

The Wonder of His Love (2)

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn this evening briefly to 1st John chapter 4 and the verse we looked at this morning, looking at the second half of it particularly. That's 1st John, the first letter of John, chapter 4 and verse 9.

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

We mentioned this morning that we would look at two points particularly from this verse. The first of these we dealt with this morning under the general overall title of the wonder of his love.

The wonder of the love of God, which we read here was made manifest or came to be visible to us by the sending of his Son Jesus Christ into the world.

And we looked at this morning that it is a wonder he loved us at all, considering what the Bible says of what we are as sinners, that our enmity against God is obvious, that we have within us that filthiness of sin, that corruption that sin is and has caused in us, would tend to make us think that God would certainly not love that.

[1 : 2 5] Or that we are at enmity with him to the extent that you would not think he would love us because of that. And yet that's what God loved.

That's the kind of people we are in ourselves. What I want to look at tonight is the wonder that he loved us so much. The wonder that he loved us at all, but it's also such a wonder that he loved us so much.

Because that's really one of the great points the text is making, that the love of God was made manifest in this, that he sent his own Son, his only Son, his only begotten Son, into the world, so that we might live through him.

The wonder of his love is a wonder that he loved us so much, loved us to that extent that he would go so far as to send his own Son into this world for our benefit.

There are six points that I want to mention in relation to that overall theme of a wonder that he loved us so much.

[2 : 3 7] First of all, it's a wonder that he loved us so much that he sent his only Son, as it's put here. His only begotten Son, as the A.B. puts it, different ways of translating the words that are used there, the original Greek text of the Bible of the New Testament.

But the question is, who did he send? How did God manifest? How did God reveal to us? How was the love of God made visible? Was it through someone who was particularly holy of human beings that he chose in this world and set him, somebody let us say like Moses, somebody like Isaiah, somebody like Job, somebody described in the Bible as an eminently holy person?

Was that the means that God chose to make his love visible? No. Well, was it an angel then? Was it the highest angel that heaven has? Was it an archangel? Was it Gabriel?

Was it any of the archangels that we know exist as the angels of God? No. He sent his own Son.

In other words, he came himself. This very God that we saw this morning is so surprising in his love considering our sinfulness.

[4 : 0 0] Goes so far in his love that it is his own very Son that he sent. Now when we say his own Son, that takes us, you see, right into it. You very well know it takes us right into the very being of God.

Because the Bible tells us that there is only one God and then that there are three persons to that God. There is the Father and there is Jesus the Son and there is the Holy Spirit.

Each of these persons is fully God and yet there are not three gods. That's a mystery.

And some people dismiss it because it's a mystery. Particularly those who are enemies of the Gospel. They dismiss it as being just ridiculous. How can you possibly accept something that you

have so little understanding about?

Well, if I had an understanding of the Trinity, I would be God. And only God understands the great mystery of his own being. But we have to say this, without God's triune being, without God being one God in three persons, you would not have the salvation that he has provided for us through his Son.

[5 : 20] Why is that? Because the Bible tells us that these three persons that comprise that one God, that each of them was active in their own way in our salvation.

And this text tells you part of how that is. Part of what belongs to that, the action of these three persons. Because you read there that God, that's God the Father particularly, that's meant. Because that's following right through from chapter 3. But it says, God manifested, the love of God was manifest, that God sent his only Son.

You can see that there's a distinction between the one who was sent and the one who did the sending. And when you read what we read in John's Gospel, it becomes evident then that it was the Father, God the Father, who sent God the Son into the world.

That it was the love of God the Father particularly, that was shown in the sending of the Son into the world. And when it says here, his only Son, or his only begotten Son, while there's a mystery in all of that and the relations between these persons in the being of God before anything was created, we can at least go as far as to say this, there is no other person like him.

[6 : 52] There is no other person as close to God the Father as he is. As much a delight to God the Father as he always has been God the Son.

He has been delight to the Father ever since. Well, we can't really say ever since because it's always been the case.

The eternal God. And you see, when you take that with you, and then you realize something of what the text is saying, that God manifested his love, when he sent his Son into the world, he was sending the very most precious thing that God the Father had.

