

(Divine Attributes) 12 the Divine Perfections of God's Love (Part 1)

by Denny Kenaston

This sermon explores the divine perfections of God's love, specifically God's goodness and God's love for man, and how these attributes are displayed through the cross of Christ.

Duration: 1:03:32

Scripture: Isaiah 53:10, Acts 17:24, 2 Corinthians 5:21

Topics: "Character Of God"

Description

In this sermon, Brother Denny emphasizes the miraculous nature of God becoming flesh and dwelling among us. He highlights the immense power displayed by the Godhead in redeeming sinful mankind, stating that it surpasses even the power of creating the world. Brother Denny praises God's immutable character, noting that despite having the ability to call upon thousands of angels, he chose to pay the price for our redemption. The sermon also emphasizes the goodness of God, as seen in his provision of life, breath, and all things necessary for living. The speaker references verses from Acts and Romans to support these points.

Transcript

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Ineffable, Lord. Ineffable. Oh, Father.

Thank you for your love, Lord. Please help us this morning, Lord, to see your love. Please help me to speak about it, Father.

Cleanse my unholy lips, Father, please. In the precious blood of your dear Son, fill us, Lord, with the Holy Ghost, all of us. In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen. I don't know about you, but I, the last few days, and I guess it's just because of all what we're looking at, but the last few days, I'm just all broken up inside and I can't explain it. Not that I'm getting some great revelation, but I just find myself all broken up inside.

And I'm grateful for that. Alright, the title of the message this morning. This is message number 12.

Hallelujah. The Divine Perfections of God's Love. The Divine Perfections of God's Love.

And we'll be using this title today and tomorrow, so this is part one. I've given much thought and prayer as to how I should introduce the next set of holy attributes. I want you to imagine with me this morning what our view of God would be like if we stopped right now and closed our subject on the attributes of God and sent you on your way.

Think about it. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-wise. He is unchanging.

He is far above. He is mysterious. He is the sovereign ruler.

He is holy, and therefore He hates sin. And He is just, and He will punish sin. Now, would you draw near to this God? Remember some of the visions of the glory of God that we have been gazing upon.

There are some pretty scary sights to look upon. Yet, each man did not flee away. You would think when you came upon such sights, such creatures, such fiery beings with four faces and feet like a calf and a fire burning in the center of their belly, you'd think that man would run scared.

Yet, none of them did. Something kept them there. If what they saw was the outshining of the attributes thus far, they might have fled away.

What kept them there in admiration instead of gripping fear? I believe it was the divine perfections of God's love. Amen? Remember, the Lord Jesus Christ, as He walked upon the earth, He was the holiest man that ever walked on the earth. Yet, the publicans and the sinners wanted to be with Him.

Think on that one a while. Selah. The holiest man.

Spotless Lamb. All of God's nature in Him. Express image of the Father.

Yet, the publicans and the sinners, they wanted to be near Him. And He wanted them near Him also. It was the divine perfections of God's love that kept those men from fleeing.

There was a beautiful draw upon their hearts when they gazed upon these heavenly scenes. We are going to cover four of God's attributes under this general category of the perfections of God's love over the next two days. They are God's goodness, God's love, God's mercy, and God's grace.

First of all, let us take up the subject of the goodness of God. By the goodness of God, I mean God's general goodness. This is a different word than righteous or holy.

It is God's overall benevolent kindness toward all that He made. That is God's goodness. It is God's goodwill toward all things and all men.

God's goodness. Remember what that little lady, Julian of Norwich, wrote? What God made, He loves. That makes sense, doesn't it? And what God loves, He cares for in a benevolent and goodwill toward way.

In Genesis chapter 1, we have a clear picture of this benevolent God manifesting Himself and interacting with His creation which He made for His own pleasure. Notice Him there. He is blessing the fish and the fowl.

