

## 1 John 4:7-11

“Love One Another”

It’s a common theme threaded throughout 1<sup>st</sup> John; love. Over and over again he returns us *to* and reminds us *of* the necessity of love. We’ve been considering the fingerprints of the Spirit of God upon the man of God who’s seeking to share the heart of God with the people of God. We considered his confession, his conversation, his crowd and his conformity; that is his willing and eager compliance to the word of God.

Yet equally we realize that those are truths that apply not only to a teacher/preacher of God’s word but in fact to everyone who names the name of Christ. If you call yourself a Christian your confession of Jesus Christ, who He is personally and what He’s done for you specifically should line up with the declaration of God’s word very definitely. Your conversation (outside of these 4 walls) shouldn’t be reminiscent of the world, we’re not to speak as the world speaks, but our speech is to be with grace, seasoned with salt understanding how to answer one another. We’re to be about building up and edifying, not tearing down or belittling, discouraging or defeating one another with our speech. Our crowd will change, all of the sudden the things that used to appeal to me don’t appeal to me anymore. I don’t want to do those things or be around people who are going to encourage me in things that will cause a breach in my relationship with the Lord or lead me toward ungodliness; and we’re eager to conform *to* and be transformed *by* the word of God. These are things that are simply true of *any* child of God.

There’s another fingerprint indicative of the Spirit of God with in any child of God and it’s one that we’ve discussed many times throughout our study of 1<sup>st</sup> John and that is this: love. But not just *any* kind of love, God’s love; the bible says that, “...*the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*” Rom 5:5 We read in Galatians 5:22-23, “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*” The fruit of the Spirit is love. What does that mean? It means that the overflow or outcropping of the Spirit of God in your life will be love. All of those other attributes work together to comprise or equate love; the fruit of the Spirit is love. What that looks like is “joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” You place all those ingredients in a big bowl, mix them all together and pop them in the oven and what comes out is called love. So the Spirit of God, and the love of God in a person’s life are virtually synonymous and inseparable, you can’t have one with out the other. So we read here in Vs 7...

Vs7-8

Ok, there are a # of things that I would like to glean and gather from these 1<sup>st</sup> couple of Vs that we're considering this morning. 1<sup>st</sup> of all I want you to realize that when John says, "Beloved, let us love one another" that he's not using a term of endearment from himself to the reader, as though he's saying, "I love you guys so much, let's all love one another." But rather he's imposing upon us the scriptural sense of *responsibility* to love one another.

He's saying, "You are loved *by* God (beloved), therefore you are responsible to share and show the love *of* God to one another." A more literal rendering would be, "Those who are loved, let us love."

Now, I got to thinking about this a little bit. Because we hear a lot about the love of God, and the command that we've received to love one another, yet I wonder if we really know exactly what that means. What does it mean to "love one another"? We understand that this word love is the word, "agape" the unconditional, self-sacrificial, others oriented love of God. But how does that play out in real time in our lives? Then I got to thinking that the bible says of Jesus in the 1<sup>st</sup> Ch of Hebrews that He is the express image of God's person, meaning that He's the exact representation of the nature of God (because He is God). Remember when He was talking to Philip there in John Ch 14 and Philip said, "Lord, just show us the Father, and that's sufficient for us." Jesus looked at him and said, "*Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*" John 14:9 So if God is love (Vs 8) and Christ is the express image, or the exact representation of God's character, and seeing Him is seeing the Father. Than it follows that I should be able to observe both the person of Christ and the principles that guided or governed His life and learn exactly what it means to have the love of God *in* me and what it looks like when the love of God is flowing *through* me. As a matter of fact Jesus said, "*Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me,*" Matt 11:29

That's what I want to do for just a minute right here, and right now. Because I would venture to say that most people should they be pressed to define love they would categorize it in a sentimental, a sexual, or a social way. Yet the bible defines love *not* as being sentimental, sexual, or social, but rather supernatural. Now; Jesus said, "*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.*" John 15:13 Which is exactly what He did, not only physically (there upon the cross specifically), but in reality Christ laid down His life (that is His will, His wants, His wishes, His personal agenda and/or desire) in virtually every arena of life that He might bless and benefit others be it physically (practically), spiritually, and most obviously eternally.

