

SERMON NOTES ON 1 JOHN 4:7-21 (THE LOVE OF GOD)

HIGHLIGHTS

Verses 7-8. John states the commandment to love and gives the reason for it

Verses 9-10. He points us to the supreme demonstration of love by the Father in sending His Son to die for our sins showing that Love is a doing word, an active verb,

Verse 11-16. He restates the commandment in the light of God's great love and goes on to show how love for one another is evidence of God's abiding in us and our abiding in Him.

Verses 17-21 John shows that love for one another is evidence that we are mature and maturing in our love for God.

Verses 7-8 John is saying that you are loved therefore, love. If love is of God and you have been born of God, there must be the evidence of your new birth by the way you live and love.

There is something that is given to the believer when they are **born of God**; a love (and the ability to love) is imparted to their life that they did not have before. Christians are not "*just* forgiven" – they are born anew by God's Spirit; God's Spirit indwells them. and they **know** God. John must be reflecting on his own experience. Here is a person, who during Jesus sojourn on earth was referred to as son of Thunder. Now he is referred to as the apostle of love.

Love is presented here as a consequence of, not a precondition for, being born again."

Verses 9-10 God is love. How was that manifested?

He sent his son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. it means Jesus took the punishment that we deserved. So, nobody who accepts Christ will ever face the wrath of God. Some of us, for whatever reason, have come to think of God the Father as aloof and mean, always waiting for us to trip up so he can pounce on us. John says, NO.NO. **The love of the Father was not only in the sending of the Son, but also in what that sending accomplishes for us. It brings life to all who trust in Jesus' death and resurrection on their behalf.** We easily think how this shows the love of Jesus, but John wants us to understand it also shows the love of God the Father. We can't love God the way we should unless we are receiving and abiding in His love. When we say **God is love**, we are saying his holiness, righteousness, compassion, mercy, justice is borne out of his covenant love for us. Everything God does, in one way or another, expresses His love and the fulfilment of his promise to us.

Verse 11. Having received this love from God, we are directed to **love one another**. This pattern of receiving from God, then giving to others was familiar to John (John 13:14). After Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, thereby showing such great love and servanthood to them. Jesus said: *If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet* (John 13:14). The proper way to love God in response to His love for us is to go out and **love one another**.

This love will lead to practical action. **"Has anybody offended you? Seek reconciliation. You may say: 'Oh, but I am the offended party.' So was God,**

and he went straight away and sought reconciliation. 'Oh, but I have been insulted', so was God: If the Son died to bring life to his enemies, can we say with any integrity that we love him with the very love of his Father, while we refuse to join him in his mission to show God's love to undeserving people? It can't be.

Verse 12-. Seeing God through the evidence of love.

It is often said that we cannot see the wind, but we can see the effect it produces. We cannot see God because he is spirit but what we can see is the effect. Similarly, the effect of God in an individual is seen by the new life God's love in him or her produces.

Verse 16. God is love.

God wants us to respond by *knowing* (experientially) and *believing the love God has for us*. We should be able to say with confidence, like Paul in Romans 8:35-39 that nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus Christ

"To feel God's love is very precious, but to believe it when you do not feel it, is the noblest." (Spurgeon)

Verses 17-18)

John insists that the more fully and completely we know God, the more the immense reality of God's love dawns on us. When we open ourselves to the warmth and light of God's presence, we find that even our deepest, darkest secrets and the ugliest parts of ourselves are not beyond God's reach. Nothing in us is so broken or so filthy that God is unwilling or unable to touch. God embraces us as we are, loves us as we are, and works in us to make us clean and whole and new. Upheld, surrounded, enfolded by such love, who could be afraid?

That is why we love him because (Verse19) He first loved us.

Verses 20-21. One might say, "I want to love God more; I want to grow in my love for Him. But how can I love a God who is invisible?" God would say to us, "Learn to love Me, whom you cannot see, by loving My children, whom you can see." **Because of this, the excuse "I just can't love that person" (or other such excuses) is invalid. If we are born of Him and are abiding in Him then the resources to love are there. It is up to us to respond to His command with our will and whole being.**

CONCLUSION: BECOME WHAT YOU ARE.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

Does loving someone mean that I am duty-bound to embrace whatever's trending about how they see the God of Scripture? Is loving someone akin to full agreement with their values or interpretations of what is most important in life? NO.

To love someone is to want God's best for them, even at the risk of your relationship suffering damage. This doesn't make it okay to go around bashing people on the head with the Bible, **but it does mean not denouncing or denying God's word simply because it is unpopular.**

"When the world looks at the church, do they see such love in our lives that can only be explained by the supernatural work of God?"

Please note that there are loves that are born of sexual desire, natural affections and philanthropic aspirations, business partnerships etc. These don't point to the supernatural work of God and they are no sign of being born of God