

# Living FROM THE CROSS

## LESSON NOTES

Rom 1:7—"To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people..."

Q. Are you "loved by God"? Why?

Q. When did God first love you?

Q. What are the practical implications of being loved?

When you look at an acorn, what do you see? On the surface, and with your natural eyes, you'll see a small, brown, hard, and slightly cone shaped object that is the seed of an oak tree. An acorn is common. So common in fact that when you come upon one, you're likely to kick it down the road and think nothing more of it. But, if you could poke a small hole in the side of its shell and see more deeply into the life within this nut, you would begin to see a whole forest of oak trees. Maybe 1000 in number. And if you could look beyond to the outer edges of this forest you would discover 10,000 more. All that is needed to grow an unlimited forest of mighty oaks is contained in that one, seemingly insignificant, acorn.

The statement—loved by God—is very much like the acorn. It's a colloquial expression: a common statement. So common in fact that when we come upon it in the Scriptures, we tend to kick it down the road and think nothing more of it. It's often just a passing thought that has no real effect in our daily lives. But if we could poke a hole in this truth and gaze deeply into its life within, we would find a vast and unlimited forest of goodness, care, provision, and every blessing. A whole world of unending grace.

To be loved by God is all encompassing. Everything you need today, tomorrow, and forever is contained in this one common reality. I'm convinced that if you could become fully persuaded of God's perfect love there is nothing more you would ever want or fear. To be loved by God is enough for you today, and forever! God's perfect love is the secret of true contentment. The substance of all faith, the source of soul rest, and the perfection of all things.

Ignatius ~ "A radical encounter with the unconditional love of God is necessary before any forward movement into a life of discipleship can occur. A person must embrace the depths of grace so that God's love is an overwhelming experience."

## 1. GOD IS LOVE.

- 1 Jn 4:8, 16—“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love”
- **Love is God’s divine nature.** God doesn’t choose to love. God IS love. The verb “is” describes a state of being.
- God would have to change his core nature to not love you.

## 2. GOD’S LOVE IS UNCONDITIONAL

- 1 Jn 4:19—“ We love because he first loved us.”
- **Human love is utilitarian and conditional...**It has strings attached to expectations of **performance or productivity** so that love can be withdrawn if and when the expectation is unmet.
- **Most of us project human love onto God.** That’s why we live FOR his love, rather than FROM it.
- We believe that love is conditional upon our performance and productivity, therefore if we produce more he will love more, whereas if we produce less he will love less.

### a. “First Love” is an unconditional love!

- **Unconditional means...**“to exist without any prerequisite; undeserved, unmerited, unearned and without any precondition.” Unconditional love is the nature of grace.
- Rom 5:8—“While we were still sinners Christ died for us...”. Cf John 3:16—“God so loved that...”
- E.g.—Seffie

### b. Love for God is a reciprocal love.

- We can only love God to the extent we know we are loved by God.
- **E.g. Mary Magdalene**—“I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love.” ~ Lu 7:47

## 3. GOD’S LOVE IS UNLIMITED

- **Unlimited means...**“boundless, infinite, immeasurable & measureless.”
- **Rom 8:32** - "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"

a. **Unlimited love is a “perfect/complete” love**, which means there is nothing Father has not already done and given, and would not do or give today, to supply whatever you may need.

- **Analogy:** Determining Worth—Being incarcerated in Mexico.

#### 4. GOD'S LOVE IS INDISCRIMINATE.

- Discriminate means "to make a difference in treatment or favour on a basis other than individual merit."
- a. **God's love does not discriminate** between good and bad people, white or black, rich or poor, male or female, gay or straight—"the death he died, he died once for all"
- Matt 5:44,45 - "But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike."
- **E.g.— A Rose** It's beauty and fragrance are indiscriminately given.

Q. Does God love you as much as he loves Jesus? Cf. Jn 17:23,26

#### 5. GOD'S LOVE IS UNFAILING

- **Unfailing** means...dependable, reliable, constant, everlasting, infallible, sure, inexhaustible, and trustworthy.
- **The reason for our faith.**
  - 1 Jn 4:16—"And so we know and rely on the love God has for us."
- Only unconditional, unlimited and indiscriminate love has the capacity to be unfailing.
- David wrote "... for I have always been mindful of your unfailing love and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness." ~ Ps 26:3

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**Living FROM God's Love is resting daily in the assurance that I am all I need to be, and have all I need to have, for life and godliness.**

#### CLOSING PRAYER:

"May Christ make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. May your roots grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God."

~ Eph 3:14-19 NLT