And he sent him into this world. That's who came. That's who was sent. He wasn't sent forcibly. He wasn't sent against his will.

He himself willingly came. And these words of Psalm 40 that we sang, as they're used in the New Testament, in the likes of Hebrews, in the epistle to the Hebrews, they're actually used there in relation to the Lord's coming into the world.

[8 : 06] To the thing that's remembered, not just at Christmas time, but other times, although it's heightened at this time of year, that Jesus was born, that he was born in Bethlehem, in all the circumstances you find described in Matthew and in Luke's Gospel.

But who was born? That's the big question, isn't it? Who was born? It was the Son of God. He took our nature to himself, united humanity to himself, and through his virgin, the virgin birth, as we call it, from Mary's birth, he came into this world a perfect human being.

That's who came. That's where you see the love of God in an amazing way. Well, where did he come into?

He sent him into this world. Herein is God's love made manifest that God sent his only Son. That's no less than him that came.

But what did he come into? He came into the world. What is the world? What is the world in John's writings? If you go to the Gospel of John in particular, and this first letter of John, you'll find that the world describes human life as it is arranged against God.

[9 : 32] It describes the enmity of the world against God. It describes the world as antagonistic to God, as something which hated Jesus, and hated all that he stood for, and all that he claimed to be, and all that he represented.

Wherever you find the spirit of opposition to God, where you find a spirit antagonistic to God, and to God's things, to God's word, to God's day, to God's people, to God's church, that's the world.

That's the spirit of the world. That's the kind of thing the world is. That's his heart. That's his nature. That's his DNA.

It is antagonistic to God. Now you see, that's what Jesus was sent into. That's where the love of God is again seen as it shines most brightly.

God did not send his son into a nice environment Where he wouldn't have to come into contact with sinners Where he wouldn't have opposition against him Where he wouldn't hear blasphemy every day in his ears Where he wouldn't actually see the haunts and dens of iniquity That existed in the

world of his day as they do in ours God didn't send his son into a nice environment Where he would be sheltered from all of that Where he would see all of that Where he would live as a human being cocooned Inside some kind of isolation unit Away from the horrors of sin and of this world He sent him into the world He came right into the heart of it He entered right into the mess of it The muck of it We saw this morning the filthiness That attaches itself to sin and to sinfulness

[11 : 38] Well that's what God sent his son into Even in the very circumstances of his birth You'll find that antagonism Represented by the fact there was no room for him in the inn The place was crowded out and the son of God Could not be received as a guest He had to go to an outhouse to be born He was brought into the world in no circumstances Identifying With the poor With sinners With outcasts With you and I You know people wonder If there's such a thing as God There's such a person as God Such a being as God Millions of people in this world And in our own society tonight Dismiss the idea of God And dismiss the idea As they look out over the world In his suffering That if there is a God He certainly can't be a very loving one Well that's from ignorance Of what the love of God really is about Because as I read my Bible And as you read your Bible And as you come to such a text as this And as you think of the wonder That God loved us at all And the wonder that he loved us so much How can you doubt the love of God When he sent no less than his own son Into nothing less than the muck of his world That's love And it's love worth knowing And it's love worth giving thanks for And it's love worth loving Because there's no other love like it And not only so But he sent him into this world Through becoming human Here is again part of The wonder of this love of God And the wonder of how that love Came to be made manifest Because that's really one of the essential things In the text In this the love of God Was made manifest The love of God is seen Where is the love of God seen?

Not as you look out over the world And try and determine From what you see in the world Is there such a thing Such a being as God? And if there is Is that a God of love?

No, you go to Where Christ was born And you go to The fact that he God Became human We just can't take in The enormity of this step From God to human And from God to a human In suffering And from God to a human Bearing sin And from God To being God in our nature Paying the price of our sin You cannot measure The distance From God as God To God on the cross But that's the reality of it And that's In the Bible The revelation of the love of God That's in The history of this world On Calvary's cross The real event Of the crucifixion of Christ As well as the birth of Christ