He is blessing Adam and Eve. And it says in Genesis chapter 1 and verse 31, And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. I get a picture there of God, a benevolent God, a good God, who made all these things, and this God, looking down on all that He made, and blessing all that He made, and all that He made, receiving those blessings from Him, and returning praise back to Him.

Hallelujah. Job 38 verse 4, and also verse 7, says, God, challenging Job, said these words, Where was thou when I laid the foundation of the earth, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? What a beautiful picture. And it seems like they were there.

It seems like the angels were looking in on what was going on. It seems like it was a celebration there. Those days when God created the heaven and the earth.

A celebration. Tozer said very wisely in the chapter on this subject, The fact that God is good is a foundation stone for all sound thought about God. The simple fact that God is good is a foundation stone for all sound thought about God.

And is necessary for moral sanity. And if I may just add to that, and to think that God is not, or that He is less than good, is the foundation for depression and insanity. And we have more depression and insanity in this land of ours than probably any other nation in all the world.

And I believe it's because we have chosen to say, God is not, when we have known that God is. We did not like to retain God in our knowledge. When the Apostle Paul was preaching to the heathen idolaters of Athens, he used this basic truth about God's goodness, which is clearly seen by all.

He used that to open up the gospel to them. In Acts chapter 17 and verse 24 through 28, and I'm not reading all of these words in those verses, but the ones that pertain to God's creation and His goodness. Paul said these words to the Athenians, these idolaters, these worshippers of the unknown God.

He said, God that made the world and all things therein, seeing He giveth to all life and breath, and all things. That's the goodness of God. He giveth to all life and breath, and all the things that we need to live day by day by day, doesn't He? And He gives that to all.

All the way down to the little insects that creep and crawl all over this world. God gives to all life, breath, and all things that they need. Why? And He goes on to say, why He does that? That they should seek the Lord, if happily they might feel after Him and find Him.

Hallelujah! Though He be not far from every one of us. You see what Paul is doing? Paul is relating to these Athenians. He's not beginning with some great high and holy theology.

He is relating to them on a level that every one of them knows. And every human being on this earth knows. It's written on the conscience of their heart, that God is good.

And they have to snuff it out, to think something other than that. And they know it, because they live every day, they breathe, they walk through life, they see the sun coming up, they see the beautiful stars at night, they see rain clouds coming over their fields, and raindrops coming down upon them, and their crops bursting forth with food to eat, and their cattle getting fat as they graze on the grass and the hillside. Oh yes, God is good.

In Romans chapter 2, Paul said, The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance. And that's what Paul was speaking about again. Just God's general goodness leadeth thee to repentance.

He went on to say to them there, For in Him we live and move and have our being. We, you heathen Athenian idolaters, and me, the Apostle Paul. We live and move and have our being.

This benevolent God, who looks down upon His creation and mankind with good will, keeps us all alive. It is the goodness of God. As God was challenging Job, He refers to the days of creation as a joyous celebration as each thing was made, and God blessed them and smiled at what He made.

Hallelujah! You know, years ago I heard a sermon entitled, God is obsessed with blessing us. And that is right. He is a benevolent, blessing God.

It is part of His holy character. He is full of good will toward all that He made, and sustaining out of it, He is full of good will. We marvel together as we ponder God's infinite ability and wisdom to care for all that He has made.

But it adds a different picture to this powerful, almighty God to see Him smiling at and caring for His creation. Psalm 96, verses 11 and 12 says, Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad. Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof.

Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein. Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice. What a picture! What's happening there? Creation is responding to the goodness of a benevolent, blessing God with praise.

Creation, the Bible says, claps its hands back at God's. The birds sing their praises to Him. And all of creation bring honor and glory and praise to the God, the benevolent God, the good God, who made them and sustains them every day as we saw in Psalm 104.

These are simply an explanation of the general goodness of God. We will go deeper, but I think it's good for us to see God in this way, looking down on His creation that He made with pleasure in His heart, looking down on all humankind and caring for them. God is, by nature, a God of goodwill.

