

# The Imitators of God

Ephesians 5:1-2

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Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. <sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

## Sermon outline

1. **Who** is the God, we are called to imitate?
2. **How** does this God reveal Himself?
3. **Where** to do we get the power to imitate by *walking in love* ?

# Characters of God

1. God is righteous and Holy
2. God is loving and kind

## Matthew 5:44-45

<sup>44</sup> But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

## Ephesians 2:4-6

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

## Jonah 4:9-11

<sup>9</sup> Then God said to Jonah, “Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?” And he said, “I have good reason to be angry, even to death.” <sup>10</sup> Then the Lord said, “You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work and *which* you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight. <sup>11</sup> Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know *the difference* between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?” (NASB)

## 1 John 4:9-10

<sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.



it is only on the cross that we can understand how God is able to resolve the tension. On the cross, God poured out his wrath on his people in the person of his Son. He satisfied both *justice*, because sin was punished, and *loving faithfulness*, since he is now able to accept and forgive us. Only through the cross, can God be both “just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:26).

***Tim Keller***

## Galatians 4:4-7

<sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, <sup>5</sup> so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. <sup>6</sup> Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” <sup>7</sup> Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

# New identity as Children of God

- It gives us tremendous assurance and security that God is our Heavenly Father who loves us deeply even as He loves our Elder brother Jesus Christ
- Therefore, we feel loved, forgiven, totally accepted
- We don't have to perform or prove our worth or abilities to earn acceptance from people
- We can freely confess our faults and ask for forgiveness and don't hold grudges with people for wrongs against us.
- We can freely enter into prayer and praise as we have intimate access to God the Father addressing Him

## 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

<sup>14</sup> For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. <sup>15</sup> And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

## Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death...”

and fell with His face to the ground and prayed

“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

How great the pain of searing loss  
The Father turns His face away  
As wounds which mar the Chosen One  
Bring many sons to glory

## Ephesians 4:31-32

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

- **Bitterness** – is a sour spirit and sour speech. It is ‘an embittered and resentful spirit which refuses to be reconciled’.
- **Wrath** – passionate rage
- **Anger** – settled and sullen hostility
- **Clamor** – people who get excited, raise their voices in a quarrel, and start shouting, even screaming at each other
- **Slander** – speaking evil of others, especially behind their backs and so defaming and even destroying their reputation.
- **Malice** – ill will, wishing and probably plotting evil against people. May include all previously mentioned vices



- **Kindness or be kind (*chrêstos*)** – God was kind to the ungrateful and selfish
- **Forgive one another** – as Christ forgave us
- **Be tenderhearted** – means to be compassionate as opposed to having a hardened ‘stony’ heart.

Tenderness of heart is wrought by an apprehension of tenderness and love in Christ. A soft heart is made soft by the blood of Christ. Many say, that an adamant cannot be melted with fire, but by blood. I cannot tell whether this be true or no; but I am sure nothing will melt the hard heart of man but the blood of Christ, the passion of our blessed Saviour. When a man considers of the love that God hath shewed him in sending of his Son, and doing such great things as he hath done, in giving of Christ to satisfy his justice, in setting us free from hell, Satan and death: the consideration of this, with the persuasion that we have interest in the same, melts the heart, and makes it become tender.

*Richard Sibbes (1577-1635)*