

Unreasonable Love

The word “love” is a commonly used word in our language. We love pizza and chocolate, shopping and hunting, our spouse or significant other, and our children. However, love at its best is the height of human affection and loyalty. In New Testament Scripture, the word used to describe the divine love of God is agape—a selfless love, which gives and sacrifices expecting nothing in return, an unconditional love that has the best interest of the recipient at heart. One might say it’s an “unreasonable love.”

In one of the most intimate writings in Scripture, John uses tender terminology such as “dear children” and “dear friends” as if he is writing a family letter from the heavenly Father to His “little children.” He essentially looks at the evidence and gives clear proof of the incarnation of the Son of God—Jesus Christ.

Based upon this extravagant demonstration of divine love, John challenges us to love one another with these words:

“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. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:9–11).

When you pause to think about it, the Incarnation narrative (Matt. 1:18–25) is one of the most unreasonable love stories in all of Scripture. Webster defines “unreasonable” as “not governed by or acting according to reason ... absurd.” How absurd that God would send His Son to be our Savior—one who shares the nature of the Father—God manifested in human flesh! “For in Christ all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form” (Col. 2:9).

Consider how unreasonable it was for God to ask a young, virgin handmaiden, engaged to be married to a righteous man, to conceive an unplanned pregnancy then endure the shame and risk that would involve. How ridiculous that Joseph would be requested to follow through with his wedding plans with Mary and accept the responsibility for her “illegitimate” child! Unreasonable! Yet what would our world be like if they had chosen otherwise?

We tend to divorce ourselves from certain accounts in God’s Word. This occurred more than 2,000 years ago to some people in Israel. It is an interesting story, but nothing like that would ever happen today. No, we will never have another virgin birth. Jesus Christ is the one and only Savior of the world. Yet, all of us have experienced disappointment, loss, or overwhelming needs. Sometimes entire communities and population segments have been ignored and marginalized.

Who are we in their story? What could be asked of us as recipients of God’s unreasonable love? Could He be challenging us to respond with unreasonable love for those the world might deem unlovable?

Why not consider the following as this year ends and we face new opportunities in 2015:

- Place yourself in Joseph’s and Mary’s story and ask, “What have I recently done for God that seemed totally unreasonable to my world?”
- Ask God to birth afresh in you His love that compels you to see neglected and hurting people through the lens of the gospel, so that you and your church can begin to address their needs through word and deed (Matt. 25:31–40).
- Pray, asking the Holy Spirit to strengthen your faith walk with Christ, so that you may be used to impact those in your sphere of influence to come together in unified strategies and unreasonable love, accompanied by

practical actions that will transform your entire neighborhood, community, and city.

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