

God is Love

(1John 4:7~21)

This section we just read, verses 7~21, they were one single paragraph in the original scrolls. And it's not hard to know what the emphasis is, that John is speaking to here...it is love. Here, John mentions the term love, 27 times in just 15 verses.

At the heart of this passage, is the statement that John makes here in verses 7~8...and as we read this again, I want you to listen very closely, because what John says here, is the central truth of his entire letter.

⁷Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God. ⁸He that loves not knows not God; for God is love.

Now, that may sound very simple, and it is...but if you truly grasp what John is saying here, you realize that, this one single statement becomes one of the most profound truths in all of scripture. And what makes this one statement so important, is "*the revelation*" John gives us here of God. "*for God is love,*" John says. You may hear that and think, that's no big revelation, everyone knows that God is a God of love. But that's not what John is saying here. Listen closely; John is not merely saying that God loves, in terms of love being one of His great qualities, but rather, what John is saying here is, the very essence of God, the very being of God...IS love! *God IS love*, John says... It is this truth of God, that becomes the basis for everything else John says here. When you look at John's statement here, through the truth that *God is love*, John's point becomes very clear. When John says here, "*that everyone that loves is born of God,*" he is merely referencing the fact, that children bear the image of their father. John is eluding to one of the basic principles of life, just as we emulate the physical characteristics of our earthly father and mother...as God's children, we should bear His characteristics as well, right? Those who know me and my parents, are able to see certain characteristics of my mom and dad, in me. I may say something or do something, and someone may say, "*That reminds me so much of your dad.*" Which is normal, and expected, given that we are a part of them. I am born of my mother and father, I am literally the product of those two people's lives, so it only stands to reason, that I bear many of their same characteristics. And the same is true with my children, they have some of the characteristics of me and my wife...they are born of us. Well, according to John, it is this "*Spirit of Love*" that characterizes us as "*God's children*"... Everyone that loves, bears witness, that they are the "*Offspring of God,*" His children. Whereas anyone who does not walk in love, manifests they know not God as they claim, again, because God IS love.

Do you see that? It's important that we understand this, because everything Paul says here revolves around this truth *that God IS love, and that He loves mankind*. John's point here is, if God loves mankind, than it only stands to reason that His children show that same love to man, right? He actually says that here in verse eleven, "*¹¹Beloved, if God loved us, we ought also to love one another.*" I'm convinced that John is still speaking in the context of knowing the difference between the "spirit of truth" and the "spirit of error," in verse 6 there. Verses 1~6 is a call for the church to be spiritually discerning, knowing that not everyone who claims to be of God, are truly of God. In those verses, John gave us things to look for, to help us discern the false from the real. Here John continues in that truth, declaring that how they treat their fellow man, their brother, will reveal whether or not they know Him as well. *⁷Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God. ⁸He that loves not knows not God; for God is love.*

Beloved, it is imperative that you get this...because this truth is just as vital and important in our day as it was John's day. Not everyone who claims to know God, truly knows Him. Listen, some of the most mean, hateful and unloving people I've ever met...are church folks. Rather than loving their fellow man, their brothers and sisters out here...they judge and condemn them! Beloved, hear what I'm saying, this is the very point that John is making here. Those who judge and condemn their fellow man out here, reveal they are spiritually blind, and have no idea who God is! Beloved, I say this with a broken heart...there's people sitting in churches throughout the land, who are better depicted by the religious leaders of John's day, the Scribes and Pharisees, than by Jesus. By that I'm referring to the fact, they see themselves as

these “*righteous, godly men,*” all the while they judge and condemn those out here in sin! They may see themselves as these quote, “godly” men...but they are anything but “Godly!” God loves sinners! We saw that in the life of Jesus, and in the death of Jesus!

In the very next verses 9~11, John declares the premises for this truth... Here John points to the cross, and declares that it is clear that God is love, and that He loves sinners! And if God loves sinners, doesn't it only stand to reason that we should as well?

Look with me here in 9~10. ⁹*In this was manifested the love of God toward us...“**This is how it was revealed unto us, that God is love, and that He loves us**”*...John says...*because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.* John is pointing to the cross! *The cross makes it clear,* John says...*God is love!* John's statement could be stated this way, “*The fact God sent His Son into the world, and offered Him up for our sins, providing salvation for us...clearly reveals He is a God of love, and loves us deeply!*” John's statement here is a reference to the cross. John is pointing to the blood soaked body of Jesus, hanging on that tree, and the fact, that God crushed His own Son, of the full weight of His judgment...so that we might be saved from the wrath to come! ⁹*In this was manifested the love of God toward us...* Do you see that? Beloved, if we had nothing else in this world, in way of revelation, to help us know what God is like, if there was no written word of God, the cross would be sufficient! The resounding message ringing from the cross is, “*I love you, I love you, I love you.*”

And not only does the cross declare “that God is love, and He deeply loves us”...but in the cross, we come to know what true love is...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.* John is still pointing to the cross...¹⁰*Herein is love,(...this is love, John says,)...not that we loved God...*that is to say, the true measure of love, is not man's love to God...but rather...God's love to man. Man's love is self-centered, self-serving. Man's love is always directed at what man finds pleasing, and worthy. Whereas God's love, true love, was demonstrated towards the unlovable, the undeserving, the unworthy...sinners. When we were in our most wicked, vile, sinful state...God sent forth His Son, to die for our sins! That is love, my brethren, that is love! Given that, ¹¹*Beloved, if God loved us, we ought also to love one another.* If a holy God, can show such love to sinful men such as ourselves, it only stands to reason, that we should love one another, right?

