



The Measure of God's Love
(Why Do I Still Guard My Heart?)
~ John 3:16

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Introduction

Since we are in the advent season (today's theme is love and because Xmas is about giving gift, today, we will talk about gift and giving, the gift of the Son, the love of God. Because Xmas is truly a love story and a love story involves 2 hearts

Start w/ Survey: how many of you have ever been disappointed with a gift you received?

When I was about 10 yo

Staff party: super cheap gift, or another dollar store gift

At your wedding: oh, another salad bowl

The kind of gift that is given is a message about the love & consideration someone has for

You: sometime is it valuable & considerate & sometimes not

**We read in Jn 3:16 → God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son,
how big or how much is "so loved"**

How do we measure the love of God for us? How can we measure it?

Today, we have all kinds of instruments to measure distance, quantity, time, money, etc.

In one way, you can't measure it because it is infinite: an infinite love from an infinite Being, giving something infinite

On another way, the measure of God's love is in the gifts. we can have a glimpse of it by Gazing & Looking at the gift & generosity of the giver and how much he gives: its greatness, its cost, its value & preciousness. In this way, you will start to see the full measure and dimension of the love of God. Xmas is the measure of God's love for us.

God so love that he gave: w/o a gift, this love would have only been sentimental

Well, God's gift to the world, you and me ≠ disappoint & was not cheap

God "gave", in giving, his love went to the full extent he was able to give

God gave us everything he had (ready to bankrupt heaven for the sake of the sons of man) so that we can partake in him/his life

He didn't spare anything, he didn't keep a margin to Hself,

He didn't get any change back when he purchased our salvation

His love was in full display through his gift

God went the full distance

You need to understand the depth of your sinfulness and sins to understand

To realize the full extent of his love

You also need to understand that we were his enemy and he had no obligations towards

Us: the world is at odd with God and God exposed Hself and his to rejection,
threat and even death for the sake of us

How big is God's love, how do you measure his love?

The measure of God's love is seen and found in the gift

By what is in the gift

God gave the greatest, most valuable, precious & costly thing he could give: His son. This gift is about the incarnation of the Son of God, born to set us free. Jesus because like us so we can become like him and be set free

How do you measure God's love?

- By value of this gift: there was nothing more precious & valuable God could offer.
he gave his only begotten son, his beloved son, and the one in whom he was well pleased
in the eyes of the Father, there was nothing more precious than his son
It's not like he had many sons and only gave one of them! No, he gave his only one
You need to be a parent to understand & appreciate the cost of the gift, the value of a Son or a child or have lost one
- By the cost of the gift
The cost was The life of the Son of God, at the end of the day, it was a willing self-Sacrifice. A self-sacrifice
God's gift of his son was going to ultimately cost him his life, it was going to be a Self-sacrifice to pay for our debt
The debt being paid: forgiven much, love much
The most precious thing ever
God gave Hself because there was nothing greater he could give
Jesus defines the greatest love as the one of laying down one's life for his friends.
And this is what he did: glad fully, willfully and willingly w/o reluctance
He 12: 2 "let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endure the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of God
his joy was in the redemption of many sons and daughters
- By the size of the gift: the greatest gift he could give
God could not give bigger or greater than himself. There was nothing greater than God Hself that could be offered to man kind
No one else could have done the job
- The only gift possible to the wold, the only one qualified
 - Jesus was the only one that could be given for the work to be done
 - The role and mission was To save us from our sins & to destroy the work of the devil
 - Jesus was born to set of free from our sins and the domination of the devil
 - ➔ there was no other choice possible



In the gift of Jesus, God's love was expressed in the most perfect way. Some may say, well it was easy because he was God

What Jesus did, he did as a human person, in human flesh not by using his divine power but by living as a man under the power of the HS
he was exposed to real threat & temptations

What did God give as a gift?

He gave his only begotten Son, his only and unique son

He gave everything he had

No one else could do the job?

What was his role & mission? To defeat Satan and save his people from their sins
Angel → Joseph: "you are to give him the name "Jesus" because he will save his people from their sins" Mt 1:21

the apostle John: the reason the Son of God appeared to destroy the work of the Devil 1Jn 3:8

and take back what duly belongs to him, the heavens and the earth he created
only a divine self-sacrifice could do:

Why this gift? "So that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"

The purpose is very simple and to the point → ≠ popular message today...but needs to be told

Because of God's love

Because there is a matter of first importance, it is a matter of eternity, a matter of where one will spend eternity

Because there is a lot at stake w/o Jesus

God ≠ want anyone to perish, he wants us to avoid judgement, condemnation & perdition: so that whoever believe...

