

Series: 1 John
Title: If God So Loved Us
Text: 1 John 4: 9-13
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1 John 4: 8:...God is love.

It does not say, “God is loving.” It says “God IS love.” God in His very being is love. Scripture says “God is *Spirit*”—his very being is Spirit (Jn 4:24). Scripture says “God is *light*”—his very being is light (1 Jn 1:5). Likewise, “God is *love*”—the very nature of God is love.

1 John 4:16: God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

If we are born-again of God then God dwelleth in us and we in him. Since God is love, we dwell in love. When God, who is love, dwells in us, the new nature he has created is love. We dwell in love. “*God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*”

That is why John speaks with dogmatism and says these two things are certain, “*Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*” Likewise, this second thing is true, “*He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*”

If God abides in me then Love abides in me, that is, God, who is love. Therefore, without a doubt, I will love Christ and love my brethren. It is impossible to do otherwise. “*If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*”

Therefore, for the same reason, without a doubt, “*he that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.*” John says, “*If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar*” (1 John 4: 20).

So where do we look to behold the love of God toward us? How do we know how we ought to love our brethren?

1 John 4: 9: In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11: Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

When John says, “If God so loved us”, the word “so” means after this manner. If God, after this manner, loved us, we ought also to love one another, after this manner.

Proposition: Believer, we behold God’s love toward his elect in Christ and he says if God so loved us we ought to love one another after the same manner.

GOD GAVE HIS BEST

1 John 4: 9: In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

For God’s elect, God loved by giving his very best. The love of God for his people made God give his very best. God sent his only begotten Son into the world. God gave the one who pleased him. His love made

God give the one he loved most. He said, *“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased”* (Mt 3:17). God gave the very best that he could give—his own darling Son—because God loved his people.

Believer, if God, after this manner, loved us then we ought to love one another after this manner. We ought to love one another with our very best. In whatever we are doing for one another we ought to put forth our very best. We should do what we sing,

*“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small,
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.”*

CHRIST CAME TO WHERE WE ARE

1 John 4: 9: In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world,...

God loved his people so that he sent his Son to where we are and Christ loved us so that he came to where we are. Our Lord Jesus Christ proved his love by dwelling among his people.

Christ loved his people so he came down and participated in our poverty. By this, he foreshadowed how he would empty himself entirely on the cross. By partaking of our poverty, in order to make us rich, he proved he truly loved us. *“And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head”* (Mt 8: 20).

Our glorious Savior was not ashamed of his people. He dwelt with simple fishermen. Christ ate with publicans and sinners. Levi was a thieving tax collect before Christ called him. As soon as our Lord called Levi to faith, Levi made a dinner in his house and invited all his sinful friends. But the religious, holier than thou crowd would not dare be seen with those awful sinners that Christ dined beside.

Matthew 9: 10: And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. 11: And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? 12: But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. 13: But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Christ loved us and came to where we are. He participated in our poverty. He was not ashamed to be seen with his sinful people. And he manifest his love by bearing patiently with our faults. Christ never rebuked his people harshly. He rebuked the deceitful religious leaders harshly but never his people. Christ did, indeed, rebuke his people. But he only gently corrected us.

Brethren, if anyone could have looked down their nose upon us, Christ could. But he never did. Let us go to where our needy brethren are. Let us become poor that our brethren might be made rich, in like manner as Christ loved. Oh, we will never be able to match his great love and his great sacrifice for us. But let us try to go bankrupt giving to the need of our brethren. I promise if one of his people, from a true motive of love, tries to go broke giving to the need of their brethren, God will provide so fully that you will never do without. Let us never be ashamed of our brethren—but remember what sinners we are and how Christ dealt with us. And let us bear one another’s faults patiently as Christ does ours.

CHRIST LAID DOWN HIS LIFE

1 John 4: 9: In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Christ provide his love most by willingly laying down his life that his people might live. The only way we could have life is by the death of God's own Son. God's law had to be honored and we had to be crucified due to our sins. Christ did both! He honored God's law making us righteous and holy in him. He did it by bearing our sins and our curse until he justified us from all our sins. Brethren, this is love's crowning deed. Our Substitute said, "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*" (Jn 5:13) Christ laying down his life for his people proved the sincerity of his love.

