

The Essentials of Our Faith – Studies In I John #16

Love Part I – Understanding It

I John 4:7-12

“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.”

I. Defining Love

A. Agape – in 7-21 used 28 times

- Common word – intensified by the Septuagint
- Cool, out of sight, awesome, whatever, etc.
- Character of God

B. New Testament usages –

- Jesus’ sacrificial idea
- Self-giving
- Motivation for God’s activity

C. Our text:

- Love is granted toward a person
- Choice
- Origin from God
- Love is how we know God or not
- God is love – love is not God
- Christ defines love by His actions

D. God’s actions show us love

- In sending His only Son
- To take our place
- To give us life

II. Love’s Motivation

A. We do not earn God’s love by our acts of love

B. God loves first

C. Being loved I am free to love others

D. It is dynamic

- As we experience God’s love again and again
- We are energized to give love in our relationships

E. It is our testimony

- Reality of our relationship with God is seen,
- In our relationships with other believers

III. Back To Our Text

A. The reason to choose to love each other VS 7

B. Because

- Not fear or law
- Love is from God

C. Reality of who we are VS 7-8

D. Example VS 9

E. Relationship VS 9

F. Evidence VS 10

G. Discipleship VS 11-12

IV. Thoughts

A. Our faith implies a relationship with a God who loves us and transforms us into a secure, loved, affirmed and forgiven person. How we live reveals who we are.

B. Love focuses on the solution to conflict, not the cause,

C. Can love be enough motivation for right living or do we need the law, rules, and standards to control behavior? Risky and messy

D. Loving each other is not so much a command as it is the outflowing of a relationship with a loving God. God’s love comes first, then our love.

E. Love is concrete not ethereal and results in service