**CHRISTIAN LOVE** **Text: I John 4:7-21 Date: 2-2-20 Sunday AM**

Jesus Christ was God’s love personified! Jesus was God’s perfect love manifested in human form. Jesus was God incarnate, therefore He was God’s love revealed through His incarnation. The supreme way that we as God’s children are to understand God’s love is through His Son Jesus Christ.

**“LOVE”** is the key word in I John 4. In 4:8 and 4:16 we are told that GOD IS LOVE!

**But this is not the whole story! GOD IS LOVE… but how does this powerful truth impact us as God’s children?**

**Early church father Jerome,** tells a now famous story about the Apostle John, when he was near the end of his life. He used to be carried into the church at Ephesus on the arms of his disciples. The Apostle John was unable to say anything except: *'little children, love one another.'* Growing weary of hearing the same words over and over again, they asked John, "Master, why do you always say this?" "Because," he replied, "It is the Lord's command, and if this only is done, it is enough." [Stott, p 49]

**Think about it…** We must always be growing in our understanding and application of Christian love. We think we know and understand Christian Love, but we don’t!

Let’s see what we can learn from **I John 4:7-21** about Christian Love.

**I. First, we see Christian Love Clarified – 4:7-12**

* **1 John 4:7-12 (KJV)** 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. 9 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. 11 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.
* **4:7-8** ~ **1)** The Nature of God Clarifies it
* Notice these words, “For love is OF GOD.”
* Also note “… born of God”
* **David Jackman writes,** “It is love for our fellow believers that John puts forward as irrefutable evidence of the new birth.”
* Being *born of God* empowers us to love God and to love each other. We were made by God and enabled by His Spirit to be lovers of God and lovers of men.
* Love defines us as Christians.
* **John Piper explains it this way,** “When John says that “love is from God,” he doesn’t mean it’s from Him the way letters are from a mailman, or even letters are from a friend. He means that love is from God the way heat is from fire, or the way light is from the sun. Love belongs to God’s nature. It’s woven into what he is. It’s part of what it means to be God. The sun gives light because it is light. And fire gives heat because it is heat.
* Loving God and loving each other is in our spiritual dna.
* As God’s image bearers, we cannot help but reflect His character.
* **Simply stated…** Image bearers are love bearers!
* Christian love flows out of God’s love.
* **4:9-10** ~ **2)** The Cross of Jesus Christ Clarifies it
* The cross is God’s *unique way* of manifesting His love for us.
* **Paul notes the uniqueness of the cross in 1 Corinthians 1:18 (KJV)** For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish *foolishness*; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.
* **4:10** ~ **1 John 4:10 (KJV)** Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son *to be* the **propitiation** for our sins.
* **What does the word “Propitiation” mean?** = It means that God punished Jesus for our sins and transgressions. Jesus suffered His Father’s wrath for my sins. Jesus was made “sin” for me. Jesus was forsaken by His Father so that we could be saved! Jesus acknowledged this on the cross when He cried out these horrific words, “My God, My God why hast Thou forsaken Me?”
* **Paul adds this to our understanding in Ephesians 2:4-5 (KJV)**  But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, 5  Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)
* **Earlier in 1 John 3:16 John explains this truth (ESV)** By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.
* **4:11-12** ~ **3)** The Love of God in Us Clarifies it
* It’s *natural* for us to love each other as God’s family members; it’s *unnatural* for us **not** to love each other as the family of God!
* It’s one thing ***to speak*** of God’s love, but it’s much more meaningful and powerful ***to show forth*** God’s love.
* We must be clear on this subject. Just as God’s nature is to love; it is also our nature as God’s children to show forth God’s love. In this, we must be like our Lord Jesus for sure!!!
* **John 1:18 (KJV)** No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, **He hath declared *Him*.**
* **Read with me I John 4:12** ~ What does it mean? “Jesus is the complete expression of God in human form, and he has revealed God to us. When we love one another, the invisible God reveals himself to others through us, and his love is made complete.” Life Application Study Bible

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* **First, we see Christian Love Clarified – 4:7-12**

**II. Secondly, we see Christian Love Assured – 4:13-21**

* **1 John 4:13-21 (KJV)** Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit. 14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Savior of the world. 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 17 Herein 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. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19 We love Him, because He first loved us. 20 If a man say/claims, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 21 And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.
* **Our Christian Love is assured by:**
* **4:13** ~ **1)** By Our Father’s Abiding Presence
* **“Dwell”** highlights the work of the Holy Spirit in us as God’s children.
* **1 Corinthians 3:16 says (ESV)** Do you not know that you are God’s temple **and** that God’s Spirit dwells in you?
* Also, the fruit of the Spirit is **LOVE**. It makes a difference when we know and accept the presence of God’s Spirit in our lives.
* God’s Spirit enables us to love, at the same God’s Spirit convicts us when we do not love as we ought!
* This truth is driven home in verses **4:13**; **4:15**; and **4:16**.
* **“Dwell”** means God in us; and us in Him! A mutual abiding is at work in every child of God!
* **Paul says in Romans 5:5 (KJV)** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts **by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.**
* **CONSIDER THIS… Scripture tells us we have the Spirit!** **The question is, “Does God’s Spirit have us?”**
* This is truly a wonderful truth for each of us to ponder!
* **4:14-15** ~ **2)** By Our Confession as Believers
* **4:14** ~ Expresses Jesus’ incarnation as ***a fact*** of human history! John said, “We have seen and do testify…”
* **One writer said,** “Jesus took to Himself a true human nature. There is no Christianity and no salvation from sin if He didn’t!”
* If Jesus was not the God-man, then His death had no atoning value and we are yet in our sins. How horrible for anyone to come to such a conclusion!!!
* **4:9 and 4:16** ~ Notice the word **“sent”** used in these two verses! = God’s love was heaven **“sent”** to us from the Father through His Son Jesus.
* **“Sent”** implies humanity and divinity! We were born into this sin cursed world. Jesus was **“sent”** on a mission to redeem us as fallen sinners! THIS IS THE CENTER OF HUMAN HISTORY AS IT RELATES TO OUR REDEMPTION!
* **The songwriter** penned these words, *“Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.”*
* **4:16** ~ **3)** By Our Abiding Love of God and Others
* God’s indwelling makes His love in us a reality. God’s Spirit assures us of our relationship with the Lord.
* Let’s glance back at **1 John 3:24 (ESV)** Whoever keeps His commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that **HE** abides in us, by the Spirit whom **HE** has given us.
* **4:17-21** ~ **4)** By Our Confidence at the Judgment
* My confidence at the judgment is based upon the saving love of God found in Jesus Christ.
* Knowing that we are loved by God takes the sting out of the word “judgment.”
* Showing forth God’s love is our main way of showing sinners that God is love and that He loves them as well.
* Through Jesus death at the cross God publicly displayed His love for you and me!
* **1 John 4:20-21 says (KJV)** If a man say/claim, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 21 And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.
* No one is going to heaven on the basis of a **“claim” based upon human effort!!!**
* This is the **7th time** this idea is presented here in I John.
* Our goal as Christians is not a **“claim”** that we love, but a **“true confession”** of Holy Spirit generated love for our Lord Jesus and for others around us!
* **Let me end where we began…** **1 John 4:7 (KJV)** Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.
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