

Title: God's Great Love Act

Text: I John 4:7-11

Take your Bibles, please, and let's turn to I John chapter 4. I John chapter 4 beginning with Vs 7.

Now, beginning with Vs 7 and going through chapter 5 verse 5, John mentions for the third time, the GREAT THEME OF LOVE. More than any other N.T. writer, John wrote about LOVE. He knew about love. And He knew the Christ who spoke about love. John is called the "BELOVED" DISCIPLE. And because of that his message was one of love.

Tradition tells us that John always preached "LOVE." It is recorded that the last words of John, as he was carried into the church in Ephesus, dieing as an old man, were: "My little children, love one another."

So, these words are very precious to John.

And dear friends, I find in these verses that I am about to read such depth that it just fills my soul. And I hope you experience this morrow, the depth of meaning of these verses.

I John chapter 4 beginning with Vs 7...(READ Vs 7-11)

PRAYER

(5A) Now, we want to look at GOD GREAT LOVE ACT, as expressed here in these wonderful verses.

(1B) And the first thing that I want you to notice is a discription of love as expressed in Versew 7 and 8. These two verses explain the love of God like no other verses in God's wonderful Word....."Belove, let us love one another, for love is from God; and every one who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

WOW!!!!!!

(1C) First of all, notice the source ^{Vs 7}. We are told that "LOVE IS FROM GOD."

The little word ^{"From"} ~~is~~ means "out-off." It is refering to source. It comes "out-off" God's own nature. And ~~I must begin with this remark.~~ ^{So the} love that ~~is~~ under discussion in I John is a love you are not born with as a human being. It does not come from human nature. So many homes and families and marriages - husbands and wives and children- have problems right at this point. We are trying to show LOVE that does not come from God. And eventually the "human" of human nature -- will run into conflicts, problems and tensions. ~~It cannot survive.~~ ^{That is why we} We need the love that comes "out-off" the very nature of God.

So, love is discribed for us as to source. This love ~~is~~ that John is talking about doesn't come from within me. It comes from God. That is where its source is found.

(2C) Secondly, as to a discription of love, notice our assurance.

In the last phrase of Vs 7, this love is discribed as "every one who loves." Or, "who loves as a habit of life". Remember, that these verbs in John are in the present continuous tense. That refer to "habits of life." "one who as a habit of life is loving is born of God and knows God!"

In other words, this love that we are talking about gives to the believer an assurance that he really has been born of God.

Now, there are two things I want to expalin before we go any further. I want to explain the word "love" and "born of God"

(1D) First of all, the word "love"....

There are three kinds of love that you should know about. There is EROSwhich is sexual desires. There is ^(2B) PHILEO. Which refers to "brotherly love" or "physical fondness" or "concern for people."

By the way--God loves us in this manner. He has a physical attraction for his creation. He loves us deeply. He places great value upon a human soul.

And the Bible tells us that husbands and wives are to love each other in this manner. The Bible commands in I Timothy that wives are to love their husbands and their children. And it uses the word PHILEO. We get our word "philadepha" from that word. The city of brotherly love....

A young man see a girl walking down the street. He says: "Wow, I would like to date that girl."...That is Phileo. "Physical attraction." If it is Erros, you need help. The Bible teaches us that the marriage bed should be undefiled and honorable to all. And that is only in the bond of marriage.

And so, the Bible teaches these two kinds of love: physical attraction and sexual desires. And unfortunately most homes are built on these and these alone. And you just might survive with those kinds of love.

However, some homes and marriages don't have Phileo anymore. They operate only on sexual desires. And thus, there is conflict....

And some homes only have physical attraction. The marriage is supported only by what some folks call "compatibility." You know, just getting along with one another.

(35) But, my friends, God has a deeper word for love. And it is the word John is trying to explain to us. And we need to get awholed of this love. Because if we don't we will basically be a selfish, self-centered person who has never really begun to live and be free. The love that John is trying to describe is call AGAPE.Agape....

Now, everyone talks about agape. You can pick up a book or magazine and there it is.....A..G..A..P..E....

And people try to have an Agape experience. Or, some want to have an Agape love feast.....But you see that is impossible.....People use the word AGAPE and they don't understand what it means. [Now, I have said this before. But, I want to say it again. In fact, I want to say it so much that you will not forget it. AGAPE COMES FROM GOD...NO ONE ELSE....You cannot program Agape....You cannot suddenly decide "I will express Agape love."....

The Bible clearly teaches that Agape(love) is of God....In fact in Vs 7 when it says "love is from God" the Greek uses the definite article "the" in front of the word "agape"....It should read "the love is from God." It is talking about a particular kind of love.....And it comes from God.

But that

because

~~It~~ ~~is~~ brings assurance. Everyone who loves is born of God.

(2D) Now, secondly, what does it mean to be "born" of God?