1 John 3: 16: Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17: But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

We can speak much of love. It is easy to speak of, especially when times are good. But true love is willing to suffer for the object of our love. Love and self-denial go hand-in-hand.

John 12: 23: And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. 24: Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. 25: He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. 26: If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.

The willingness of Christ to deny himself under such great suffering, proved the greatness of his love. When a man lays down his life he lays down everything. Giving up life, he gives up wealth. Laying down life, he gives up position: dead men do not hold office or authority. Laying down life, he forsakes enjoyment. Laying down life, he gives up all things. There is no greater proof of the greatness of love. When Christ laid down his life he gave up everything for those he loved.

Another way Christ shows the greatness of his love in laying down his life is that he was willing to lay down his life bearing the shame of sin which he hated. He was willing to die under the wrath of God who he loved. Bearing our sin and our curse was the cup he willingly drank dry for his people. That was the cup he spoke of in the Garden of Gethsemane.

We see this illustrated in what Christ said the night he instituted the Lord's table. He told them to drink all of the cup of wine. Normally, there were dregs in the bottom of the cup of wine. The dregs are the yeast that dies and settles on the bottom. Yeast represents sin in scripture. But that is the cup Christ spoke of in the garden. Christ drank that cup out of love for his people. Therefore, he says to us his people,

Isaiah 51: 22: Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God *that* pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, *even* the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again.

Isaiah 25: 6: And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees,...wines on the lees well refined.

"*Wines on the lees*" is well-aged wine in which the dregs have died. It is well-aged, good wine. But, notice, it is "*wines on the lees well refined.*" The lees have been filtered out of it by Christ's work on the cross. Usually men would leave the last bit of wine in the cup due to the dregs. But because Christ bore our

sin away and God promises they will never be remembered, when Christ gave the cup of wine to his apostles that night he instituted the table, Christ said, “This is the new testament in my blood. Drink ye all of it” (Mt 26:27; Lu 22: 20). Do you see the greatness of Christ’s love for us in that, brethren? The apostle Paul prayed,

Ephesians 3: 17: That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

When Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, when we are rooted and grounded in his love, when he makes us comprehend the greatness of his love and how that it passeth knowledge then Christ’s love fills us with the fulness of God. Oh, how his love constrains us! Christ’s love is the motive in everything a believer does! Lawmongers just cannot understand how we expect believers to behave as they ought by simply preaching Christ and his great love in laying down his life for his people. It is the love of Christ that controls the believer’s heart! If Christ’s great sacrificial love does not constrain us to deny ourselves for God’s honor and the good of our brethren then we do not know him! It is that simple!

When vain men accused Paul and the other preachers of being beside themselves in their willingness to suffer persecution and loss for Christ, when they accused them of being too serious and sober in only preaching Christ crucified, do you remember what Paul said to the Corinthian believers?

2 Corinthians 5: 12: For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. 13: For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. 14: FOR THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINETH US; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15: And that he died for all, that they which live SHOULD NOT HENCEFORTH LIVE UNTO THEMSELVES, BUT UNTO HIM WHICH DIED FOR THEM, AND ROSE AGAIN.

WITH NO LOVE TOWARD HIM

1 John 4: 10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be the propitiation for our sins.*

God loved us when we did not love him. He did not wait on us to show him love in order for him to show us love. Had he done that, we would have never loved him. *“We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).*

Romans 5: 8: But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, Christ died for us. 9: Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10: For if, WHEN WE WERE ENEMIES, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Some say they will not show love to a brother or sister until they are first shown love from their brethren. When offended, some say they will not love until that person who offended them tells them they are sorry. Some are always expecting others to take the first step. If that is the case with us, brethren, then we love like a Pharisee! But that is not how God loved his people. We hated him but he loved us. If we will not love and forgive our brethren then that is self-righteousness! Christ said it is wickedness!

