

The love of God (1 John 4)

Part 1

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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] John, John's first epistle, chapter 4, verse 7, Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God. And everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be [00:01:02] the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us and his love is perfected in us. Hereby we know that dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love. And he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, [00:02:02] that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love cast without fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we received from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also. It seems that the Spirit of God would direct [00:03:05] our heart as this morning to the love of God. Might I have read a number of verses. I don't want to take much time, but there are three things that I want to speak to you of. The first is, God's love toward us a sinner. It comes in verses nine and ten. God's love in us a saint, that I believe is expressed in verse twelve. And love that is perfected with us in the day of judgment, that I think is in verse seventeen. The apostle, I say apostle, [00:04:09] he may not have been an apostle, but we always seem to regard him as such. I'm talking about Jude. Jude says, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. You know Jude, in his epistles, has presented in just a few words the terrible and solemn truth that grace had been abandoned, that grace had been abused. And it's nearly at the end of his epistle where he comes to entreat those to whom he was writing to keep themselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. [00:05:09] And the verses I believe that we have read together tonight show to us the full character of the love of God, of that love that brings us into this life, and that love that maintains us in it until we are with the Lord. This love then comes out to sinners. You know, I don't know how many bedrooms there are, maybe not so many now, but shall I say how many bedrooms there were, in the homes, not only of believers, but of those with probably some background or other, [00:06:02] that the words, God is love, are not on the wall. God is love. How wonderful. I wonder how much sometimes we appreciate just what it means to understand that God is love. The Apostle goes on following those words to write this, in this was manifested the love of God to water, because that God sent his only

begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Beloved, this love, which by God's wonderful grace brings those who have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ into [00:07:03] perfection in the day of judgment, is a love that begins with the sinner. How important it is to realize that. It's love that begins with the sinner. It continues with the saint, and how much our hearts thrilled this morning as we thought of his love. As we have already said, it goes on. It's never going to cease. It goes on right to the day of judgment. We may say to ourselves, as we think back to the words of Jude, how do we keep in this love? How do we keep in it? [00:08:04] Believe in Jesus? Yes. Love one another? Yes. You know, as we read verses 7 and 8, it would seem that there's no excuse at all for failing in love. But you know, love, beloved, is not just being kind to each other, but it's also being faithful to God. Love is the active outgoing of the divine nature. God's love gives all and forgives all. It's only possible through the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, where sin is, there must be a ground into which righteousness [00:09:06] can be brought. What God's righteousness demanded is love provided. How wonderful. And you know, this brings us really to a verse which never ceases to thrill my soul. At verse 9, in this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Beloved, God has given his Son that we might live through him. I don't know whether you have thought at all of this, but you know, the first thing that [00:10:04] we needed was life. Oh yes, was life. I hope I'm not going to be in trouble for saying this, but I believe it is absolutely true, that we must have life before we can come to know salvation through the propitiatory work of the Lord Jesus. New birth precedes faith. There may be those who do not agree with that, but I believe it is the truth of scripture. That's why this verse 9 means so much. God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. He came [00:11:11] first of all to give life, for we were dead. And the second thing he came to do, which comes in verse 10 I think it is, was to make propitiation. Why? Because we were guilty. If the Lord Jesus Christ had not come into the world, we would never have had life. We were dead. And he came that we might live through him. And if you read carefully, and there's no time to go into it [00:12:01] tonight, but if you read carefully the opening chapters of John's Gospel, I think you will have to agree with what I have just said. He came to give life. His very presence in this world brought home to men the deepness and the desperate sin that they were in. Scripture tells us, doesn't it, just one verse, in him was life. And the life was the light of men. And there it is. But you know, we must move on because when that life, that new birth was there, it was then that I knew what a [00:13:07] guilty sinner I was. Whilst I was dead in sin, I knew nothing of that. It was when there was life, except a man be born again of the Spirit of God. It's all in the beginning of John's Gospel. But you know, the wonderful thing about this is that this love towards sinners is seen in the fact that God sent his Son that sinners might have life. But then he shows us how. I said already, I'm going to say it again. The coming of the Lord Jesus come into the world was first of all to give life because we were dead. And secondly, and wonderfully, to make propitiation because we were [00:14:04] guilty. This verse 10. We've been thinking of love, haven't we? But here it is. Herein is love. Herein is love. Not that we love God. But that could never have been of ourselves. Never at all. There's a hymn in our hymn book which says, It is not to ourselves we owe that we, O God, are thine. We're nothing to do with it. It's not to ourselves we owe that we, O God, are thine. Jesus the Lord, our night broke through and gave us light divine. That light which showed us for what we were. Sinners of the deepest died. And having shown us what we were, in wonderful love, God moves on. It says herein is love. Not that we love God, but that he loved us, [00:15:11] and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, propitiation to me is one of the most wonderful verses in the New Testament. You don't find it in the Old Testament. Only in the New Testament. Here it is. What is it? Propitiation, beloved, is that aspect of the death of Christ, which has vindicated a holy and a righteous God, and which gives a divine perception of the evil [00:16:07] within and the fact that God has provided one who would take our place and stand for us. O beloved, God had to be vindicated on all the question of sin. And you know, if life is an instantaneous