So again I submit to you that if we're to get an accurate understanding of love, we must examine and carefully consider the person of Jesus Christ and the principles that governed and guided His life.

Though we could consider many, I've narrowed my thoughts to 3 primary principles that Jesus was led by as the result of the power and person of the Holy Spirit in His life. Certainly there would be sub points that would fit under the primary points, but for now I just want to hit the highlights.

If you're one who takes notes so as to think through things later write this down; Primary Principles That Governed The Life Of Christ: #1 Submission. "Submission?" Yeah, remember these words, "*For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*" John 6:38 Or to understand that another way, "I've submitted Myself completely and in totality to God the Father." He said, "*I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.*" John 5:30

And again, "*The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.*" John 8:29 Even in the Garden of Gethsemane as He was contemplating the cross; being separated from the Father as He would be made sin for you and me that we might become the righteousness of God in Him; crying out, "*Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.*" Luke 22:42 You guys, that's the language of *submission*. Now, we won't go there today but jot it down, look at it later, Eph Ch 5; it's a Ch that speaks on what it means to walk in love as Christ has also loved us and given Himself for us. and When you get down to about Vs 21 it says, "*submitting to one another in the fear of God.*" It speaks on how that plays out in the wife's life toward her husband, and the husbands life toward his wife. But here's my point; if we're to walk in love there's no way *around* it, there's no exception *to* it we are to submit our lives 1<sup>st</sup> of all to God, and 2<sup>ndly</sup> to one another. There's no place for pride in love, love walks in humility. Jesus spoke of being meek (not weak) and lowly of heart, gentle. We read that a smoking flax He wouldn't quench, a bruised reed He wouldn't break; He was a man of humility, He dealt with the hurting gently, He led a life of *submission to the Father intentionally*, He purposed to submit Himself to the Father.

Primary Principles That Governed The Life Of Christ: #1 Submission, #2 Service. One day Jesus was teaching His disciples on what it took to achieve greatness with in the context of the Kingdom of God; and He said, “...*whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*” Matt 20:26-28 Jesus was governed by a principle of service; you can’t study the gospels without seeing the continual unrelenting service of Christ to those around Him. Even though He would at times grow weary *in* the work He would never grow weary *of* the work. How many times we find Him tired, that is, physically fatigued and simply worn out. Perhaps even looking for a place to rest, a place for Him and His disciples to simply enjoy a little relaxation; but the multitudes seeing the direction He was headed always seemed to take an alternate route to the destination and by the time He got there they would already be there waiting *on* Him and wanting something *from* Him. How many times did He get frustrated or exasperated and just say, “You know what, could gimme a break? Can I have 15 minutes here?” Never; with out exception we’ll read that He would look *upon* them and be moved with compassion *for* them and He would begin to minister to and serve them. He is the quintessential example of servanthood.

Jesus said, “*For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.*” Luke 22:27 It’s interesting how in Acts Ch 10 you find Peter preaching to the household of Cornelius concerning the person and nature of Christ, and he says that Jesus was anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and with power, the result being that He went about *doing good* and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him (Vs38). Here’s my point, when you’re filled with the Holy Spirit a natural byproduct of that supernatural work in your life will be “doing good,” serving others in some capacity.

I’m not saying that you’ll only be serving continually, or that it’ll be your job vocationally, but there will be consistency; because when the Spirit of God is *in* you, the character of Christ, the nature of God will flow forth *from* you.

