

1 John 4:7-11

“Why God Sent His Son”

Has anyone noticed the overwhelming emphasis of love in this letter? I’m going to be honest; I was tempted to make short work of this passage that’s before us today. Read over it, make a couple comments concerning it & move on. Because it’s a passage that circles back to love & we’ve looked at & thought through this principle in previous passages. – But I got a check in my spirit when I was considering that, & the way it came across my mind was something to the effect of, “If it was important enough to John to come back to this topic (& by extension important enough to the Holy Spirit who was inspiring Jn to write it) then why isn’t it important enough to *you* to take your time & teach it”? So... we’re going to take our time w/this text & allow ourselves (humbly) to continue to learn of the love of God.

Vs 7-11

Are you picking up what John is putting down here? Here we have this brief handful of verses & the words, “beloved, love, loved & loves” are used some 13 times in 5 verses!

& I would state again (for the record) that the kind of love that’s in view throughout this passage isn’t storgē, it’s not eros or philō, it’s the non-self-seeking, others oriented, sacrificial, service-oriented love of God, it’s agapē.

& In the Greek it’s pretty plain. A loose translation might be “You who are *loved*, are to *love*.” We might go as far as to say, “You who are loved *by* God, demonstrate/display the love of God.”

I want you to notice the order, (John alludes to it here, he makes plain in Vs 10). The *reason* you’re to love is because you’re *already* loved by God. The initiative doesn’t belong to you, the response (& responsibility) does. God loves you, so love one another.

* There is in scripture a principle that I refer to as Divine initiative & human responsibility. You will never find a situation in which *man* initiates a relationship w/God & *God* responds by saying, “I’m so grateful that you’ve chosen to pursue Me & want to know Me!” It’s always & *only* the other way around. God initiates, we respond. Jesus said that like this, “*You did not choose Me, but I chose you...*”¹

The Bible is clear in no uncertain terms, “*There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.*”²

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 15:16]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ro 3:10-12]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

What does that mean? It means that if you know J.C. it's not because you sought after Him. It's because He sought after you! He reached out to *you* & you *responded* to His initiative. *If you're currently seeking... there you are, you're trying to learn, trying to find truth & you feel like it's leading you His way. It's not because you just woke up one day & decided to search for God. It's because He began wooing you, drawing you & you're responding the tug of the Holy Spirit upon your heart to seek after & search for truth... He knows where it'll lead you, it'll lead you to J.C. who is the way *the truth* & the life, & you will come to the Father, through Him. He's the door by which we enter into eternal life...**

You are loved by God. The Holy Spirit assures & reassures us of that fact all throughout this letter. & It's important that you be established in that fact. Because how many of you know that times can be tough? We go through trials... & tribulations... & seasons of struggle & if we're not careful we can begin to question God's love.

*Like our children, they say things like, "If you loved me..." fill in the blank. Generally, it applies to something they want, or wanting you to be done w/something they *don't* want. We're the same way w/God.*

Let me ask you something. When your child says, "If you loved me..." & then they give you some sort of ultimatum, is what they have to say a true reflection of your heart or the truth of the matter? No. It may be their perspective, but it's not reflective of the truth. So to w/you & me & our relationship w/our Father in heaven.

We don't always *understand* what God is up to, from our *perspective* we may not even *agree* w/what God is up to... God never asked us to understand the *why* behind every *what*. He doesn't ask us to understand Him. He asks us to *trust* Him. His ways are higher than our ways, how then are we going to understand every situation, every circumstance, every struggle that enters the equation of our lives?

When you're dealing w/a child, there are certain things that no matter how hard you try, you cannot explain to them in a way that they understand. I see young parents try this sometimes. There they are w/their 2yr old or young toddler & they're trying to rationalize w/them & the child is plainly not tracking...

There are times that a child just cannot understand, in such cases they must learn to trust. So to w/us & our heavenly Father. Never trade what you don't understand for what you do understand. I don't understand what's happening, I don't understand *why* it's happening, but this much I do understand. God loves me, therefore though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.

Beloved... let us love (let us continually be loving) one another. Btw, the words, “one another” bring reciprocity into view. It’s mutual exchange. Now, we don’t love to *be* loved. But if we’re both fulfilling this command, then love will be mutual between us.

“For love is of God; & everyone who loves is born of God & knows God.” If love is of God & God is *in* you, then His love will flow *through* you to one another. Paul told the Romans that the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom He has given us. To Timothy he put it like this, “*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*”³ You might write it down & read it later, 1 Peter 1:22-23. The *love* of God is an inescapable attribute of the *child* of God.

