

More on the Love of God

I John Series

I Jn 4:7-14

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INTRODUCTION

A. Illustration

In 1944, C.E. Goodman of Hallmark Greeting Cards wrote a slogan: "When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best." Ever since, that motto has been used to sell greeting cards. When we look at Jesus Christ, we know that God cared enough to send the very best.

-- Robert C. Shannon, 1000 Windows

B. In telling us about God's love, John has shown us that God cares enough to send the very best

1. I John 3:1 -- See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. NASB95

2. I John 3:16 -- We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us. . . . NASB95

C. It is God's love for us that tell us we are to love our brethren

1. I John 3:16 -- We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. NASB95

2. I John 3:18 -- Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. NASB95

D. John isn't through with love

1. He will use the word "love" 26 times in this letter

2. It is most frequently used in chapter four, where it appears 12 times

3. Any word used that often in one chapter is a word worth our attention

E. John makes one of the most important statements about God -- God is love

1. There are many things we could say about what God is

a. God is: all-knowing; all-powerful; all-present; all-wise

b. God is: holy, righteous, just, pure

c. God is: a rock, a refuge, a hiding place

d. God is: a spirit, invisible, not a man

2. Though each of these is important and true, none really tell us why God does what he does for us; they do not explain why God desires a relationship with us

a. love does answer those questions

b. John will use the fact that God is love to reveal something about God and us who would be his people

I. GOD IS LOVE – I JN 4:7-8

A. First, we need to understand what John is saying about God

1. His point is that God is love
 - a. David Jackman – “John is not identifying a quality which God possesses; he is making a statement about the essence of God’s being. It is not simply that God loves, but that he is love.”
 - b. this is important to understand John’s full statement
2. God is really a number of things: light, for example, and in him there is not darkness at all
 - a. God’s essential being can be truthfully stated in other terms as well, but this one has a particular meaning and emphasis to us as people created in his image
 - b. God is love – and that is the answer to the basic question, “In what way does God relate to me?”

B. Let’s trace John’s statement backwards, to see what he is really trying to communicate

1. When we do that, the statement just preceding “God is love,” is the one that says, “the one who does not love does not know God”
2. So, let’s just eliminate this negative from our discussion – we’re not interested in NOT knowing God

C. Back one more phrase, we find this: “everyone who loves is born of God and knows God”

1. Something happens to people who know God
2. Believers are a people who are “born of God” – they have experienced a new birth; they have died to an old life and risen to a new one
3. Love is something that characterizes this new life

D. Back one more phrase, we find this: “love is from God”

1. Do not assume that John is talking about every possible expression of human love, for it ought to be obvious that he is talking about something that is practiced within the body of Christ
2. In verse 7, the Greek article “the” appears before the noun love indicating he is not talking about the general principle of love, but a specific love
3. The context of the book also confines this love to something shared among believers

E. Back yet one more phrase and now you find John’s application of the divine truth about God

1. “Beloved, let us love one another”
2. The grand truth about the essence of God’s being leads to what should be a grand truth about us – God is love; let us love one another

II. IN THE CROSS WE SEE THE LOVE OF GOD – I JN 4:9-10

A. John says that God's love was manifested (demonstrated, made clear, made visible)

1. God's love is not just theological philosophy
2. God's love is real and active; it is not in just word or tongue, it is in deed and truth

B. But, it is even more than God merely demonstrating that he loves us – God is clarifying himself To us through his son

1. God sent his one and only, unique, son so that we might live through him
2. John 3:16 -- "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. NASB95
3. Ephesians 2:4-5 -- But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), NASB95
4. Revelation 1:5 -- and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— NASB95

C. God doesn't just act lovingly toward us – he is love

1. How would you expect God to act?
2. If he is love, if that identifies his essential being, he could act in no other way toward us

D. To see this on an even deeper level, 4:10 tells us that it is because God is love that we have any Hope at all

1. God doesn't simply reciprocate or meet us halfway
2. He love us and showed that love in sending his son to be the propitiation for our sins
3. Romans 5:6-10 -- For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. NASB95
 - a. we were helpless (weak, feeble, sick, without strength)
 - b. we were sinners
 - c. we were enemies
 - d. still, Christ died for us
 - e. the explanation for that is that God is love, and being love, he acted toward us in a way wholly consistent with his nature

III. THE PERFECTLY REASONABLE APPLICATION – I JN 4:11-14

A. If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another 4:11

1. If God is our father, we will not want to slander his name by acting as if we are different than he is
2. If we are “of God” then of necessity we must be like God
3. If we have been redeemed from sin, then we will want to demonstrate the fact that we are a new person in Christ
4. It would be completely inconsistent for us to claim that we are Christians and fail to love

B. Love is the witness of the church to the world 4:12

1. God is not something that anyone can see or examine scientifically
2. If the world is going to know God, then those who already know God are going to have to explain him
 - a. we do that by proclaiming the love of God through Jesus Christ
 - b. we do that by showing through our own love for one another, that God’s love is real
 - c. John 13:34-35 -- “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” NASB95

C. What if we fail to love?

1. I John 4:8 -- The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. NASB95
2. At some point, we’re going to have to come to terms with love
 - a. I Corinthians 13:13 -- But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love. NASB95
 - b. if faith and hope are important, love is even more so
3. If we fail to love, we have failed at being God’s people

CONCLUSION

A. I John 4:13-14 -- By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. NASB95

B. Love proves that we know God and abide in him

C. John bore witness that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world – he love us

D. Conclusion