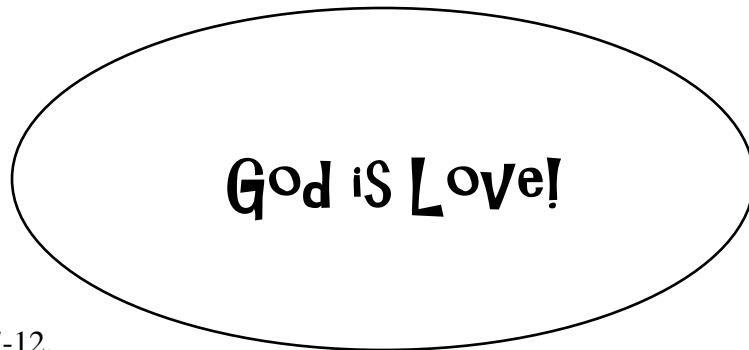


LESSON 7: 1 JOHN 4:7-21



Please read 1 John 4:7-12.

Why is love so important?

How does John define love? (vs 10)

Jesus used the story of the Good Samaritan to illustrate love. We have grown up accustomed to the fact that the Samaritan was a hero. Perhaps, when we hear the word Samaritan we instantly think of this selfless man. However, when Jesus told this story, he wasn't speaking to a crowd of people who knew such organizations as Samaritan's Purse (humanitarian aid), The Samaritan Institute (counseling), or even just Samaritans (an emotional support charity). When they heard the name, Samaritan, they pictured their enemy. I would like you to read Jesus' parable with fresh eyes today. Change to names to make it more real. To help you do this, answer these questions.

Name two groups of people you would expect to help someone in trouble.

- 1.
- 2.

Name a person, or a stereotypical group of people whom you would not normally associate with charity.

Now, please read Luke 10:25-37, interposing the names you just wrote down for the key players.

How did it make you feel that the people whom you expected to help walked away?

How would you feel if you were helped by your sworn enemy?

How would you react (be honest with yourself) if you saw a person you despised injured on the side of the road?

The way we live out our ability to love shows more about how we accept God's love than it does anything else. When I was a young child, I lived in an area of town where crime wasn't unheard of. One day, I fell off my bike and was hurt pretty badly. I was covered in blood (head wounds always bleed way more than they should!) As I sat in the street crying for help, I saw

curtains snap shut, people grab their children and run in the house, and eyes peeking out from behind doors, but no help came. It wasn't that my neighbors were bad people. Many of them were my family's friends. Most of them were kind and lovely people. However, fear kept them behind doors. When we read the story of the Good Samaritan, it is easy to dismiss the priest and the Levite as barbaric and heartless, but would we do the same?

How can you be a Good Samaritan this week?

Please read 1 John 4:13-18.

In the video, we talked about how we have confidence on the Day of Judgment because we have confidence and hope that the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross covered and paid the penalty for our sins. Let's dig a bit deeper into this subject by reading Paul's explanation.

Please read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.

The foundation that Paul is talking about is the message of the gospel. What do you think he meant by "someone else is building on it"?

How do we 'build' our lives on the message of Jesus Christ?

Our actions and words encompass the life that we build on our salvation. This is our Christian walk. I think it is safe to say that not all Christian walks are the same. We can live a life that is completely devoted to the Lord in word and deed. We can live a life that is very different than that of the fallen world around us, or we can not. We can choose to live our life frighteningly similar to the that of a non-believer. Our 'building' doesn't affect the foundation that we built upon.

What does Paul say will happen on the “Day” (Day of Judgment) to the building that we built (the life we lived)?

What is the reward for our ‘building’ surviving the fire?

What is the penalty for our ‘building’ being burned up?

Why do both instances end with the builder’s life being saved?

Jesus is our safety net. He is our ticket into heaven. We will stand judgment for the things we have done and the words we have said, but ultimately, our salvation is dependent on the foundation of Christ’s sacrifice and not our works.

Please finish reading 1 John Chapter 4 (verses 19-21).

Why do you think it is impossible to love God and yet hate people?

Are there people that you find hard to love? If so take a moment to write down WHY you find it so hard to love this person (or people).

Our love for the Father compels us to love His children, even when we don't get along with them. God commands us to love our enemies. Sometimes, situations don't allow us to re-establish relationships with people who have hurt us. Sometimes that is not possible and sometimes it is not wise. God doesn't say that we need to allow people to continually hurt us and use us. There is a difference between loving someone as God loves, forgiving as God forgave, and being used and abused.

How can we offer love to someone that we can't allow access to our lives to? Can we love from a distance? How does that look to you?

Take a few moments to ask God to help you love the people around you. Be specific. If there is anyone for whom this is particularly difficult, ask God to help you offer love. Look for ways this week to live out a life of love.