Sure it does, and here in verse 12, John makes an interesting statement concerning the implications of loving our brother, ¹²*No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and his love is perfected in us.* ¹³*Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

Now this is interesting... John begins here by stating, *that no man has ever seen God. But...*John says, that's not to say we “*can't see Him*”... What do you mean preacher? Don't miss this, John says that when we walk in love one to another, the Spirit of God Himself is present with us, dwelling within us. And understood, I guess you could say, we can see God. Maybe not in His original form, but...we can see Him, in the lives of His people, when they walk in love one to another. Pretty interesting, right? When we walk in love towards one another, the Spirit of God is manifest in our lives.

John goes on to say here, that it is this Spirit, this Spirit of love that we now have for one another, that gives us the assurance that we are truly the children of God. ¹³*Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.* John says that it is this Spirit of love we have towards our brother, that bears witness, or validates us, as being the children of God. This is yet another one of those “*Hereby we know*”...statement, that John has been making all throughout this letter. And that is with good reason, because John tells us in chapter 5, that's the main reason he's writing this letter.

(5:13) ¹³*These things have I written unto you, that believe on the name of the Son of God; **that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.***

Here John declares the purpose of his writing this letter... First he declares “*Who*” he's writing to... ¹³*These things have I written unto you, that believe on the name of the Son of God”*...He's writing to those who profess faith in Jesus Christ. And then the purpose... ***that ye may know that ye have eternal***

life... He's writing to strengthen that faith, to help give them resolve and assurance that they do indeed have "*eternal life*" dwelling in them. It's when you understand this, that you are able to understand all the "*hereby we know*" statements he makes throughout this letter. Each one points to a specific attribute or characteristic, that indicates "*eternal life*" is dwelling in them. For example:

(2:3) *And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments...*

(2:5) *Whoever keeps His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected, hereby know we that we are in Him.*

(3:14) *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren...*

(3:24) *And he that keeps His commandments dwells in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit He has given us...*

And now, here again in **(Vs 13)**... "***By this we know, that we are in Him, and He in us...***"

With each one, John declares an attribute that will be true in the life of a believer, thus giving him the validation that "*eternal life*" truly dwells in him. And when we speak of "*eternal life*," we're talking of course, of Jesus Christ. Tragically, because of poor bible teaching, many think of "*eternal life*" as something afar off, a life that one enters when he leaves this life. But that's not true, "*eternal life*" is a reference to the "*life of God*." And again, here it is a reference to Jesus. John made that clear in his opening statements of this letter, declaring that Jesus was "*eternal life*" manifested in the flesh.

*¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; ²(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you **that eternal life**, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) Which we know him to be speaking of Jesus Christ...*

Well throughout this letter, John points to certain truths, certain attributes that validate the presence of "*eternal life*" within in a man. ***hereby we do know that we know Him...hereby know we that we are in Him... We know that we have passed from death unto life... And hereby we know that He abides in us, ...and the one here in verse thirteen...***

(Vs 13)... "***By this we know, that we are in Him, and He in us...***" HOW? By the Spirit He has given us, which we know refers to the Spirit of Love... This love I now have for my brother, is what both bears witness and gives me the assurance that I truly have fellowship with God the Father.

Read that again with me, and notice how John "connects" the "Spirit He has given us" with Jesus...

*¹³Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and do testify that the Father **sent the Son** to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵Whosoever shall confess **that Jesus is the Son of God**, God dwells in him, and he in God. ¹⁶And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him. ¹⁷Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear hath torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love. ¹⁹We love him, because he first loved us.*

Do you see that? When you fully understand what John is saying here, you realize that this "*Spirit of love*" that we now possess for our brother...it is actually a reference to "*Christ in us*." Simply put, if Christ is in us, we'll walk in love, because He IS love. Whereas if we do not walk in love towards our brother, it merely reveals that He does not dwell in us...

The key statement there is that last part of verse 17... *because as he is, (speaking of Christ)...so are we in this world*. The fact that we "*walk in love towards our brother*"...just as "*Christ did*"...this is what gives us the "*boldness*" (confidence) in the Day of Judgment. In other words because we walk in love as Christ did, and knowing that He was God's Son...that gives us the confidence that we truly have been born of God...that we truly are one of His children.

When you understand all this...you realize, that there is no way a man can truly know God, and not love his brother. It's simply impossible! That's why John says what he says here in verse 20...

(Vs 20) ²⁰*If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*

Now don't miss this... John says, ²⁰*If a man says, that he loves God, yet hates his brother...that man is a liar...* **plain and simple**, John says! His claims of “*Loving God*” are simply not TRUE... Reason being, it simply makes no sense. How can a man, who does not love his brother, someone he knows personally, and sees day to day...how can he love God, whom he's never met in person, or ever seen? Think about it, that just doesn't make sense... If anyone makes such a claim, you know that it's not true.

Especially in light of the cross, and what it reveals about God... To fully understand what John is saying here, we must read it along with the previous verse... ¹⁹*We love him, because he first loved us.* Simply put, our love for God stems from the love He has shown to us on the cross. You see, it's not until you realize your sinful condition, and the fact that God offered up His Son for you...that you are able to truly love God. When John says here, ²⁰*If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar...* he's referring to the fact that the one who “hates his brother” reveals that he doesn't understand that he is every bit as much a sinner as the one he is condemning. It's only when you understand that we're all sinners, there is none righteous, no not one. We all stand guilty before God...yet God, in His great love for us, sinners, offered up His Son for our sins, crushing Him with the full weight of His judgment that should have been ours. It is only when you understand that...that you are to truly love God, out of gratitude. And love your fellow man as well, realizing that we are all brothers and sisters, who need the grace and mercy of God.

Any man who truly loves God, it will be manifest by the fact that he loves his brother as well. (Vs 21)...²¹*And this commandment have we from him, That he who loves God love his brother also.*