

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John 4:7&8**

Chapter 17- Being Born of God

174. Being Born of God- Part 2

WAOY Wednesday 03/26/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about "Being Born of God". So let's read **1John 4:7&8** again together:

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Now on the last broadcast- we were going over the kind of selfless, giving and not expecting anything in return love that John was talking about here and today I want to zero in on the phrase that John said in verse 7-

.. everyone who loves is born of God.

Now obviously- we know that John does *not* mean that everybody who loves golf is born of God or that everybody who loves Country and Western Music is born of God. John is not saying that everybody who has any degree of love for anything is born of God. That is certainly not what John was talking about here.

No, John is saying that godly, selfless, giving love is the hallmark of the new birth. That everyone who is born from above no longer loves himself supremely; he no longer has himself as the center of all that he does and thinks; he no longer lives his life selfishly and to benefit himself – but that this person now loves God and he loves God's Word and he loves the ways of God more than he loves anything or anyone else.

This kind of love will cause this person to obey what God has said- rather than to do what is right in his own eyes; it will cause him to seek

after God's Will- rather than simply live to himself; it will cause him to do all to the glory of God rather than to do what will satisfy his own lusts and cravings.

You see, dear friends- in the final analysis- love- real love; true love always causes a measurable response from us- always and in every case. The concept that we can love Jesus absent obedience to Jesus is not a concept that is found anywhere in Scripture. The Bible teaches that our obedience; our devotion; our willingness to sacrifice what we want and do what Jesus wants us to do is *always* the result of us being saved by Grace and walking our corresponding love that we have for what Christ has done in us and for us. In other words- those who are born again will love God enough to obey Him. Jesus Himself put it like this in **John 14:15**:

If you love Me you will keep My commandments.

And again in **Luke 6:46**, when He asked:

Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord' and do not do what I say?

You see, the notion that Jesus can be your Savior without Jesus being your Lord is again not found anywhere in Scripture. Jesus is either your Lord or else you are not saved. And if Jesus is Lord- then we are bought and paid for by Jesus and if we are bought and paid for then we are slaves- who have absolutely no rights and who serve the Master for the Master's benefit and for the Master's glory.

And for any human being to love that kind of arrangement is a miracle and it indicates that something radical and dramatic has taken place in the heart and nature of that person or else he would never agree to an arrangement like that. And I suggest to you that that radical and dramatic thing that occurred in us that causes us to be willing to live the remainder of our lives as a slave of Jesus Christ; that thing that actually brings us the greatest degree of satisfaction and the greatest degree of joy when we live to honor only God and when we live to fulfill only God's Will is that our wicked hearts have come into contact with the love of God.

And those who love- always do something *because* of that love. They don't see it as an obligation- although it surely is; they don't see it

as a duty- although it surely is- they see it as the way to honor God and the way to please the Master and the way to bring glory to the One that they so desperately and fully love.

For example- those who love their children will not sit around and wait for somebody else to feed and clothe and provide for them- he will do it himself. And he will work three jobs if necessary- but because he loves them- he will do what love requires and in so doing- he will find joy and satisfaction in doing it. Those who love their wives will not disrespect their wives and will not allow anyone else to disrespect her- not even their children. And in so honoring his wife- the man will attain joy and satisfaction that the world has never known.

And if a man loves God- it is because God loved him first and God supernaturally and marvelously changed him and God gave him the greatest gift that anyone could ever have- that great gift is the gift of love for God- and because he has been given that gift- he will follow after God- he will seek to please God- regardless of the cost and regardless of what it may do to him personally- because man was created to know God and to love God and only by knowing and loving God can any human being attain the fullness of joy and the fullness of satisfaction and so the redeemed man will serve God and he will obey God- although at times he will stumble and at times he will fall short- he will never quit; he will never stop his pursuit of God because he has within him a part of God's very Own Nature that compels him onward.

This is why over and over in this Epistle- John measured our love for God and our love for each other by what we actually *do* and not what we *say*.

You see, it takes no courage, dear friends, to *say* that you love God and then live as though you don't. It takes no sacrifice; it costs you nothing to say something- unless you are willing to do actually do it. And something that never requires anything of you; something that costs you nothing; something that makes no demands on your life at all is cheap and it is fruitless and it is temporary and it is base.

