

1 John 4:7-10
“For love is of God”

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I. Intro

This Sunday we take up where we left off last week as we noted the entirety of this section on love is from verse 7-21 and a simple outline:

1. Vs. 7-12 The exhortation to love one another
2. Vs. 13-16 The connection between Love and sound doctrine
3. Vs. 17-21 The perfection of love seen in the confidence of the believer before God at the judgement

The Apostle John for the third time takes up the subject of “LOVE”:

1. In 2:7-11 Love as the proof of fellowship with God
2. In 3:10-14 Love as the proof of being a child of God
3. In 4:7-16 Love as the proof of our spiritual maturity

We also noted the lyrical nature of John’s writing style with the repeated words and phrases. The first was:

- 3:24 “By this we know that *He abides in us*, by the Spirit whom He has given us”
- 4:13 “By this we know that *we abide in Him*, and he in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.”

Between this repeated chorus John reveals **two proofs of the indwelling Holy Spirit.**

- **The FIRST**, as noted last week, was *the acceptance of the truth of the Incarnation through obedience which grants us LIFE and fellowship with God.*
- **The SECOND**, that we are about to study today is, *the manifestation of true life*, which is seen in the fact of love.

Another repeated chorus in 1st John is seen in the three-time repeated chorus: “**LOVE ONE ANOTHER**”, which is the constant command. What changes is the threefold reason for the command which is seen in the words:

- Vs. 7-10 “**Let us love one another**”: The point is that since we have been born again and LOVE is God’s own nature we must exhibit that nature to each other.
- Vs. 11 “**We also ought to love one another**”: Since LOVE is God’s gift to His children than we must be sharing that gift with each other.
- Vs. 12 “**If we love one another**”: Since God’s LOVE is God’s current activity in and through His children than it must be our activity.

John’s words are very specific with regards to this first point as this phrase “Let us” in the Greek is an exhortation that indicates a continuous action and should read “**Let us be HABITUALLY loving one another.**” Also noted the words “one another” in the Greek suggest the practice of exchanging LOVE with others for mutual benefit. God has given His love to us with the expectation that we will give it away to benefit others.

II. vs. 7-8 What God is

Now we take up the phrase “for love is of God” and verse 8 “God is love” need clarification which the Greek provides but the English translation does not.

John states in verses 7-8 two truths:

1. **First**, Vs. 7 “For love is of God”: Here John reveals that the source of Love is God. **God is not only the source of LOVE; His is the only true definition of what love is and behaves like**. John offers this definition of love for his readers in verses 9-10 and we will examine that in detail when we get there.
 - a. **First, John reveals that love’s “source” is the Divine nature**.
 - b. **Second, John reveals that this Love of God is transformative**: As I said last week that the Love of God has the potential if NOT resisted to cause NEW BIRTH. And such NEW BIRTH is unattainable any other way than the Love of God. It is this transforming Love of God that ushers us into fellowship with God who gifted us with His Love. John says that is the only type of person who truly “**knows God**”. I believe that this is what was behind Jesus’ words in matt. 7:21-23 where we read, “**Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but who does the will of My Father in heaven**.” Furthermore, according to verse 8 the absence of God’s love in the life of a person who professes to have been in contact with the love of God indicates the absence of the knowledge of God, verse 8 “**He who does not love does not know God**.” In the Greek in verse 8, “**does not know God**”, are “**The person who does not love with this kind of love has NEVER known God**.” **This reveals to the reader that to experience God’s love through faith is transformative!** To have experienced the love of God that changes us through New Birth WILL cause that person to exhibit that which they have come into contact with the love of GOD, with others! When looking at Faith and God’s love we discover that”
 - **Faith is** personally appropriating God’s love that has been offered to all.
 - **Love is** personally extending to ALL God’s love because it was personally applied to ourselves.
2. **Second**, Vs. 8 “God is love”: First we need to realize that John is NOT declaring the worldly popular definition that ALL “LOVE IS.. GOD”. To equate that everything that passes as love in the world today is that defines the character and nature of the GOD Head is **absurd** as it is God defines LOVE which John points out in verses 8, 10! Two points are made in this verse:
 - a. **First, God can never be defined by an abstraction!** In the Greek the article is placed on the word God and NOT on the word love which means that **these two words are NOT INTERCHANGEABLE**. A proper translation of this phrase would be “God, as

to His nature is love and because of this it is always His nature to be loving.”

b. Second, you cannot sperate His nature from other aspects of His nature! *God’s word reveals to us even in First John that God is also Holy. What this indicates is that God’s love is always a Holy Love and that His Holiness is always loving!* The problem of leaving the definition of God as to His nature and character captive by the worlds concept of love is that much of what in the world calls love bears no resemblance to God’s definition of love. This is brought out further by the observation that John links God’s love to the nature of God Head:

1. Vs. 7-8 The definition to God’s Love is from the vantage point of **God the Father.**
2. Vs. 9-11 The definition to God’s Love is form the vantage point of **God the Son.**
3. Vs. 12 The definition to God’s Love is from the perspective of **God the Holy Spirit.**

III. Vs. 9-10 What God did

Vs. 9-11 Here the focus is on “***What God did***” that demonstrates the fact that His nature is love.

