

The Beloved of God



Lesson Objective:

The objective of this lesson will be to examine our identity as sons and daughters of God and the purposes of our creation.

Key Scripture:

Psalm 8:3-6 ³ When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have ordained; ⁴ What is man that you take thought of him, and the son of man that you care for him? ⁵ Yet you have made him a little lower than God, and you crown him with glory and majesty! ⁶ You make him to rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,

The Origin of All Love

I John 4:7-8 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Key Point: *God is the origin of all love.*

In the beginning there was God. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit dwelt together in perfect unity and love. He was in fact the origin of all love we have become familiar with, for He Himself is love. Out of His nature of love came the expressions of tender affection a one feels for their spouse; the love a parent has for their child and the child for the parent; or the love one has for a dear friend. However, God's love is so great and that it is identified as unconditional love.

While the Hebrew and Greek words for "love" have various shades and meanings, they may be summed up in the following definition: Love, whether used of God or man, is an earnest and anxious desire for and an active and charitable interest in the well being of the one loved.¹

¹ (from International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Electronic Database Copyright (C) 1996 by BibleSoft)

Key Point: *Agape love removes the conditions of performance and gives love unconditionally.*

The Greek verb *agapas* means the highest, most perfect kind of love, implying a clear determination of will, judgment, and belonging to the sphere of Divine revelation.² Agape love removes the conditions of performance for love, giving love unconditionally.

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church, he describes the love of God in the following way:

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 *4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8 Love never fails. (NIV)*

Because the nature of God is love, so much so that the apostle John identifies God as being love, these attributes describe God's nature: God never gives up. He cares more for others than for self. Being fulfilled in Himself, He has no lack that anyone could satisfy. He doesn't force Himself on others and isn't always "me first." He isn't irritable or in a bad mood. He isn't easily provoked to anger, nor does He keep an account of our faults or failures. He isn't happy when injustice is done, but is happy when truth prevails. He always watches and guards over us. He endures all things, believes the best in all things, never stops hoping in all things, bears up under all things, not losing heart or courage. God never fails at loving us.

The Love of the Godhead

Key Point: *Generosity is the expression of agape love.*

The love of God is totally void of selfishness, but is purely motivated by generosity - the desire to give of oneself to the other. Giving is the essential nature of God's love. As the apostle John put it so well, "God so loved the world that He gave...."³

The love between the members of the Godhead is tremendous. Oh, how the Father loves the Son and the Holy Spirit, and oh how great is the love that the Son has for the Father and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is passionately in love with the Father and the Son, and the three of them are, in one accord, deeply in love with the other. This great love must be expressed through its giving nature.

The Father wants to give His Son the greatest gift He can imagine. Out of the depths of their great love for the Son the Father and the Holy Spirit conceived a vision to provide for the Son a bride, a beautiful glorious bride without spot or wrinkle. A Bride who will express His nature and character and be just like Him; who will be a suitable helper for intimacy, companionship, and partnership. And she shall reign with Him for all of eternity.⁴

The Holy Spirit and the Son, out of the vastness of their love for the Father, conceived a vision, "Let's build for the Father a house. It cannot be a house made of natural stones nor can it even be made of precious stones like diamonds, rubies, sapphires or emeralds. No! His house must be made of something even more precious than these. These stones must reflect the greatest value of all. It must be a house made of "living stones."

² Ibid

³ John 3:16

⁴ 2Timothy 2:12

The Father and the Son came together in one accord and out of the intense passionate love they have for the Spirit came the dream to give Him the most precious gift fathomable, a body through which He may express His power, love, and creativity. This will be a body with many parts. Each part uniquely fitted together with every other part. Each member will be different in function, design, and capabilities, yet are in union with one head, Christ Jesus.

Key Point: ***Mankind was conceived in the love relationship of the Godhead.***

From the intimate love between the members of the Godhead, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, a vision was created and mankind was conceived. Man would become love's ultimate expression of the Godhead. Within the greatness of the mind of God came a three-fold vision whereby He will fashion a bride for the Son, a temple for the Father, and a body for the Holy Spirit. The model He will use will be His own image and likeness. He will fashion for Himself a people of His very own, holy unto Him, to make a name for Himself, and to represent His glory throughout the earth. These will be a family of sons and daughters who will share in the greatness of His inheritance, ruling and reigning with Him.⁵

Key Point: ***Mankind was in the forefront of God's plans through all He created.***

The vision of mankind became the primary focus of all God does as He creates the heavens and the earth. When He created the archangels, ministering angels, seraphim and cherubim, mankind was in the forefront of His plan.