thing, and I believe it is, and that life must come before propitiation is applied to deliver us from the guilt of sin. Herein is love. Not that we love God, but that God loved us and gave his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. You know, it was the law that demanded the satisfaction of blood for sin.

[00:17:15] There could be no peace for the soul without deliverance, and there could be no deliverance but for the wonderful work of propitiation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter writes of him, he says, who was delivered for our offenses, raised again for our justification. I'm sorry, it was paused. What Peter says is very much the same thing, but not in the same words. [00:18:01] Beloved, what the Lord demanded, because we are sinners, Christ has provided in that precious blood that he shed, that wonderful work upon the cross. The heart is set free by the work of the Lord Jesus. But you know, it's not only a question of God's love for sinners, but there's God's love in us. And verse 12 says to us, no man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. I wonder sometimes if we really know anything at all about [00:19:06] the love of God in our hearts and in our lives. But God doesn't tell us to love until he has shown to us his love in Christ. God has shown us his love in Christ, love that gave him, love that took him to the cross. And you know, I believe that that love must have a reflection in us. No man has seen God at any time. I'm going back from here to the first chapter of John's Gospel. No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. The one who was intimate with the Father is the one who has revealed God [00:20:11] to us. And if we love one another, the scriptures say, God dwells in us, and his love is perfected in us. You know, when we come down to verse 17, we see that perfecting of this wonderful love.

Verse 17 says, Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. If you were to go back, I think it's the 138th psalm, no, the 143rd psalm, you would read these words, and I believe it's the psalm of David, [00:21:01] and he says, Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. How can a sinful man be justified? How can a sinful man stand before God? We come back to John's Gospel, don't we, John 5, 24. He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life. How precious and how wonderful. You know, that verse in John 5, 24, makes it abundantly clear that the believer on the Lord Jesus Christ is never to be put on trial for his guilt. The unbeliever will be raised [00:22:04] for judgment, but the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ will be raised. He will be manifested, not judged, manifested at the judgment seat of Christ, O beloved, because as he is, so are we in this world. This I believe, and it's very simple and probably not very clear, but I believe that this is what this 17th verse is all about. We have first of all his love to the sinner, we have his love shown to us, and we have his love perfected with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment. Here it is, and it's because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no [00:23:03] fear in love. The love of God has met us in all our need. The love of God has watched over us and cared for us. And the love of all the shadows in that day, when we are in his presence, we will stand there clothed in that robe of righteousness, perfected then in that day. Beloved, as we wait for that moment, may I take you back to the exhortation of Jude, very precious, I believe, to many hearts. But oh, as we are here waiting for him, Jude says, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Beloved, that life [00:24:04] with him in glory, oh yes, we have eternal life now, but that's taking us straight into his own very presence. And as long as we're looking forward to that, we need God's mercy. Every moment of our lives down here, we will need the mercy of God. When we're in the glory, there's no more need of mercy. Mercy's for down here. And that's why Jude says, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. May we ever rest in all the wonders of his love that we have found here, waiting for him to come.