

Have you ever wondered where love comes from? When you see the love between a man and his wife, do you wonder where that love comes from? Or the love between a parent and a child where does that love come from? Or the love between family or good friends where does that come from? Where does love come from? The Bible gives us the answer. Love comes from God because God is Himself love. Look at verses 7-8: *“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”*

There has never been a time when there was not God, and so there has never been a time when there was not love. The Bible begins with these four words in the book of Genesis: “In the beginning God ...” God is love, and so we could also say, “In the beginning love ...” In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. In the beginning love spun a universe across the stretches of time. Love comes from God, because God is love.

Love has always existed, from the very beginning. Even before the world was created, there was love. Jesus prayed in **John 17:24** *“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”*

People sometimes wonder, “Who did God love before he created people?” And the answer is, God loved Himself! God is one God, and yet in three persons God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, we call this the Trinity. So, the Father loved the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Son loved the Father and the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit loved the Father and the Son. Please note here God’s love is always shared, it is God’s nature to share His love. Love has always existed because God has always existed, and God is love.

But God not only loved Himself before creation; he also looked forward in time and loved us. We read in **Ephesians 1: 4 - 5** *“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.”*

Let just stop and think about those words Paul wrote to the Church in Ephesus. Just think even before God spoke the universe into existence God loved you. Just think that there has never been a time when God has not loved you and wanted to share His love with you. Lucas's story

Where does love come from? Love comes from God because God is love. That's our first truth for this morning. Love comes from God.

Our second truth is this: love came down to earth. Look at **1 John 4: 9** *"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him."*

God created us because he loves us and wants to have a relationship with us. But after God created us, we rebelled against him. The Bible says we have all sinned and thus broken our relationship with God. But that didn't stop God's love. Love began in eternity among the persons of the Trinity, but love came down to earth at Christmas. God sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

The Nicene Creed puts it this way. "We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds; God of God; Light of Light; Very God of Very God; begotten, not made; being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven; and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man."

Or as we read in the gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning ... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

The miracle of Christmas is that the baby in the manger was God in human flesh. God became a man. The Son of God became the son of man. Jesus who had lived with God the Father in eternity entered our world on Christmas day. He left the glories of heaven and came to earth as a tiny baby. This is how God showed his love among us:

He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. That is how we have our rebellion forgiven and so that God could lavish His love on us. Love began in heaven, but love came down to earth at Christmas.

Love comes from God. That's our first truth. Love came down to earth that first Christmas. That's our second truth. And finally, love came down to the cross. Look at **1 John 4:10** *"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."* God loves us so much that he not only sent Jesus to earth, he sent him to the cross at Calvary.

Philippians 2: 6 - 8 tells us that Jesus *"who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!"*

This was God's plan all along. It's part of the Christmas story. When Mary became pregnant with Jesus, the angel told Joseph, **Matthew 1: 20 - 21** *"Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."* Jesus is the same name as Joshua in the Old Testament which literally means, "The Lord is salvation," and so the name Jesus actually means "Saviour."

Jesus lived his entire life in the shadow of the cross. Love not only came down to earth at Christmas. Love came down to the cross to pay the price for our sins so that we could be saved. As the angel said to the shepherds that first Christmas Eve **Luke 2: 11** *"Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."* This was the true gift of Christmas. Not simply the gift of a Son, but the gift of a Saviour. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Love came down at Christmas. Love came down to the cross.

On 13th November 1984 Foreigner released the single, "I want to know what love is" it became a worldwide no1 and expressed a heart truth of many who heard it. I'll read a few lines from the song,

*Now this mountain, I must climb
Feels like the world upon my shoulders
But through the clouds, I see love shine
It keeps me warm as life grows colder*

*In my life, there's been heartache and pain
I don't know if I can face it again
Can't stop now, I've travelled so far
To change this lonely life*

*I wanna know what love is
I want you to show me
I wanna feel what love is
I know you can show me*

This song has a message, that captures the heart's true desire, that is to be loved and to know what love is. Do you want to know what love is, then ask Jesus to show you? Jesus will point to the cross and stretch out His arms and turn His nail pierced hands towards you and say, "I already have my beloved child I did this for the love you."

God went to extraordinary lengths to show His love to us. That He came down to earth that first Christmas, lived amongst us for thirty odd years and submitted to a cruel and barbarous death so that He may lavish His love fully and freely upon on us.

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

As Corrie Ten Boom said, "Who can add to Christmas? The perfect motive is that God so loved the world. The perfect gift is that He gave His only Son. The only requirement is to believe in Him. The reward of faith is that you shall have everlasting life."

Love came down at Christmas. Will you allow God to love you?