

## 20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 13 (March 23-29, 2014)

The older I get, the more I marvel at the love of God for lost sinners. If I could start my ministry over again, I would emphasize His love more than any other topic. This week, we will look at some of the most popular love verses in His Word.

**Sunday** – March 23 (read John 3:16-18)

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16, KJV)*

Is there a more beautiful promise in the Word of God? Our Father's unconditional love for those He created is so great that He would have offered His Son if **only one** of us needed salvation. Instead, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God" (Romans 3:10b-11). Although we all deserve death (Romans 6:23), God has offered us life through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This verse alone will give you all the assurance you need in order to know your eternal destination. Can you afford to reject His wonderful offer of grace?

**Monday** – March 24 (read Exodus 34:4-8)

*The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. (Exodus 34:6b-7a)*

The printed verse for today is God's description of Himself. Aren't you glad He is "compassionate and gracious"? Aren't you glad He is "slow to anger" and "abounding in **love** and faithfulness"? Does it bring joy to you to know He **maintains** that love by "forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin"? Is this description anything like the angry God that you may have pictured when you were a child? To be just, God has to punish sin (see the rest of verse 7), but Jesus paid the eternal penalty by His death on Calvary. "For the wages of sin is (still) death, but the **gift of God** is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23, emphasis mine).

**Tuesday** – March 25 (read 1 John 3:1-3)

*How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! (1 John 3:1)*

I often quote this entire passage (1 John 3:1-3) while I am preaching because of the emphasis on our privileges as God's children. Jesus is the **Son of God** and we are called "**children of God**," so that makes us **brothers** of the Lord. Romans 8:17a says, "Now if we are children, then we are heirs—

heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ . . ." Why do most Christians live as spiritual paupers when all the resources of heaven are available to them? James 4:2b-3 says in answer to that question, "You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures." Examine your motives, but learn to ask God to supply all your needs (see Philippians 4:19).

**Wednesday** – March 26 (read 1 John 4:7-12)

*Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8)*

I will spend two days on the material in today's reading assignment. Since "God is love," all truly unselfish love has its origin with Him (v. 7). We humans are not capable of the type of love described in the entire chapter of 1 Corinthians 13 unless God lives in us through His Spirit (v. 12). We will study God's command to "love one another" in next week's devotions, but I want to meditate on this passage so that we will realize that we are not always relying on the Holy Spirit to help us love the unlovely and to make sure He gets the glory when we are able to love unconditionally. Without the Spirit guiding us, all of our efforts to love others will stem from a hidden selfish motive, wanting something in return.

**Thursday** – March 27 (read 1 John 4:7-12)

*This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. (1 John 4:9)*

Today's printed verse is similar to John 3:16 (see Sunday's devotion). God loved us too much to pronounce judgment on Adam and Eve's sin without providing a way for lost mankind to return to Him. As we approach the Easter season, I want you to be fully aware of the sacrifice Jesus made to free you from the **penalty** of your sins. He would have been **just** in condemning you immediately, but His **mercy** required that you have a way back home. **His love** has to precede **our love** (v. 10), but ours certainly ought to flow freely to others as a result of receiving His unspeakable gift of love (v. 11). Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal God's love in your heart and mind so that you can love others unselfishly (v. 12).

**Friday** – March 28 (read Romans 8:31-39)

*Who shall separate us from the love of God? (Romans 8:35a)*

What a great question this is! Before I understood **eternal security**, I thought my sins created a separation from **His love** until I confessed them. I did not understand that **all of them** (past, present, future) were paid for on Calvary. My sins can separate me from **fellowship** with God because of my own guilt and shame, but nothing can separate me "from the **love of God** that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (v. 38-39, emphasis mine). I want you to read the assigned text and meditate on His unconditional love. Recall what we learned in the previous two days: "Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:11). Prepare to make application of this principal in next week's studies.

**Saturday** – March 29 (read Romans 5:1-11)

*And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us. (Romans 5:5)*

I mentioned on Wednesday that God is the source of any unselfish love we have for others. Today's printed verse tells you why! The Holy Spirit comes into the lives of true born again believers, making it possible for them to love others. Verse 8 continues, "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Our Holy God cannot look upon sin (see Habakkuk 1:13); therefore, in order for us to enter His presence, the cleansing blood of Jesus had to be applied "while we were still sinners." After accepting His death for our life, we can now come boldly to the Father in the Name of His Son (see Hebrews 4:16). As a result, we are now able to love others as He loves us (see John 13:34). That will be the topic of next week's devotions.