

## **1 John 4: 7-21 Living a Life of Love (Prep Time: Colossians 3: 12-14)**

Wherever you go in the world, there is a love-connection between followers of Jesus Christ that will bless even the most dead. God's love transforms the way we love and the way we look at love. We already addressed this topic in 1 John 2. Along with living in obedience to God's Word, believers love distinctively from the lost. There can be no real joyful intimacy with God if there is none with other believers. **1 John 2**

**9**Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates (disregard, detest, to slight) his brother is still in the darkness. **10**Whoever loves his brother lives in (abides in, *meno*; intimate with) the light, and there is nothing (term of absolute negativity) in him to make (cause) him stumble (to fall into a snare or trap). Loving fellow believers helps and protects us from sin and it keeps us living in the light. **11**But (contrast) whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him. This is a new look at an old command from Jesus, the distinguishing mark of Christ's disciples is a unique and wonderful love for the brothers and sisters in Christ.

Today, John repeats this message! Yet, in context we need to see that living a life of love with other believers will **also** protect us from the false teachers that will come into our lives. (TV, Mormons, JW, Cheap Grace-Jude) Last week we were challenged to test the spirits, to compare what people say, or what we feel or think against truth. (Bible, Gospel, Deity and humanity of Christ). False teachers are warned about throughout Scripture. So here, in address the Gnostic, mystical heresies of the time, John tells us to focus on the person and work of Jesus Christ (last week) and then to love one another (this week). Love! Lived it!

**7** Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

**8**Whoever does not love does not know (by relationship or experience) God, because God is love. John is unapologetically stating that love amongst believers is a indicator of our love for God. This is an agape love, a no-strings attached commitment to others in ways that benefits, helps and grows them to be or as followers of Jesus Christ. Anything less, is a carnal, worldly love. Love is seen/known through actions. **Look**

**9**This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. **10** This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. God's love is not a theory, it is a proven fact, thus through the sacrificial death of Christ, God's love-driven, wrath-removing idea and plan from the beginning of time, is freely given through repentant faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. God's love is active. Our forgiveness is a hope only because of His love.

**11** Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought (lit. owe; due; this is an ethical issue, how things should necessarily be because we have experienced the love of Christ; disconnect from this community and connection with other believers is a serious sin and puts you in a dangerous place to be led astray.) **to love one another.** **12** No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. Somehow, God's love is made more perfect as followers of Christ love one another like Christ. **Listen...**

**13** We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. **14** And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. **15** If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God (Faith that Jesus is God), God lives (abides) in him and he in God. (God abides in those who believe the truth about our Tri-unified God.) Context same as last week.

**16** And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. **17** In this way, love is made complete among us (together, corporately) so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. (Changed life and love)**18**There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. Our confident faith has come from a personal life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. In the context of loving God and others, we see that God enables our love; we also see that we are then NOT motivated by a fear of losing His love. As we selflessly love other believers, we are being brought into a more perfect and complete understanding of God's love. God uses people to show His love in tangible, accountable ways. In contrast, false teachers generally use threats and fear to get you to think like them.(Context, have a mystical experience, deeper knowledge, good works; starts with Jesus)

**WHY?** **19** We love because he first loved us. **20** If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. **21** And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother. (LH, living in love with other believers is not optional. It will **also** protect us and one another from the false teachers that will come into our lives. **NONE of us love perfectly!** This is an agape love, a no-strings attached commitment to act towards others in ways that benefits, helps and grows them to be or as followers of Jesus Christ. There is a distinction between those who love selflessly like Christ and those who love selfishly like the world. Living a life of love begins and ends with living out of the overflow of the intimate love of God. John reminds us today that God is for you! His Spirit is in you! His love is settled in the cross of His unique Son and your beautiful Savior Jesus Christ. Don't fear loving no matter what may happen. Live a life of love!

**Atonement:** The sacrificial death of Christ that offers restoration of fellowship between God and the Christian. Christ's blood was shed, making amends for the sin of believers.

**Propitiation:** The removal of wrath against a believer which was accomplished through the satisfactory death of Christ on their behalf. God's wrath fell on Jesus instead of the believer.