**February 18, 2018 “As Christ Also Loved You” Ephesians 5:1-2**

Last week in our study of Ephesians, we looked at what it meant to be imitators of God. As you will note in Ephesians 5:1, this statement by Paul is not a suggestion but rather it is in the form of a command… “be imitators of God”.

That command has bothered me since I began to research it in depth. The reason it has is because I know that in my heart and in my flesh, I cannot imitate God so how can I relate to this command? How can I obey that which God is calling me to?

It is far easier for me to identify with David as he writes in Psalm 51:3, “I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against You and You only have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight.” That is far easier for me to comprehend than “be imitators of God”.

How then can I or we become the imitator of God? The answer if found in Ephesians 3:14-19… “that you may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man”.

Have you ever had someone tell you that God is love? I have had that many times but have you ever asked them how do we know this? How do we know that God is love? Could it be that we know that God is love by His willingness to forgive? Note vs 32 of Ephesians 4… “just as God in Christ has forgiven you”.

I find so often in my life it is much easier for me to accept the forgiveness of God to me in my life than it is to extend that same forgiveness to others. Do you find that to be true in your life as well? If and when someone does something to us that we do not like, what is our first reaction? Vs 31 or vs 32 of Ephesians 4? You see what Paul is trying to show us that the depth of our love for God is indicated by how willing we are to forgive!!!

Why do I or we struggle so with forgiveness? Could it be that our modern view of God is all wrong? How many of us have seen a pictorial rendition of Da Vinci’s portrayal of Christ? We see Him in that portrayal with long flowing wavy reddish-brown hair with a perfectly manicured beard with folded hands looking somberly toward heaven. Or we see Him in a picture with children flocking around Him with similes on their faces and He is holding them on His lap and they are having such a good time with Jesus. Question, Is that an accurate portrayal of Christ? Is that how the Bible describes Jesus? Or is this more accurate? Revelation 1:10-17… “and I fell at His feet like a dead man”. And Revelation 20:11… “from whose presence earth and heaven fled away and there was no place found for them”.

Is God love? Absolutely… it has always been His standard the love of God should always be the standard in our lives as well.

1. Exodus 20:1-17
   1. How many of us realize that the law of God is the portrayal of His love?
      1. The first four are love towards God
      2. Last six are love toward our fellow man
   2. Vs 3… Thou shalt have no other gods before Me
      1. Loyalty
         1. Love does not change with circumstances
         2. Do you love me enough not to go after anything else?
   3. Exodus 20:4-6… Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image
      1. Love is faithful
         1. Showing loving kindness to thousands
            1. To those “who love Me”
            2. And keep My commandments

“be imitators of God”

* 1. Exodus 20:7… Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain
     1. Hold God in reverence
        1. How do you and I show reverence for God?
           1. Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called
           2. Walk in love
           3. Walk not as the Gentiles do
           4. Walk as children of light
  2. Exodus 20:8-11… Remember the Sabbath day
     1. Take time to fellowship with God

What does this first section tell us? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all you mind and with all your strength.

1. Second section
   1. Exodus 20:12… Honor your father and your mother
      1. Love is respectful to everyone
   2. Exodus 20:13… thou shalt not murder
      1. Love is harmless
   3. Exodus 20:14… thou shalt not commit adultery
      1. Love is pure and seeks purity
   4. Exodus 20:15… thou shalt not steal
      1. Love is unselfish
   5. Exodus 20:16… thou shalt not bear false witness against your neighbor
      1. Love does not do anything that is hurtful
   6. Exodus 20:17… thou shalt not covet
      1. Love is not jealous and is content
2. Mark 12:28-33
   1. I Corinthians 12:31b… I will show you a still more excellent way
      1. I Corinthians 13
      2. “Just as God in Christ also has forgiven you”