[15 : 18] He was born To die He was born to die That death That's where The love of God Is made manifest That he came into this world Through becoming human He didn't cease to be God But the humanity That he took to himself Was not Something like Being human It was not something Less than human It was and is Fully human Oh you say But he had no sin No he didn't have sin Humanity wasn't Created with sin Adam wasn't a sinner When God created him Neither was Eve They became sinners Through their own rebelliousness But human nature As complete Human nature Is complete without sin In the person of Christ Everything about him As a human being Is all there intact

Everything that makes A human Human Is there in him That's what he took To himself That's what he joined To his divine person That's what he united With himself As the son of God And there's that The wonderful words Of that carol Which goes back To Bethlehem To the babe Of Bethlehem To the infant Jesus Being nursed there And tended to By his mother Mary Who is he In yonder stall At whose sheep At whose feet The shepherds Fall Tis the Lord Oh wondrous story Tis the Lord The king Of glory You're looking At the infant Jesus As described To you there In the gospels Lying in a manger Wrapped in Swaddling clothes And he's the king Of glory God sent his son Into this world Through becoming Human Without ceasing To be God How great Is our God How great Is his love How unquestioned Is his commitment To the saving Of sinners Like you and I How undoubted Is his love As you see it Made manifest In this great fact That he sent No less than his son That he sent No less than his son Into nothing less Than this world In its antagonism To him And that he sent it Through no less A means Than to become One of us There are many people In this world That you'd love To help People that you see

In their plight Of poverty Of deprivation People that live Lives that we just Know little of Or nothing of Who are so few If any at all Of the things That we take For granted Who will not Have stockings Filled with things At Christmas time Who don't even Have clean water And die of disease And malnutrition He'd love to help These people But would you Go and be one of them Would you go and Take their entire Condition to yourself And say That's where I want To live in order To help

these people And I want to Become one of them Fully And I want to Know what it's like To live like that And to take their Plight and apply it To myself Well Jesus Went further than that The son of God Did not just become Human He became human So that he would Bear our sin And as we saw This morning Bear the penalty Of our sin We'll see in a minute With propitiation God loved the world To that extent So much That's the wonder of it As to send his son Into the world And send him By becoming human And send him Forcibly To be the propitiation For our sins Now that's one of the Big words of the Bible Propitiation It's a word That we've come across Many times It's a word That's precious It's a word That's important To retain In every translation Of the Bible As far as possible Because it's a word That has a lot Of important theology Attached to it And that means Our knowledge of God Our understanding Of God Propitiation Is a word That has to do With dealing With the anger Or the wrath Of God Don't believe These ideas That you come across That God is not An angry God That God does not Look on sin With wrath Or with anger

[20 : 25] That that's old fashioned That that's what Medieval people Used to think That that's where All these caricatures And paintings Of people And their sufferings And representations Of hell All of that sort of stuff Develop from these Wrong ideas Of God This is not a wrong Idea of God What was it That made The sufferings Of Jesus So intense It wasn't just A physical thing It wasn't just That he was abused Physically Though he was Scourged With a Roman scourge His back Lacerated And bleeding There's all of that But that doesn't Explain the sufferings That he himself Cried out of his soul My God My God Why Have you forsaken me What caused that Agony Because that's an Agony of his soul An agony deep Within himself No physical suffering

Can explain that The only explanation Is the one the Bible Gives it He sent him into the world To be the propitiation For our sin To be himself To be himself The one who took The anger And the wrath Of God Against us For our sins Unto himself There's a swap Going on In our salvation There's an exchange An exchange Of our sin To him And his righteousness To us An exchange Of what We Deserved For our sin Unto him And an exchange For Of what He now Deserves As a reward Unto us For his sake He became The propitiation For our sins

Every iota Every gram Weight Of the wrath Of God That was due To his people For their sins Fell upon Christ Was taken By Jesus To himself That's why He came That's why He was sent Into the world That's the purpose For the babe In the manger Being where He is In this world That's what It led to That's what The intention Was all along And you know There is One of the most Wonderful things That you can Actually have Ever Taking place Anywhere Some people Say that If you think Of God Being angry You can't Think of him At the same time As being love Or some people Think that When we say That propitiation Is God God's anger

