

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John 4:9&10**

Chapter 18- The Manifest Love of God

185- The Manifest Love of God- Part 9

WAOY Tuesday 05/06/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about "The Manifest Love of God". So let's open our Bibles and read **1John 4:9&10** again together:

9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Now on the last broadcast- we were going over just what the term, "propitiation" actually means. Many people today say that *propitiation* simply means *substitute* and then they go on to other things- but that definition is way too simplistic and so I believe that we need to spend just a little more time to learn about this term and how it relates to the Manifest Love of God.

Here In verse 10- John uses a word that is only used three times in the entire New Testament. John uses it twice in this Epistle and the Apostle Paul used it in **Romans 3:25**, when he said:

whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

The word that was translated into English as "propitiation" comes from the Greek word, *hilasmos* which means: *appeasement or satisfaction*. The way that propitiation is best understood is that Christ's death on the Cross satisfied the demands of God's Justice against our sins- thus appeasing God's holy wrath.

Now because we view Salvation basically on our *own* terms rather than on God's terms- the importance of God's Justice being satisfied or the concept of God's wrath being carried out may sound strange to some of you. You see, dear friends, it is just as important to God that His Justice be demonstrated as it is that His Grace and Mercy be demonstrated. Grace and Mercy are two parts of God's very Own Nature and Character- but so is God's anger against sin and God's Justice part of His Character and Nature and Justice and Wrath against sin are equally as important to God as is Grace and Mercy.

And this goes to the Truth about God and His view of sin. You see, if God simply forgave sin and allowed sinners access into Heaven without sin first being completely paid for- then God could not be just and if God allowed that- sin would have been rewarded with Heaven. And if God did that and if God cast aside His Justice and Wrath against sin- then God would be sinning against His Own Holy and Righteous Character and Nature and God would in effect- cease to be God.

So God does not simply *forgive* sin and God does not simply *allow* sinners access to Heaven because He is so nice. No God Almighty must be satisfied- His vengeance against all evil and wickedness must be complete or else God's Holiness would take backseat to God's Mercy and that could never be. You see, God operates in such a way, dear friends, that part of His Character and Nature is ever superseded by the other. In other words- God's Goodness and Mercy towards us is only brought about because God's Justice and vengeance against sin was completely satisfied- not because sin no longer matters to God or because God is lenient.

Our sins are not forgiven because God had a change of heart or because God looked the other way. No, our sins are forgiven because they were all paid for by the death, burial and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. You see, God poured out all His wrath and all His Fury against all of our sins- but because those sins were imputed to Jesus Christ- God judged all of our sins as they were on Jesus. In this way- God's Justice against our sins was satisfied and yet we are free to go to Heaven.

And this is why it is so wrong for us to presume on God's Grace and God's Mercy. This is why premeditated sin is so evil and why it is so wrong to assume that you can do anything that you want to and God will forgive you anyway. We need to be reminded that we are not

forgiven, beloved simply because we asked to be forgiven. We are forgiven because all of the Wrath that, by rights, *should* have been poured out upon us was poured out upon Jesus and there is no more Wrath from God to be poured out on us- that is the only reason why we who are sinners can ever be forgiven by a just and holy God.

Please never think that you are so valuable; or that it is because God *needs* you so much or even because God loves you so much that your sins are not instantly and severely judged by God. God would be perfectly just to end it all right now and send every single human being on earth to an eternal lake of fire because we are all – every one of us- are guilty of committing sins against a holy God. But God doesn't send everyone on earth to Hell and the reason that He doesn't has nothing to do with anything good or anything righteous that any of us brings to the table.

No, precious Mercy and infinite Grace can flow toward us without measure only because Wrath and Judgment flowed out to Jesus without measure and we must never forget about that. We sinned and deserved to die and Jesus was sinless and didn't deserve to die. But instead of punishing us- God punished our sins on Jesus and that allows us to enter into God's Presence.

When you hear someone say, *"Oh it's okay, I can sin now and ask God to forgive me later"* or *"it doesn't matter what I do- God loves me so much He will forgive me."* We must know that that person has absolutely no respect at all and no appreciation at all for what Jesus did and that person is absolutely tempting God. We tend to forget that it would have been just as easy for God to raise up a rock as it was for God to save our wretched souls.

So a very healthy fear of God and a broken and humble heart and an intelligent appreciation for Jesus taking our punishment in our stead- these are the results of correctly understanding the unarguable fact of our sinfulness and correctly understanding the purpose of the death, burial, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So there is a whole lot more to the term, "propitiation" than simply that Jesus is our substitute. It also means that all of God's just Wrath against our sins has been forever satisfied and that is the only reason any of us can go to Heaven.

Now there are several related words that will help us to understand this term a little bit better. For example- in **Luke 18:13-**

Jesus is describing just what kind of person is truly saved by describing a sinful man being so broken over his sins that he would not even lift his eyes toward Heaven. Jesus said this convicted man smote his breast in agony over his guilt and cried out, “**Have mercy on me, the sinner**”. In this verse- the Greek verb, *hilaskomai*, which is a derivative of the word, *hilasmos* that means *propitiation* was used. This verb, *hilaskomai* means: *to make satisfaction for*.