#1 Submission, #2 Service, and #3 (perhaps most obviously) *Sacrifice*. The life of Christ was all about sacrifice. I mean, that was the whole purpose of His coming wasn't it? To be the sacrifice for the sin of the world, He was the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. Jesus said that even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so the Son of Man had to be lifted up (a reference to the cross), so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. Jesus recognized and realized that His life was all about sacrifice, His purpose in life was to lay down His life for you and for me, He would give Himself for the sake of others, over and over again He would tell His disciples that He would be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, that they would scourge Him, beat Him, and crucify Him and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day He would rise again. Jesus would give His life sacrificially for the sake of others, lay His own life aside for you and me.

Now; with in the context of these things, understanding just a little bit more about the love of God as demonstrated *to us through* Christ; that love involves submission to God and to one another, it involves taking the lower place, humbling ourselves so as to serve others, that it involves the sacrifice of my own will, my own agenda, my own desire. Understanding that Jesus walked in humility, He always spoke truthfully and dealt with mankind in integrity, He was a man of meekness and gentleness; look again at the passage, “Beloved *let us love one another...*” Kinda adds a different dimension to it doesn't it? “Let us submit to one another, serve one another, sacrifice for one another; let us be about blessing and benefiting one another, let us walk in humility toward one another, dealing honestly *with* and speaking truthfully *to* one another, let us be gentle and meek; let us love one another; ‘for love is of God.’”

“Love is of God.” When you understand the nature of love you understand the nature of God, for love is of God. “and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” Which tells us 2 things; if this kind of love courses *through* you and flows out *of* you to others *around* you it testifies of a reality *in* you and that is this: #1 You are born of God (you're a child of God) and #2 you know God, (that is you have an ongoing relationship *with* God). You walk with Him and abide *in* Him, you are experiencing Him in your life. Because this kind of love (believe you me) isn't natural for man. What comes natural *to* me is to look out *for* me, why should I want to bless or benefit you if there's nothing in it for me? But when I serve you, look to bless or benefit you with out regard for me; well now that's different isn't it? That has the scent of our Savior about it.

Now I'm not saying that people who don't know Christ have no capacity for kindness or acts of unselfishness. But even though I give my body to be burned, make the ultimate sacrifice in giving my life, but have not love (that is the Spirit hasn't filled me, Christ is not *in* me) it profits me nothing eternally.

Even our very best efforts pale in comparison to what God does in us and through us because love (true love) is of God.

Vs8

Now don't misunderstand this; it's a glorious truth, but to say that God is love is not the same things as saying that love is God. People justify all kinds of immoral activity by saying that since they're filing it under the banner of "love" that God is ok with it because God is love. But that's not all that the bible says about God. The bible also says that God is *light*, that is He is pure and holy. The bible also says that God is a consuming fire; He is righteous and true, a God of justice and uprightness. However we can rest assured that because God is love that every nuance of His nature is balanced in love. His holiness is loving; His righteousness is a loving righteousness, God's justice is issued in love, every nuance of God's nature is extended to us through the never ending reservoir of God's love. "For God is love," and if God be in you, than the love of God will flow forth from you. It's true that we all grow at different rates and some things come into fruition at different times in our lives, but if God be in you than the love of God will issue forth from you because God is love.

Vs9

2 More attributes of love to be gleaned and gathered from this Vs. #1 Love takes the initiative, we didn't love God, we didn't cry out *to* or reach out *for* God, there are none who seek God. God sought us, God extended Himself to us, God took the initiative and sent His only begotten Son. Love won't wait for a justifiable reason, or hold out until it's called upon, it will simply take the initiative to meet, or serve a need. 2ndly Love will give it's very best, God sent *His only begotten Son*, God gave to mankind His very best regardless of the fact that man did not in any way deserve it. The bible declares, "*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" Romans 5:8

Why? What was His motive, what was the incentive? “That we might live through Him” God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us (Vs 9) “*Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.*” Romans 5:9 That we might live *through* Him, John 10:10 “*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*” The bible teaches that prior to our being made alive in Christ that we’re dead in sin and transgression, oh our heart may be beating physically, we may be interacting socially, but we’re dead spiritually. It’s in Christ that we’re made alive to God, it’s a bit of a paradox isn’t it? That Christ had to die so that we might live... Yet in Christ we’re called to die to self that He might live both in us and through us.