Because God is love, He communicates not only in words but in action. God’s love is never static or inactive as He chooses to reveal His love to humanity in actions.

A. **His first action** was in creation as humanity is the apex of His creation and everything else in His creation was made to meet humanity’s needs. It was man’s sin that brought this creation under bondage but before this Man kind had on earth a perfect home in which to enjoy and perfect fellowship with their creator.

B. **We can also see** how God dealt in love with fallen humanity as He initiated even before the fall a way in which to reestablish fellowship with what humanity destroyed. This was seen in God’s provision of an innocent animal to cover Adam and Eve. It’s seen in God sparing Noah and his family from the wickedness of the world. It’s seen in the covenants God made with Abram in which only God ratified. It’s seen in His loving Israel in spite of them and not because of them as a witness to the rest of humanity. But the greatest demonstration of God’s love for fallen humanity is what Paul describes in Rom. 5:8 “**But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**”

Vs. 9 Here we read that John says that “***In this the love of God was manifested towards us***” and this preface to what will be explained next has important points. The word manifest in the Greek is one that means to be made “public” and the words “towards us” is “in our case”. Next when we read the words “only begotten” in the Greek has a different meaning than we would interpret as it means only that Jesus has no siblings. It is used to describe the uniqueness of Jesus who is eternal and has no birth into existence but because he was “SENT” was begotten into the

limitation of that which He created. The word “Sent” means to be sent on a commission as an envoy with credentials. This is what Paul declared in Colo. 1:15-16 where we are told “**He (Jesus) is the exact image of the invisible God, the first-born over-all creation. For by Him (Jesus) all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him (Jesus) and for Him (Jesus).**”

Vs. 10 Notice that John writes of two purposes of the Gift of Jesus:

1. Vs. 9 **That we might live through Him**: The greatest gift ever given is a paradox as Jesus had to die if humanity was going to have the possibility to live.
2. Vs. 10 **That He might be the propitiation for our sins**: “In this is love”, John writes and the Greek it describes NOT any kind of love but a particular love that God’s nature, a divine love. John further clarifies that in the words “not that we loved” indicates that humanity had no capacity to love like God and would have never possessed this quality. The word “SENT” indicates the greatness of God who with complete understanding of our total inability to love still loved us! God has always loved lost sinners and that is why He alone could be the only One to appease what His holiness demands and be Jesus’ sacrifice render those that receive Him favorable. God’s love needs no promise, no good works to initiate His love to work towards us; instead in springs forth spontaneously towards fallen humanity even though this fallen humanity is not worthy of it.

These two truths reveal that Jesus’ incarnation seen in His life and death was NOT an “accident” it was instead a deliberate “appointment”. Jesus didn’t die as a weak martyr, but as a mighty conqueror!

Finally, John gives his readers **three aspects to the demonstration of God’s love seen in God’s gift to fallen humanity in sending His only Son Jesus**:

1. **God gave His best**: This is seen in Who God gave as we are told that God gave His Son Jesus. That is the best there is to give as nothing could ever come close to the Gift of God the Son. When some person wants to include their offering of works either included with Jesus as God’s gift or apart from Jesus as God’s gift it is the most offensive form of blaspheme a person could ever do. Paul said it this way in 2 Corinth 9:15 “**Thanks be to**

God for His indescribable gift".

2. **God gave His Son to die**: Second the measurement of this great love of God in sending God the Son as a gift is seen in Jesus' cost to accomplish the mission for humanities reconciliation, HIS DEATH! God the Father didn't merely send God the Son to teach the world about Himself and that would have been wonderful but knowledge of the character of God wouldn't have been enough to redeem fallen humanity. It would have been far more than humanity deserved. Neither did God the Father send God the Son to be our example of the possibilities and benefits to a relationship with God. This too would have been wonderful but inadequate because humanity is hopelessly and helplessly lost and not example can suffice as we have no ability to live up to it. Instead, God's love didn't stop at a teacher or an example it went all the way to death. And not any death, a death reserved for the worst of sinners. It is this truth that Paul writes of his confidence in found in Roman's 8:31-39 why he bold proclaims that "***Nothing can separate us from the love of God***".
3. **God gave for sinners**: Finally, we realize that Jesus was willing crucified for those who did all that they could to crucify Him. Those that God the Son went this far to demonstrate His love for were not lovely "good people" but instead the most vile of all creatures, people like me who rebelled against Him and hated Him who created us. Those who given the change even after they have received so much from God would not hesitate to rebel against Him and scream out "crucify Him". The measure of God love is realized in both the gift the purpose of the gift and to whom the gift was given for. By these three truths we understand God's love!