

“SOULed OUT”
Session 9: The goodness of God
Rev. Rick Dietzman
November 14, 2010

INTRODUCTION

A distorted perception of God from life's disappointments or other circumstances will hinder our souls.

Some see Him as...

- A stern Father
- Temperamental and hard to please
- Cold and exacting

Others see...

- God is love
- A caring Father
- A heavenly Santa Clause

How did God reveal himself?

Exodus 34:4-8

Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the LORD had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD.

*And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "**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. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.**"*

Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped.

Hebrews 13:8

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

What He is today we shall find Him tomorrow and the next day and the next year

I. Compassionate and Gracious: The meaning is to love deeply and tenderly, characteristic of the love parents have for their children at the gut level. It literally means "bowels of mercy"

Psalm 103:13-14

As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

Matthew 15:32

Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way."

Gracious means to "show compassion by granting a favor" – freely given.

The grace of God is the basis for our repentance. It begins and ends with Him.

Q: How does giving that originates from compassion differ from other kinds of giving. Why is it important to know this about God?

II. Slow to Anger: God is not our adversary, Satan is. God is our defender

John 8:10-11

Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Ezekiel 16:59-63 describes both God's compassion and his wrath and anger

"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will deal with you as you deserve, because you have despised my oath by breaking the covenant. Yet I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed ... So I will establish my covenant with you, and you will know that I am the LORD. Then, when I make atonement for you for all you have done, you will remember and be ashamed and never again open your mouth because of your humiliation, declares the Sovereign LORD."

Q: How does this attitude (God's part and on our part) bring people back to center after they have rebelled? Why is being slow to anger important here?

III. Abundant in steadfast loving-kindness and truth - God is loyal to the end. He is reliable like the pillars of a large building.

Psalm 136:1 (and following verses)

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever.

We believe because that which we believe in is certain, established and permanent

Deuteronomy 32:4

He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

Amen means "truly... truly"

Each time there is a testing, people accuse God of not caring for them, and yet he has prepared a right provision for them if they would only ask.

People of Israel in the dessert: Why is God playing this cruel joke on us? (Exodus 14:11,12)

Psalm 78:19-24

They spoke against God, saying, "Can God spread a table in the desert? When he struck the rock, water gushed out, and streams flowed abundantly. But can he also give us food? Can he supply meat for his people?" When the LORD heard them, he was very angry; his fire broke out against Jacob, and his wrath rose against Israel, for they did not believe in God or trust in his deliverance. Yet he gave a command to the skies above and opened the doors of the heavens; he rained down manna for the people to eat, he gave them the grain of heaven.

Q: Since these attributes are true about God, then why are we so prone to accuse Him of wrong or injustice?

Psalm 95:7-11

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did. For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways." So I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest."

Deuteronomy 8:2-7

Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you. Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and revering him. For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land-- a land with streams and pools of water.

Q: Why does God demonstrate his loving kindness by testing us?

IV. Maintaining Love for thousands – He guards with fidelity, watches over continually, he does not forget..

Isaiah 49:8-10

This is what the LORD says: "In the time of my favor I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances, to say to the captives, 'Come out,' and to those in darkness, 'Be free!' "They will feed beside the roads and find pasture on every barren hill. They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water.

God parents us, restores us, gives us rest, fills us and lifts us up

V. Forgiving Wickedness and Rebellion... Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."

"But I do not excuse the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected— even children in the third and fourth generations." NLT translation

- God will not call innocent that which is guilty, He will not "cleanse the guilty"
- Atonement ("a guilt offering") and Forgiveness is the only way the guilty can be cleared
- If a person will not receive God's love offer, then they will have to bear their own guilt

Examples: Racism, Family Secrets, Feuds, Abuse

Q: How have you observed sins being passed down? And have you seen atonement and forgiveness stop this?

Sin must be dealt with by Atonement – this is how God deals justly and can offer forgiveness.

Romans 3:25-26

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Hebrews 2:14-18

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death-- that is, the devil-- and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