It simply means that I have an actual birth that happens to me. And it originates with God. God does some thing in me to produce His life in my life. I can not explain it. I can just tell you what the Bible says about it. The Bible tells us that we actual become partakers of the divine nature, or the very nature of God the moment we accept Christ as our Saviour and Lord. At the moment you receive Christ, God produces his life in you. So that, in truth, you can say: "I have the life of God by a rebirth.

The Bible says that we become new creatures in Christ. Old things pass away. All things become new. We become a child of God by a rebirth. It is called a spiritual birth. Remember that God is spirit. And when you are born of God what God does is to put his quality of life in you which is spirit. And that spirit comes to live in you. And it is the nature of God. The Holy Spirit of God comes to live in the believer. And you have a brand new nature. You have the very life of God.

H Now, here is the point: Love is out-of God. When you are born, spiritually, you are born from God. Therefore, only those who are born from God have ^{can agree love} ~~that~~ love. It is part of the nature of God. And until you get the nature of God, you cannot love in this manner. You may try. But you will be defeated. ^{And} ~~And~~ christians have this love because they have the Holy Spirit in them. They have accepted Christ. They have a new nature.

But the problem is that it lies dormant. And it lies dormant because we do not understand what is involved. But according to John it convinces us and brings assurance that we are "born of God." That we have his life in us....

(3C) Also, in regards to this discription of love. John tells us relating to knowledge that we will know God. Vs 8 says: "He that loveth not." In other words he who is not loving as a habit of life is not knowing God. "For God is Love."

John is literally saying that he is not knowing God by personal experience.....

My Christian friends, do you see what John is trying to say? He is saying that if we are not producing the love of the Holy Spirit, we are not daily experiencing the knowledge of Christ. We are not getting better acquainted with Christ, if love is lying dormant within us. The more we love as a pattern of life, John is saying, the more we daily experience knowing God. And the more we know of God the more we desire to ~~be~~ ^{be} feed spiritual food when we come to church. And it is all related to love, according to ~~John~~ ^{John 13:1}

(4C) Then fourth, in Vs 7 and 8 this discription of love is related to ^{God} his nature. John says at the end of Vs 8 "God is love." This means that Agape is the nature of God. This is a part of God to love in this way.

Now, what does that Mean? ^{when we say Part of His Nature?} Well, it means many things. But let me give you a couple of concepts....

(1D) Number 1, it means sacrifice.....By the way: husbands are to love their wives in this manner.....It is a sacrificial love.... A giving of yourself with no thought of return....

(2D) Number 2, it means a concern for others with no regard to what we will receive. You know, even in our best moments it is easy to love others with the idea of what we will receive in return. It is so easy to love a person who like you.....But, oh, it is hard to love someone who doesn't like you... Right.....Do you see how we shift gears and move out of the spiritual realm into the carnal realm and we are saying: "Hay, I cann't love him anymore because he dosen't love me."

Thus, we leave the realm of AGAPE - love, and move into the realm of PHILIP- Love..because he dosen't physical attract me or his personality clashes with mine, or he doesn't like me.....So, we back off

Folks, this Agape love that we are talking about comes from God.... And the fruit of the Holy Spirit's operation in our life is love.....

(2B) Now, in knowling all of this, in verse 9-10, John shows us how love can be deminstrated. And there are four things that I believe love deminstrates here in these verse. ~~Four~~ ^{Four} ways in which AGAPE love is ~~d~~ deminstrated.....

(1C) First of all, in Vs 9, we have this statement: "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because God sent his only begotten son into the world that we might live through him." The phrase "the only begotten son" tells us that love is deminstrated in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Christ is God's only begotten son.

Now, there are two things involved in that phrases. (1D) The word "begotten" means "unique". We learn ^{over}~~ove~~ in the book of Hebrews that Abraham had a son Issac and it was his only "begotten son." ~~Issac was~~ But, we know that Abraham had other sons. Issac was not his only son. He had other sons. Ishmael was one of Abraham's sons. So, Issac was ^{his} "special" or "unique" son. That is what the word "only begotten" means....

(2D) But it also refers to the fact that Christ was born of a virgin. He became a man. God sent his "only betton son."n The greatest deminstration of love, then, was when Christ, the son of God, left everything he was and became man. He laid aside all of his divine rights and privileges, he emptied himself, the Bible says, and he became a man....WHY?.....So that we might know God. The Bible says that no man has seen God at any time, but the only begotten son who is in the bosom of the Father. He has declared him. He has put him on display. Love is deminstrated to you and to me by the fact that God became man. *God in philippes, we are told to have this same attitude as us - that was in christ.*

(2C) Secondly, love is deminstrated in the example of the Father. Vs 9 says, "God sent his only begotten son".....Do you understant that it was the love of the Father who sent Jesus Christ into the world? God sent his son.... John wrote in his gospel: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoeverf believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.".....God so love that ^{he} gave.....The example of the Father

Do we love that way!