Matthew 18: 21: Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 22: Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. 23: Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. 24: And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. 25: But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26: The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27: Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. 28: But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 29: And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30: And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. 31: So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32: Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou WICKED servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? 34: And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. 35: So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Beloved, where would you and I be if God waited for us to love him? Where would we be if God waited on us to take the first step? Where would we be if God waited on us to repent and be filled with remorse and ask forgiveness? *“BUT GOD, who is rich in mercy, FOR HIS GREAT LOVE WHEREWITH HE LOVED US, EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN SINS, hath quickened us together with Christ, (BY GRACE YE ARE SAVED)” (Eph 2:4).*

Brethren, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another. Let us love one another even before our brethren love us. Let us love our brethren even when our brethren show us no love in return. Let us be love by forgiving one another seventy times seven a day!

BY MAKING US A NEW CREATION

1 John 4: 7:...every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God... 12: No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

God loves his people by making us a new creation. He made us a new creation through the righteousness of Christ. God prepared righteousness for us beforehand. He put away our sins beforehand. All the preparations were made beforehand. Then God sent forth the Holy Spirit and birthed us again. Then God took up his abode in us. Then God perfected his love in us. When our eyes opened spiritually for the first time everything was finished the same as Adam opened his eyes physically for the first time and the garden was already finished. *“Every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God”*—no exceptions. If we love one another it is because God first took up abode and dwelleth in us and God has perfected his love in us. If any man glories because he loves his brethren then let him give glory where glory is due, to God alone!

Therefore, though believers have many faults and failures, God’s people love one another despite our faults and failures. The apostle Peter denied the Lord three times but he loved the Lord. Christ said, “Peter do you love me.” He did not ask do you know the 5 points? Not are you converted? Not have you mourned enough? He asked, “Peter, do you love me?”

Do I love the Lord Jesus Christ? That is what every believer should ask of themselves. Do I love the Lord Jesus Christ? I should not be asking whether or not my brethren love the Lord. God asked Peter, "Do you love me?"

And how did the Lord tell Peter to prove it? He said, "*Feed my sheep.*" Love my people. Our love for Christ is proved by us loving our brethren. If we love Christ then we will do what is the most natural thing, we will love those for whom Christ died.

Unless I am deceived, my study and my preaching is motivated by my love for Christ and by my love for you, my brethren. If God dwells in us and his love is perfected in us then our giving of ourselves to our brethren is motivated by our love for Christ and his people. If God's made us a new creation and perfected his love in us then our conduct is a result of God making us behold Christ's great love for us and creating in us a love for Christ and his people. "*The love of Christ, constraineth us!*"

A nurse labors over her patients. But when her shift ends she goes home. A mother labors over her child until the child is well. What is the difference? Love. Those born of God do not do anything in the kingdom of God for reward or from legal motives or from servile fear. We do it because the love of Christ constrains us!

How do I know if I really love the Lord Jesus Christ? How do you know you love your husband or your wife? How do you know you love your child? How do you know you love your grandchildren? How do you know you love your dearest friend? Here are four or five things I got from Pastor Henry Mahan.

One, if you love a person then you enjoy thinking about that person. They dwell in your heart. You don't forget them. It is the same if you love Christ.

Two, if you love a person then you enjoy hearing about them. You love to hear people talk about them. You love to read about them. If a loved one writes a letter to you then you read it over and over. If you love God then you love His Word; you love to hear His gospel. You don't miss it unless you absolutely have to. David said, "*I was glad when they said to me, let's go to the house of God*" (Ps 122: 1). His sheep will go far to hear his Word preached. "*Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet; a light unto my path*" (Ps 119: 105). I need his word more than my daily food (Job 23: 12).

Three, if you love a person then you love those they love. Those who love their brethren love Christ's preachers because Christ loves them and makes them preach Christ to us. "*How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel, and bring glad tidings of good things*" (Rom 10:15). God people love one another because Christ loves them. Some of our brethren may have traits and manners that may be less loveable. But don't you? If you don't think so then I promise you that you do! But we love you anyway because Christ loves you!

Four, if you love a person then you want to please them and you hate to displease them. A believer loves to please Christ and we never want to displease him. That is our motivation.

Five, if you love a person then you want to be with them. Believers want to be with Christ now by being with his people. Our brethren, in whom Christ dwells, are the closest thing we have to Christ in the flesh in this earth. We look forward to that day when we awake and behold him face to face. But for now, we love our brethren and we want to be with them.

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." We ought to! It is beyond reasonable! And all in whom God dwells, do!

Amen!