When it comes to eternity and the afterlife,

There are only 2 ways: the way of life and the way of death and both are eternal

Spending eternity w/ God and people of God in a renewed earth w/o sin, pain, suffering & death as per Rev 21: 1-5

Spending eternity in judgment, pain and suffering w/o God and people of God in a place called hell

This is why Jesus died → so that we would avoid perishing... through faith in Jesus

Jesus defined ultimate love as providing the ultimate sacrifice, laying down your life for another

God wants us to have eternal life, but there is also more to this. The personal experience of God's love in our life and heart

Now the love of God is not just something out there.

It is something he wants us to experience in a tangible manner through his care, provision
It is also something that God wants us to personally experience in our heart Ro. 5:5 God
has poured out his love into our hearts by the HS

In Eph 3:16-19 Paul tells us about the need to pray for strength in order to grasp,
discover & experience the full dimension of God's love → it is a love that
surpasses knowledge

And again, his love in Christ according to Paul is something we will never be separated
from despite what the devil is saying and want you to believe Ro. 8: 38-39

The only thing that will separate you from the love of God in Christ: rejecting
Jesus as the only one who can save you from your sin.

This passage is the Gospel in a nutshell:

Everything you need to know is there: the love disposition of God for you, the way of
eternal life in Jesus and the means for salvation

After you have made this decision, then you embark on a journey of learning and
practicing the way of Jesus called discipleship or spiritual formation so you can grow

So what should be our response to such love, to God's love?

If you are a Christian here today, the only appropriate response is to surrender to God's love
this is the unconditional love of God: everyone is invited and welcomed: the way of life
& eternal life is simply through faith in Jesus

**God gave his heart: Such love demands a response, therefore what should be our response to this
love? How should we respond to such an intricate & pursuing love?**

Remember, a love story involves 2 hearts:

If you are Christian here today

The only appropriate response is to love back and to surrender. Trust him

**God made Himself vulnerable by exposing his Son? We need to also make Ourselves
vulnerable**

That we love back & surrender

The measure of our love is how much we give of Ourselves

To love God, Neighbour, love Ourselves

Surrendering to his love Ro 12: 1 in view of God's mercy, offer your body as a
living sacrifice

If you are not a Christian/believer here today

You need to consider what is at stake here

The only appropriate response is to love back, surrender and trust: wouldn't
you agree?

"...whoever believes in him..." → this is the gospel, this is the unconditional love
of God: Jesus paid the price for you and everyone is invited and



welcomed: the way of life & eternal life is simply through faith in Jesus
In order to receive the benefit of the Gospel, we need to partake in it. We
partake in it through faith in Jesus

To answer the theme question of the day: why do I still guard my heart, or feel so guarded?

Guarded towards what? God, others? We'll take it in relationship to God today

Seems to me that the answer is because I don't feel safe → fear: we are afraid,

Therefore we don't trust him (we don't trust people)

We think God has an ulterior motive:

He will ask or take beyond our capacity

He will disturb my life and my plans

Do you have better plans than God does?

In view of God's love, why do we think that?

A past bad experience with the people of God OR

This is the work & lies of the devil like in the garden...

He has proven his love & intention. He wants our greater good. We can trust
him, we should not hold back

we have to open up towards God like he did towards us.

Now why am I still guarded: because I don't trust, fear...?

Now it could be that like many people you hesitate for a reason or another, you remain
guarded. Let's look at some of the reasons why you might be guarded

- Maybe you tried Xtianity but it didn't work for you
My question would be "what were you expecting"
I invite you to revisit your expectation with a mature Xian and reconnect w/ God and
learn to experience him personally
- Maybe you had a bad experience with God's people or the church. You were badly hurt
That happens, I am sorry about that but welcome to the club
Don't confuse God and man, but look at Jesus
Forgive and move on w/ Jesus. Don't let this determine your future and be deprived of
God's grace
- Maybe you think that's nice but you don't feel lovable, you feel unworthy and think God
cannot love you
Do you think that after demonstrating like he did, he does not have any love left for
you? Or that he will not go the full distance and love you no matter what?
What you think about Yself might not be what God thinks about you.
- Maybe you've done something terribly wrong in the past and do not forgive yourself and
think that God cannot or will not either
God forgave Paul, the persecutor of the church, surely he can love you and forgive you



There might be other reasons and we cannot cover them all. But all of this to say that

If you made this choice to believe in Christ today

Know that you will be challenged in your faith

So we would like to know it is the case so we can help you and support you in your walk w/ Jesus because it will be very hard for you to do it on your own

see me or pastor Justin after the service or email us

That we believe in him

In order to receive the benefit of the Gospel, we need to partake in it. We partake in it through faith in Jesus

That is the purpose of discipleship

We all need to learn a lot about love. This is what discipleship is all about

To learn how to love & trust him more

We have come to believe that we can be Xian w/o being/becoming a disciple

The great commission is about making disciples and teach them to obey

We have come to believe we can be a Xian and be a snob

The motivation behind God's love & gift

So that whoever believe in him shall not perish but have eternal life

Conclusion

1 John 3:16

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

The incarnation as the greatest act of

Love, humility, vulnerability and generosity. How will you respond to his gift?