(3C) But, love is also deminstrated in the purpose of Christ coming into the world. We read in Vs 9: "God sent his only begotten son into the world, that we might live through him."

The Bible says in John 1:4 "In him, in christ, was life, and the life was the light of men."

No person really sees and has the light to see until he knows the one who has the life which produces light. Jesus is life. You have never known life, until you come to know Jesus as your own personal saviour.

However, I must remind you that Jesus is the Saviour of the world regardless of what we do about it. But you see, he can be my saviour...He can be my Lord ~~the~~ ^{when} moment I invited him to come into my life. ~~And~~ ^{Then} I receive Life. The whole reason God loved me and why he sent his son into the world is so that I might live....Live forever....Yes.....But, also to live right now. Eternal life begins the moment I accept Christ. And this love is [?] actually life. God is love. God is life. God can give you that life. It comes out-of his own nature....

(4C) Then, I notice, that this love is demonstrated in his sacrifice.

Vs 10 says: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins."

(1D) I would like you to notice about the sacrifice of Christ, first of all, that it came in spite of our lack of love.

Did you notice that?....Isn't that tremendous....Vs 10 says: "Herein is love, not that we loved God."....

The fact is ..we didn't. We are not born and directed to love God. We are born and bent towards loving....what?....SELF....That is the way we are born. We are not born to love God. We have a selfish nature that is going, if left alone, that is going to loveSELF....

So, John says: "Herein is love, not that we loved God." In other words, God loved us. Christ loved us. Christ died for us....in spite of our lack of love.....What a tremendous principle to get awfully off...

(2D) And secondly, it was through the act of the Father.

Vs 10: "But that He loved us.".....The word "love" is in the past tense. This means that he loved me at a point in time. What was the point in time that the Father love me?.....

At that point when Christ died on the cross....The greatest love act that the Father ever demonstrated was the death of Jesus on the cross.....

At the point in time that Jesus died ~~for~~ on the cross the Father demonstrated to the whole world more love than the world has ever been able to understand. This was God's great love act....

Notice, the little word "BUT"....This is a word for "contrast." It is a strange contrast. Not that we loved God....How ridiculous...BUT...in great contrast....But, God in one moment of time loved the whole world, through the cross and the death of His son.

Oh, how we need to get the right perspective.. The cross was not a last minute plan of God to save the world. The cross was no surprise. The cross was in the mind of God when he created and designed man. The Bible says in the book of Revelation that Christ was a lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Before God ever created anybody in this congregation he saw that one great love act....He saw it...And it was through the cross that He demonstrated to all the world his love for us.....

May I suggest something to you, my christian friends? If you have found your heart growing a little cold in the matter of love, where would you go for help? Where should you go to rekindle the ~~flame~~ flame?

My understanding of what John is saying, here, is that you should come back to the foot of the cross. There is no other place to go. Christians, you know we can get so familiar with the cross that we lose the meaning of that love act. Oh, how we need to come back to the cross. Herein is love. Herein is how you can know AGAPE...Here it is....."Not that we loved God. In spite of our lack of love....The father loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins.....

Now, what does the word "propitiation mean" ? It means "~~confessing~~" "paid for."

When Jesus died on the cross he ^{it} paid for your sins and mine. The Bible says our sins have been removed as far ~~away~~ as the east is from the west. How far is that?....No contact..... *Completely Removed.*

The Bible tells us that Christ has taken away our sins by the shedding ^{of} his won blood. And all of this just to teach us the meaning of AGAPE... Love...God's great love act. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that the Father loved us in a moment of time, at the cross, when he sent his son to be the propitiation, the blood shed for our sins...."

At that mement God deminstrated his love for you and for me. ~~The cross is the greatest act of love deminstrated for you and for me.~~

(50) And that is why he says in Vs 11: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

How about it christian?.....Do we let "self" come between us.... Do we make our love "condictional".....I will love you if you will love me"...

Oh, beloved let us love one another.....

Shall we pray

Our Father in heaven we thank you for the great love act of the father which sent Jesus into the world to be our saviour and Lord, to shed his blood for our sins. We thank you that all of our sins were laid upon him. With his stripes we are healed. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bursed for our iniquities. And he went through all the suffering and pain on the cross because he loved us.

And this love he wants each of us to deminstrate in our lives. Our Fther we pray for those ~~where~~ today who have never received Jesus. We pray that they will receive Jesus as their savior.

And Father, for those of us who know you as Savior, and yet your love is not operating in our lives...We are not loving one antother....Father forgive us.....and cleasns us from all unrighteousness....and help us to manifest your love one to another.....For we pray this in the name of Jesus, who loved us and deid for us.....Amen....