

God is Love

1John 4:7-12

Why is Love Such a Big Deal?

05.03. 09

Read 1John 4:7-21

Intro There are at least 4 compelling factors that motivate us this morning to begin a life changing journey into the depths of God's love. In a few moments, we will answer from these verses in 1 John 4 the question – 'Why is loving each other such a big deal?' But first we will answer the question – 'Why set aside 9 weeks of sermons to challenge our thinking and change our appreciation of God's love?'

The compelling factors are:

1. Increased confidence in God. The key concern of John's letter is to help the readers know with a high level of certainty that they are or are not children of God. John teaches 3 basic tests that determine whether you possess eternal life or not. One, belief that Jesus is the Son of God and came in the flesh to bear sin (5:1). Two, obedience to the commands of God (2:29). Three, loving people (4:7-8). "Whoever does not love does not know God" is a petrifying standard to test the reality of our possession of eternal life. A study of God's love will increase your confidence in God which will strengthen the evidences of his love in real life.
2. Responsive worship to God. The Psalmist in 107:43 teaches us to pay attention to the loving works of God as seen in his reversing the downward direction of people's lives. Then he challenges us to consider, look closely at the great love of the Lord. This paying attention to and careful consideration is the source of genuine praise, thanksgiving and exaltation of God. Our worship is often a shallow response to what God has done in great depth. God has intervened in love – praise him! A study of God's love should grow our proportional response of worship.
3. Effective marketing for God. Loving people is a primary means God has designated to spread the good news of who he is and what he has done to restore relationship with people. Jesus taught that people will know we are his followers by our love for one another (John 13:34-35). Christ like love in our marriages reveals to others the reality of God's love in Christ (Eph.5:22-33). A study of God's love will rekindle the fire in our souls to love others intentionally toward the true lover of their souls.
4. Clearer understanding of God. The fuzziness characterizing the common understanding of God's love is absolutely life threatening. The concepts that God loves everyone unconditionally, that he loves everyone the same way and that his love is not consistent with his judgment have weakened and diluted the truth of God's love. Ultimately our unclear, man centered concepts of love lead us away from God and toward ourselves. We, like the church at Ephesus (Rev.2:1-7), remain busy in our religion but guilty of 'abandoning the love we had at first.' A study of the love of God will clear away the clutter of man centered ideas that we have accumulated over the years to make room for that initial, hot love for Christ that we long for and miss.

"a sense of the love of God to us is the main cause of our love to him. When we believe, know, and feel that God loves us, we, as a natural result, love him in return; and in proportion as our knowledge increases, our faith strengthens, our conviction deepens that we are really beloved of God; we, from the very constitution of our being, are constrained to yield our hearts to God in return." CH Spurgeon 1871

Let's look at 1 John 4 to discover 3 foundational truths about God's love that will challenge, change and motivate us. These truths are the building blocks of our nine week journey into the love of God.

1John 4:7-12 Why is loving each other such a big deal?

1. God is love. 4:7-8

Note the facts as stated in these verses that 'love comes from God' and 'God is love.' These statements challenge our understanding in at least these ways:

- God's love is self-originating.
- God's love is one of his descriptive perfections.

Note the logical deductions drawn from these facts:

- Lovers are connected to God.
- Nonlovers are not connected to God.

Carson illus.

cmp. 4:10, 19

illus. w/Deut.7:7-8

2. God has loved us in Christ. 4:9-11

Note the references to how God reveals his love. Manifestations, signs and evidences of love are crucial to understanding and measuring love. When John writes 'this is how God showed his love' and 'this is love', our attention should become focused. While there are several ways God demonstrates love for us, the primary one is found in Jesus Christ.

The greatness of God's love evidenced in Jesus Christ is seen in . . .

- God sent his one and only Son.
- God sent his Son to die.
- God sent his son to die for sinners.

Note the logical deduction v.11

Our love for people should be uncaused, spontaneous self- sacrificing action for others.

Cmp John 3:16; 1John 3:16

3. God presently loves in and through his people. 4:12

Note that the reference to God's invisibility raises a concern. If you cannot see God, how then will anyone know him or get to know about him? The verse gives the answer in two stages:

- God lives in his people who love people.
- God's love (what he is) is revealed in a special way through his people.

Illus. with 3:17

Conclusion No one loves God until they know that God loves them.

- Repent of disinterested admiration of God. ‘I love’ is really ‘I admire.’
- Ask God for help in turning your affections toward him in the coming weeks.
- Prayerfully prepare for celebrating God’s love in Christ at the Lords Table.