

J.J.

GOD IS LOVE
1 John 4:7-21

1 John 4: 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have 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 also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

Pray

INTRODUCTION :

During her sermon on Jesus's teaching that we should love our enemies, The pastor asked the congregation to raise their hands if they had enemies. Everyone did so except for Mrs. Watson in the front row, who had just turned 95.

"Mrs. Watson," the pastor asked, "how could you possibly live for 95 years and have no enemies?"

"That's easy," the senior citizen replied, "I just outlived all of them."

Last week, we talked about "Loving Jesus". Next week, by God's grace, we'll talk about how to love others. But in order for us to get an understanding of what love is, let's go to the one who is love Himself.

Background of this book. John wrote this in response to some heresy (false teachings) that was going around during those days mainly Gnosticism – basically, it espouses two things

1. They believe that body and spirit are separate (body is evil and spirit is good) and that even if you sin in the body doesn't matter because you have the spirit in you.
2. They believe that to know God more you have to have some sort of higher mystical knowledge that is subjective – because it is based on a person's internal experience or feeling e.g. I feel I am one with God

That's why John wrote this book. He is assuring the believers at that time that you are truly saved or a Christian, if your life is marked by righteousness and then of course tells them, it **shows that you know who God is if your life is marked by love... and not by mystical knowledge.**

, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God

The title of this sermon is God is love.

Before anything else, the Bible says that God is love. He is not the God of love. He is love. The Bible doesn't also say that "love is God." If you say that you make "love" your god.

Quote: The term “God is love” means every understanding of love that we have must come from how God defined and showed what love is all about. We cannot separate God’s love with His holiness. God’s love is holy love.

Man does not define what love is.

We will divide this passage into three parts :

- I. **GOD IS THE SPARK OF LOVE**
- II. **GOD IS THE SOURCE OF LOVE**
- III. **GOD IS THE SAMPLE OF LOVE**

- I. **GOD IS THE SPARK OF LOVE.**

Now when John used the word “Beloved”, he used the word agapetos

Etymology : Beloved “agapetos” esteemed, favorite

It comes from the word “agapao” which means “I love you because I chose to love you.”

It doesn’t matter if you’re good or beautiful or rich or if you’re good to me. I love and will love you. Period.

Quote : The reason we can love others is because we know we are loved by God.

One of the temptations of the devil uses especially during times of trials and testings is to say to you, “God doesn’t love you.” “God doesn’t care for you”

That’s why John said, *let us love one another,*

We love others because we are overflowing with God’s love for us.

1 John 3:1 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!

What does it mean lavished?

Illustration : One time a father wanted to teach his son the lesson of God's great love. They were sailing in the ocean and he said, “Look to the east and then he pointed his finger to the east and circled around the entire ocean and said, "Johnny, my boy, God's love is as big as all that." "Why, Father," the boy replied with sparkling eyes, "then we must be right in the middle of it."

That’s why that song, “How He loves us.” By David Crowder Band, the one line I always remember there is, *“If grace was an ocean, we’re all sinking.”*

What does it mean to understand this kind of love?

BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATION : Remember the story of the woman who came at Jesus' feet and anointed his feet with oil and tears, and people were trying to judge Jesus for allowing a woman and a sinner to be near Him and yet He rebuked them gently saying, I came here and no one even washed my feet and etc.

Here's what our Lord said,

Luke 7:47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."

If you are a person who cannot forgive others, maybe it's because you don't understand how much God has forgiven you. Maybe we think we deserve God's love because we are good or righteous people.

Note : You see in Luke 7, how our Lord correlates forgiveness with love.

Why? It's easy to love those who love us but to love and forgive people who hurt us, who hate us, who annoy us, well that's the agapao kind of love – that's the Godly kind of love. That's the Christian kind of love.

At the end of the day, the background of this letter of John is how would you know that you are a Christian? What are the marks? AND ONE OF THEM IS AGAPAO KIND OF LOVE – THE KIND OF LOVE THAT LOVES EVEN THE UNLOVEABLE and we can only do this because we are God's beloved.

That's why verse 19 says

19 We love because he first loved us.

Note : This is easy for people who are loveable or even for those who are our circle of friends. I can understand that there are people who are not easy to love. They are either annoying or they were the ones who betrayed us or they were the ones who hurt us.

Illustration : I think I already told you the story that one time, I was an associate pastor in our church in the Philippines where my father-in-law was the lead pastor. He had to go to the States for some conference and it would take him a month. I was a young and new pastor and there were some people there who didn't like me that they openly showed their dislike for me. My father-in-law and I communicated through email. Of course, one of the things he wrote is asking the question, "How is the church?" I wrote back to him complaining about these two people. When he replied, I was expecting the letter to sound something like, "Don't worry, I'll take care of these two when I come back." But he wrote first encouraging me and that I'm doing a good job and then he mentioned the two people which he said some thing like this, "Regarding so and so....they are your Grace Developers".

