

Third Presbyterian Church
Midweek Bible Study
Lesson on LOVE
7/30/2023

1 John 4:7-16 (NIV)

⁷ Dear friends, let us **love one another**, for love comes **from God**. Everyone who loves has been **born of God** and **knows God**. ⁸ Whoever does not **love does not know God**, because **God is love**. ⁹ This is how God showed his **love among** us: He sent his one **and only Son** into the world that we might **live through him**. ¹⁰ This is love: not **that we loved God**, but that he **loved us and sent** his Son as an atoning **sacrifice for our sins**. ¹¹ Dear friends, since **God so loved** us, we **also ought to love one another**. ¹² No one has **ever seen God**; but if we love **one another**, **God lives in us and** his love is made **complete in us**. ¹³ We know that **we live in him** and he in us, because he **has given us of his Spirit**. ¹⁴ And we have seen **and testify that** the Father has sent his Son to be the **Savior of the world**. ¹⁵ If anyone **acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God**, God lives in him and he **in God**. ¹⁶ And so **we know and rely** on the **love God has for** us. God is love. **Whoever lives in love** lives in God, and **God in him**.

Galatians 5:22-23 (KJV)

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, peace, **longsuffering**, gentleness, goodness, **faith**, ²³ Meekness, temperance: against such there **is no law**.

1. Give definition/discussion of the three types of love mentioned in the sermon: Phileo, Eros, Agape.
 - a. Which are we naturally able to produce?
 - b. Which can't we naturally produce and why?
2. From the sermon why is it important to be careful how we use the word love.
3. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit of God, our relationship with God is not performance-based. What does a performance-based relationship with God look like? Why is this type of relationship problematic?

4. Why is it important and how does it govern your walk knowing that God has AGAPE love for you?
5. Without the Agape love of God, we cannot love ourselves and our self-hate will range from minor to acute. Agree or disagree and why?
 - a. Why is it important to love ourselves and what does loving myself look like?
6. How does having the agape love from God translate in having love for others. Be specific in your explanation and also speak about Grace.
7. Why is it easier to love God than other Christians?
8. When you have difficulty loving other believers, what is it that makes it difficult?
9. What specific steps will you take this week to demonstrate your love for another believer?
10. Share your main takeaway from the sermon and the lesson?

F. Test 6: Loving One Another, 4:7-21

(4:7-21) **Introduction:** Do we really love God? This is the sixth test, the one sure way to measure whether or not we love God: Do we love one another? Do we really love our neighbors, all of our fellow men? No matter who they are, do we love them? If we love our fellow man, this proves that we love God. Loving one another proves seven things.

1. Loving one another proves that we are born of God and know God (v.7-8).
2. Loving one another proves that we see God's love (v.9-11).
3. Loving one another proves that God's Spirit is within us (v.12-13).
4. Loving one another proves that our testimony and confession are true (v.14-16).
5. Loving one another proves that God is going to deliver from judgment (v.17).
6. Loving one another proves that God delivers us from fear (v.18).
7. Loving one another proves that we love God (v.19-21).

1. (4:7-8) Love— New Birth: loving one another proves that we are born of God and that we know God. Note two things.

1. God is love; His very nature is love (1 John 4:7). Therefore, if a person loves God, he becomes a loving person; he takes on the very nature of God. If a person really loves God, then he does what God does: he loves everyone. Note exactly what the verse says. When we love one another, people see two things:

- ⇒ People see that we are born of God. They see that we have the nature of God, that God has put His divine nature into us. How do they see God's nature in us? By our love. They see us doing the very same thing that God does—loving people. They see us loving everyone: the rich and poor, healthy and suffering, deserving and undeserving, acceptable and unacceptable, good and bad. They see us loving everyone, no matter who they are.
- ⇒ People see that we know God. They see that we have been talking to God and learning about God; that we are doing what God says, carrying out His instructions. They see that we know God, fellowship and commune with Him; that we are living godly lives, and that we are actually taking on the very nature of God. How do they see all this? By our love. They see that we are loving and caring just as God is loving and caring.

