

Home Group study: week beginning 28th February 2021

Limitless Love

Do you have something in life, other than a person or the Lord, that you really love?

It might be a hobby, a pastime, an activity or even an object: your house, your car, whatever. How much time and/or effort do you put into that thing?

How easy is it for you to put in that level of devotion?

Read: 1 John 4: 7-21

The overwhelming message behind this passage is love. How many times is love mentioned in this passage? (*The answer if you need it, is 27!*) In his sermon on Sunday Carnie quoted some definitions of 'love'. How would you define 'love'?

What does v10 tell us about the nature of God's love? (*Not just his love in sending Jesus but that 'he loved us'. Worth discussing the implications of that.*)

Verse 9 says 'This is how God showed his love among us'; so how does he show his love?

Contemplate what it must be like to sacrifice your only son. Why did God sacrifice his son?

What does that tell us about how much God loves us?

Does this verse remind you of another verse written by John? Have a look at John 3: 16-17.

These words are so familiar that we can lose sight of their significance. How keen is God not to see anyone perish? Do you think that applies to people who have turned against God or who are totally evil? Or do you think God wants them to get their just desserts? What does v17 say is God's objective in sending his son to die? What does that say for God's love?

Back in 1 John 4, what should be the outcome of God's love for us? How should we show love to one another? 1 John 3: 17-18 gives us some ideas which the group might like to expand on.

In John's gospel, 13: 34-35 Jesus tells us what the result will be from loving one another.

How would you define 'one another'? How do you think everyone will know that we are Jesus' disciples if we love one another?

Verse 34 is 'a new command'. Can we be 'commanded' to love people?

Understanding

There is a lot in this passage about love and our relationship with God (eg vv7-8, 15-16, 20). What does our love 'for one another' say about our relationship with God? Can we ever love perfectly enough to say that we are in God and God is in us?

How is love described in verse 18? Does this seem a strange outcome of love or do you agree with what it says here? And what assurance do we get from verse 17? Does that help to drive out fear?

This is in some ways a difficult and challenging passage and in some ways a wonderful and reassuring passage. Verses 13-16 are literally at the centre of the passage; why do you think that might be? What do those verse say to us?

Application

As Carnie reminded us on Sunday there can be a lot of negativity in our lives.

That's especially so at the moment. What things may cause negativity in our lives?

How does this passage (and others referring to God's love) enable us to deal with this negativity? Can we remain negative when we know the extent of God's love for us?

And can we believe that that love is not just a 'general' love for all of God's people but applies to every one of us individually? Psalm 139 might help us to understand just how personally God loves us. It may have been written by King David more than 3,000 years ago, but it still applies to each of us in 2021. Even those of us who haven't been appointed as kings of Israel!