God is good-hearted and friendly. We have been cursed by the fall, brethren, and plagued with guilt. And it's hard for us to see God that way, but He is that way.

That's what God's goodness means. I want you to notice also that this goodness is unmerited. It's unmerited.

Matthew 5, verse 45 says, He maketh His Sun to rise on the evil and on the good. Look at that. And sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.

This goodness of God is unmerited. Oh, what a good way to look at life in general. Amen? The whole earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

James 1, verse 17 says, Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights. There it is. That works for all of His creation and all of mankind.

Oh, I wonder how many could testify, how many saints could testify, in fact, it was the general goodness of God that led them to repentance. As they found themselves in a difficult situation, and God saved them out of it. I wonder how many mariners found themselves out in the middle of the ocean and the winds were blowing and the waves were picking up their boat and setting it 60 feet higher into the air and then dropping it about 40 feet down below the other waves and back up 60 feet up in the air and here they are in this little boat.

And they cried out in desperation to a God that they did not even know. And in His goodness and His unmerited favor, though all of those mariners may have been drunk out of their minds two days ago when they were at port, God looks down on them in His general goodness and unmerited favor and calms the sea out there. And they all are in awe as they realize the storm is over and we didn't die.

Happens all the time. Read Psalm 107. Not just for the saints, for all mankind.

God's good will toward man. It is good to see God this way after we have been trembling day by day gazing upon some of His attributes. It's good for us to see God this way.

This is also one of His attributes. The very act of creation is a display of God's goodness. He gave unmerited existence to all things.

You sit here today because God extended unmerited existence to you. David said in Psalm 34, verse 8, Let all taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.

I wonder how many have seen that the Lord was good and decided to put their trust in Him because the goodness of God led them to repentance. Brethren, we dwell under a friendly sky. Tozer says, we dwell under a friendly sky.

Even the lost man out there dwells under a friendly sky. And God is caring for them, giving them life and breath and being, sustaining them, causing rain to fall on their crops, making them to prosper, delivering them out of destructions at times, and on and on and on we could go. It is the nature of God to be good.

That's what that sermon was talking about. God is obsessed with blessing us. It is His very nature to bless.

He cannot help Himself. It flows out of His very nature to bless all things and to feel kindly toward them. Let's move on to God's love.

Now we want to study the deeper aspects of God's love. Yes, God's goodness is love. No doubt.

But there is a deeper love than this. God's love for man. You want to study the attributes of our high and lofty triune God? There is no greater display of God's eternal perfections than in His redemption of man.

There is no greater display of God's eternal perfections than in His redemption of man. In the beginning, God made man in His own image and likeness. Male and female created He them.

He made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor and gave them dominion over all things on the earth. In the beginning, He did. And God loved man that He had made.

And they walked together in sweet and simple fellowship. Man was a beautiful display of God's perfections. Amen? Oh, he was.

I can only imagine, but I think it's okay to imagine since we've been gazing on a few other holy things that God made. I wonder what man was like then before he fell. A couple of definitions of love would be in order here.

The first one I just drew it right out of what they call ISB. That's the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, which is a very good reference book, by the way. Four volumes.

It's about like this. Definition of love. Love is an earnest and anxious desire for and an active and beneficent interest in the well-being of the one loved.

Love is an earnest and anxious desire for and an active and beneficent interest in the well-being of the one loved. Love identifies itself emotionally with its object. And there in the garden, when God made man, God loved man and identified himself emotionally with man and turned his heart's attention and affections upon man.

It says in Psalm 8, what is man that thou art mindful of him? That word mindful is an interesting word. That you have set your attention on him. What is man that you have set your attention on him? Ah yes, it's beautiful to think about the creation, and it's beautiful to think about the stars, and it's beautiful to think about all the animals and the beautiful mountains and the sea and the green grass and the beautiful trees and all the things that God made.

