

# The First Epistle of John

## (Week 45 – 1John 4:19-21)

### I. Review: (1John 4:17-18)

#### A. John made four basic points:

1. Judgment Day is coming.
2. Perfect love (i.e., God's love being made manifested in us) gives us confidence to face that Judgment Day.
3. Perfect love shows we are like Jesus in this world.
4. If God's love isn't flowing through us, we will face Judgment Day with fear, and fear has to do with punishment.

#### B. Question: What does John's great emphasis of love imply?

1. This implies that a Christian is to be involved in close relationships with other Christians, where there is a willingness to work through misunderstandings and hurt feelings.
  - a. God's love expressed through Christ's death, presents us to God as a holy and blameless people, free from accusation (above reproach) (cf. Col. 1:22)
  - b. Love covers a multitude of sin; it overlooks other people's faults (cf. 1Peter 4:8)
2. This also implies that a Christian is to be involved in the lives of those who are lost and dying, impacting sinners with the love of Christ with the hope of bringing them to Jesus through the message of the Gospel.
  - a. A true disciple sees all people-- as he once was -- as victims of sin, and sees all people as potentially becoming free from the condemnation of sin through the love of God expressed through the gospel.

### II. John re-emphasizes the topic of love (Pt 4)

A. 1John 4:19-21 (ESV), "*We love because he first loved us.*" <sup>20</sup> *If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.* <sup>21</sup> *And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother."*

#### 1. John makes three points here:

a. 1John 4:19, "*We love because he first loved us.*"

i. Christ was crucified because God already loved us, even while we were sinners (cf. Romans 6:5-9).

ii. This love that proceeds from God compels us to love in return:

1. 2Cor. 5:14-15 (ESV), "*For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; <sup>15</sup>and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*"

➤ His divine love causes us to live for Christ in obedience to His will.

➤ Love is indeed compelling:

- a. How often have you heard of people going great distances just to be with the one they love?

- b. How often have you heard of people risking their lives for those whom they love?
    - c. It is not unusually to hear of people even dying for those whom they love.
    - d. What makes Christ's love supreme is that He didn't die for those who loved Him; He died for the ungodly (Romans 5:6-9).
  - iii. God's powerful love that compels us to love Him ought to compel us to love others, especially fellow disciples.
  - iv. This leads us to the second point...
- b. 1John 4:20, "*If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar...*"
  - i. The love that gives us confidence at the day of judgment is the love that flows from God, through us, into the lives of our brothers and sisters.
  - ii. John used the term "liar" three times:
    1. The Moral Test: Those who claim to know God yet do not follow His commands are liars (1John 2:4)
    2. The Doctrinal Test: Those who deny Jesus is the Christ are liars (1John 2:22)
    3. And now, the Social Test: Those who show no agape love to their neighbor -- especially towards their brothers in Christ -- are liars.
  - iii. Genuine love for God is seen by your love towards the lovable and the unlovable; the friend and the enemy; the familiar and the stranger.
    1. Earlier, we defined love as "*a self-sacrificing, caring commitment that shows itself in seeking the highest good for the one loved.*"
    2. If a person does not practice sacrificial, committed love for others, they are revealing that they really don't love God.
    3. That's why John says in the second part of 1John 4:20, "*...for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen*"

- iv. It is easy to make up excuses for our lack of love!
- v. One may say, “If you knew how difficult and challenging this person is, you would understand why I don’t love him!”
  - 1. Three things to remember:
    - Agape love is not a feeling; it is a mental decision to do what is necessary to promote your neighbor’s welfare.
    - This love is of divine origin and it grows within the hearts of those in Christ: It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22). And He has given us OF His Spirit (1John 4:13), that is, the ability to love others.
    - Remember that you also have “inconsistencies” and “faults” yet Christ, because of His love, presents you “faultless” and “blameless” (Col. 1:22; Jude 1:24)
  - 2. Love is a command, which leads to the third point...
- c. 1John 4:21, “*And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.*”
  - i. All people will know we are of Christ by our love for each other (John 13:33-34).
  - ii. And when we love, we show, by action, that we love God!
  - iii. For this reason, John said earlier in 1John 3:18, “*...let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth*”