

## **God is Love**

Over the next four weeks, we're going to spend our time gathered around one of the most encouraging claims in all of Scripture—we are going to home in on the Apostle John's bold claim that **"God is love" (1 John 4:8b)**. Not simply that God is loving, or that love is one of His many attributes, but that love is the very essence of who He is. Understanding this truth can reshape everything for you. We're going to begin by observing from Scripture how God reveals His nature as the fountain of all love. Then we'll look to Jesus, the One in whom "love" took on flesh and walked among us. From there, we'll explore how the Holy Spirit transforms us from the inside out, forming us into people who reflect God's loving heart. And finally, we'll discover how God's divine love refuses to stay contained as it extends through His people to a world filled with those who are longing to be found and to be loved. Together, we'll learn not just about love—but how to embrace it, live in it, be shaped by it, and to carry it wherever we go. So, let's get started...

### **"Love Defined – God Reveals Himself"**

#### **Introduction**

Regardless of where you visit around our globe, you'll discover that every culture has its own definition of love. Some see it as a feeling, others as a strong desire, others as tolerance. But Scripture does something completely different: it doesn't just describe God as loving — no, as you have already heard, it declares that **God is love**. Not "love is God," but "God is love." Love is not an attribute God occasionally displays; LOVE is the very essence of His being. If we misunderstand God, we will misunderstand love. And if we misunderstand love, we will unfortunately misunderstand the gospel.

So, let's ground ourselves by looking at the nature of God, the way He reveals it to us.

#### **God Reveals His Character – Read Exodus 34:1–9**

This story is one of the richest "God-meets-Moses" moments in the entire Old Testament. In Exodus 3, we read about Moses' *first* encounter with God. Here in Exodus 34, it's the moment where Moses encounters God's *character* in an intimate and covenant-defining way. If you go back a few chapters, just before Exodus 34, you'll discover that Israel shattered the original covenant through their implementation of the golden calf (Exodus 32). If you recall the story, Moses broke the original tablets as a symbolic act that strongly conveyed to God's people that the covenant itself had been violated and then he melted the calf, ground it into powder, scattered in the water, and made the people of Israel drink it. Needless to say, Moses was not pleased with the actions of his people.

Now, in Exodus 34:1, God commands Moses: "Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first..." At first glance, these words do not seem like much, but they signal a shift in Moses' relationship with the "I Am." Instead of God being upset with Israel for their disobedience and

for their blatant disregard and destruction of the covenant, His approaching their leader again lets us see God's character on display. God does not abandon His people. In this case, God was willing to make a way for Moses and the Israelites to renew the covenant. To make it anew. The first time Moses received the stone tablets, they were given to him by God. This time, God invites Moses to participate in the restoration process. Today... because of Jesus, God now invites every person to take part in His offer of restoration. For Moses, this encounter moved him into a place of deeper intimacy and trust in his relationship with God. If God was willing then, guess what...? He's willing today! It is the love of God that invites you into a deeper and more intimate relationship as well. All you have to do is accept the invite.

At the burning bush encounter all the way back in Exodus 3, Moses learns of God's identity. Here in Exodus 34:5-7, Moses learns all about God's character. When you look at these verses, you'll notice that God proclaims His own name and then defines His character in great detail. God reveals Himself as: merciful, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving of iniquities, transgressions, sins. All while never ignoring unrepentant sin. It was in this moment God taught Moses that Israel's hope was not in their levels of obedience but in God's nature. For us, our Hope is no different. Our hope is also in God's nature as revealed to us through His Son and His Holy Spirit. Moses responded with worship and intercession, asking God to remain with His people and to forgive them. Moses didn't just have another encounter with God. Instead, he learned much about the heart of the One who willingly bound Himself to Israel in covenant love.

What can we learn from this encounter?

- God's presence is grounded in His character, not our performance.
- Our role in Kingdom work depends on God's character revealed through us.
- It is God's faithfulness towards us that allows for restoration.
- God's justice and mercy go hand in hand because of His love for us.

### **God Defines Love - Read 1 John 4:7-12**

Here, John is writing to a church confused by false teachers and fractured relationships. Into that chaos he speaks a simple but seismic truth: **"Love is from God... because God is love."** He reminds this fractured and confused church that love does not begin with human emotion or cultural opinion — it begins with God Himself. When John writes, "Love is from God... because God is love," he anchors the very definition of love to God's character. Love is not something we discover or invent; it is something God reveals. If God is love, then anything we call "love" that contradicts His character is counterfeit. Authentic love flows from the nature of the One who is its source. And that source is the one who John says, "is love."

John then shows that God not only defines love but demonstrates it through the sending of His Son. The cross becomes the ultimate picture of love — love that initiates, sacrifices, and gives what is most precious for the sake of sinners. If you think about it, the cross is the moment when

God says, “This is who I am. This is what love looks like.” Since we have been loved in this way, we are then invited to reflect that same love toward others. God’s love is not meant to be admired from a distance but received deeply and reproduced in us and in our relationships. This is why the clearest evidence of God’s love at work in us is not how we feel but how we love, how we forgive, how we show mercy to those around us.

## **Conclusion**

God is love — not sentimentally, not superficially, but sacrificially and eternally. The invitation today is simple: Will you give your heart to Jesus? If so, God, who is always faithful, will love you and will save you. If you’ve made the decision to receive Jesus as your Savior, whether it is in this place today, or if was at some other time, I also invite you to...

- **Receive His love.**
- **Rest in His love.**
- **Reflect His love.**