



There is a common thought in today's "Christianity" that Jesus loved the sinner and hated the religious leaders of the day. Yes, it is true that Jesus loved the sinner but is not truthful to think that Jesus ignored and even hated the religious leaders of the day. The fact of the matter is that Jesus loved them all. He loved the Jewish sinner; He loved the non-Jewish people who sinned; He loved the Romans who were sinners; and yes, He loved the Jewish leadership who were all sinners as well.

If Jesus was and is God then we must grasp the fact that Jesus loved and continues to love everyone as the Father loves everyone. Well, Jesus is absolutely the second person of the triune God. Yes, Jesus is God. The problem was, and it still happens today, is that Jesus dealt with and deals with people differently. That does not mean that He does not love them all

the same. If God is love then the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit must love everyone the same or He is not the true God.

Unfortunately, we look at the scriptures and we see how some people are dealt with and we get the misunderstanding that God did not love everyone. If that is the case then the Bible is lying to us when it tells us that "God is love" and that He loves everyone the same. However, the truth of the matter is that God loves everyone the same way – He loves us all.

When we look at the scriptures we see different aspects of this love. Sometimes it can be and many times is misinterpreted. The fundamental aspect of God is not that He is merciful – although He is. He is not simply kind – although He is. He is not only gracious - although He is. He is not only a disciplinarian – although He is. No, the fundamental aspect of God that has been lost in this hour is that **God is love**. The scriptures tell us this over and over again.

There are many attributes of this love but the fact remains is that God is a God of love. That fact, in these days, has been mismanaged and misunderstood. The sly tactics of the enemy is that God's love has somehow been taken out of the scriptures and has been displaced with the fact, although true, is that God is simply a God of grace. There is no question about the fact that grace is an important aspect of the character and nature of God. However, it is not the defining character of God. The scripture tells us over and over again and again that **God is love**.

Now, I understand that there are two ways you can view what I just wrote. You can either be thinking of one of two things. You can disapprove and stop reading this essay or you can agree with what I said and continue to read. I encourage those that may not agree to please continue to read this short little essay before throwing it away.

I know that the scriptures tell us and mention many times that God is a God of grace, mercy and peace. The New Testament writers begin their letters using such greetings. However, we neglect the fact that they all define who and what God truly is by telling us that God is the **God of love**. This is expressed in all of their letters. Every word in the Epistles express the awesomeness and vastness of God's love through His grace, His mercy, His peace, His forgiveness and His everlasting love.

This sometimes, over the past few years, has been taken out of the scriptures and out of many teachings. We do not hear of God's love spoken of much in the teaching that we hear of today. We hear of His grace and mercy. These aspects of God are very true but we must realize that the scripture distinctly tells us over and over again that God **is** love.

The Bible is God's love wrapped up in a few pages but it represents who He forever was, is and will be. From Genesis to Revelation we read of and see of God redemptive power which is found in the word – love. It is what truly makes us born-again and gives us new life in and through God. It is only God's love for us that we are truly saved. It is absolutely nothing that we have done. It was God's love that sent us Jesus. It is His free gift of salvation to anyone who believes in Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior.

Over the years, however, even the word love, in the scriptures has taken on a new meaning that has been misunderstood. I have written in past essays that the term love, which has been used since the 1960's has taken on a new meaning. The term love when expressed by the Greek word "agapeo" has taken on a new meaning in the world of believers. We have literally changed the meaning of the Greek word "agapeo" to mean "unconditional love." However, nowhere does it express that God's "agapao" is unconditional.

When we look at the term as found in the original Greek we find that it refers to having a "*goodwill, benevolence, and willful delight in the object of that love.*" Unlike our English word for love, "*agape*" is not used in the New Testament to refer to romantic or sexual love. Nor does it refer to close friendship or brotherly love, for which the Greek word "*philia*" is used. "Agape" love involves faithfulness, a commitment and an act of the will. It is distinguished from the other types of love by its lofty moral nature and strong character. It is referred to many times as being God's highest form of love.

Actually, all of that is only partially true. God's "love" goes far beyond what any mere word or definition could express. What we express as "God's love" does not even come near to the fullness and richness of what God's love towards all of His creation truly is. We must always try to comprehend that fact. The fact is that we can never truly nor can we ever fully express, grasp or understand what vastness of the love of God truly is. Nor can we ever truly fully tell how He expresses it to the people who are on this earth. The fact of the matter is that God simply does – in many different ways.

That brings me back to the point in which we began. Jesus, who is God, expressed His love to the people in different ways. However, it was still love. When Jesus was with the sinner it would seem to us that He treated them kinder and with a great love. When He spoke to the religious leaders it seemed as though He spoke down to them and that He did not speak with any love towards them.

However, was that true? Was Jesus a respecter of persons? Did he really hate the religious leaders? Of course the answer is – no. If Jesus was God (which He was and always will be) then He must have walked and lived in God's image, likeness and yes, even in the fullness of His love.

Yes, Jesus loved the religious leadership – just as much as He loved the common folk. The misunderstanding comes in play by what we read in the scriptures. It seemed as though Jesus was always talking down to the religious leaders and that He did not care for them. Actually, the complete opposite was in play. He loved the religious leaders just as much as He loved the common Jewish people. He loved the pagan Romans. He loved the pagan people in the surrounding regions. If you look at the Gospel accounts you see many times when Jesus went into pagan cities and territories to either do a miracle or to simply speak to an individual.

