

January 14, 2018 -

I John 4:7-11

- "Herein Is Love"

Introduction:

The dust has not even settled from the Christmas holidays and it appears in every store and supermarket it's now the universal time to put Valentine's Day stuff out... Valentine's Day is a month away and many folks will engage in expressing their love for one another. That's a wonderful and precious thing for all of us to do. There are many ways to express our love. But what really is love? It is so simple yet defies a simple definition. If there ever was a topic that could qualify as the most thought about, written about, talked about, and sung about, it is certainly love. There is a lot of hype about love. Magazine racks are full with stories of love and books on the subject. We have so called love experts today.

Yet, the reality of it is that we live in a world where people are searching for true lasting love. They are desperately looking for this and going to all sorts of pains and expenses to find it. There are many wonderful love affairs that people learn about and see in this world and they want the same thing. The Bible tells of many such wonderful love stories like: Abraham and Sarah; Isaac and Rebecca and what of Jacob and Rachel. Remember his love for her. **Genesis 29:[20] And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.**

However, there is one love affair that is not only good for us, but it is altogether necessary. Hidden in this section is John's famous statement that "God is love" but we must remember not to twist the equation because it doesn't work. Love is not God. Yes God is love but love is not God because God is so much more. You see the world has its definition of what love is and it is corrupt in comparison. This morning I like us to look at three aspects of God's love that we need to imitate if we are to love one another as God desires us too.

I. God's Love is Unconditional v.7-8

1 John 4:7 - Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. [8] He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

1. It is not sexual - Eros (English = erotic; to arouse sexual desires) You may say you really love your truck or dirt bike or something else but you also say you love your wife and children. The word love means two very different things. One love means I love because it gives me pleasure. If you stop giving me pleasure, I will stop loving you. Do you love your wife that way, members?

2. There is another word for love - it is - phileo (brotherly - love between family members) It conveys tender affection, kindness.

3. The word used in this passage is AGAPE. The verb is agapeo and the noun is agape. This love comes exclusively from God and to have this kind of love one must know the author and giver God. It is a love that loves the worth of the individual. It is an unconditional love. Romans 5:8 describes this love, God is love – true love comes only from one source God.

1. John drives his point home by asserting the negative that of not knowing God is evidenced by not loving with agape love. 1 John 4:8 you are to “agapeo”.
2. A person who has never experienced God's love won't love in God's way. We can conclude by this that the world's concept of love is very different from God's. It is God's type of love that is lasting when practice in our relationships.

Illustration:

An old legend says that one day Abraham was standing by his tent door when he saw an old man coming along the way, weary with his journey and with bleeding feet. With true hospitality he invited the old man to share his meal and to lodge with him for the night. Abraham noticed that he asked no blessing on the meal and inquired why he did not pray to the God of Heaven. The old man said, "I am a fire worshipper and acknowledge no other god." At this, Abraham grew angry and sent him from his tent. Then God called Abraham and asked, "Where is the old man, "I have cared for him for over a hundred years even though he has dishonored me. Could you not endure him one night and so prove to him My love?"

II God's Love is sacrificial v. 9-10

1 John 4:9-10 - 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.

1. The word “manifested” – means to make visible or known what has been hidden or unknown. God's love is seen in the ultimate act of self- sacrifice in Christ death on the Cross. It was the ultimate act of love: to die in another's place. It is to suffer another's punishment. Some men will die for their friends, but no man dies for the crimes of his enemies. Why did Jesus pay the price of His enemies, because God loves all men. They are all precious to Him! He places value on all human life!
2. This act of Christ was called the "vicarious atonement." It means to "take the place of another." In the atonement, Christ took our place, receiving the full wrath of God. The climax of this was when the sins of the world were placed upon Jesus, and God, for that brief moment, God looked away from Jesus. It was a brief moment of separation. Sinners who do not have Christ for their savior will suffer this agony for eternity.
3. The word "propitiation" means, "one who propitiates" and is used in the OT of the act of the priests who applied the blood on the mercy seat. In essence, Christ's own blood was applied to the mercy seat to “satisfy the demands of the Law”. That we might live through him" expresses to us His sacrifice. Nothing can live unless something else is sacrificed.

Note what Jesus said, ' JN 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.

God often speaks of human relationships as a part of His mission to redeem a lost world. Therefore He asked that His followers would remain united in their love for one another. Jesus understood that is a spiritual impossibility to love God but not love others.

A test of your love for God is to examine your love for others. Our tendency is to say, “Heavenly Father, the problem is not between You and me. I love You with all my heart. I just don’t love my brother.” And God says, “That is impossible. You cannot love Me without loving the ones for whom My Son died.

Are you willing to sacrifice in your relationship, your needs, wants and desires? Or do you want your way and what you want at the cost you are willing to pay.

III- God’s Love is Beneficial v11

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. [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.

1. The "if" here appears like an "if / then" statement but it might better read "since". If God loved us so much, then... we ought... note the rest of this verse. How are we to love? We love with the same love for one another that God has for us. --- **I Corinthians 6:1-10 and Galatians 5: 22.**

We owe it to each other to bear one another burdens, to be connected to one another. Christians are to walk in love exhibiting evidence of being born of God and knowing Him by their loving actions. Real Love is an action not a feeling. It produces selfless, sacrificial giving.

Christian Schwartz of Natural Church Development: ...Our research indicates that there is a highly significant relationship between the ability of a church to demonstrate love and its long-term growth potential. Growing churches possess on average a measurably higher “love quotient” than stagnant or dying churches. When you get a group of people together who genuinely believe something, who practice it in their lives, and who really enjoy each other, it’s such a contagious atmosphere that you can’t keep people away from it. Practicing agape love is the true test of our faith. It is known today that the average church is too much like a bag of marbles – we scratch against each other and make a little noise, but we really don’t affect each other much. We need to make this kind of connection just with our friends from high school...

Conclusion:

Clearly, he does not intend this to be optional. God intends for all His children to be helpful, edifying and even healing agents. We should be available to one another, and respond in love when needed. Without connections to others, we become self-centered and selfish, isolated and alone, often unaware of our own pain. We must build a true love connection.