But, God made man in his own image. This whole thing, dear brethren, it's not about trees and it's not about mountains and it's not about starry skies. It's about man whom God made in his own image.

So with that definition of love, consider that God's attribute of love is infinite and perfect. And with that infinite and perfect love, God loved man. Then came Satan, the proud rebel, knowing who God is, and Satan knew who God is.

Knowing God's pleasure in this holy creature called man, knowing God's pleasure in the display of His glory in this creature called man, he knew, Satan knew, that nothing would pierce deeper pain into the heart of God than to defile this simple, innocent creature called man. So man fell. By his own disobedience, he fell through the temptation of Satan in the garden.

Now here in this, God's love for man and His holy hatred for sin and His righteous, just judgment, they all come together here in this scene in seemingly irreconcilable ways. How can these three attributes dwell together? And remember, we looked at His holiness on Friday, and we looked at His justice yesterday. Now we look at His love.

How can these three attributes dwell together? In God's being, these three must be satisfied. None can be pushed aside for want of the other. All three must be satisfied in completeness in God's being.

Amen? Because we know by now God is immutable. He does not change. He cannot change.

The Father says, I will give My only begotten Son. I will slay My only Son, a pure and a perfect sacrifice to redeem man whom I love. The Son says, I will become flesh and live a pleasing life and lay down My life.

I will let You, Father, slay Me and release Your wrath against sin upon Me for love's sake. And the Holy Spirit says, I will be in You the strength You need to live that life and to lay down Your life as a sacrifice for the sins of man. This is the only way that inside of God's being these three attributes can be satisfied.

There was no other way you can be sure of it. 1 John 3 and verse 16 says, Hereby perceive we the love of God. This is how you perceive and understand the love of God.

Because He laid down His life for us. John 15 and verse 13, Jesus speaking to His disciples said, Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. See the heart of God in that statement.

I, God, the Son, love you, mankind. You are My friend. And I will lay down My life for you.

1 John 4, verse 9 and 10, In this was manifested the love of God toward us, man, because that God, the Father, sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love. Not that we loved God, but that He loved us.

That's love. And sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

And Christ, the Son, so loved the world that He laid down His life for man. Paul said it this way in Romans 5, verse 6, 7 and 8. Talk about a kindly God. For when we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly, for the ungodly, for the rebels, for the sinners.

Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die. His reasoning was now out of human reasonings.

Yet, peradventure for a good man, even some would even dare to die. But God commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. God commended.

God manifested. God displayed. God expressed His love toward us.

How? Oh, He feeds us every day. No. Oh, He takes care of me when I'm just about to drown out in a pond somewhere.

No. No. God manifests, commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Think about it. Think about the gap between the sinner and the holy, infinite, awesome God that we've been studying about for all these days. Think of the gap between the two of those, brethren.

And while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. I can't understand that. Only through the cross can God's love for man, His holy hatred for sin, and His righteous justice come together.

Only through the cross. There is no other way. Each of these attributes and many more are exalted and displayed through the suffering and dying of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Oh, how high holiness is exalted! Look at the price that must be paid! It exalts holiness! The holiness of God. Oh, the depth of the love of God that the Father would slay His only Son. We begin to see into the depth of the infiniteness of God's holy character when we gaze on the cross.

Oh, the creative miracle of the incarnation! God became flesh! Figure that one out! You think this creation is a miracle? God became flesh and dwelt among us! Have you ever seen a greater display of omnipotence than when the Godhead paid the price to redeem sinful, rebellious man? The power to create this world is nothing compared to the power that it took for God to redeem man. Aren't you glad for God's immutable character in this difficult scene of God redeeming man? He could have called 10,000 angels, you know, but His immutable character would not allow Him to do it. Aren't you glad He was immutable, unchanging like a rock? The price of God's justice must be paid.

