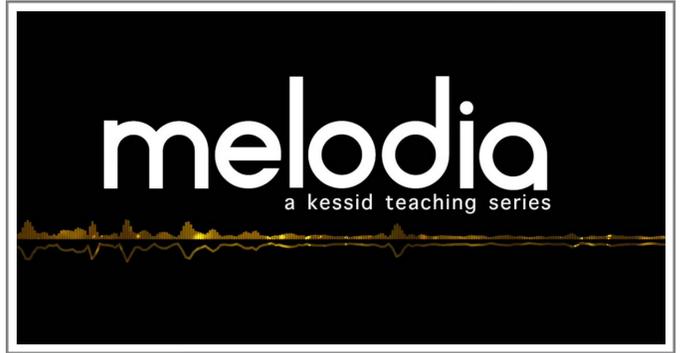


"I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU"

Date: February 14, 2021

Speaker: Danny Clinton



Happy Valentine's Weekend...

I think we'd all agree that Humans have a strong desire to be loved.

- This is why Valentine's Day can be both a Lovely and Loathed day...
- We, of course, all have beautiful and broken-hearted Stories about love inside us...

The Bible and Love - "Speaking to the Internal"

- Then... A Human Study on Love – "Speaking to the External"

"The Bible has a great deal to say about love."

(Vs) 1 John 4:7-8 – Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

- In other words, love is a fundamental characteristic of who God is.
- "Everything God does is impelled and influenced by His love."

"The Bible says that since true love is part of God's nature, God is the source of love."

- He is the initiator of a loving relationship with us...
- This means ... Any love we have for God is simply a response to His sacrificial love for us.

(Vs) 1 John 4:10 – "This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

- This is teaching us that our human understanding of love is flawed, and incomplete, but the more we look at Jesus, the better we understand true love.

"Christ's love is the only always and unfailing love."

Also, "The Bible says that this same Love motivated God to save the world."

(Vs) John 3:16 – "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

God's love is best seen in the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf.

(Vs) 1 John 4:9 – "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."

- *Important! God's love does not require us to be "worthy" to receive it; His love is truly benevolent and gracious:*

(Vs) Romans 5:8 – "God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us"

Lastly, "The Bible says that God's love for us in Christ resulted in our being brought into His family, and that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ."

(Vs) 1 John 3:1 – "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"

(Vs) Romans 8:38-39 – "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

God's love does not wax and wane; it is not a fickle, emotional sensation. God's love for us is why Christ died on the cross.

- ... God's love for those who trust in Christ is why He holds them in His hand and promises never to let them go.

(Vs) John 10:20 – "My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."

- Jesus is saying, God will hold their hearts, God will mend their internal stories!
- This is how our God's love speaks to us in the Internal!

Humans and Love - "Speaking to the External"

- **Story:** Newspaper columnist and minister George Crane tells of a wife who came into his office full of hatred toward her husband. "I do not only want to get rid of him, I want to get even. Before I divorce him, I want to hurt him as much as he has me." Dr. Crane suggested an ingenious plan. "Go home and act as if you really love your husband. Tell him how much he means to you. Praise him for every decent trait. Go out of your way to be as kind, considerate, and generous as possible. Spare no efforts to please him, to enjoy him. Make him believe you love him. After you've convinced him of your undying love and that you cannot live without him, then drop the bomb. Tell him that you're getting a divorce. That will really hurt him." With revenge in her eyes, she smiled and exclaimed, "Beautiful, beautiful. Will he ever be surprised!" And she did it with enthusiasm. Acting "as if." For two months she showed love, kindness, listening, giving, reinforcing, sharing. When she didn't return, Crane called. "Are you ready now to go through with the divorce?" "Divorce?" she exclaimed. "Never! I discovered I really do love him."

- He goes on to say, "Her actions had changed her feelings. Motion resulted in emotion. The ability to love is established not so much by fervent promise as often repeated deeds."
- **Story:** In his book *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis wrote, "Do not waste your time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor, act as if you did. As soon as we do this, we find one of the great secrets.
- He adds, "When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him." – C.S. Lewis
- Perhaps this is why Christ commands, instead of suggests, that we love each other?

(Vs) John 15:12 – "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

- The Love of Christ is unlike all other Love!

Did you know that Christ's love for us is so outside of our normally accepted concept for love that a word had to be invented to explain it?

- "Agape"
- This Greek word for love, 'agape,' seems to have been virtually a Christian invention – "Agape is new word for a new thing!"
- Apart from about twenty occurrences in the Greek version of the Old Testament, it is almost non-existent before the New Testament.
- Agape draws its meaning directly from the revelation of God in Christ.

"Agape is not a form of natural affection, however intense, but a supernatural fruit that comes out of having relationship with God."

- It is the word that best describes Jesus love for you and me... a love that comes from God in spite of how I treat the Son or His gift of life...

"It is a love that exists outside a matter of will rather than feeling. This is why this Love is the basic element in Christ-likeness. (for Christians must love even those they dislike.)"

- In essence... It is 'Love in Motion!'
- External, always moving outward and encompassing!

(Vs) Matt. 5:44-48 – "I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

He's saying... 'As I have shown you, show others.'

- I think it's because He knows how difficult external Love is for us.

Maybe what we need this Valentine's is "A new Word for a New Thing."

- Maybe what we need is both together... "Mended Hearts in Motion."