

“The Love of Christmas”

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Scripture

1 John 4:7-11

“Beloved, **let us love one another**, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”

“The one who does not love does not know God, for **God is love.**”

“By this the love of God was manifested in us, that **God has sent His only begotten 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 propitiation for our sins.**”

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

Christmas

Do you love Christmas?

It can be a “Blue Christmas” for some

We always have to remember that all are not joyful during the holidays

They may need the true “Love of Christmas”

If I were to ask you what the Christmas story was, how would you respond?

If someone never had heard of Christmas, how would you describe it to them?

Would Jesus be the centre of the conversation?

We are staying with the writings of John for our Christmas message this year

1 John written near the end of John’s life

He’s an older man now, after a lifetime of experience

He has ministered in the church for a while now

What does he want to communicate to his readers?

The Encouragement to Love

1 John 4:7

“Beloved, let us love one another, for **love is from God**; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”

Four main Greek words for love in the New Testament

Eros-> Storge -> Philos -> Agape

John continually uses Agape in this section

Agape is a sacrificial love -> KJV in Luke 2 -> "Goodwill toward all men"

"**love is from God**" -> the source of love is God

If you have ever used the word love to anyone, you've used something God created

But John is talking about a deep, sacrificial love

"everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."

Anyone who continually loves like that, must know God, personally

"**knows**" -> This is not the knowledge of God, like book knowledge

The Greek is *ginosko* -> It is a **deep, personal, experiential knowledge**

You could say:

- "I know the mayor"
- "I know the governor"
- "I know the president"

You might know their name...

But do you really "know" them?

Some people say they know Jesus, too...

How many of you have a deep, personal, experiential knowledge of God?

If you do, then you would be showing that sacrificial, agape love to one another

On the other hand:

God is Love

1 John 4:8

"The one who does not love does not know God, **for God is love.**"

If you do not have that love for one another, then John says you have no idea who God is

Why?

Because God is love!

God is the essence of love

He is the embodiment of love

Many people can profess to be Christians, but have no idea who God is

To God, they are frauds

Impersonators and hypocrites

They are fools: thinking you fake their way into Heaven

Slip in without confrontation

Jesus addresses those individuals in Matthew 7:

Matthew 7:21-23

“Not everyone who says to Me, '**Lord, Lord,**' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.

"**Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'**

23"And then I will declare to them, '**I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.**'"

Many will die on earth and go to see Jesus at the judgment seat

They will claim to have a personal relationship with Him -> “Lord, Lord”

They will try to tell Jesus, “I’ve been a good person; let me tell you what I’ve done!”

Jesus will not be moved by their spiritual resume

He will not be moved by self-evaluation that they were good

Instead, He will tell them -> “I never KNEW you!”

“We didn’t have a personal relationship”

We may have had a professional relationship, but it certainly wasn’t personal

Do you know the difference between a personal relationship and a professional one?

Does the governor or the president know who you are?

You need to have a personal relationship with Jesus to get into Heaven

How did God show us what love was?

God’s Declaration of Love

1 John 4:9

“By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.”

God revealed His love to us by sending “His only begotten Son into the world”

This is our Christmas story

The baby, born in Bethlehem, laid in a manger

Celebrated by the angels

Sought after by the wise men

Worshipped by the shepherds

Jesus is the Love of Christmas

How do people in the world know that God loves them?

He sent His Son into the world!

John 3:16-17

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

“For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”

He came as a baby who would be Savior

Even the name Jesus means “The Lord is Salvation”

Luke 2:10-11

“Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

Many of you may remember those verses as Linus quoted the Bible in the Peanuts Christmas special ages ago

Matthew 1:21 (an angel telling Joseph in a dream) as I read earlier

“She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

John wrote:

Jesus came “so that we might live through Him”

Our part in the Christmas story is to let Jesus live through us to others -> “love one another even as I have loved you!”

Then John wrote:

God’s Sacrificial Love

1 John 4:10

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

John wrote that we didn’t love God

We could never love God without God in us through the Holy Spirit

Instead, John wrote, “He loved us”

How do we know that?

He “sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins”

“propitiation” -> means “an offering to appease” someone

Anyone ever had a complaint about something they purchased?

You take it back to the store and demand your money back

The owner of the store says, “I cannot give you your money back, but instead I’ll give you a better model free”

Or maybe you get “store credit”

These are some things to appease you -> so that you go away without being angry

Why is Jesus a propitiation?

Because God can be your enemy!

If you do not have a personal relationship with Jesus, God is your enemy

Paul wrote about Jesus’s sacrifice:

Romans 5:8-11

“**But God demonstrates His own love toward us**, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more than, having now been justified by His blood, **we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.** And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

If you are a follower of Jesus now, you were once an enemy of God but now you are reconciled with Him

Friendship has replaced war

But if you haven’t accepted Jesus as the propitiation, you are still an enemy of God

So, let me urge you today -> accept Jesus’s sacrifice on your behalf

Let me introduce you to the Savior of the World

That you can avoid the wrath of God

If you do not develop a personal relationship, your last breath here is your first breath in Hell

I plead with you-> while you still have time

The true “Love of Christmas” could be yours today

“Prayer of Salvation”

The Call to Love

1 John 4:11

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

If you have that personal relationship with Jesus already, **I plead with you to love one another**

Not just people inside the church, but all those you come in contact with -> this reveals your relationship with Jesus

We are to “Go Tell It on the Mountain”

“Over the Hills and everywhere”

He is Emmanuel -> “God with Us”

Thank Him today for being our Emmanuel

Prayer

Benediction