

February 14, 2021 -

I John 4:7-11 -

"God Is Love"

Introduction:

Today is Valentine's Day and many couples 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. Yet, the reality of it all is that we live in a world where people are searching for true lasting love. 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; God's love for us. No human being can comprehend God's love for his creation. Hidden in this section of John's epistle is the famous statement that "God is love" it is a simple definition but necessitates clarification. We must remember not to ever twist the equation because it would not be true. 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 on this Valentine's day when there is so much visceral and hatred in our nation I believe our focus on love would be therapeutic. God's demonstration of love for us is nothing short of extravagant! "This is how He showed his love among us: God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him" (I John 4:9) I'd like us to look at four aspects of God's love.

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

1. The love John speaks of comes from the ancient Greek word *agape*; it is the concept of a self-giving love that gives without demanding or expecting re-payment. The verb is *agapaō* and the noun is *agape*. This love comes exclusively from God and to give this kind of love one must know the author and giver - God. We love one another because we are loved by God, and have received that love, and live in light of it. John contends that there is something that is given to every believer when they are born of God; a love is imparted to their life that they did not have before. Christians are born anew by God's Spirit and this love continues.

**Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his love endureth for ever. Psalms 106:1**

2. To further reinforce God perpetual love for us is our eternal security in Christ. In Romans chapter 8 Paul asks a question in verse 35, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* The word used for separate (*chorizo*) comes from a word meaning "space" to separate one's self from. The love of Christ refers to Christ's love for the believer. Can anything or one put a distance between Christ's love and us? NO! Our position in the face of all our adversaries is secure. Paul then in verse 35 lists every possible physical adversary, beginning with tribulation which means "pressure" or anything that troubles the spirit. Can distress (being surrounded by

difficult circumstances and not knowing where to turn) cause Christ to cease loving us? Can persecution (physical or mental suffering caused by those who reject Christ) negate His love? Can famine (being without food and starving to the point of becoming ugly from malnutrition) stop Him from loving us? Can nakedness (lack of clothing), or peril (danger), or sword referring to an assassin's dagger which would mean facing death for Christ's sake would be able to separate us from the love of God?

3. Paul concludes this section by quoting Psalm 44:22, as it is written. For thy sake we are killed all the day long we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter (Romans 8:36). This reminds believers that suffering has always been the lot of God's children and does not indicate that we have been separated from His love.

4. Paul then answers this question in verse 37 A conqueror overcomes his enemy and makes him his defeated foe. To be more than a conqueror is to go a step farther and make an enemy your friend. So, the things listed in verses 35-36 that Satan sends as adversaries to harm us, God changes into our friends that help us.

In verses 38-39 Paul lists every possible spiritual and intangible adversary: **For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities (high-ranking fallen angels or demons), nor powers (hostile powers of the spirit world), nor things present nor things to come (the present or future uncertainties of time), nor height nor depth (the endless dimensions of space), nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

5. 1 John 4:8 states that we are to “agapeo”. So a person who has never experienced God's love won't love 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 practiced in our relationships. God is love – Pure love, true love it comes only from this source. John drives his point home by asserting the negative that of not knowing God is evidenced by not loving with the special love of God a sacrificial love or agape love.

### 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. The word “manifested” – means to make visible, to make known the ultimate act of self-sacrifice is 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. Jesus paid the price of His enemies, because God loves all men. They are all precious to Him! He places value on all human life! --- [1 Timothy 2:3-5](#)

2. This act of Christ death is known as 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. John 15:13 says, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

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. 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. Nothing can live unless something else is sacrificed. --- John 3:16...

### III God's Love is Unconditional v. 10

1. When we say that God's love is "unconditional," we are affirming that there is nothing we can *do* to make Him love us more or less. We don't earn His love by fulfilling a pre-determined set of conditions. He loves us **not** because of what *we* are, but because of who *He* is – for God *is* love (1 John 4:8). But this is not to suggest that God doesn't judge sin or that people won't have to suffer the consequences of their ill-advised decisions and actions. [Romans 5:8](#), describes this love.

### IV - God's Love is Beneficial v11, 12

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. 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. Look at [Romans 12:9-21](#).

### Conclusion:

God's love is Perpetual, sacrificial, unconditional and beneficial. His love for us is amazing and demonstrated in numerous ways:

**Psalms 36.5.** Thy (love) mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens; *and* thy faithfulness *reacheth* unto the clouds. 7 How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. **Psalms 86:13-15** How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! *If* I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee. **Psalms 139:17, 18**