

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

Part 3 - Love

There is something that happens to people around Christmas, where it seems that families are more loving, friends are more loving, strangers are more loving.

Love

It is the core of Christmas, and it is beautiful to see in action currently. I have felt a stirring in my spirit this week that there is a revelation of God's love that He wants to pour out today that will radically and wonderfully change what Christmas looks like for each of us.

For God So Loved

What are we celebrating with Christmas? God became flesh through a miraculous birth. I feel sometimes that I hear this every year and the weight of it has worn off.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

- + God loved the world so much that He, through virgin birth, sent His one and only son into the world.
- + If we even look around the world at the moment at all the inequalities, wars and things that are happening, we can all agree they are horrible.
- + However God loved us all so much, that He sent His Son into the world.

Ephesians 3 paints this beautiful picture of God's love and the enormity of that revelation for us.

Paul prays this prayer for all of us in Ephesians 3:17-19

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

- + What an incredible picture of the magnitude of God's love for us. He both prays that the Ephesians and us today would know the height, depth, the width and the length of God's love and also know that His love surpasses all knowledge.
- + I feel like God wants us to have a fresh encounter with His love, that same love that motivated Him to send Jesus to this earth. That same love that goes beyond understanding and we never come to the end of. But there is something new about His love that He deposits in us today.

Love God

- + The greatest thing we can ever do is love God.
- + At least for me, loving God sometimes becomes secondary at this time of the year because of busyness, the stress and all the things we need to do.
- + But we are supposed to focus on the reason for this whole season, and that revelation should draw us into a greater love for God. He should be our first love in this moment. He should be who we put first in this moment.

Mark 12:29-30:

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

- + As we receive a greater revelation of His love and as we are reminded of how much He loved us, it should draw us deeper and to love Him deeper.
- + Not out of obligation but out of revelation.

Love Others

Mark 12:31

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

- + When we have a revelation of God's love that causes us to love Him more, the overflow becomes the second greatest commandment that Jesus talked about - Love your neighbour.
- + This is how it works: God loved first so that we love Him and we can then love others like He loved us.
- + If we really got the revelation of God's love this Christmas, we would see people in Riverlife rise up in a greater measure of love for our God that would change the lives of people around us.
- + It starts with all of us and what He wants to deposit in us so that we can love Him more, and we could then love those around us in a greater measure.

Here are a few things I thought would be great overflows of God's love at any time, but especially this season:

- + Stop for the one - Jesus did! If someone tries to sell you something in the shops, sell them something greater.
- + Pray the fruit of love would manifest in your time with family.
- + Be intentional with your neighbours and show love to them.

- + Leave space for someone who needs God's love during Christmas. That could mean inviting someone who doesn't know Jesus to have Christmas lunch with you. It could mean inviting someone to church. It could be seeing someone who is alone and needs community. Leave space for God's love to flow through you.

Discussion Questions

1. How does the Christmas Story show God's love to you?
2. Is Jesus at the centre of your Christmas this year?
3. How could you spend intentional time with Him so that He is your first love this Christmas?
4. What is one thing you can do to show God's love to someone else this Christmas?

Pray that Holy Spirit would invade all aspects of Christmas for you, and that the love of God would flow out of you.