

David Brown: Boundless (28/9/19)

Introduction:

Boundless - having no bounds. Infinite or vast. Unlimited.

There are, in the words of the song we just sang, an insight into the boundless nature of God's love.

How **deep** the Father's love for us,
How **vast** beyond all measure,
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure.

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.

"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." **Ephesians 3:14-21**

Psalm 103:12 - "As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us."

Micah 7:19 - "He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea."

Extravagant Love:

"It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin." Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, pg 48

1. Judas

Judas, the self-appointed disciple, was with Jesus for three and half years. All the while, Jesus knew that this man would betray Him into the hands of evil men who would seek to kill Him.

Yet, Jesus displayed the extravagant love of God in that He kept on pursuing Judas till the end. Even to the point that, in John 13 it tells us that He revealed to the disciples that one of them would betray Him, and, in spite of this, He washed His betrayers feet. He, for whom it was an almost infinite humiliation to become a man, then got down on His knees and washed the feet of His betrayer. This is extravagant love!

2. Barrabas

Destined to death upon a cross for starting an insurrection against the state, Barrabas was another unlikely object of the extravagant love of God. Jesus, though He could

have saved Himself from all of this, prayed to His Father saying 'let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, if it is your will, I will go through with it.' And that is just what He did. He took the place of Barrabas, this most heinous criminal.

But, as it said in the song we sang earlier:

Behold the man upon a cross,

My sin upon His shoulders;

Ashamed, I hear *my mocking voice* call out among the scoffers.

It was *my sin* that held Him there, until it was accomplished;

His dying breath has brought *me life* -

I know that it is finished.

You and I are represented in Barrabas! So extravagant is the love of God that, no matter how heinous our crimes, He *has* taken our place!!

3. Mary

The final example that I would like to bring to your attention today is that of Mary Magdalene. Mary, in case you feel that your sins are too black for God to forgive, was a prostitute! When caught in the act and brought before Jesus for condemnation, she found the opposite to be the case. He freely forgave her! He heaped absolutely no condemnation on her. Freely? Really? Yes, freely!

If you have trouble understanding such free forgiveness, you are in good company. So did Simon the Pharisee. In Luke 7 we read about a feast that he put on to celebrate God's goodness in healing him of his leprosy. But, as is apparent in the story, not all of that leprosy had been healed. It appears that the leprous cancer of self was still present Simon's heart, because when Mary appeared at the feast to anoint Jesus her Messiah, Simon was incensed. He could not believe that Jesus was entertaining such a woman!

Let's read a couple of verses. "And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it." "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.'" **Luke 7:40-47**

Jesus' love for Mary was extravagant! He freely forgave her for a sin that was thought to be unforgivable! Can you relate? It is sometimes easy to look at the sins of others as redeemable, but your own? Now that is a different story! But, after experiencing such a great redemption, Mary's heart was filled with a correspondingly great love for Him! To whom much love is shown, much love is experienced! Is this your experience?

I will not boast in anything,
No gifts, no power, no wisdom;
But I will boast in Jesus Christ,
His death and resurrection.

Why should I gain from His reward?

I cannot give an answer;
But this I know with all my heart –
His wounds have paid my ransom.

Christian Sincerity:

According to the apostle Paul, there is only one reasonable response to such extravagant love!

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." **Romans 12:1,2**
In view of God's great mercy, the only reasonable response is to give yourself entirely! A living sacrifice. God gave all of heaven for us. He poured out a love that was boundless. So why would we put up boundaries on our response?

In **Mark 12:30** it says that we are to love God with ALL our heart, mind, soul and strength. Everything we have! But don't just stop there. Notice that it says love God with all YOUR heart, all YOUR mind, all YOUR soul, and all YOUR strength? God isn't calling you to give in proportion to what someone else can give. He is asking you to give what you can give. You, the unique you that you are. This is what God wants! He wants you to respond to His extravagant love by giving Him all of YOURself.

The Bible calls for the Christian to be the hardest working person in the world.

- **Ecclesiastes 9:10** - "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going."
- **Colossians 3:23** - "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men."
- **1 Corinthians 10:31** - "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."
- **Proverbs 12:11** (NIV) - "Those who work their land will have abundant food, but those who chase fantasies have no sense."

"If you are not willing to risk the unusual, you will have to settle for the ordinary." Jim Rohn

As a Christian, if you're not working your backside off, you should probably question your sincerity!

Conclusion:

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." **Hebrews 11:6**

According to the author of Hebrews, if we don't have faith in the kind of God that rules the universe, we cannot please Him.

Which begs the question: what is it that you believe about God? Does your life testify that this is what you believe?

Do you truly believe that God's love for you is boundless? If God's love is immense, extravagant, boundless, shouldn't your response be correspondingly extravagant?

In **Hebrews 9:23** it says that in comparison to all the types and symbols that teach us about salvation, the gift of Jesus was a "better sacrifice." In **Hebrews 10:14** it says that God, "by a single offering," the perfect offering of His Son, "has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified." The gift of Jesus was enough. Enough for all time. For all men. It was the perfect gift of a boundless, extravagant love.

"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." **Hebrews 13:15**

God doesn't care so much about what you offer Him in response to His love. He cares far more that you give Him all of yourself. This is, after all, the only reasonable response to such boundless love.

In **Malachi 1:7-10** God expresses His disbelief people feel it appropriate to bring Him a polluted offering. The people had got to the place where they were content to bring God the scraps. The leftovers. Can you believe it? Bringing God the leftovers! They would come to the temple with a maimed or sick lamb and offer it up to the Most High God of the universe. The One who was the very reason for their existence, the one who had delivered them from Egypt, who had taken them to the land of promise, who had promised to be with them and had gone with them into every captivity. This God, they brought a polluted offering! As unbelievable as that sounds, it is exactly what we do. We come to God with the scraps of our heart, mind, soul and strength. We give Him the dregs of our time, the dregs of our devotion. We are content to give Him less than the best. This, in contrast with His extravagant love, is laughable! Who do we think we are!?

In Isaiah chapter 5 God describes His relationship with His people through the metaphor of a vineyard. He tells how He had made the perfect preparations, doing everything just right so that the vineyard would produce good fruit! Then, when all of this was done, He waited to see what would happen. Unbelievably, the vineyard produced wild grapes! Standing back in disbelief, we hear Him say "what more could I have done?" **Isaiah 5:4.**

Ask yourself this question today. What more could God have done? What more could He have done to show you how precious you are? What more could He have done to call forth the appropriate response from our hearts? He has done it all! Now it is up to us. Will we bear good fruit? Or will we stubbornly bring forth wild grapes in spite of all God has done?

God isn't asking for something that you're not, He's asking for all that you are!