Chosen Before Creation

***Ephesians 1:3-6** ³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. (NIV)*

Key Point: ***Before the creation of the world, God chose man to be In Him.***

From the motivation of love, God envisioned mankind. Before He created the world, He predetermined and strategized man's destiny. God's plan was that man would choose to remain blameless and holy in His sight. In other words, love would motivate him to choose to remain in right relationship with Him. In love's conception of man, free will would be necessary for love to be reciprocated. Man was thus given the option to succeed in his relationship with God or fail. However, a predetermined plan was made before man's creation for reconciliation should man fall from his state of glory of being in right relationship with his Father.⁶ From a heart that loves unconditionally, He joyfully determined the cost of man's failure with the hope of eternally abiding and

⁵ Deuteronomy 7:6; 2Samuel 7:23; Titus 2:14; Romans 8:17; 2Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:10

⁶ Acts 2:23; 4:28; 1Peter 1:20

partnering with man. The Father predestined humanity to be adopted back into His family, whom would then reign with Him.⁷

Foreknowledge of God

Romans 8:29 *For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;*

Key Point: *God had prior experiential knowledge with each of us.*

Paul states that we were foreknown by God before creation. The Greek word used for “foreknew” is the word *proginosko*, *pro* meaning prior and *ginosko* meaning experiential knowledge. *Ginosko* is a word used to describe the experiential knowledge gained through the intimate relationship of a husband and his wife. How is it possible that we were formerly in intimate relationship with the Father?

Have you ever awoken from a dream that seemed so real that it took a while to determine whether it was real or not? It looked and felt so real. Dreams are a gift from God. Although God does not sleep He does dream. Everything in creation, from the atom to the largest planet in the galaxy, is a result of God’s creative dreams. Before He spoke, “*Let there be....*” He imagined each of His creative expressions. You are the expression of His dream come true.

Jeremiah 1:5 *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."*

Jeremiah personally experienced the hand of God upon his life. His call began prior to his conception. God said that before Jeremiah was born he was consecrated. Consecrated means that he was set apart and dedicated for a purpose. His call was to be a prophet to the nations. But he is not more special than the rest of God’s children.

Key Point: *We are not only foreknown by the Father, but we have also been consecrated with a call and destiny.*

We may or may not all be called to be a prophet to the nations, but our calling and destiny are just as true as his. You were known by the Father. You were especially planned and gifted to fulfill a purpose.

Psalm 139:14-18 ¹⁴ *I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, ¹⁶ your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. ¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! ¹⁸ Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you. (NIV)*

⁷ 2Timothy 2:12; Romans 8:17; Revelation 3:21; 5:10; 22:5

Key Point: *God's thoughts of our welfare and a hope-filled future, out-number the grains of sand on the beach.*

Can you imagine how many grains of sand there are on any one certain beach? David is basically saying, "It would be easier to count the sands on any seashore than to count the number of thoughts God has for any one of us." Can you grasp the significance of this? Imagine for a minute a twelve ounce glass filled with sand. Each glass of sand could be considered as one day's worth of thoughts the Father has had about you since He conceived you in His dreams before creation. He has been thinking and dreaming about you a lot.

Jeremiah 29:11 *"For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."*

Notice what kind of thoughts the Father has about us. They are good thoughts. They are not thoughts concerning judgment, punishment, or thoughts motivated by anger or disgust. They are plans for our prosperity, health, happiness, destiny and hope. They are the thoughts motivated from the heart of a true Father who wants His children to succeed and experience His blessings.

Key Point: *Conforming to the image of Jesus consist of three stages: 1) called 2) justified & 3) glorified.*

Romans 8:29-30 ²⁹ *For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;* ³⁰ *and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.*

Three Stages of Being Conformed to the Image of Jesus Christ:

Every man, woman and child on the face of this earth are heirs of Adam and thus inheritors of the Father's predestined plan. According to verse 30, the journey towards this conformation consists of three stages: 1) Called 2) Justified 3) Glorified.

