

## Steadfast Love; Lamentations 3:22-24

- I. Seeing is Believing
  - a. The phrase comes from the ancient Greeks and is found in many philosophers' writings
  - b. Jesus tells Thomas (after he wants to see Jesus' wounds) that those who believe without seeing are blessed
  - c. While that is absolutely true, I submit to you that we can see God
- II. Our Visible God
  - a. Our God is visible to us
  - b. This phrase may seem contradictory to Scripture
    - i. Exodus 33:20 (ESV) <sup>20</sup> But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."
    - ii. There are several other texts that tell us we cannot see God
  - c. God's form may not be visible to us, but He is seen throughout our world
    - i. Psalm 19:1 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
    - ii. Look up at the sky; what keeps the vacuum of space from intruding into our atmosphere?
    - iii. The cycle of rain is amazing
      - 1. All clouds are made up of water, ice crystals, or both suspended in air
      - 2. The different clouds represent different weather
    - iv. Psalm 104:24–25 (ESV) <sup>24</sup> O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. <sup>25</sup> Here is the sea, great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great.
      - 1. The colossal squid has eyes that are about the size of a soccer ball (the squid can reach up to 46 feet)
      - 2. They are almost exactly like human eyes (the camera eye)
      - 3. They have photospheres in the back which help them to see their prey in the dark depths of the sea (where they dwell)
      - 4. Their eyes are set forward giving them binocular vision
      - 5. Isaiah 40:26 (ESV) <sup>26</sup> Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing.
    - v. Romans 1:18–20 (ESV) <sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. <sup>19</sup> For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.
  - d. God is visible to us in all His creation
- III. Our Saving God

- a. "Story, I could've had a really different story"
- b. We all have a story
  - i. My story was one of self-gratification (what could I do to enjoy life as I thought it needed to be lived)
  - ii. I was the typical military airmen with a foul mouth and a penchant for drinking and for women
  - iii. I met Sherril, we got married and our mindsets changed
  - iv. While in Iceland we attended a denominational church off base
  - v. My neighbor was a member of the body (he is now an Elder in a church in Mississippi) (finish story)
- c. My story could have ended very differently
  - i. If I did not pay attention to God challenging my idea of life
  - ii. If I ignored God sending Doug and Stacy into our lives
  - iii. If I ignored God's love for me through His Son's sacrifice
- d. We have a saving God whose blood washes our sins away
- e. Romans 5:17–18 (ESV) <sup>17</sup> For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

#### IV. Our Loving God

- a. Romans 5:8 (ESV) <sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- b. God's love for us is manifested in everything He does (and did)
  - i. What if God, knowing that Eve would be deceived, knowing the Adam would eat the fruit as well, placed the tree in the middle of the Garden just so He could show His love for us?
  - ii. Knowing that we would fall, He still gave us the world and all that is in it
  - iii. Genesis 1:28–30 (ESV) <sup>28</sup> And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." <sup>29</sup> And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. <sup>30</sup> And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.
  - iv. Even though we are fallen, sinful, broken people God still loves us
- c. Nothing can stop God's love!
  - i. Romans 8:31–39 (ESV) <sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. <sup>35</sup>

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." <sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- ii. We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19)
- iii. 1 John 4:7–12 (ESV) <sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <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. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

d. God's love is everlasting

#### V. Steadfast Love

- a. Lamentations 3:22–24 (ESV) <sup>22</sup> The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; <sup>23</sup> they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. <sup>24</sup> "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."
- b. Nobody loves me like You love me, Jesus, I stand in awe of Your amazing ways, I worship You as long as I am breathing, God, You are faithful and true, Nobody loves me like You
- c. 1 John 3:1 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.