2. But note a significant fact: the person who does not love others reveals something as well: he does not know God (1 John 4:8). Who is this person? Who is it that does not know God? The person who...

- lives selfishly
- hoards and banks
- discriminates
- is prejudiced
- elevates himself
- gossips
- curses
- gets angry
- steals
- neglects others
- abuses
- criticizes
- backbites
- hates
- murders

This person does not know God. God is love and this person is not loving. He is not living like God lives; he is not demonstrating love for other people, not showing concern and care and not helping and ministering to people's needs. He is not blessing other people; he is causing hurt and pain and destroying them. And this is not God's nature; God is love. God blesses people; He does not hurt and destroy them.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39).

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

"Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Romans 12:9).

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you" (1 Thes. 3:12).

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1:22).

2. (4:9-11) God, Love of— Jesus Christ, Death— Propitiation: loving one another proves that we see God's love.

1. Note God's love (1 John 4:9). In fact this is the very way that we know that God is love. If someone asks, "How do we know that God is love? The world is full of so much evil and bad, how can we be sure God loves us?" Note the Scripture: this is the way God revealed that He loves us. "God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." The world is full of evil and bad. Men commit all kinds of evil, and in addition to this they...

- curse God
- ignore God
- neglect God
- disobey God
- disbelieve God
- reject God
- rebel against God
- deny God
- oppose God

But this is the glorious love of God. God still loves man and still wants to help and to take care of man. Man has the most serious problem imaginable: not only is he engulfed with all the evil of the world, but he dies and ceases to be on this earth. He lives at most for just a few short years and then he is gone forever from the earth. But as stated, God is love and He has proven His love. He has sent His only Son into the world so that man might live through Him.

2. Note how we know the love of God: by salvation. We know that God loves us because God saves man. How can we live through Christ? How does God give us life through Christ? By sending Christ to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10. See note, pt.2—1 John 2:1-2; Deeper Study #1—1 John 2:2 for discussion.)

3. The conclusion is compelling: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another" (1 John 4:11). If God loved us when we opposed and did things against Him, when we disobeyed and ignored Him, then there is no person we should not love. If God went to such great lengths to give His very own Son to die for us, then we should go to the same length to love one another. We are to love those who...

- oppose us
- do things against us
- ignore us
- distrust us
- curse us
- reject us
- persecute us
- kill us

No matter who the person is, God loves him and has shown in the most supreme way possible that He loves him. Therefore, we are to love that person and demonstrate our love for him. We are to sacrifice ourselves and try to bring life to him. This we do by loving him, by showing him there is a better way, the way of love.

3. (4:12-13) Love— Holy Spirit— Indwelling Presence: loving one another proves that God's Spirit is within us.

1. God is not known by sight (1 John 4:12). No person has ever seen God face to face. No person has ever penetrated the spiritual world and crossed over into heaven and seen God. No matter what some claim, Scripture is clear—no person has ever seen God. Even Jesus Christ Himself declared the same fact:

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18).

2. How then can we know God (1 John 4:12)? God is known only by love, only by His Spirit who dwells within believers. When a person believes in the love of God, that God loves us so much that He gave His Son to die for our sins, it pleases God supremely. God is perfectly pleased, for God loves His Son with a perfect love. Therefore, when a person honors God's Son by believing in Christ, God takes that person and puts His Spirit into the person. God actually implants His divine nature, the Holy Spirit, into the life of the believer. He does this so that His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, will have many followers, followers who will honor Christ by living and loving just as He lived and loved.

Simply stated, we know God by love. If we love God, then we accept what God has done for us in Christ. When we accept Christ, God puts His Spirit in us. It is that simple. We simply know God by loving Him, loving Him for all that He has done for us in Christ. And when we love Him and love His Son, God just floods our being with His precious Holy Spirit.

Now note what happens when God begins to dwell within us (1 John 4:12). We love one another and God's love becomes perfected, that is, complete and fulfilled in us. We just grow and grow in love. We mature more and more, ever completing and perfecting the love of God upon earth.

