

## LOVE IS BOLD ENOUGH TO SACRIFICE

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Series: God Is Love  
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Love, Sacrifice,  
1 John 3:16

Some of what I have been doing during this series is taking our everyday experience with love and see what they can teach us about the nature of God. Kind of like what Jesus did one day when teaching about God as a good father, he gave the example of how good imperfect earthly fathers are to their children and asked us to imagine how much more God would be in that regard.

And I think it is the same thing with love. It is far easier to say God is love but we are not too sure what to do with that or if we are to experience that love in a different way. Sometimes we get too spiritual we miss out on the spirituality of everyday life.

Experiencing God's love in the rays of the sun warming us up, or the rain quenching the dry ground and the aroma that comes with it. Or birds singing in trees. Or just our families and friends. I think God put us in communities and families because from there we can learn about His nature.

That the only way we can know God loves us is by saying, well the Bible says so is just not right. While that is true, I think the procession is the other way. God loves us, and that is why the Bible says so. It is not true because it is written rather it is written because it is true. You see it may be news to some of us but there was a time the Bible as know it today was not there. It had not been put together. And who knows maybe there will be a time we will not have it as it is. Even then truth of God's nature and Love remains. It is this truth that we must learn to see. And so I hope we go into a journey of seeing every day the things God puts in around us because he loves. A daily journey.

However, while that is beautiful it also presents a certain problem because of the broken nature of the world. So we need the Holy Spirit to know God's love in the ways the world cannot teach us or where the world has twisted what love is

We are born we start forming our ideas and worldview towards everything from our experiences with the world around us. But even the most loving parent is imperfect. So even while loving us, they wound us at the same time. And this often colours our view of love. The father who had to work 2 jobs to send you to school loved but was also mostly absent.

There is a philosopher of our time who argues that when we say we are looking for love we do not realize that we are also saying we are looking for someone who will hurt us in familiar ways. Because our first image of love from our parents was imperfect and it became our image of love. That is why we all have these crazy patterns when it comes to love. They go

all the way back to when we were little children. And some of those patterns need to be broken because they are destructive.

So unfortunately because of how we have been disappointed by imperfect love we are not too sure sometimes how far we want to take the revelation God is love. Or we think that God's love is unknowable or totally out there and it can only be head knowledge. But there is a lot to learn about God's love from the love we have experienced and there is a lot more to be taught by the Holy Spirit.

But we have all been burnt by love before. Every time we are burnt by love we always vow to protect ourselves next time. To not let our hearts trust that much and before we can say it for the 100th time, we are falling in love again, we are trusting a new friend or the same old friend. We were just wired for love. Love is maddening and sometimes people think it is a human defect. Why do we need love, or helplessly keep falling in love even after the last wounding and breaching of trust?

Some guy I listen to says we are all a 10 in our need for love. We desperately need love but we are all less than a 10 in how we give love so there is all this unmet need for love flying around yet every time there is hope to be loved we will give up everything.

Yet we are so wired for love we will look for it again and again and again. And it just drives us mad. And at the altar of love, we will once again sacrifice our sanity and our hearts. We will give up everything we are for love.

And it is not just romantic love. A psychologist I like suggests that mothers have to fall madly in love with their children because what else would make them keep up with all the crazy demands of children. It's like they are always jet-lagged and are asleep when the world is moving and in the middle of the night when sensible godly people are sleeping, they are wide awake and they think that is a great time to feed and play. The only way to serve those little humans is if you actually really love them, madly.

Love is maddening, it is meant to be so. If love hasn't driven us crazy then we have not yet loved. World changing events have been driven either by deep love or deep fear. And world history has been changed and marked either because someone deeply loved or deeply feared something.

You know one of the famous love stories of all time? Here is an excerpt from it

***“O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?***

***Deny thy father and refuse thy name;***

***Or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love***

***And I'll no longer be a Capulet.”***

Okay, all Juliet is trying to say to his love Romeo is that they can disown their families to be together if that is what is in the way of their love. I mean there are more efficient ways to say the same thing in English today. Maybe not as beautiful.

Nonetheless, even before we had better language, we knew how crazy love can make us. Even though language and culture keeps changing from generation to generation, the boldness of love to be crazy enough to sacrifice everything has not changed.

Okay, let me tell you a more recent story. Love has always shaped history. The current queen of England is monarch and or head of state of 7 countries and the head of the Commonwealth of Nations which comprises of 53 countries most of which were colonies of the UK. She is now the longest reigning monarch after 66 years on the throne. Has seen 13 US presidents, 13 British Prime Ministers, 7 Popes of the Catholic Church, 7 Archbishops of Canterbury and of course all 4 Presidents of Kenya.

But she would not have been on the throne if her uncle King Edward VIII had not fallen in love with an American woman called Wallis Simpson. You see in 1936 to be heir to the throne of England there were certain conditions to be met one of which was not to marry a divorcee. To be King was prestigious but to be with someone he loved was better so with the following words love changed once again the course of history

***"I have found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility and to discharge my duties as king as I would wish to do without the help and support of the woman I love."***

All for love, all for maddening reckless love, he sacrificed being on the throne. Now granted, he remained influential and rich. He did not lose very much compared to the life of a normal person. Love is bold enough to be crazy and those actions end up impacting everyone we are connected to and if you are too powerful you end up impacting the world. Love is bold enough to make crazy sacrifices.