But if anything is priceless- it is the love of God; if there is any commodity at all that is valuable- it is God's love. So therefore God's Love will make the *most* demands on your life; it will require of you *more* than anything else and it will cost you the highest price. So never be guilty of saying or even thinking that God's love will not cost you something. Dear friends- God's love is so valuable; God's Love is so

priceless; it is so important; it is so meaningful and so eternal and so glorious- God's Love will cost you everything!

And that is why Jesus said over and over that every other kind of affection that human beings are able to experience on this earth must appear to us as being hate compared to the love of God. The love of family; the love of country; the love of a wife or a husband; the love of children- mother or father- everything must be as hate to us compared the indescribable and incomprehensible love of God.

That is why it is true to say that only born again people have this love because until God moves upon us first; until God does a Sovereign work in us first- no human being born of woman has the capacity for any love like this. And that is also why when a person does exhibit this selfless love it is a glorious and beautiful thing to behold.

To rightly understand verse 7- we must take it and turn it around. John said that everyone who loveth is born of God and that is a universal imperative phrase in the Greek which means that every single human being who possess this selfless love is born of God and the reason that is true is because only those who are born from above by the miraculous power of the new birth have either the desire and the power to demonstrate this kind of godly love.

Now John shows us here that the ultimate test of our Christian faith is that we love one another. And I must say here that this kind of godly selfless love is more vital a test than our orthodoxy.

Now those of you who know me know that I am very big about what we believe. Orthodoxy- or correct Doctrine is absolutely vital to the believer and we live in a time when Sound Doctrine is in very short supply. So I want to say here and now that without Truth being paramount in your life- you will eventually fall into false belief and you will be off base- and that is why the Bible commands us over and over to get the Gospel right and preach it right and live it right.

I think that it is a great tragedy today to hear so many people place so little importance on what we believe- I see it as one of the biggest and most serious failures in the modern Church and I am going to continue to cry out against that as long as God is gracious to give me the ability to do so.

Now having said that as we read here what John says we have to say that while getting our theology and our Doctrine right is a great part of serving the Lord- it isn't the greatest part.

Brothers and sisters, we must believe right things – because without that we have nothing at all and we have no standing whatsoever- so the correctness of our beliefs is absolutely essential. And yet John says here that as it pertains to our experience and our self-examination- the test of orthodoxy is *not* the ultimate test.

So let us admit that it is very possible for someone to be right on all of his theology and still be lost. It is possible for someone to understand the great mysteries of God and still be yet in his sins. It is possible for someone to be able to extrapolate all of the nuances of the Doctrine of the Trinity and still be unsaved and unregenerate.

Dear friends- we have to admit that we live in a day when so much de-emphasis has been placed on Sound Doctrine that people today are more confused about the serious eternal issues of God than ever before- and we are much poorer because of that unwise course of action. Ancient heresies that troubled the people of God many hundreds of years ago are making a huge comeback in our day precisely because people do not know what they believe or why they believe it. The cults are growing today by double digits all because we have lowered the importance of clear sound Doctrine and precise Biblical Theology. I do not apologize at all for making sound Doctrine an issue on these broadcasts. It is a shame how we have thrown 2,000 years of Church history under the bus all because we are not as concerned about Divine Truth as much as the Bible says that we should be.

But as important as Theology and Doctrine is- the Scriptures are clear. As vital as a Biblical Theology is to the believer in the 21st Century- it is not the most important thing. John makes it crystal clear in his Epistle that loving God and loving each other is the trump card in Christianity. Without godly and selfless love toward each other and without a fervent and unyielding love for God and the things of God- nothing else matters- not even Sound Doctrine.

That is not to say that because love is paramount that we do not need Sound Doctrine or that accurate Biblical Doctrine doesn't matter- it matters a whole lot and without it- we are in serious trouble. But even with Sound Doctrine- if we do not have and if we do not manifest this godly selfless kind of love- we are nothing more than sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. Paul put it this way in **1Corinthians 13:1-8a**:

1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 If I have *the gift of prophecy*, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

3 And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant,

5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*,

6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails...

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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