

Last week

1. The God Who Is There is What?

- a. He is a person. Not the force or the first cause. He is a person. He loves. He hates. He enjoys. He is a He. He is patient. He thinks. He longs for others.
- b. He knows everything, except those things that He chooses not to know (more on that later). He knows the full history of this universe. He knew about electricity before Benjamin Franklin went kite flying. He knows the heart and the head and hair of every person. He knows when each animal dies.

“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”
Matthew 10:29-31, NIV.

And most importantly, for you, He knows you.

““Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”” Jeremiah 1:5, NIV.

- c. He is perfect and holy. – Let’s recite this 3,000 year old song

“The LORD reigns, let the nations tremble; he sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake. Great is the LORD in Zion; he is exalted over all the nations. Let them praise your great and awesome name—he is holy. The King is mighty, he loves justice—you have established equity; in Jacob you have done what is just and right. Exalt the LORD our God and worship at his footstool; he is holy.” Psalms 99:1-5, NIV.

- d. He judges with power and finality - the Flood

2. The God Who Calls Us to Love Him

Mt 3:17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”*

Mt 5:43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’*

Mt 5:44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

Mt 5:46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?*

Mt 6:5 “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.*

Mt 6:24 “No-one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.*

Mt 12:18 “Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. (Isaiah speaking of Jesus)*

Mt 17:5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”*

Mt 19:19 honour your father and mother,’ and ‘love your neighbour as yourself.*

Mt 22:36 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”*

Mt 22:37 Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’*

Mt 22:39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’*

Mt 23:6* they **love** the place of honour at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues;

Mt 23:7* they **love** to be greeted in the market-places and to have men call them 'Rabbi'.

Mt 24:12* Because of the increase of wickedness the **love** of most will grow cold

3. The God Who Loves Sinners – More Than Words

He would come and live with the unholy

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death--even death on a cross!" Philippians 2:5-8, NIV.

He would die for sinners while they were powerless, unrighteous and sinful

"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!" Romans 5:6-9, NIV.

He would permit the ones whom He loved to murder Him

*"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, **with the help of wicked men**, put him to death by nailing him to the cross." Acts 2:22, 23, NIV.*

Listen to what happened on the cross and what Jesus said.

*"When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals--one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, **"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."** And they **divided up his clothes** by casting lots. The people stood watching, and the rulers even **sneered** at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One." The soldiers also came up and **mocked** him. They offered him **wine vinegar** and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. One of the criminals who hung there hurled **insults** at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23:33-43, NIV.*

Conclusion – Church, are you ready to love like that?

1. We have got to get out of the habit of feeling justified when we hate the sinful

"To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of

all I get.’ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”” Luke 18:9-14, NIV.

2. We have got to understand how privileged we are to be in the Kingdom of God.

“As you come to him, the living Stone--**rejected** by men but **chosen** by God and **precious** to him-- you also, like living stones, are being built into a **spiritual house** to be a **holy priesthood**, offering **spiritual sacrifices** acceptable to God through **Jesus Christ**. For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” **Now to you who believe, this stone is precious.** But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,” and, “A **stone that causes men to stumble** and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message--which is also what they were destined for. But you are a **chosen people**, a **royal priesthood**, a **holy nation**, a **people belonging to God**, that you **may declare the praises of him** who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not **received mercy**, but now you have **received mercy.**” 1 Peter 2:4-10, NIV.

3. We have got grow up in our love and become like Jesus

“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-13, NIV.