3. Note one other thing: How do we know that we dwell in God and He in us (1 John 4:13)? By the Holy Spirit whom He has given to us. If we have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, He bears witness with our spirit. It is impossible for God to be living within the body and life of a person and the person not know it. It is the Spirit of God who tells us that we have been saved and are in God and God in us.

Thought 1. If a person does not have the witness of God's Spirit within him, he needs to evaluate his conversion. The likelihood is that he has never been saved. Even if he is temporarily in a backslidden state, the Holy Spirit is convicting and bugging him to repent and turn back to God.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (John 16:7-11).

4. (4:14-16) Testimony— Confession— Love: loving one another proves that our testimony and confession are true. This is the great testimony of John. But note how it is the testimony of every genuine believer as well.

1. There is John's declaration: that he and the early believers had seen and do testify that the Father sent His Son to be the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14. See outline—' 1 John 1:1-5 and notes—' 1 John 1:1-5 for discussion.)

2. There is the great promise to the whole human race: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him and he in God" (1 John 4:15. See note—' 1 John 4:2-3 for discussion. Apply what is said about teachers to every person. Also see note, Jesus Christ, Diety—' 1 John 1:1 for more discussion.)

3. There is the great testimony and confession of John himself and the early believers: "we have known and believed the love that God has to us" (1 John 4:16). What is it that they knew and believed? Three things, and all three are critical. Note them closely.

- a. "God is love." God has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. This is the way we know that God is love.
- b. Believers must love. They must *dwell in love*; that is, they must live in love, love one another with all their hearts.
- c. Loving one another is the way we can tell that we are saved. If we dwell in love, then we dwell in God and God in us. The way we know that we dwell in God and God in us is by our love. If we love one another, then we are demonstrating the nature of God. If we are *not loving* one another, then we are demonstrating that we *do not have* the nature of God. Loving one another shows whether or not God is in us.
 - ⇒ God is love; therefore, if we have the nature of God, we are loving people—all people—just as God loves them.
 - ⇒ God is love, therefore, if we are *not loving* people, we *do not have* the nature of God. We *are not saved* no matter what we claim. The proof that we are saved, that we have the nature of God, is loving others.

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28-29).

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with

the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10).

5. (4:17) Assurance— Judgment— Boldness— Love: loving one another proves that God is going to deliver us from judgment. Judgment is coming—a day of universal judgment when all persons will be brought before the great Judge Himself, even the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the clear declaration of Scripture:

"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36).

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matthew 16:27).

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:31-32).

But note the most wonderful thing: we can be delivered from judgment. We can face the great day of judgment boldly without dread and fear. How? By living a life of love, by loving one another perfectly. In fact, the fruit of love is having boldness in the day of judgment. If we love perfectly—if we allow our love to be complete and fulfilled—if we allow love to *live itself out* through us—then we will have boldness in the day of judgment. God will give us assurance that we shall not be judged, but on the contrary, we shall be rewarded.

How, then, is it possible to perfect our love while on earth? By living in the world just as Jesus lived. Even as He was in the world, so we are to be in the world. That is, Jesus Christ loved when He was in the world; He walked in love. Therefore, we are to love one another while in the world. We are to bear witness and proclaim the love of God and love one another just as Christ did. This is to be the consuming passion of our lives. The more we love, the more we grow and become perfected in love; and the more we grow and become perfected in love, the more assurance and boldness we have about the future judgment. The more we love, the more assurance God gives us that we shall not be judged in that day.

Thought 1. Most people, even believers, are wrong in their ideas about the return of Christ. He is Judge as well as Savior. And believers are to be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. Some will be weeping even as others will be joyful. It all depends upon how we have lived, what we have done in our bodies and in our works for Him.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).

The only way to be assured of deliverance from judgment, of having boldness to stand with uplifted face, is to live a life of love—to love everyone more and more while on earth.

"In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (Ephes. 3:12).

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12).

6. (4:18) Fear— Fearlessness— Love: loving one another proves that God delivers us from fear. This is an excellent verse on fear and how to conquer fear. Note the four things said.

