

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

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Knowing and Being Known

July 19, 2020

Sermon Text: Hebrews 1:1-3

Scripture Reading: Revelation 21

This morning I would like us to think carefully about the direct connection between these two declarations of Scripture:

1 John 4:8-9 ESV Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (9) **In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.**

John 1:14 ESV And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth....John 1:18

ESV No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, **he has made him known.**

God is love. And God, who is love, *reveals Himself to us. He has spoken. He speaks. God talks to us.* This gives us real insight into the nature of genuine love. Consider:

Genesis 3:8 ESV And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Sin. Darkness. Secrecy. Hiding from the Light. Lying. Deception.

In contrast:

Hebrews 1:1-2 ESV Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, (2) but in these last days **he has spoken to us by his Son,**

whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

By this time I hope that you all know the master theme of the Bible. It is, you might title it, *Eden Restored. Back to Eden*. It is God's eternal plan in Christ to bring us back into fellowship with Him – walking with Him in the garden you might say.

God, again as I hope all of you know by now, *desires to dwell among us and for us to be His people. He desires intimate fellowship with us*. [for more on this, check out the In My Father's House sermon series on sermonaudio.com/crc which is summarized in the book by that same title that you can get on Amazon. I say this not to promote "my book," but because these things are great tools for helping anyone really understand the Bible and the Gospel and Christ's work for us on the cross.]

Exodus 29:43-45 ESV There I will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be sanctified by my glory. (44) I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar. Aaron also and his sons I will consecrate to serve me as priests. (45) I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God.

Leviticus 26:11-12 ESV I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. (12) And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.

Zechariah 13:9 ESV And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'

John 14:23 ESV Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

2 Corinthians 6:16 ESV What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Revelation 21:3 ESV And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

God is love. How does His love reveal itself? How do we see that God loves us? Why did Christ come into this world and go to the cross? Why is there a new heavens and new earth – a place prepared for us by Christ? Why is Christ coming again to “receive us to Himself”? The answer is plain –

Because He loves us and this love desires to have personal relationship with us. This love desires to fellowship with us and we with Him. This love impels God to crave to live together with us...and even in us!

Ephesians 2:22 ESV In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

John 14:3 ESV And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

John 17:24 ESV Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

The love of God, Christ’s love, genuine, real love – always works

toward personal relationship, toward living with, toward openness and intimacy, toward knowing and being known. Always.

Therefore, if this love is in fact present in us, if in truth we are born again and we truly know Christ, *then that love is going to work in us in the same manner. In this present life our sinful flesh will protest, but nevertheless that love is going to cause us to love God and love one another, and how does that love work itself out? It craves intimacy, it craves relationship, it craves dwelling together with.*

If you truly love someone, *you want to know them. And you want them to know you.* I suppose this is why the Bible often refers to husband/wife relationship as *knowing* one another. It’s that naked and not ashamed theme back in Eden before the fall. This is the love of God. And it is the badge by which we know that we know Him, and that he knows us:

John 13:35 ESV By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

The Love of God is Done with Darkness

God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. God does not hide Himself from those whom he loves. In contrast, consider these statements:

Scripture calls, *walking in the light*. Living in the light. Being done with what the Bible calls, “the deeds of darkness.”

John 3:19-20 ESV And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. (20) For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

Romans 13:12 ESV The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Ephesians 5:8 ESV for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

What is true of darkness? Hiding. Secrecy. Disguises. This is the realm of sin and of Satan’s kingdom. Lies. Hypocrisy.

One of the incredibly consistent characteristics that we deal with in domestic abusers who claim to be Christians is this darkness. This business of disguises, of refusing to be known and thus of course, of being devoid of love. Who they really are is a carefully guarded secret. They live a lie. They only pretend to love.

One of the things that happens to us when we are born again is that increasingly the new creation that we are now reveals itself. The masks drop. The disguises and lying and hiding go. True relationships with one another and with the Lord spring up and grow. Light increases and darkness is dispelled. If we know Christ and we are growing in Him, it is a certain thing that *the real me will want to be known and to know*. This is the certain fruit of the love of Christ in us.

But we walk in the light. We are light in Christ. And a large part of this matter of walking in the light is *knowing and being known. Knowing others, craving to have relationship with Christ’s people, and craving for them to know us*.