Sin must be punished. The wages of sin is death, and nothing can change that. And so, God's justice is satisfied only in the slaying of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

Do you want to study the attributes of God, men? Do you want to learn what God has revealed as true about Himself? Study the cross! Yay! Study it the rest of your life! You won't get done. Do you want to see the image of God and be changed into the same image from glory to glory? Study the cross. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 21 says, For He, the Father, hath made Him, the Son, to be sin for us.

Who knew no sin? Who knew no sin? That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Oh, what love! How could we then live a fleshly, unholy life? How could we do such a thing? Isaiah chapter 53 and verse 10 says, Yet it pleased the Lord, the Father, to bruise Him. Huh? What? This is the Father who loves His Son with an infinite love.

It pleased the Father to bruise His Son? He, the Father, hath put Him, the Son, to grief? We now shall make His soul an offering for sin. Isaiah 53, verse 11 says, He, the Father, shall see the travail of His soul, the Son, and be satisfied. And by His knowledge, that's the Son, shall My righteous servant justify many, for He shall bear their iniquity.

How can the Father do this to the Son of His love, in whom He is well pleased? This makes no sense to our own understanding. How can He turn His wrath on His beloved Son? How can He be pleased to bruise Him? How can He see the travail of His only begotten Son and be satisfied? How can He make His Son a curse and hang Him on a tree? These things are too lofty for me to figure out, I'll tell you that. Turn with me to Psalms 22 for a moment.

That was the Father's perspective. Now let's look at the Son's perspective. My God, My God.

And I want you to notice here, brethren, He doesn't say, My Father. I mean, He's been saying My Father for many years. Now, He's not saying, My Father.

He's saying, My God. My God, My God. Why hast Thou forsaken Me? Why art Thou so far from helping Me? And from the words of My roaring, O My God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not.

And in the night season, and am not silent. But Thou art holy. Thou art holy.

Maybe even the Son is reasoning His way through this excruciating experience. Ah, but yes, You're holy. You're holy.

That's why I'm here. You're holy. O Thou that habitest the praises of Israel.

Verse 6, But I am a worm and no man. And a reproach of men and despise of the people. And all that see Me laugh Me to scorn.

They shoot out the lips. They shake the head. And on and on He goes to describe what He went through as He hung there on the cross.

How can the Son submit Himself to such tortures to please His Father? And how could it please His Father? How can He hang there on a cross like a disinherited son, forsaken by His Father? How can He withhold His ability to call ten thousand angels and come and smite them all? How can He do that? How can He trust His life into the hands of a Father who is smiting Him? How can the pure spotless Lamb allow Himself to be made sin? Oh, what torture! How can this be? For His great love wherewith He loved us. That is the only way it can be. For love.

For love, brethren. God's love. For man.

For His great love of holiness and hatred for sin, this must be. And for His high demand for justice, He hath done all this. It is the only way these three attributes can be satisfied in the heart of God.

The only way. You can be sure if there was another way, it would have been done. It is the only way.

The Creator must become the Savior. See the Son there clinging to the righteousness of God His Father, which He loved and glorified, and at the same time clinging to the misery of mankind whom He could not forsake. Look at that strain there of righteousness.

I hate iniquity. My Father loves righteousness. And He hates iniquity and I must satisfy His justice.

And I love mankind. And I want to deliver them from their misery. His obedient love for His Father, He would not get down off of that cross because of His obedient love for His Father.

Even though He knew He would be forsaken. His obedient love for His Father, He would not get down off of that cross. His love for man and His desire to redeem man.

His joy. Remember? For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross despising the shame, it says in Hebrews 12. Imagine! The joy set before Him.

Yes. God's holy righteousness will be satisfied. God's justice shall be satisfied.

And man will be redeemed. My love and my Father's love shall be released. Yes, it was the joy set before Him that He endured the cross and despised the shame of it.

Love is an earnest and anxious desire for and an active and beneficent interest in the well-being of the one loved. Love identifies itself emotionally with its object. Yes, God so loved the world.