One situation that comes to mind is when Jesus crossed over and went into the country of the Gadarenes. (Mark 5:1-20) We see that the man was possessed by a host of demons that were known as "legion." He set the man free of these demons. However, if we look closely we see that Jesus expressly went to that area to meet with this man and set him free.

We see that immediately after this account in Mark 5:1-20, Jesus immediately left that area to go back to minister to the Jewish people. We see in Mark 5:21-43 that He immediately went back into a Jewish area and healed not only Jairus' daughter but on the way to Jairus' home, Jesus healed a woman who was suffering from a blood disease – an “issue of blood.”

We must remember as we read the scriptures that Jesus, being God, loved all those that He spoke to – the Jewish people, the gentiles and yes, even the Jewish leadership. The reason that it seemed as though He spoke so harsh to the Jewish leadership was because: 1) They thought that they knew the scriptures (which they only had a false understanding of them); 2) They thought that because of their stature of being “religious leaders” that they automatically were entitled to a place in Heaven; 3) The most important reason was that they were the farthest from the Kingdom because of their hypocrisy and lack of truly understanding who and what God truly was and is – to them and to all the people.

They needed to be spoken differently to. Why, because they became hard hearted, arrogant and truly self-righteous in their own ways and ideas. When the Pharisees began in 300 BC they desired to get back to the right ways of God. However, over the next 300 years their attitudes changed. They got into power and that power started to corrupt their ways of thinking and even acting. By the time of Jesus, those ways and ideas got farther and farther away from the truth and simplicity of God and His ways. Hmmm.....

Doesn't that seem to happen today to many people? We take the simplicity of God and His ways and we tend to make it into precepts and principles which ultimately form “religions.” We tend to over think and then we tend to take out many of God's truths and ways and replace or change them with our own ways, thoughts and precepts. That is why we have over 30,000 “Christian religions” in the world today. Yes, that is true – over 30,000 different forms of Christianity in the world today. Hmmm.....

Yes, throughout the Gospel accounts, as well as throughout all the scriptures, we see Jesus and the Father ministering and bringing healing to not only the Jewish people but also to the heathen and pagan people. We also must not forget that He did minister to the Jewish religious leaders. We see this through Nicodemus and others of the leadership who secretly had believed and followed Jesus. Actually, we see in the New Testament writings that many of these Jewish religious leaders did accept and believe in Jesus after His death and resurrection.

Yes, God was and still is the God over every person upon this earth - Jew and Gentile. He is the God of all those who call themselves – the “One New Man in Christ.” However, He has not forgotten and He is still the God over all those who don't believe nor look to Him.

We see this brought forth in its fullness through the writers of the entire New Testament. The Good News is brought to and expressed to both the Jewish people and the Gentile people throughout the earth. God desires none to perish but for all to come to the saving knowledge of Jesus. (2Peter 3:9)

This brings us to where we are, today. Does each of us truly have a desire to see those who really don't know Jesus as their Lord and Savior come to that understanding and accept Him? Are we too busy with our other “Christian activities” that we are neglecting our most primary function as believers in Christ?

I am not saying that we are not to pray or intercede. I am not saying that we are not to feed the hungry or minister to the sick. What I am saying is that while we are doing those things we must remember what the primary mission of every believer upon this earth truly is. That is to tell the lost about Jesus and to tell them how they can have eternal life in and through Jesus.

If we are born again believers in Christ then that is our first call. That is what Jesus called His disciples to do. That is what He is still calling His disciples who are upon this earth to continue to do. We are to continually and firstly testify and declare the Lordship of Jesus to all who are on the earth, today.

Matthew 28:18-20 tells us this very clearly as it states, *“And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹ **Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”***

Mark 16 15-18 tells us this very clearly as it states, *“And he said unto them, **Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.** ¹⁶ He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. ¹⁷ And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”*

Luke 24:46-48 tells us this very clearly as it states, *“...Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: ⁴⁷ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ **And ye are witnesses of these things.”***

John 20:21-23 tell us this very clearly as it states, *“...Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, **even so send I you.** ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: ²³ Whose so ever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose so ever sins ye retain, they are retained.”*

The Good News is to be shed abroad for all to hear and to have the opportunity of receiving Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. I know that this may seem very simple and that this little message may seem to get lost in the vastness of the knowledge of God. However, this is the primary message that must be preached to anyone who would listen in this hour.

This is the message that needs to be, or should I say, must be preached today to every living being on this earth. This is the message that must never be forgotten or “placed under a bushel” by every believer today. This is the main reason that we are still on this earth. It is all about Jesus and the salvation that is found in and through Him.

The main reason why Jesus has not come back yet is because the message has not been preached to every individual. If we truly desire to see Jesus come, than we must go first to every individual and tell them the Good News concerning Jesus. The scriptures are very clear to every one of us who call ourselves a believer, *“**Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.**”* Why? The answer is simple. *“**For God so loved the world, that He sent His only begotten Son, that whosoever should believe in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.**”*