Being pacified Because of Jesus And what he Did Some people Think that What that means Is that God Began as a God of anger And what we're Teaching is that He became a God of love Through what Jesus did It's not like That It was God In his love Who sent His son To be the Propitiation To meet His own Anger To deal With his Own anger To overcome His own Anger To satisfy His own Anger Against sin It's love That did That The same God Against Whom we Are At Enmity The same God Who is Angry With our Sins Against us For our Sins That same God In love Sent his Son To deal

With his Own anger And there Is just Nothing else Anywhere Like that But then That's God And there Is no one Like God Anyway Anywhere He sent His only Son He sent Him into The world He sent Him through Becoming Human He sent Him to Be the Propitiation For our Sins And Paul In Romans Chapter 8 Has a Really Dynamic Phrase To describe That And it's In a Context of Assuring us Of the Quality Of God's Love Of the Certainty Of the Salvation That Jesus Has procured For his People That nothing whatsoever Is going to Be able to Take that Away from Us To interfere With it To change It To alter Its terms Nothing Of that Is going To happen Not Our sins Are forgiven They're Completely

[25 : 27] Forgiven They're Forever Forgiven And no One shall Separate us From the Love of God That is in Christ Jesus Our son But What especially Gives us The confidence Apart from the Fact that it's Written in God's word But what else Is there in That passage That gives us The confidence That that is Really how Things are Well it's This He who Did not Spare His own Son You know You might have Thought of all Persons that Ever existed That Jesus Christ would be Spared Son Suffering That God The Father Would not go So far In his Case As to lay That total Amount of Suffering upon Him That was Entailed As a ransom For our Sins Well if that Had been the Case We could not Have been Saved And that's

What it says He who Did not Spare His own Son But delivered Him up For us All How shall He not Freely Or by his Grace Give us All things Do you doubt The love Of God Do you doubt That God Loves the Likes of You Do you Doubt That there Is such A loving God As you Look out Over the World As you Listen to The atheistic Voices That clamor For God To be Removed From Teaching Of our Schools From the Teaching of Our Universities From all Sorts Of Aspects Of Human Life And Public Life Especially Not if You believe Your Bible He sent Him To be The Propitiation For our Sins And when You actually Have said That That he Dealt With his Own Wrath That he Dealt With our Sins And in Doing so That he Did not Spare His Own Son

Then you Cannot Doubt The love Of God It is The most Solid Thing You Have Got He Sent Him Fourthly Fifthly To be The Saviour Of the World Now you Know that The name Jesus Means The Saviour You shall Call his Name Jesus For he Shall Save his People From their Sins And that's What he's Saying Here In terms Of why He was Sent Into The World The Love Of God Was Made Manifest That God Sent his Only Son Into The World So That we Might Live Through Him If you Go to Verse 10 You'll Find Verse 14 Rather You'll Find It says There That he Is Sent To The Son To be The Saviour Of The World That's The Meaning Of The Word Jesus That's Why It's Such A Horrible Thing To Misuse That Precious

Name To Hear It As A Swear Word To Hear It On People's Lips Used Just In Such A Sinful Thoughtless God Dishonouring Way There Is No Name More Precious Than The Name Of Jesus He Is The Saviour Treasure That Name Don't Ever Misuse That Name Defend That Name Prize That Name Live Out That Name In Your Own Life Because It Deserves All Of That As The Name Of Jesus He Sent Him To Be The Saviour Of The World And That Means That Jesus Saves Completely That Is Why It Is So Offensive To Jesus To Say That There Are Actually Other Ways To God And To God's Acceptance That There Are Other Saviors Like In Other Religions And That If You Follow These Other Religions Sincerely If You Do It With All Your Heart Devoted To Whatever Religion It Is Or Whatever Figure Is In Those Religions Whether It Be In Mormonism Or Islam Or Buddhism Or Whatever It Is If You Follow It Absolutely Sincerely You'll Find Out At The End Of The Journey That It Will Take You Just As Securely To God And To Acceptance With God Not If You Believe Your Bible Not If You Believe That Jesus Alone Saves And Saves Completely You Don't Need Any Other Saviors Along With Jesus Because He's The Only One Who Is The Saviour And Saves Completely Now We Don't Actually Agree