- 1. Called** - Within the heart of every man and woman there is a yearning to know his or her creator. This yearning acts as an itch in our spirits that needs to be scratched. It is an inner desire to know the truth, "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?" Because God created us with a free will, each of us must first respond to His call. His invitation to fallen mankind is "I want you to know me," and "I want you to know you as I know you."
- 2. Justified** - The second stage of "justification" has already been purchased for us through the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When Jesus said, "It is finished," He literally finished the fulfillment of every requirement of righteousness on our behalf. Jesus not only died for us but He also died as us. We have been justified, just as if we had never sinned. There is no longer anything being held against us. The records of our failures, mistakes, and outright rebellion have all been erased through the blood of Jesus Christ. Our debt has been paid in full.
- 3. Glorified** - The third stage, "glorification", is the process of sanctification. Sanctification is not necessarily the process of God bringing us out of sin. The redemption and justification of Jesus Christ has already defeated sin on our behalf. Sin is no longer our master. Therefore, we are not sinners, but we are now saints of God through Jesus Christ. Sanctification is the process whereby the Holy Spirit brings us from

faith to faith and from glory to glory. It is being conformed into His image and transformed through the renewing of our minds resulting in glorification.

Our Purpose and Destiny

Psalm 8:3-6 ³ *When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have ordained;* ⁴ *What is man that you take thought of him, and the son of man that you care for him?* ⁵ *Yet you have made him a little lower than God, and you crown him with glory and majesty!* ⁶ *You make him to rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,*

Key Point: ***Man was made a little lower than God to rule with glory.***

Other translations of this portion of Scripture state that man was made a little lower than the angels or heavenly beings. However, this more accurate translation (the New American Standard) states that man was made a little lower than God. We were crowned with glory and majesty and made to be the rulers over the works of His hands. All things were once under the feet of man. But these, along with many other things, were lost when Adam brought mankind into the bondage of sin as he surrendered the authority of this earth to Satan. Jesus said that the reason He came to earth was to seek and save all that was lost.⁸

Commission Restored

Key Point: ***With God's commission comes all the authority and power, with all the resources to fulfill that commission.***

We see these two great evidences of God's purpose for man in both Genesis and Revelations. The very beginning of the Bible and the last book of the Bible both reveal the original commission of man and the commission restored. Man's purposes are seen in his commission.

The backbone, or strength, of Kingdom authority and power in the body of Christ is found in the commission.⁹ For with the commission comes all the authority, power, and all the resources to fulfilling that commission. Discovering God's original commission and purpose for mankind can help to fortify our resolve to a life of history making significance.

Genesis 1:28 *God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

⁸ Luke 19:10

⁹ "When Heaven Invades Earth" by Bill Johnson ©2003 – Bill Johnson, Destiny Image Publishers Inc., pg.30

Man was commissioned by God to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth, subdue it, and to rule over every living thing that moves on the earth. When Jesus restored all things, He restored our commission to rule and reign with Him.¹⁰

When Jesus said, *"It is finished"* He accomplished more than purchasing our redemption. It was more than crushing the authority of Satan under His feet and bringing freedom. He restored mankind to right relationship with our Father in heaven. And out of that relationship we are partners with Him in His dominion and reign.

God's Representatives on Earth

Key Point: ***Man's first mission from God was to cultivate and expand, and then reign and rule over the earth.***

Within the chaotic world, God chose a portion of land and created a perfect environment, a garden for His choice creation. This garden was the Father's ultimate expression of beauty and peace. It was the closest thing to heaven on earth. God formed a man out of the dirt of the earth and put His mouth to the mouth of man and blew into him spirit and life. Man rose up as a creature that was the image and likeness of God Himself. He was then commissioned to have a lot of children, subdue and rule over the earth.