Anybody, who is so hard to love, we should all the more love.

But how?

Simple. JUST START LOVING THEM.

If you are truly a child of God, this is what God gave.

Romans 5:5 God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Love is already inside of you. You just need to pour it out.

Quote : Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis wrote, "Do not waste your time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor act as if you did. As soon as we do this, we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him. If you injure someone you dislike, you will find yourself disliking him more. If you do him a good turn, you will find yourself disliking him less."

How do you create a fire? Through friction. When somebody irritates you, hurts you, annoys you...use that friction to SPARK love instead of hate or anger

II. GOD IS THE SOURCE OF LOVE

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Agapao kind of love comes from God

Only Christians can do that.

ANAK KO YAN. I always love telling this story. Ten years ago in 2009, it was my Tatay and Nanay's 50th Anniversary. They were holding a big church wedding again and a party afterwards. I already told them that I cannot come but my siblings knew I was coming and they wanted it to be a surprise where I will just arrive at the wedding itself. On the day of the wedding, it was my father-in-law who drove me to the church and we parked in an area which we were sure was far and my Tatay or Nanay wouldn't recognize me. But as soon as I stepped out of the car and the care was far away, my Tatay saw me and immediately said to everybody, "Si Jerry!" I was surprised. The people around him told my Tatay, "How can you be sure it's Jerry?" I can hear my Tatay say to everybody, "Si Jerry yan, anak ko yan...anak ko yan." (That's Jerry, he's my son...he's my son.)

I always remember my Tatay when I was young, he would say to me, "Manang-mana ka sa akin. Kamukha kita...kamukha kita...pareho tayong pogi at saka sakang ka rin" (We look like each other, we're both handsome and bow-legged)

Application : When we love others specially those who are unloveable or we love those who hate us or who have hurt us, God is saying to the angels, "That's my son! That's my son!" "Mana sa akin yan! Kamukha ko yan! Kita mo pareho kaming magmahal" (He comes after me, he looks like me, we give the same kind of love.)
and whoever loves (agapao) has been born of God

That's why Jesus said,

John 13:35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

Earlier, I mentioned about “grace developers”. Some people are not easy to love... make sure you are not one of them. How? By being a loving person yourself. That’s why the commandment is to love one another. If you are a loving person, you will be easier to love.

It’s exactly the opposite if we don’t love others

8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

We have to remember that when you became a Christian, you were born again... you have a Spiritual DNA...and in that spiritual DNA is love. LOVE is proof that you are God’s child.

III. GOD IS THE SAMPLE OF LOVE

How did God sample love?

1. Love takes sacrifice.

9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him

We know we are loving like God loves if we are willing to sacrifice all the things that are precious to us for another person.

God has sacrificed what was most precious to Him, His only Son.

What are the things that are precious to us?

1. Our reputation
2. Our time
3. Our treasures
4. Our pride

But in the end, if it’s done out love it’s not a sacrifice at all.

Story : A chaplain was ministering to a soldier in the hospital and said, “You have lost an arm in the great cause.”

The soldier replied, “I didn't lose it—I gave it.”

2. Love takes the first step.

10 In this is love, not that we have 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 also ought to love one another.

VERY IMPORTANT : We would never have a relationship with God if God didn’t make the first move.

That’s how we should love one another. We should be the one to make the first move to forgive...to understand...to forebear...to show patience. We should be the one to make the move to ask for forgiveness.

Illustration : My father-in-law always used to tell me, “Kapag nag-away kayo, pareho na kayong mali.” Why? The other one offended, the other one did not forebear or forgave.

sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins

Propitiation means appeasing. If someone needs appeasing, it means someone is angry. Here’s the thing, God is angry at us because we offended Him by our sin. But because of His love for us, He was even the one who made a way in order to appease His own anger by giving His own Son.

Application : It’s the same with us even if you were the one offended or hurt or betrayed, you are the one who must make the first step to appease your own anger by loving that person.

That’s why Jesus said,

*Matthew 18:15 "If another believer sins against you, **go** privately and point out the offense.*

Quote :

Pride says “You, come to me.”

Love says, “I’ll go to you.”

The problem sometimes, when we are offended or hurt or betrayed, we do not go to the person directly and privately. We go to others and then publicly slander them, hoping that others will also get angry at that same person.

Now, it’s also the same if you know if you’ve hurt or offended others.

Matthew 5:23-24 If you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you, abandon your offering, leave immediately, go to this friend and make things right. Then and only then, come back and work things out with God. (The Message)

It takes humility to show love.