You may think at a first glance, what kind of father-son relationship is this? But let us look deeper. This is an infinitely deep relationship that the Father and the Son have. An infinitely deep relationship of fellowship that we can hardly understand.

Or maybe we can by now. After having studied God for two and a half weeks, maybe we can understand this relationship. Remember the story of Abraham and Isaac? This is a living picture of what we have been considering.

God tried and tested Abraham and said to him, I want you to take your Son, your only Son, your Son whom you love, and take Him to mountain, Mount Moriah, and there offer Him as a burnt sacrifice unto

Me. And the Bible says that Abraham obeyed. And he rose up early in the morning and made the trip, three days journey, to the mountain, Mount Moriah, which by the way is the place where the temple was built.

Mount Moriah. Go there and slay your Son and offer Him as a burnt offering unto Me. Yes, Lord.

Yes. Up the mountain they go. Isaac says to his father, Father, we have the wood.

We have the fire. But where is the sacrifice? Oh, my son, God will provide Him a sacrifice. God will do that.

There on top of that mountain, Abraham built himself an altar. What do you think was going through that father's heart for those three days that he marched his way to that sacrifice? What do you think was going through that father's heart as he laid those stones on the ground one after another and took the wood and laid the wood on there? What do you think was going through his heart? And then he turns to his son Isaac, and I believe it was this way. I don't think he had to wrestle that boy to the ground and tie him up.

Then he turns to his son Isaac and says, My son, yes, my father. God has told me that you are the sacrifice. Now lay down here, son.

And Isaac laid himself down on the ground, put his hands behind his back. And I can imagine the fellowship of that father and that son at that moment. Can you? The son looks up into his father's eyes, and there's anguish in his eyes, yet there's trust in his eyes.

The father looks down into his son's eyes, and there's anguish in the father's eyes, yet there's determination in the father's eyes. And he lays him up there on that altar, his hands tied behind his back, and takes this knife in his hand. And again, he looks down upon his son, and he looks into the eyes of the heart of his son, and his son looks into the eyes of the heart of his father.

And there's fellowship there. You can be sure of it. Deep fellowship.

Trust. The father lifts up that hand with that knife in it, ready to come down upon his son. That's the way it was between the father and the son.

Fellowship. Paul called it the fellowship of his suffering. That's what Paul called it in Philippians chapter 3. And Paul saw it clear enough that he said, I long for that, that I may enter into the fellowship of the sufferings of God.

The last verse in one of our favorite hymns says it all. Could we with ink the ocean fill? And were the skies of parchment made, were every stalk on earth a quill, and every man a scribe by trade, to write the love of God above would drain the oceans dry. O love of God, how rich, how pure, how measureless and strong, it shall forevermore endure, the saints' and angels' songs.

We'll never get tired of singing about it. They'll never get tired of singing about it. It shall forevermore endure.

The saints' and angels' song. Why did God, Jehovah, the eternal self-existent One, go through all this agony? Was it just so you could go to heaven and have a nice life and live in a mansion someday? Looks pretty shallow, doesn't it, brethren? I've got a mansion in glory. I'm happy with a cabin down here.

Looks pretty shallow to me. Just so you could go to heaven and have a nice life up there. Was it so you can live a fleshly, self-centered life here and then go to heaven when you're done? My dear brethren, it was to deliver us from our sins and transform us into God-glorifying saints just like Adam was.

That's why He went through all of that. To the praise of the glory of His grace for all of eternity. And it will be to the praise of His glory.

Won't it? Brethren, let us seek the Lord and so dedicate our future life to Him that He might live His holy nature in and through us. Yea, and His name shall be sanctified before the heathen. That's love.

Isn't it? That's love. Let's pray. Oh Lord, forgive my feeble attempt, Lord, at such a lofty subject.

But oh, we plead with You to open our eyes and help us to see deeply Your love. We pray this in Christ's holy name. Amen.

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