[30 : 30] With The Idea That People Should Not Be Free To Choose Their Own Religion We We Have To We Have To To That Extent But That Does Not Mean That We Have To Accept That Every Other Form Of Religion Is Equal To The Religion Of Jesus All All You Have To Do Is Look At Some Of The Text In The Bible I'm Just Going To Mention One Of Them In Acts Chapter 4 And At Verse 12 The Book of Acts Is As you Know Where Luke Was Giving Us Following On From His Gospel An Account Of The Way The Church And The Gospel Spread Into The Gentile World And The Preaching Of The Apostles The Two Things They Preached Was The Death Of Christ And The Resurrection Of Christ And As they Came To Preach This Is One Of The Places Where You Find This Emphasis In Acts 4 And Verse 12 Where Peter Is Saying Along With John Peter Is

Saying This Is The Stone That Was Rejected By You Builders Which Has Become The Cornerstone And There Is Salvation In No One Else For There Is No Other Name Under Heaven Given Among Men By Which We Must Be Saved No Other Name Do You And I Think That God Would Have Sent His Only Son And Sent Him Into This World Hostile And Antagonistic To Himself That He Would Have Sent Him By Becoming Human That He Would Have Sent Him To Be The Propitiation For Our Sins To Meet His Wrath To Endure His Wrath That God Would Have Done All That If There Were Other Ways To Be Saved He Is The Complete Savior And It's Utterly Dishonoring To Him To

Suggest For A Moment That He Has Any Rival Any Equal Anyone Just As Good Or Even Nearly As Good As Far As Being A Savior Is Concerned Doesn't Doesn't Matter What Scholarship Says Doesn't Matter What Clever People Say Doesn't Matter What Philosophers Might Say You Stick With What God God Says And What God Says Is This Is My Beloved Son Hear Him So It's a Wonder That He Loved Us So Much That He Sent His Only Son That He Sent Him Into The World That He Sent Him To Be To Be The Propitiation For Our Sins That He Sent Him To Be The Savior Of The World And That He Sent Him Finally So That We He Might Live Through Him When He Was Setting Out Himself Jesus In That Great Chapter In John Chapter 10 As The Good Shepherd This Is One Of The Things That He Said Those Who Had Come And Been Thought Of As Saviors Were

Just impostors He said they came but didn't protect the flock or for the good of the flock I am the good shepherd I have come that they might have life and have it in all its abundance He had come to restore the life we had forfeited by our sin against God He had come to restore us to the life that we were designed for that eternal life with God in heaven that is why Jesus was born that is why He suffered that is why He died that is why He rose again that is why now at God's right hand and you find that described in many places but one of the places that you find it in it's wonderful description as in Revelation Chapter 7 the last book of the Bible where you find the final wonderful state of God's thirst anymore the sun shall not strike them nor any scorching heat for the lamb in the midst of the throne will be the shepherd He will guide them to springs of living water and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes whatever you say about that it actually describes a fullness of life that you cannot put into words it's impossible it's heaven it doesn't belong to this world you can't use the things of this world to fully describe it adequately but you see what is there is

[35 : 33] This Jesus leading his people throughout the whole of eternity to more and more satisfaction in himself fullness of life life in its abundance life without end life without interruption life without pains without sorrows without disappointments without discouragements without broken hearts without any of these things instead it's everything that's opposite to that and it's the love of God that has provided that for us now we finished this morning with another wonder the wonder a wonder that He loved us at all and we said well I wonder from that

Why I don't love Him more and tonight we looked at a wonder that He loved us so much in these six points and I wonder as we close I wonder why He's not yet your savior if you're here not saved how can that be why should that be when such a love has done so much to provide salvation for us I wonder why anyone is unsaved when you know all this has been done for the likes of you and I let's pray Lord

Our gracious God help help us to magnify your love in the way that we commit ourselves to being your people help us to manifest your love in our way of life help us we pray to praise you constantly for the great fact of your love toward us enable us we pray to take all the encouragement we need from that great fact of your love from its exercise in the way you have made it manifest in our Lord Jesus Christ we thank you that love will ever go on being active on behalf of your people but it will never end in its provision for them we pray that each of us here Lord will know in eternity and in time before we reach it that that love indeed has embraced us too hear us now we pray and bless to us what we are going to receive by way of food we