Vs10

Couple things quickly here; 1<sup>st</sup> of all John wants us to see the gravity of love, “In this is love, not that we loved God,” the fact that you and I love God is no big deal, it simply shows that we’re not foolish. Anyone who knows anything of the truth of God would only be wise to love Him.

What’s amazing is that God knows the truth of me, and the truth of you and yet He’s still opted to love us and send His Son to be the propitiation for us (our sins). God is holy, God is just, God is righteous, merciful, gracious and compassionate, God is love. I (by nature) am the polar opposite of all those things; yet God has loved me and given His Son for me; that’s love!

Now, it’s easy for us to translate the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross as a display of Christ’s love for us; and it’s only appropriate that we do. Yet here John wants to underscore the fact that it was a display of the love of the *Father* toward us. Some people think, “Well, if the Father was so full of love why didn’t He take to the cross for us Himself?” Such a mentality knows nothing of the nature of true sacrifice and a deep display of love. How many of us here have children? Now if you had a choice to die yourself (a horribly gruesome death) or allow your child to die that death which would you choose? You would gladly take the place of your child; the sacrifice would be much, much greater for you to allow your child to suffer while you endured the sight of it. Now if you being evil would gladly take the place of your child, how much more was it a sacrifice for our heavenly Father to allow His only begotten Son to suffer for you and for me? God was demonstrating the greatness of His love *for* us in giving *to* us His only begotten Son as a propitiation for our sins.

What is a “propitiation”? Simply put it’s a sacrifice that satisfies the wrath of God; the wages of sin is death, the soul that sins shall surely die and with out the shedding of blood there can be no remission, no forgiveness of sin. The life of the flesh is in the blood and it’s life for life, the clean that cleanses the unclean. Jesus took our place and satisfied the sin penalty so that as we look *to* Him and trust *in* Him God’s wrath is turned away *from* us and His saving grace is issued *to* us.

Vs11

You see, here it is; underscored again. Having been so loved *by* God, we’re to share and show the love *of* God to one another. It’s the word “so” that you need to think through. How did God “so” love us? We’ve spent our time today developing a bit of that; even so we’re to love one another in like manner. The word “ought” speaks of an *obligatory debt*, since God has so loved me I’m (listen), I’m *indebted to God* to so love you. God is all about “pay if forward.”

Remember when Jesus washed the disciples feet there in the upper room on the eve of His betrayal? You would think after washing each of their feet He might kick back and say, “Ok, who’s got Me? I’ve washed all your feet, who’s going to be the one to now wash *My feet*? I left the towel there’s a basin of water, how about a pedicure while you’re at it?” He didn’t say that. What He did say was this, “*Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.*” John 13:12-14 When you’ve been served by the Lord, the appropriate response is to serve another brother or sister in the *name* of the Lord. When you’ve been so loved by God; the appropriate response is to so love one another to the *glory* of God...

### Prayer Points:

God the love with which You've loved us is unsearchable, it's unfathomable, yet we pray that You would give us a *glimpse* of it, take us deeper in our *understanding* of it, that we might be more like You through it. Help us to so love one another, may Your love resonate in us, and shine forth from us to the glory of Your name.

If you've never received God's love, Christ hasn't come into your life, forgiven you of your sin, changed you from the inside out, than perhaps today is your day. God has loved you with an everlasting love, and He demonstrated His love for you in the giving of His Son for you upon the cross. Jesus was delivered up to the cross and He shed His blood because of our offenses, our transgressions, but He was raised for our justification, you don't have to understand it, just trust God for it and you'll be made brand new, old things will pass away and all things will be made new. Just open your heart, call upon Him and cry out to Him even now...