

Good News For Sinners 02
God Loves You
By Bill Denton

INTRODUCTION

A. It's funny how songs can express deep human needs

1. Not that they always have the right answer for those needs, but song writers are very often very perceptive about the holes in our hearts
2. Just a couple of the songs that came to mind recently are this kind of song
 - a. "All We Need Is Love" sang the Beatles
 - b. "What The World Needs Now Is Love, Sweet Love"
 - c. I've actually heard preachers rave against such music, but I think they missed the expression of human need and desire
 - d. maybe the songs didn't offer much in the way of an answer or a the right source for the love we need
 - e. In the words of another song, too many people end up, "Looking For Love In All The Wrong Places"
3. Still, if anyone doubts the human need for love, we might conclude they are out of touch with reality

B. One great part of the topic of love is the all-too-common idea people have that they are unlovable

1. Feeling that one is unlovable is common among people who experience depression or suffer from bipolar disorder
2. Feeling unlovable is quite common among teenagers and young adults who find it difficult to form romantic relationships
3. There is at least one web site where people who think they are unlovable can write their story and get feedback (hopefully positive) to help them move forward in life
4. Feeling unlovable can hit anyone who suffers a major defeat, a setback, broken relationships, divorce, family troubles, and more

C. What we don't often talk about is how thinking or feeling that we're unlovable affects our spiritual development and our relationship with God

1. We said last week that the gospel is supposed to mean "good news"
2. Why then do many people get an unlovable feeling from Christians
3. I've got some good news today for everyone – God loves you!

I. LOVE IS GOD'S BEST MOTIVE

A. Psalm 136 insists that we see God's love in his every act on behalf of his people

B. Jesus' great statement in John 3:16-17 is a testimony to God's love

John 3:16–17 (NAS) — 16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. **17** “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

1. What “world” is Jesus talking about?
 - a. the same world that had turned its defiant back on God?
 - b. the same world whose every word and every deed became an offense?
 - c. the same world that had become more and more sinful?
 - d. the same world who mocked God with idols of sticks and stones?
 - e. the same world that had become destructive and hateful?

2. Well, that's the only world Jesus could have been talking about
 - a. a very unlovely world
 - b. a very unlovable world
 - c. and yet God loved it so!

C. You must consider what God's love moved him to do

1. It moved God to act lovingly

2. It moved God to act sacrificially

3. It moved God to do what only He could do – send his son to die for unlovely, unlovable people

4. But the very fact that God did that disproves the whole idea of unlovable
 - a. it may be very true that the world in all its sin is unlovely
 - b. but it is not true that the world – people – were unlovable

5. One of the great mysteries of the gospel of Jesus has always been God's motive – why did he send his son to die for sinners?
 - a. the answer has been before us all along – he loves us
 - b. this is very much part of the good news of Jesus Christ that gets hidden by other things
 - c. it's a shame that's true because it's a message an unlovely world needs to hear

II. GOD'S LOVE HAS ALWAYS BEEN HARD TO UNDERSTAND

A. The religious people of Israel were puzzled by Jesus

1. Mark 2:15–17 (NAS) —

15 And it happened that He was reclining at the table in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many of them, and they were following Him. **16** When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to His disciples, “Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?” **17** And hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

- a. Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners – people among the most unlovely in Israel, and judged by many as unlovable
- b. and yet there was Jesus, gracing them with his presence around their dinner table
- c. “Why is he eating and drinking with those unlovely people?”
- d. “Because I didn’t come to call the lovely, but the unlovely”
- e. “I came to love them and to show that they are loved by God”

2. Even today, people get it in their heads that God can only love a certain kind of person

- a. that’s not just wrong
- b. it’s contrary to the very nature of God

B. The truth is God’s love is not always what we think it is

1. God has always loved people who appear to be the most unlovely

2. God has always surprised people with his love

- a. he surprises people who think they’ve got God figured out
- b. he surprises people who think they are beyond God’s love

C. Perhaps the biggest surprise about God’s love is how often he loves people we don’t

1. That’s exactly why the religious people of Israel didn’t understand God’s love

2. It still works that way today

- a. take a look around at the people you think are unlovely
- b. it’s probably true that you think of them as unlovable
- c. you need to learn something – God loves those people

III. GOD LOVE YOU!

A. It seems that we're just really good at messing up this love thing

1. There are two extreme views that prevail too often
 - a. I'm the only one God loves
 - b. God could never love me at all
2. I'm not sure which one is the most common, because it seems I see both more than I wish I would

B. Our earlier discussion in today's lesson dealt mostly with the "I'm the only one God loves" idea

1. That was the problem of scribes and Pharisees
2. Sadly, we still see a lot of this attitude

C. But there is also the "God could never love me at all" idea to deal with

1. I've heard people talk about their sins as if they were the only ones with sins
2. I've heard people express concern that their sins were too bad for God to possibly ever want to have anything to do with them
3. Sometimes, that's guilt talking
4. Sometimes, it's shame talking
5. But it is always wrong

CONCLUSION

A. You need to rethink your thinking

1. Do you think Jesus only died for the good people?
 - a. what good people
 - b. scripture tells us there is "none righteous" – not even one!
2. Do you think Jesus only died for those who are lovely?
 - a. what I'm trying to get you to see is that it's sin that makes us unlovely
 - b. we've all got sin to deal with, so none of us are all that lovely
3. Do you think Jesus only loves the lovely, lovable people?
 - a. I've some good news for you
 - b. God loved you enough to send Jesus to die for you, and Jesus loved you enough to have done it!

B. The really good news is that God loves you!

C. Invitation