What did God say when say when you show humility.

James 4:6 “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

Illustration : I remember one time, Ray-Ann Fuentes was being ousted as a leader in the church they were in and the son was so angry. The son couldn’t forgive but Ray-Ann said, “Ayaw mo ng blessing?” Unforgiveness (which is pride) takes away God’s blessings (Remember, He opposes the proud.)

Now the next verses shows that when we love like how God loves, it just shows that God is truly in us.

12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

Remember it says here, God is love. So if God lives in us, then our lives will be marked with love. Our Lord said, *"You will know a person by their fruit." Matthew 7:16*

This is the reason why love is part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5: 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

There is a reason why love is first in the list of fruit and why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13 *"and the greatest of this is love."*

Without love, we will have no joy, no peace, no forbearance, no kindness, no goodness, no faithfulness, no gentleness and no self-control.

We cannot claim we love God if we hate a brother or a sister.

19 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

We talked about the greatest sample of love and the greatest sample of love is JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD!

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Evangelistic...you are now part of God's family

STORY

I never dreamed that taking a child to Disney World could be so difficult — or that such a trip could teach me so much about God's outrageous grace.

Our middle daughter had been previously adopted by another family. I [Timothy] am sure this couple had the best of intentions, but they never quite integrated the adopted child into their family of biological children. After a couple of rough years, they dissolved the adoption, and we ended up welcoming an eight-year-old girl into our home.

For one reason or another, whenever our daughter's previous family vacationed at Disney World, they took their biological children with them, but they left their adopted daughter with a family friend. Usually — at least in the child's mind — this happened because she did something wrong that precluded her presence on the trip.

And so, by the time we adopted our daughter, she had seen many pictures of Disney World and she had heard about the rides and the characters and the parades. But when it came to passing through the gates of the Magic Kingdom, she had always been the one left on the outside. Once I found out about this history, I made plans to take her to Disney World the next time a speaking engagement took our family to the southeastern United States.

I thought I had mastered the Disney World drill. I knew from previous experiences that the prospect of seeing cast members in freakishly oversized mouse and duck costumes somehow turns children into squirming bundles of emotional instability. What I didn't expect was that the prospect of visiting this dreamworld would produce a stream of downright devilish behavior in our newest daughter. In the month leading up to our trip to the Magic Kingdom, she stole food when a simple request would have gained her a snack. She lied when it would have been easier to tell the truth. She whispered insults that were carefully crafted to hurt her older sister as deeply as possible — and, as the days on the calendar moved closer to the trip, her mutinies multiplied.

A couple of days before our family headed to Florida, I pulled our daughter into my lap to talk through her latest escapade. "I know what you're going to do," she stated flatly. "You're not going to take me to Disney World, are you?" The thought hadn't actually crossed my mind, but her downward spiral suddenly started to make some sense. She knew she couldn't earn her way into the Magic Kingdom — she had tried and failed that test several times before — so she was living in a way that placed her as far as possible from the most magical place on earth.

In retrospect, I'm embarrassed to admit that, in that moment, I was tempted to turn her fear to my own advantage. The easiest response would have been, "If you don't start behaving better, you're right, we won't take you" — but, by God's grace, I didn't. Instead, I asked her, "Is this trip something we're doing as a family?"

She nodded, brown eyes wide and tear-rimmed.

"Are you part of this family?"

She nodded again.

"Then you're going with us. Sure, there may be some consequences to help you remember what's right and what's wrong — but you're part of our family, and we're not leaving you behind."

I'd like to say that her behaviors grew better after that moment. They didn't. Her choices pretty much spiraled out of control at every hotel and rest stop all the way to Lake Buena Vista. Still, we headed to Disney World on the day we had promised, and it was a typical Disney day. Overpriced tickets, overpriced meals, and lots of lines, mingled with just enough manufactured magic to consider maybe going again someday.

In our hotel room that evening, a very different child emerged. She was exhausted, pensive, and a little weepy at times, but her month-long facade of rebellion had faded. When bedtime rolled around, I prayed with her, held her, and asked, "So how was your first day at Disney World?"

She closed her eyes and snuggled down into her stuffed unicorn. After a few moments, she opened her eyes ever so slightly. **"Daddy," she said, "I finally got to go to Disney World. But it wasn't because I was good; it's because I'm yours."**

It wasn't because I was good; it's because I'm yours.

Source: PROOF: Finding Freedom through the Intoxicating Joy of Irresistible Grace
By Daniel Montgomery and Timothy Paul Jones

Application :

God has loved us not because we are good but because He chose to love us because we are family. Let's do the same.

S.G.D.