So the man was not simply receiving Salvation because he asked for it- but this man could be saved because God’s wrath against his sins had been satisfied by Jesus- that is what Jesus was talking about here.

Now please don’t misunderstand me. We *are* forgiven because we repent and ask God to forgive us- I am not putting down on asking God for forgiveness- and I am certainly not minimizing repentance here no, not at all. I am simply saying that unless Jesus paid for our sins- unless God’s Justice against our sins had been satisfied- it would not have mattered if we asked or not- we would still be lost and unforgiven.

God doesn’t grant forgiveness and Mercy toward sinful man simply because they asked Him to. No, we have to remember brothers and sisters that God is just and God’s Grace and Mercy is not leniency. God did not get soft hearted towards us when we repented and just forgave us based upon our emotional plea. No our sins- all of our sins had to be paid for- they had to be judged; they had to receive the full measure of God’s Wrath upon them. And Jesus did that for us- praise His Name forever!

This issue of Grace and Mercy was the great divide between the Jews of the first century and those people who were saved. The Jews saw Grace as a cop- out; they saw Mercy as weakness; and they demanded that the full brunt of judgment that the Law demanded be poured out against sin. All sin except their own sin of course. The Jew heard what Jesus taught about the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son and they were not impressed at all. In these two parables that thrill our hearts today- Jesus was illustrating the magnificence of Grace and Mercy- but to the legalistic Jew- all they heard was weakness and a coddling of sin.

And, unbelievably, there are some even today who agree with the self-righteous Jew and look at God’s Grace and Mercy the same way as the deceived Pharisees did- and they teach and preach that

Righteousness is brought about by obedience to the Law- which is a lie from hell.

The Jew of Jesus' day rejected Grace- not because they didn't need it themselves- because they did need it because they too were sinners. No, they rejected Grace because they saw Grace as an excuse to go on sinning and as an insult to God's Justice. The Jew correctly understood that sin had to be paid for and that a holy God would never pardon the guilty because that would make God to be an accomplice of sin.

But what the Jew was ignorant about was that everybody was saved by Grace because nobody deserved Salvation; nobody earned Salvation; and nobody was worthy of Salvation. Every single Old Testament soul who was saved was saved the very same way that we are saved- by Grace through Faith alone- not because they kept the Law. So Grace is not an excuse to go on sinning with impunity. No, Grace is favor from God when you do sin.

You see, dear friends, the mistake that people make is to assume that *some* people keep the Law while *others* don't. The mistake is to assume that *some* people have worked hard and have earned their own righteousness before God while others are just too lazy or too sinful to do so themselves. But the reality is that no one keeps the Law- every man sins; Moses sinned; Abraham sinned; David sinned horribly; Isaiah sinned; Daniel and the other prophets all sinned; every day. Peter, James and John all sinned. Paul sinned every day of his life. The Bible is clear that *all* men sin and come short of the glory of God and the Bible is also clear that if any man teaches that he doesn't sin- he is deceived and he makes God out to be a liar.

Now that doesn't excuse sin and that doesn't make sinning to be okay. The point is that to think or to teach that if you just try harder; if you just put forth more effort then you could quit sinning is silly on the surface and is an insult to all that Jesus did.

If all it takes to be sinless is human effort or will power- then why did Jesus die? Why did God impute all of our sins on Jesus? Why did Jesus receive the full brunt of God's wrath against sin? Why did Jesus lay in the grave for three days and why did He rise from the dead?

If all that Jesus was- was an example for us to follow- then all that Jesus would have needed to do was teach. But that's not all that Jesus did is it? No Jesus *did* teach- but He also died didn't He? And it

is that death and it is that Resurrection from the dead that paid for all of our sins- not just what Jesus taught.

You see, if all we have to do to be saved is to improve *ourselves* based upon human power or technique or ingenuity then that makes Grace to be worthless. Grace is that God does for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

You see, God would be wrong to allow any sinner to go to Heaven if his sins had not first been paid for. The problem with paying for our sins is the only way we can pay for our sins is to die and go to hell. In other words- without Jesus- if God judges our sins- He would have to judge us. So here comes our propitiation. In a Sovereign act of God- God imputed all of our sins on the sinless Lamb of God- even though Jesus didn't do anything to deserve that. And now that all of our sins- even the sins that we haven't even committed yet and even all of the sins of those who had already died before Jesus was ever born have been imputed to Jesus- God now poured out all of His Fury and all of His Wrath upon those sins that were now on Jesus as He hung on the Cross.

This act did two things. First it allowed for God's holy Justice against sin to be satisfied; and secondly- it allowed for God to pour out His Mercy and Grace toward those who were actually guilty of committing those sins.

This is the greatest act of Love that the world has ever known. This is the greatest act of kindness and mercy and Grace that exists in all of Creation. Nothing comes even remotely close to God's Love than this one single act. And to neglect to understand and appreciate and to not stand in awe of this act of God's Love and then to turn around and compare God's Love to earthly and temporary things like money or a new job says one of two things: Either you really don't believe that God is angry with sin as the Bible says that He is or else you really don't believe that your own personal sins were really that bad. And either one of those things are terrible.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.