The greatness that God intended for man, as becoming rulers over earth, begins small. Almost everything God does begins in seed form and then must grow into maturity. So it was with man's commission. Adam and Eve were placed in the garden with a mission; *"Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it."*¹¹

In cultivating and keeping it they were to extend its borders and then rule or govern over what they possess through the simplicity of their devotion to God. In other words God was saying to them, "Now multiply and have a lot of children. And as they have children and their children have children, extend the boundary of good and perfect until you take dominion over all the earth, ruling over every living thing on its face. Extend, cultivate and keep what you see here in this garden until that which is perfect and good invades the wilderness, the chaos and destruction, that lie without."

Key Point: ***The greater the number of people in right relationship with God, the greater the impact upon earth.***

Man was placed on planet earth to represent God, to re-present His rule and His reign. This process was to continue until the entire earth was covered with the glorious rule of God through his ambassadors, man. The greater the number of people in right relationship to God, the greater the impact their lives will be upon the earth.¹²

Habakkuk 2:14 "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

¹⁰ Revelation 5:10

¹¹ Genesis 2:15

¹² "When Heaven Invades Earth" by Bill Johnson ©2003 – Bill Johnson, Destiny Image Publishers Inc., pg.30

Matthew 28:18-20 ¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. (NKJ)

Key Point: ***"All Authority" has been given to us to expand, cultivate, and rule over the Kingdom of god upon earth.***

There was not a key missing from Jesus' authority. If Jesus has 100% of "all" authority this means that Satan no longer has any. Jesus had truly crushed the head of Satan. He has been stripped of all his authority. From the basis of this authority we are commissioned to "Go" and as we go we are to take the kingdom with us. Our commission is thus restored to **expand** the kingdom of God throughout the earth, **cultivate** it and **keep it**.

Three Passions of Christ:

Jesus' life on earth exemplified normal Christianity. He lived totally dependent upon the Holy Spirit to reveal what the Father was doing and saying. By His example we represent Christ with these three great passions:

- 1. Reveal the Glory** - Whereas demonstrating the kingdom of God on earth is expressed through our actions and deeds. His glory is manifested through our character and lifestyle. We are no longer sinners but saints. We are not bound to an earthly perspective but we are seated with Christ in heavenly places. Because we are sons and daughters of God, His divine nature has influence on our character. Our minds are transformed so that we have the mind of Christ Jesus. As we express who we are in Christ Jesus, we bring glory to God. This is not a legalistic performance of duty, these are true expressions of who we now are.
- 2. Demonstrate the Kingdom of God** - Jesus revealed the heart and will of the Father when He taught us how to pray. He prayed, "Let your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Jesus demonstrated kingdom reality on earth when he performed miracles and overpowered the natural realm.
- 3. Destroy the Works of the Devil** - We have been commissioned to bring light into darkness, to undo the lies and deceptions, sicknesses and diseases, bondages and captivity, and every form of darkness that exists on this earth.

Conclusion

Man was created in the image of God and placed into the Father's ultimate expression of heaven on earth; the Garden of Eden. Outside that garden was a different story. It was a barren wilderness of removed blessing. It was a kingdom of darkness under the rule of Satan and his demonic forces. It was in desperate need of an invasion and occupation by God's delegated ones. The same purpose that God commissioned mankind with has been restored. It is the same commission that Jesus came to earth with, *"to destroy the works of the devil."*¹³

It was God's intention that as man multiplied they would expand the borders of heaven throughout the earth. Mankind would thus extend God's kingdom and dominion through the simplicity of love and devotion to Him.

¹³ 1 John 3:8

The greater the number of people in right relationship to God, the greater the impact of their leadership and dominion.

God's plan of dominion for man never ceased. The original plan was never aborted; it was fully realized once and for all in the crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and glorification of Jesus. In redeeming mankind, Jesus retrieved what man had given away. We were thus completely restored to His plan of ruling as a people made in His image. The lack of the glorified Christ being manifested in our lives through revealing the gospel of the kingdom of God, performing miracles, healings, signs and wonders isn't because it is not in God's will for us. The problem exists between our ears. We fail to fully understand what Christ Jesus has purchased for us. We have yet to grasp the revelation of who we are in Christ and who Christ is in us. This understanding begins with our identity in Christ as His children and heirs.

End of Lesson 201

Recommended Resources:

1. Book: "When Heaven Invades Earth" by Bill Johnson ©2003 – Bill Johnson, Destiny Image Publishers Inc.

Copies of this book can be obtained through:

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