

Morning Star Church
Small Group Study Guide
C2 Christmas, Session 4: Love
December 19-20, 2009

Message Synopsis: Pastor Mike continued our C2 Christmas series this week talking about love. The problem with the world's conception of love is performance based. *If you do this, if you execute what I need you to do, if you function in a certain way then you will be loved and accepted by people.* God interrupted our concept of love by sending unconditionally His Own Son, born into our world to show us how to love! Mary was the first to hear this glorious truth that God's love is unconditional, unchanging, and inseparable. And it was overwhelming for her to conceive it, so much so that she praises God in her song:

And Mary said I'm bursting with God-news; I'm dancing the song of my Savior God. God took one good look at me, and look what happened—I'm the most fortunate woman on earth! What God has done for me will never be forgotten, the God whose very name is holy, set apart from all others. His mercy flows in wave after wave on those who are in awe before him. He bared his arm and showed his strength, scattered the bluffing braggarts. He knocked tyrants off their high horses, pulled victims out of the mud. The starving poor sat down to a banquet; the callous rich were left out in the cold. He embraced his chosen child, Israel; he remembered and piled on the mercies, piled them high. It's exactly what he promised, beginning with Abraham and right up to now.

Luke 1:46-54, the Message

Additional passages to consider: John 1:10-14; John 3:16; Romans 5:8; Romans 8:31-35

Questions for your small group to consider:

1. Pastor Mike talked about the unconditional, unchanging, and inseparable love of God for us. He illustrated it in the Christmas story of God's Son coming to earth to prove His love for us, as Christmas approaches, what aspect of God's Love would you desire to know more about this year?
2. Mary's praise to God about His love for her in Luke 1 has this phrase in it, "*what God has done for me will never be forgotten...*" Share with your group what you would say to complete that statement, *What God has done for me will never be forgotten, this is what He did...*
3. God does not force us to love Him, but He does pursue us with His grace and mercy and He does persist in His forgiveness and tenderness. What would it mean to you this Christmas to realize your heart is the greatest gift God desires?
4. Discuss in your group why our culture's concept of love is so performance based. What can we as believers learn from the way God allows people to choose His love?

Prayer Requests

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God's love is based on God's character,
not our conduct.

- God's love is unconditional.
"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions... For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."
(Apostle Paul, Ephesians 2:4-5,8-9)
- God's love is unchanging.
"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Apostle Paul, Romans 8:38)
- God's love is unlimited.
"And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, 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."
(Apostle Paul, Ephesians 3:17-19)
- God's love confirms that we're God's children.
"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" (John, 1 John 3:1)
- God's love casts out fear.
"God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love." (John, 1 John 4: 16-18)

God's love transforms me from a human doing to a human being.

Salvation is not a matter of trying, but of trusting.

For further devotional study ...

December 21	Psalm 103:17; 108:4	December 25	John 3:16,17
December 22	Jeremiah 31:3	December 26	Romans 5:8
December 23	John 1:1-14	December 27	Ephesians 3:17-19
December 24	1 Timothy 3:16		