1. There is no fear in love. If we really love someone, there is no need to fear him. In fact, we will not fear him. If we love the person, sacrificially give him our very best, then we have done all we can. Our lives and what we have done are in God's hands. We will rest assured that we can do no more. A peace, an assurance, will sweep over our soul. Note this, for it is the promise of God: when we really love someone, really give sacrificially all that we can, God will give us a peace and an assurance of soul that erases all fear. Our souls will

know no fear, only peace and assurance of God's care. This is the promise of God even if some people react against us and persecute us and martyr us. God will give us such a deep sense of His presence—so deep that we will be flooded with peace and assurance. This is what Peter calls "the spirit of glory and of God" that rests upon the believer when he is reproached.

"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified" (1 Peter 4:14).

2. Perfect love casts out fear. This is critical to note, for only a love that is growing and growing will be blessed by God. A believer cannot love one person and hold feelings against another person. This is not love. True love is impartial. A person who really loves loves everyone. There is no such thing as a heart filled with love and hate. The two are incompatible. Therefore, the only believer who knows the peace and assurance of God is the believer who is being perfected in love, the believer who is growing and growing in love, fulfilling and completing his love.

3. Fear has torment; that is, it thinks about and expects punishment or suffering or loss. A person feels that something is going to happen to him. Such feelings, of course, cause all kinds of disturbance and problems for people, all to varying degrees. People fear all kinds of things:

- ⇒ suffering ⇒ economic slump
- ⇒ divorce ⇒ the future
- ⇒ loss of health ⇒ God and His judgment
- ⇒ loss of wealth ⇒ loss of a loved one
- ⇒ loss of a job ⇒ heights, darkness, etc.

Fear causes anxiety, dread, alarm, fright, panic, and terror. It causes all kinds of unpleasant emotions, phobias, neurosis, and even the more serious psychotic disorders. The torment of fear is one of the worst problems faced by man.

4. Fear means that a person is not perfected in love.

- ⇒ The person is not fully grasping (perfected) the love and care of God for him (see note—1 John 4:9-11 for more discussion).
- ⇒ The person is not loving other people like he should; he is not growing more and more in love. His eyes are upon himself, not upon God and others like they should be.

In summary, fear can be cast out only by the perfect love of God. The more we know of God's love and care and the more we love other people, the more fear is conquered in our lives. The reason is clearly seen in the promises of God. God loves us so much that He will take care of us through all the trials and temptations of life, no matter what they are.

- ⇒ There is no need to fear people, the evil that they can do to us; God will strengthen and deliver us even through death.

"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever" (2 Tim. 4:16-18).

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).

"The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" (Psalm 118:6).

"So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:6).

- ⇒ There is no need to fear judgment. God delivers us from judgment.

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Romans 8:34-35).

⇒ There is no need to fear the dark or the enemies of the dark. God will take care of us.

"But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah. I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me" (Psalms 3:3-5).

"Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day" (Psalms 91:5).

"When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet" (Proverbs 3:24).

⇒ There is no need to fear not having food to eat or clothing.

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:31-33).

7. (4:19-21) Love: loving one another proves that we love God. How do we know that we love God? There are three ways.

1. We know that we love God because we know God's love for us (1 John 4:19). He loves us and we have seen His love; therefore, we love Him. (See note—1 John 4:9-11 for more discussion.)

2. We know that we love God because we do not hate our brother. If we love God, it is impossible to hold feelings against our brother. Why? Because God is love. If we have the nature of God in us, then we love our brothers. Note how strong this verse states the fact.

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20).

We cannot see God, but we can see our brothers. It is far easier to love someone in this world whom we can see than it is to love someone whom we cannot see. Therefore, if we say that we love God and hate those whom we see, we are lying.

3. We know that we love God because we keep His commandment. What is His commandment? If we love God, we are to love our brothers also.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35).

"He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep" (John 21:16).

Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – 1 & 2 Peter; 1, 2 & 3 John; Jude.