So are we sure we want very powerful people driven by this thing called love? For the most part in our understanding love looks out of control. Is this who we want God to be? But King Edward's words were not the first to tell us about how love changed the course of the Human story. I think something in us, in all human generations, knows too well that love is bold enough to sacrifice because we were made in God's image and he is love. Something in us knows how love works, that it holds nothing back because God loves us and God is love and he held nothing back.

John 3:16

***"For God so loved the world (you and me and everyone else in the world), that He gave"***

Lets Pray

So last week I tried to show us how our very nature is proof of God's love. The fact that all human beings have values that cannot be taken away by our culture, politics, policies or economic status. The fact that all human beings have power to choose even to choose to walk away from God. Because only love is bold enough to create something with so much value and bold enough to trust when it is far easier to control and manipulate.

And we know how the story went with creation. Man made the choice to walk out on God. To not trust God. A choice that humanity often makes over and over again. So what does a love that is bold enough do when it is disappointed? It loves still and sacrifices everything.

You see I am beginning to realize that in a relationship when someone is hurt they hold all the power and determine whether there will be reconciliation. The wrong party can apologize they can try to make amends but until the wronged party offers forgiveness and starts to intentionally reach out to them the relationship is not completely healed. Because until we reach out to them and affirm them, they walk on egg shells around us. And I think this is where we get things wrong sometimes when trust is breached in a relationship that we need to keep. We fold our hands and hope they do all the work to fix things yet at that point they are bankrupt and we hold all the cards.

And love is bold enough to reach that divide and cause reconciliation. This is exactly what I see in Jesus. When God's heart is broken by us turning away, Love is bold enough to reach out to us through Jesus Christ. And it cost everything.

You see sometimes we think we were expecting that he could have been a little more forceful. And in forceful shows of power become so obvious that He is God. You know we sometimes wonder why Jesus being God was not been obvious.

Or maybe we think that the easier path for Jesus being God would have been to force everyone into submission. But that is because we do not know how incredibly humbling love is.

You see this is a problem because we forget that even for us, when we truly are in love we give everything, including our very own dignity with the hope that our love will choose us. Kings have given up thrones, people have parted with wealth and titles, and others have been disowned by family all for love.

We know these stories and when we hear them we agree that is how crazy love is. If human beings experiencing just a glimpse of love, imperfect love would be bold enough to be crazy, what makes us think that God being love itself, perfect love would not be bolder enough to be even crazier?

But who would be crazy enough to let go of the privilege of being God? Who would be crazy enough let go of immortality and choose to experience death? Who would be crazy enough to submit themselves to their creation? Only someone who has loved completely, Because only Love is bold enough to sacrifice. I know it is reckless and crazy. How does an eternal God die? Why on earth?

And again, we ask the wrong question. Love made a way. We have seen in our own human ways examples of men and women doing the impossible for the one they love. That is why we write songs like "I will cross the oceans for you, I will go and bring you the moon" Yet even the impossible seems conceivable even for the mortal, limited man when he is in love.

What do you think would happen with God to whom all things are possible? Only love is Bold enough to sacrifice everything.

John 15:3

***Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.***

Those are the words of Jesus to his disciples. And deep in our hearts, we know this truth. It's just that most of us don't love anyone enough to go that far.

At the time Jesus is saying this they are not sure he actually means dying. He taught in parables and so this may very well be one of them. Little did they know that Jesus was actually talking about something that he was willing, and ready to do and was going to do. Die for his friends. Because God so loved the world that he died for his friends. The disciples never thought that Jesus would actually die at least not willingly, he was innocent. I think they hoped he would dare start a revolution or when arrested at least defend himself. Is Love that Bold that it would sacrifice everything?

But you would think it ends there, not until you realize the conditions under which love was poured out, not until you realize the people for whom love died. You know human love is limited. We can take in so much and sacrifice so much but we all get to a point and say enough is enough even for our friends. We draw a line in the sand and decide that we can only take too much, we can only give too much, we can only lose too much. Here is how Paul another writer whose letters became part of our bible says

Romans 5:8

***But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.***

Somehow in us, we get it. Love gives up everything. We have sacrificed things for love ourselves. Love sacrifices everything possibly even life itself. But no one dies for their enemy. Now for a righteous man, some might, even though rare. No one would die for a sinner, for a bad person. Think of Hitler and Stalin, and all the people who have caused you pain. Jesus died for them too. Think about yourself, when you were still a sinner and an enemy of God, he died for you.

Even with no assurance that we would choose him, he loved us. This is love in action. Instead of God pouting because he has been offended, he makes the first move to initiate reconciliation and pays full price.

Now it's neat to think well it happened long ago. While that is true, let us bring it close home. You see, a few years ago before you chose to follow Jesus? His death was for you too. You see, even now when you are still debating his relevance and whether or not to follow him, his death is yours too. You remember last week or even this morning when you engaged in what you knew too well was disobedience, his death was very much for you too.

The whole venture of God and humanity is bold. Bold enough to create and Bold enough to trust us. Bold enough to allow us to tell His story in our imperfect ways. Bold enough to invite us to work with him. Bold enough to sacrifice it all.

***This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.***

***Walking the hill carrying a cross despite being innocent***

***That is how love really looks like***

***The nail pierced hands and wounded side***

***That is how love really looks like***

What do you love? Who would you lay down your life for? Love is bold enough to sacrifice.

The same way imperfect love drove us to sacrifice, perfect love drove God to the perfect sacrifice for you. For God so loved the world that he gave

**Let's pray**