

Part 9 – 1 John 4:7-21

I. Love, The Evidence Of The New Birth – 4:7-11

A. Vs. 7 – Those who love others show that they have been born of God.

1. Note these two things that set us apart from those who don't know Christ:

A. The New Birth is seen in our treatment of others – you cannot be a bitter, hateful person and be truly saved. Note 1 Jn. 2:8-11; 1 Jn. 3:11-18; Jn. 13:34-35. He is speaking here of a constant state of mind. We do get bitter at times, and we are to deal with it. See Eph. 4:30-32.

B. They know God – this is knowledge that is grounded in personal experience.

** If we are a bitter, unloving, angry person, with no desire to know God and His will, we are not born of God.

B. Vs. 8 – Here is the reminder that Biblical love is a mark of our knowing God.

1. To not love others is to say we do not know God. The word for "not" in vs. 8 is "ouk" in the Greek and means a denial of something absolutely and directly.

2. The person mentioned here is not saved. 1 Corinthians 13 gives us a pattern for love.

3. When we think of the writings of the New Testament we think of "interactive" Christian love. Note passages such as Eph. 4:1-6; Eph. 4:17-5:9. Beginning in Eph. 4:25 we have what we can call "interactive" Christianity.

4. As a child of God, we will be convicted when we sin. Some teach that a Christian can get to the point where the Holy Spirit cannot convict them any longer – Jn. 16:8-11 disputes this thinking. The fact that sin grieves the Holy Spirit means He will work in our life.

C. Vs. 9 – This verse shows God's love for us.

1. God sent His Son into the world that we might be saved (Jn. 3:16).

2. Love is an action word. Emotions are part of the equation, or can be.

3. Our "living" as mentioned here is not just about having eternal life, it reflects our everyday walk. Thus, acts of love are involved in our living through Christ.

4. The word for "live" has the idea of "enjoying real life", or "having true life" and living worthy of the name of Christ.

5. The word "live" is conditional, meaning something had to cause it. Our "living" is based on the fact that God's love came to us, in Christ, and changed us.

D. Vs. 10 – A picture of real love.

1. We did not love God first – for the most part, the world is antagonistic towards the things of God. see In. 15:18-25 and 2 Cor. 4:3-5.

2. God loved us and sent His Son to be a "propitiation" for our sins. This means that Christ satisfied the judicial demands of God because of our sin. In the OT, the Ark of the Covenant (the cover of the ark), in the Holy of Holies, was sprinkled with blood on the Day of Atonement. God was thus appeased – Heb. 9:5; Rom. 3:25.

3. Propitiation is God's work, not man's, so that we can be forgiven. Christ is the satisfaction to God's justice for our sins. His blood is a necessity in this work.

** Paul Enns states, "Propitiation is Godward...His holiness is vindicated and satisfied by the death of Christ."

E. Vs. 11 – Here we see what our response should be.

1. Since God loves us unconditionally, we are to do the same for others.

II. God is seen in how we love.

A. Vs. 12 – This verse describes how we can show the relationship we have with God.

1. John reminds us that no one has seen God at any time. See Ex. 33:20; Jn. 1:18. Christ is the revealer of God (Jn. 14:7-11).

2. "Abiding" has two different concepts in the New Testament:

A. It is used to describe the salvation experience. Believers "abide in Him."

B. It is used similar to Gal. 5. It is a "walking in the Spirit" type of relationship.

3. If we show love, it shows that God abides in us.

4. This verse is a relational, not a salvific verse. By "abiding" in God's love we are made "perfect" or "complete" in our relationship with Him. He is maturing us.

B. Vs. 13 – This verse deals with our salvation experience.

1. The only way we can live vs. 12 is by the Holy Spirit.

2. We can "know" that He abides in us and we in Him because He has given us the Spirit. The Spirit produces love in our lives (Gal. 5:22-23).

3. Romans 8 also describes the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

A. We are freed from sin and death through Christ – Rom. 8:2

B. We are under no condemnation – Rom.8:1

C. The Spirit brings joy and we are spiritually minded because of the Spirit – Rom. 8:5.

C. Vs. 14 – John gives us a firsthand account of what he has personally witnessed.

1. The apostles were eyewitnesses of the ministry of Christ. He came to "seek and save" all who were lost – see Lk. 19:10; Jn. 5:36-38.

D. Vs. 15 – This is a key verse dealing with a person's relationship to Christ.

1. This verse is connected to vs. 14. The message of the Apostles regarding Who Christ was must be accepted. Confession of all that Christ is brings salvation.

2. This "confession" brings us into a relationship with Christ, an abiding relationship.

E. Vs. 16 – The thought continues regarding the evidence of our relationship with God.

1. Because of what vss. 14-15 tell us about Christ, we know and believe the love God has for us. The very fact of the Savior, God's Son, coming to die for us, shows us God's love.

2. Our life "abiding in love" shows our salvation. Do we love God? Do we love people?

III. The Power Of God's Love - 4:17-21

A. Vs. 17 – Here we see what love can bring to lives, spiritually speaking.

1. When love reaches a place in our lives where it is seen in maturing us, we can react in ways that honor Christ. The phrase "perfected with us" seems to indicate "association", thus this verse is probably dealing with corporate church relationships.

2. John mentions that we can have "confidence", free and fearless confidence in the day of judgment. What this means most likely is that we as God's children are no longer condemned (Rom. 8: 1), and we can also that we will not face the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

3. The phrase "day of judgment" is used in the NT to describe God's judgment on the unsaved. Note:

A. Mt. 10:15 – Cities rejecting the Gospel seem to have a worse fate than Sodom and Gomorrah. Christ had been present in Mt. 10 and had been rejected.

B. Mt. 1 1:22-24 – These verses are a picture of future judgment.

C. Other verses dealing with this include Jn. 5:22; Rom. 1:32-36; Heb. 9:27; 2 Peter 3:7.

4. Some Christians live in fear of judgment because they do not understand the relationship they have with Christ. God does correct us (Heb. 12) as His children, but our sins have already been judged at the cross.

B. Vs. 18 – John gives us a prescription for dealing with fear.

1. As we grow in God, and understand His love for us, we do not need to fear.
2. The word "fear" means "dread" or "terror." This type of life is negated by love that has grown and matured in Christ. The more we know God, the less we need to fear.
3. Note that "perfect" love literally "throws out" fear.
4. Love is tied to God's grace. God's love for us as His children is unconditional. We love because He loved us.

C. Vss. 19-21 – These verses finish our thoughts on God's love and its impact on us.

1. Vs. 19 reminds us that our love is in response to His giving of love to us.
2. Vs. 20 again brings to the front the idea that we cannot claim to love God and not love our brother. Note John says this person is a "liar", and according to 1 John 1 liars are not believers.
3. Vs. 21 reminds us of our responsibility to live in obedience to the commandments of God. We are to love the church of God and the world around us, to reach them for Christ.