If I claim to be a Christian, and if that claim is true, then I am going to do what

You see this love in the issue of *repentance*. If I sin against someone – against God or against my neighbor –

and if I know the Lord, if I am born again, then I am going to be driven to restore relationship. That is love. Repentance is love in action. The person who will not repent need not deceive themselves – they do not love.

Knowing and Being Known

This matter of *knowing and being known* is at the heart of the love of God for us and in us:

1 Corinthians 8:3 ESV But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

Galatians 4:9 ESV **But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God,** how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?

Yes, we see God's love in the sending of His Son into this world, and in Christ going to the cross for us, but the incarnation and the cross and the resurrection are not ends in themselves. They are the incredible means by which God's love for us comes to its fullness – effecting relationship with us, being with us, being our Father and we being His children. And I suppose this is

largely why John was blown away by it all:

1 John 3:1 ESV See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

And Paul-

Romans 8:15 ESV For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Therefore, as we are emphasizing this morning, *when we exercise the true love of God, we step out of the darkness and into the light. We come out of hiding. Why? Because we are known and we want to know. Because we crave intimacy with God and with one another.*

As we grow in Christ, this love gets easier to practice. It is foreign to our sinful flesh and in some ways we will battle that fleshly desire to cover and hide as long as we are in this present life. But as we mature in the Lord, as sanctification does its work, there most certainly will be a strengthening in all

this. If there isn't, then something is very wrong.

The love of God craves honest relationship. Genuine sharing of one's life with others.

1 John 1:5-7 ESV This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (6) If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. (7) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Think on these verses very, very carefully. Consider:

- God is light. There is no darkness in Him. God does not hide. He reveals Himself.
- God desires fellowship with us. He craves for us to know Him.
- But to have fellowship with God, for Him to dwell in us, we must come out of hiding in the darkness. We must be born again and become children of light.
- Then we will have fellowship with one another. We will have relationship and intimacy with

one another. We will increasingly stop hiding from one another and from the Lord until one day Eden will be restored and we will be “naked and unashamed.”

Now, we know that the Holy Spirit dwells within every true Christian. And more – the Spirit leads us. We can be assured then that the Holy Spirit is leading us to love God and to love one another more and more. This love, as we have been seeing, involves a desire to be known and to know. Real relationship.

Alright then, as all of this is true – then we are instructed in God's Word not to quench the Spirit. The Spirit, if he is in us, is going to be causing us to desire this relationship. We must not quench His leading, but follow Him.

But the point I want to make here is specifically this:

If we are going to love one another, then we are going to turn from hiding, be done with deceit and hypocrisy, we are going to share in one another's lives and we are going to know one another and be known, then we need to obey the Lord so that His Spirit who is leading us into loving relationship is not quenched by Pharisees and counterfeiters and hypocrites.

Do you understand? Let me illustrate. Some years ago – quite a few years ago as a matter of fact – there was a man in this church (actually over time there have been numbers of such people) who regularly quenched the Spirit’s work among us. And the way he did it was to oppose knowing and being known. He opposed real relationship and he opposed genuine love. For example, we spent an extended time one Sunday in the main class in prayer. Afterward, he came to me and said, “some people are very uncomfortable with that. We should not do it. Class time is for teaching and instruction.”

Prayer, you see, is a kind of sharing of ourselves with God and with one another in the process. He hated that. Ultimately when we tried to encourage him and talk to him about the bondage he was in, he came up to me on his last Sunday here and said, “I am leaving this church and I am not coming back because I certainly don’t want to pollute your pure sinless group here.” And he never came back. He actually had been a leader for quite some time.

But my point is that we must not grieve the Spirit by permitting this kind of thing to rule and dominate the church. The love of Christ will be quenched by his kind.

Let me leave off this morning with these things:

- Are there ways in our lives where we tend to hide from one another?
- Do I see a growing openness in my life? A desire to overcome the darkness and the hiding that sin would have you practice?
- I say that I love others, but does that love display itself in wanting them to know me, and for me to know them?
- Are you a person who no one really knows? That is to say, is your life a disguise and is keeping that disguise a chief goal in your life? If so, you aren’t saved. You are in the darkness.

Finally, with all this in our minds, listen to these words again:

Hebrews 1:1-2 ESV Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, (2) but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son... Hebrews 1:3a He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature,

God, the infinite, eternal, almighty Creator of the universe, *has spoken to us because He loves us and He wants us to know Him and He wants to know us. Herein is love.* Do you see it in yourself? Do you desire to know and to be known?