

God's Beloved Son

If someone asked you to describe who you are, what would you say? Would you ever choose the descriptor, loved by God, to describe yourself? Usually this is not the first thing to pop into our minds and yet it is the very thing that God wants us to realize above all else. As the Apostle John wrote in his first letter, "**. . . it is not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.**" (1 John 4:10-11) John also captured this point in the beginning of His Gospel account when he wrote: "**God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son. For God did not send His son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.**" (John 3:16-17)

In our lesson this morning, we examined the love of God for His creation, mankind. This evening we will look at the love that God had for His holy Son, Jesus.

Matthew records the following in his Gospel, chapter Matthew 3 verses 13-17:

"Then came Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbid him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized of You, and You are coming to me?'

"And Jesus answering said unto him, 'Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he suffered Him.

"And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: And lo a voice from Heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.'"

When John baptized Jesus, a voice spoke from Heaven, proclaiming Jesus to be His beloved Son, in Whom He was well pleased. This voice would be heard again on the mountaintop, where some of the disciples encountered the glory of God.

Matthew 17:1-5 is the account of Jesus and His transfiguration:

"And after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and brought them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light.

"And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Him.

"Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here: if You wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

“While he yet spoke, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, ‘This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear Him.’”

It seems to me that it is very telling that God states His love for Jesus. He does not merely say, “Hear Him,” but first asserts His **love** for Him, and then tells them to listen to Him. In other words, as Jesus would say on several occasions, the words of teaching and commandment that He brought to mankind were the words of God, His father.

Peter bore witness to this event on the mountaintop, as is recorded in his second letter:

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, ‘This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.’ And this voice which came from Heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount.” (2 Peter 1:16-18)

This voice from within the glory of God had the desired effect. It seared itself into the disciples’ brains, so that they would always remember them. ***“This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased – hear Him!”***

Now let’s read another portion of the ministry of Jesus from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 12 verses 14-21:

“Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him. But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew Himself from thence: and great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all; and charged them that they should not make Him known: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, ‘Behold My servant, Whom I have chosen; My beloved, in Whom My soul is well pleased: I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory. And in His name shall the Gentiles trust.’”

Notice verse 18 above – it is the prophecy that was borne out by the words spoken from the glory of God, first at the baptism of Jesus, and later on at the mountaintop.

John 5:16-20 says,

“And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father works hitherto, and I work.’ Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

“Then answered Jesus and said unto them, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what he sees the Father do: for what things whatsoever He does, these also does the Son do likewise. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does: and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.’”

The Father loves the Son, and that is why God revealed to His beloved Son the plan that He had for mankind. He showed Him the things that were to transpire on the Earth.

In John 15:7-10 we have the following:

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you: continue in My love. If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.”

Jesus was beloved of God because He kept the commandments of God. He did not consider the commandments of God to be grievous, but righteous. Because of this, He was beloved in the sight of God. He was an obedient Son.

If you would like, and if it is convenient, flip on over to the first chapter of the Book of Hebrews as we will be reading verses 1-9:

“God, Who at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds; Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

“For unto which of the angels said He at any time, ‘You are My Son, this day have I begotten You?’ And again, ‘I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son?’

“And again, when He brought in the firstbegotten into the world, He said, ‘And let all the angels of God worship Him.’ And of the angels He said, ‘Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.’

“But unto the Son He said, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows.’”

Jesus, because of His love for God and His obedience to Him, was elevated above all the angels in Heaven, becoming the only Son of God born of woman – the only begotten Son!

John the Baptist also bore witness of God's love for Jesus. Remember that we earlier read that John witnessed the voice of God speaking from Heaven when he baptized Jesus. Here is John's account in John 3:22-36:

“After these things came Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judaea; and there He tarried with them, and baptized.

“And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison.

“Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, ‘Rabbi, He that was with You beyond Jordan, to Whom you bare witness, behold, the same baptizes, and all men come to Him.’

“John answered and said, ‘A man can receive nothing, except it is given him from Heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.’ He that has the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

““He must increase, but I must decrease. He that comes from above is above all: he that is of the Earth is earthly, and speaks of the Earth: He that comes from Heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no man receives His testimony.

““He that has received His testimony has set to his seal that God is true. For He Whom God has sent speaks the words of God: for God gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him.

““The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.”

“This is My beloved Son – hear Him!” Jesus was trusted with God's words of truth!

Because Jesus spoke words of truth – that is, words from God – He also holds the key to our salvation! Everlasting life comes from God Almighty, through His Son, Jesus. As first John, and then Jesus, preached repentance and the salvation of God, they baptized the believers in the abundant waters nearby.

John 17:20-26 is an account of Jesus praying for unity for His followers, and He says,

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

“And the glory which You gave Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them, as You have loved Me.

“Father, I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me: for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

“O righteous Father, the world has not known You: but I have known You, and these have known that You have sent Me. And I have declared unto them Your name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

Our salvation is not only in the initial belief in Jesus, but also is in our trusting His words to be words of truth, to be words from God. Therefore, Jesus prayed that His followers would know the love of God that He Himself had known, and would thereby keep the teachings of the righteous God of the cosmos. In learning the attributes of God, and the ways of God, and adopting them into our own lives through the Holy Spirit of God, we become one with the righteous Father and His obedient Son, and are thereby saved. As Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9, “ . . . ***for by grace have you been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory.***” God loved Jesus from before the foundation of the world, and loves us through Him.

Above anything else, God wants us to recognize ourselves as His beloved creation for whom He sent Jesus Christ to reveal the truth of His total and unyielding love. The Lord's Supper is a perfect example. When you hear the words “ . . . ***take, eat, this is My body. . . . Take, eat, this My blood which is shed for you***” (Matthew 26), do you stop to realize that Jesus indeed shed His blood for you? When God allowed Jesus Christ to be nailed to a cross and die a horrible death for the sake of humankind, God did that specifically for you. He did it because He loves us, and Jesus Christ did it because He loved us and, even more importantly, He was an obedient Son Who loved His Father.

You see, when Jesus ate the Last Supper with His disciples, He showed them, and all who have come after, that God loves us without reservation. What God wants is for you to recognize this most important point: who you are, above anything else, is God's

beloved child. We need not earn God's love. We need not do anything but realize what Christ has done, which is to give us His unconditional love, and accept that truth in our hearts, do not argue with Him, but demonstrate our obedient faith in Him, just as Jesus was obedient to His Father. We should do so today, and begin to see yourself as, above anything else, loved by God through His beloved Son.

God did not send someone else to accomplish His saving purposes for the whole world; He sent His Son. And to make it crystal clear to all who had ears to hear, as Jesus emerged from the Jordan newly baptized a voice thundered from Heaven, ***"This is My Son."*** The ocean of God's love for us runs deep enough that He sent His beloved Son, His only Son. God has called, and continues to call us through the words of His Son (Romans 10:17). He sent His beloved Son to accomplish His will and purpose to redeem mankind from our sins. And by sending His Son not only does God accomplish His saving purposes for the world, but He gives us our clearest glimpse of Himself. We only begin to understand Who God really is in looking at His beloved Son, Jesus.