

## Seeing the Love of God

"No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us," 1John 4:12. The word "perfected" is translated from the Greek word *teleioo*, and can be defined as "to bring to the end (goal) purposed" (Enhanced Strong's Lexicon; def.3). So? While we cannot "see" God, His love is brought to its intended goal when we, as Christians made so through obedience to Christ, love one another. This *manifestation* of God we can, and certainly *should*, see! But *brotherly love* is not the only way to "see" the *unseen* and indeed *invisible* (cf. Colossians 1:15) God...

### We also can "see" the love of God through:

- **His Creation.** We can discern the *existence* of God through His creation, cf. Romans 1:18-20. This *natural revelation* is abundantly visible through our own bodies, and the world/universe around us. But God could have created a utilitarian world in monochrome- one that would have sustained us *physically* without the beautiful wonders with which He infused it. However, note carefully the description of the Garden paradise He fashioned for man, "*And out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is **pleasing to the sight** and good for food,*" Genesis 2:9. Through the creation of a world that not only sustains us, but also is esthetically pleasing and awe-inspiring, we "see" the love of God!
- **His Salvation through Jesus Christ.** There is no more visible manifestation of the love of God than the salvation afforded mankind through Jesus. Such was the eternal disposition of God for mankind. The plan of saving mankind through Him was present before the world was formed, before man was created, and before the need for salvation from sin existed, cf. Ephesians 1:3-4. And then, "*when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons,*" Galatians 4:4-5. Thus Paul writes, "*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,*" Romans 5:8. The word translated as "demonstrates" can also mean to *show, prove, establish, or exhibit* (IBID, def.3a). Through the plan and its fruition to save mankind from our sins by the sacrifice of His own Son, God's love is both *proven* and *shown* to be beyond comparison!
- **His Provision of the Word.** What a dark and dreadful world it would be without the loving provision of God's word to guide and illumine us! I've often said that I feel sorry for those who don't believe the Bible to be God's infallible guide. What a tremendous burden it must be to have no finite rules for determining right and wrong, good and evil, and worthy and unworthy! These folks have to establish such things on their own with no help from any higher authority. What a pitifully burdened and woefully tiring existence it must be in such darkness for those who reject the loving provision of "*the living and abiding word of God,*" 1Peter 1:22-25!
- **His Provision of the Church.** God's love is manifested for us through the *brethren* He provided to (from Romans 12:9-16): *love us genuinely; help us abhor evil and cleave to good; be devoted to us in brotherly love; give us examples of fervency in spirit and service to the Lord; help us rejoice in hope and persevere in tribulation; be devoted in prayer for us; contribute to our needs; practice hospitality to/for us; and rejoice with us in good times and weep with us in times of tragedy.* What a wonderful provision of God's love to provide us with the very best people of the world to help, guide, and sustain us!
- **His Patience, Forbearance, and Longsuffering.** I've had the privilege of knowing and being associated with some of the most patient, forbearing, longsuffering, and forgiving people on the planet. But in these regards, none of them compare to God. Indeed, these supreme attributes of our loving God are the only reason that this evil world remains, cf. 2Peter 2:9. Likewise, "*the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience*" is a very visible manifestation of His loving kindness that "*leads you to repentance,*" Romans 2:4. Or at least it is supposed to do so! It boggles my mind to consider the patient forbearance God has shown me. What about you?

It is true that we cannot see God, but His loving provisions for us are hard not to see! As one of my preaching mentors, Dean Bullock, used to say, "You'd have to have help to miss that- you just can't miss it by yourself!" "*But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear,*"

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