Now, that doesn’t mean that His love is *perfected* in the life of the believer (in the sense that we will always be able to walk in it w/never a flaw). But it must be *present* & *practiced* in the life of the believer in a growing/maturing manner.

“Everyone who loves is born of God & knows God.” Again, everyone who “agapes” is born of God, born again by the Spirit of God & knows (that is, has experienced) God. Jn is saying that, * when you’ve truly experienced God, it will show by His love at work in & through your life... Satan divides & destroys. Jesus unites people in His love... If you don’t love the *people* of God, then your claim to be *born* of God or to *know* God is simply false...

“For love is of God.” That is, it springs forth *from* God. God is the wellspring, the source in which true love (agape love) originates & flows out from.

What does this mean for you in your relationships w/one another? If you’re struggling in your marriage relationship in maintaining love for one another? *It means you need to draw nearer to God, for love is of God. If you want to love one another more, you need to make it your aim to draw nearer to God. If you make it your aim to focus on your relationship w/God, it will (as a necessary byproduct) aid in strengthening your love relationship w/one another.* *

Vs 8

* Notice Jn says that God is love, but he doesn’t say that love is God. Love is intrinsic to the very nature of God. But God is much more than love *only*. We might say that love doesn’t define God, but God defines love. Back in Ch 1 we were told that God is *light*. Jesus told us that God is Spirit, in Ch 3 John tells us that He is *righteous*. The book of Hebrews tells us that our God is a consuming fire. So... God is love – He’s not *only* love.

³ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (2 Ti 1:7). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He's life, He's righteousness, He's holiness, He is light... He is just & the justifier of us all. But what Jn is simply communicating here is that the love of God will be seen & shown in/through the child of God. & At the risk of redundancy. He's not talking about love for your mom, or your children or your spouse (though those things will be there). He's not speaking of something sentimental or social, he's speaking about something supernatural. He's speaking about love for the body of Christ. *

Vs 9

In his gospel we read it like this, **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."*⁴ How was the love of God for mankind made manifest to mankind? How is it that God demonstrated His love for you & me? How did He make it plain for all people to see?

A few weeks ago, I spoke to you of how God reveals Himself through nature. We learn of God's *existence* through nature... We learn of His power, His wisdom, His creativity, that surely He is great & greatly to be praised. Paul tells us in Rom Ch 1, *"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead,"*⁵ In other words, creation (the visible) testifies of the Creator (invisible).

The Psalmist said, *"The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world."*⁶ The whole earth is filled w/His glory... However, when we look at nature, nature wants to kill you. You see the gazelle, it's so interesting, beautiful & swift, then you see the lioness stalking the gazelle, it preys on the gazelle, overtakes/overpowers the gazelle & delivers to its pride peanut butter & gazellee sandwiches. ☺

Nature is brutal, winter will kill you if you're not equipped, the desert, the Mts or forest, the ocean. Beautiful to behold, brutal to be left in w/out appropriate supplies. Nature does not testify to us of God's love, nor does the Bible teach that it does. All throughout your NT the love of God is directly connected to the cross of J.C.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 3:16-17]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ro 1:20]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ps 19:1-4]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

“In *this* the love of God was manifested (made evident) toward us...” Not in the Mts, or the forests, not in the oceans or painted deserts, “that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might *live* through Him.” *

Family this is what we need! “Life”. Apart from Christ we are dead (spiritually) in trespasses & sins. Sin results in death, Jesus came to give us life. The paradox is difficult to grasp. Jesus had to die so that we might live.

& Again, if you’ll just allow me to hammer home this point. I want to circle back to our, “God if you love me then why...” (fill in the blank). God never said, “You’ll know I love you by how plush & problem free I make your life.” His love was not manifested toward us in that we win the lottery, never struggle financially, or fall sick physically, we’re never befallen by tragedy. & Again, I’m not trying to say we always understand the “why” (though we know God can use those things to our benefit somehow eternally, that doesn’t always make us feel better presently...) God makes known & proves to you His love for you in that Christ died for you personally.

It was a tremendous sacrifice for the Father & for the Son, no greater love has anyone than this, then to lay down one’s life for his friends. Yet God demonstrated His own love toward us in that while we were still sinners, our backs turned *toward* Him, wanting nothing to do *with* Him. Christ died for us...

* Btw, can we talk for just a second about this term here in Vs 9, “His only begotten Son”? This is a term unique unto Jesus alone. It speaks of the fact that the Father & the Son are of the same substance, the same essential Being. When you use the term “Beget”, it speaks of something exactly the same. You can *create* a statue that looks like you, but it doesn’t share the same substance as you, it’ll never be human. But if you “beget” someone, it means that they’re a human being, just the same as you are. An animal begets an animal, insects beget insects, birds beget birds. What does God beget? God.

You & me, we are *adopted* as sons & daughters of God, but we don’t share the same essential nature as God. Jesus is “begotten” of God. You are a “human” being. Jesus is a “God-Being” who robbed Himself in humanity. -- & Why did God send Him into the world? That we might live through Him. Family, there’s a big difference between existing & living. Everyone has “existence” not everyone has “life”. In *Him* (that is in Jesus) there is life & the life is the light of men. *

Vs10

Here it is in plain view, Divine initiative. “In this is love, *not that we loved God...*”

But that He loved *us* (& how do we know that He loved us)? He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

You see? You didn't love God, I didn't love God. “In this is love, you have your devotions, you serve in missions, you attend church regularly, give so generously.” Those things aren't the initiative *of* love, they are a response *to* love. It's not that you loved God, but that He loved *you* & sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Divine initiative. In mythology the gods are typically angry w/humanity. They're always using/abusing humanity & people are bringing their gifts to them to try & appease them, win favor from them. Christianity is completely the opposite. Mankind has sinned against *God*, mankind walked away & strayed from *God*. But God loved *us*, reached out to *us* & made a way of reconciliation *for* us that we might live through Him.

We see 2 purposes for the death of Christ upon the cross here. #1 That we might live through Him. #2 He would serve as the *propitiation* for our sins. The death of Jesus wasn't an accident, it was an appointment.

We've seen this word “propitiation” before in Ch 2. Let's remember, it simply means a sacrifice sufficient to satisfy the righteous wrath of God against sin. It points to the fact that He took the punishment, the death that we deserved. He died for us that we might live through Him.

Listen, God didn't send an angel into the world, or some “lower level” being of sorts. He gave His very best, His only begotten Son... This is the love of God, love gives it's very best, not the least it can get by with...

& Think about it, God could've sent Jesus to teach us of Himself. That would've been more than we deserved. He could've sent Him to live out His life as an example, to show us what truly godly living looks like. But God so loved you, that He sent His only begotten Son, not just to teach you, or be an example *to* you, but to die *for* you that you might have *life* (eternal life) in Him.

* Guys, our love for God really doesn't say anything special about us. It's the only reasonable response to receiving *His* love. But God's love for *us*, speaks volumes about *Him*. His grace, His mercy, His forgiveness, His compassion, His patience, His infinite wisdom in reconciling the sin dilemma in righteousness & holiness, His perfect justice & desire to have a relationship w/us... *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!*⁷ *

Vs 11

* I want you to see this. The proper way to love God (in response to His love for us) is to go out & love one another. God would have us “pay it forward”. – It was both an illustration & an application that Jn had received from Jesus.

Perhaps you can recall it in your mind’s eye? There was your Lord & mine at the Last Supper on that fateful night... He’s washing the feet of His disciples. It would be the natural order (one would think) for Him to say (after He was finished), “Now, who’s going to do for *Me* what I have done for *you*?” But that’s not what happens, what happens isn’t a display of the natural, but of the *supernatural*. Jesus looks at them & says, “*You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.*”⁸

Notice the word “ought”, (it’s in our **closing** Vs this morning as well). It carries the idea of being obliged, of owing a debt. You & me we owe a debt. **Can we ever repay it? No. It’s as if God says, “I’ve forgiven you completely. Now here’s what you’re to do for Me. Love one another.” & What you do to the least of these My brethren (Jesus said) you do to Me... My love for God can be seen in my love for the body of Christ.** *

* If God’s love never flows *out* of me, then it’s fair to question if the love of God has ever flowed *into* me. Imagine a clogged pipe, water is going in, but it’s not flowing through, it’s never finding its way out... What good is the pipe? You & me, we are conduits of the love of God. He pours His love *into* us that it might flow *out of* us to others *around* us...

Think of how God has loved you. He’s given everything for you, the grace He’s shown you, the mercy/forgiveness He’s extended to you time & time again. He’s been truthful w/you, He’s been there *for* you, He’s had compassion *on* you. You didn’t deserve any of it... “Beloved, if God so love us, we also out to love one another.” *

Prayer Points:

God we thank You for Your love... You undeserved, unmatched, unsearchable love. We thank You for sending J.C. to be the propitiation for our sins, that we might have life, that we might live through Him.

If you have yet to turn from your sins & believe on J.C. then you exist, but you’re not truly alive. We receive *life* in Christ. Turn from your sins, trust in Him & be saved.

⁸ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 13:13–14]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.