

Study Guide



1 John 4:7-21

"God Is Love"

November 20, 2016

Welcome (40 Minutes)

Be intentional to have authentic relationships...

Worship (5 Minutes)

As the group transitions from of a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

Word (45 Minutes)

In the previous portion of 1 John, John called us to test the spirits. The spirits that confessed that Jesus Christ had some in the flesh were from God. Those that could not, were not from God. The subject of this week's text revolves around love. In the first section, John calls us to love. In section two, John addresses the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We wrap up in section three with a discussion of love perfected.

For more in depth study check out the following pages...

Walk Prayer & Missions

December 18-28—South Sudan
For further information visit
norrisferrychurch.org

Calendar

November 27th— Family Christmas
Program Practice
December 18th-28th— South Sudan Trip
(please see Jared Clary for me information)

Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Jesus?

Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to "[Resurrecting](#)":

The head that once was crowned with thorns
Is crowned with glory now
The Savior knelt to wash our feet
Now at his feet we bow

The one who wore our sin and shame
Now robed in majesty
The radiance of perfect love
Now shines for all to see

Your name
Your name
Is victory
All praise
Will rise
To Christ our king
[x2]

The fear that held us now gives way
To him who is our peace
His final breath upon the cross
Is now alive in me

Your name
Your name
Is victory
All praise
Will rise
To Christ our king
[x2]

By Your spirit I will rise
From the ashes of defeat
The resurrected king
Is resurrecting me
In Your name I come alive
To declare your victory
The resurrected king
Is resurrecting me
[x3]

The tomb where soldiers watched in vain
Was borrowed for three days
His body there would not remain
Our God has robbed the grave
Our God has robbed the grave

Your name
Your name
Is victory
All praise
Will rise
To Christ our king
[x2]

By Your spirit I will rise
From the ashes of defeat
The resurrected king
Is resurrecting me
In your name I come alive
To declare Your victory
The resurrected king
Is resurrecting me
The resurrected king
Is resurrecting me

Word (45 Minutes)

Extolled to Love (7-12)

In these first verses, John calls us to love one another. He grounds the call in a very logical set of statements. The call to love one another is grounded in the fact that we have been born of God. Love comes from God and, therefore, all those who love are born of God. This is clearly in keeping with the exhortation to walk in the light and be holy. John is calling his believing readers to be who they are. If you are a believer, you should love one another.

In contrast, we see that the inverse is also true. Those that do not love have not been born of God. The implications for John's readers are no different than they are for us today. It is easy enough to evaluate whether or not your actions are reflecting the character of God. John introduces a messy test of our affections. My mind is drawn to Jesus's teaching in Matthew 5:

21 "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell."

The call of the believer is not simply to avoid murder, it's to avoid anger! Conversely, the call of the believer isn't simply to tolerate his brother in Christ, but to love him!

John leaves the abstract and gives his readers a clear example of the love he is calling them to. God's love was made manifest to humanity in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Christ was sent from God so that we might live through him. Christ was sent to save. Further, this salvation came at a great cost to the Father (his son) as well as the Son (his life).

This is our example. It is also the way that our invisible God is made visible in our world. When those around us see the love we have for one another, it is a glimpse of the Father as he abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

God's Indwelling (13-16)

John continues by expounding upon the indwelling mentioned in verse 12. If God's love being perfected in us is contingent upon His abiding in us, then it is paramount that we have confidence that He abides in us. The seal that guarantees God's abiding presence in us is the Spirit. Drawing his readers back to the first part of the chapter, he shows that we have the Spirit because we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to save the world.

The confession that Jesus is the Son of God and that He has been sent by God is also the test mentioned in verses 1-6 as the entry into the family of God. John is essentially saying that those who see Jesus for who He truly is are those in whom God abides.

The result of salvation is walking in the light and living in righteousness. The posture of salvation is one of agreement with the Father and the testimony of His Son. The ultimate result of this posture is abiding in love. So, we've come full circle. We should love one another because God is love. Our love for one another is the great evidence that we know God and that He abides in us.

Perfect Love (17-19)

The result of this abiding love is confidence for the believer. This love identifies us with the Father and shows us to be in union with the Son. That union gives us confidence in the day of judgment. It is the evidence that we've passed from death to life.

This love is contrasted with fear. Those who love have confidence in the day of judgment, they do not have fear in that day. John shows us that fear involves punishment. Those who are right with the Son and, thus, the Father do not have to fear punishment in the day of judgment because the Son is the propitiation for our sins (verse 10).

Verse 19 almost sneaks by you if you're not careful, but it is weighty and rich. Why do we love? We love because he first loved us. In the context of love as a evidence of salvation, the gravity of John's words take on even more significance. Will power and good decision making were not our entrance into the family of God. We love because He first loved us. This is why Christians should always exude humility. Our right standing before the Lord is based solely on his gracious act of loving us.

Conclusion (20-21)

In a wonderful summary, John re-illustrates his point. If you say you love God, but you hate your brother, you're a liar. If you can't love your brother, whom you've seen, you cannot love God whom you've not seen. Therefore, if you love God, you should love your brother. Paul has concisely said in two verses what we've been driving at in the previous twelve verses!

What a clear and pertinent message! Love your brother and sister in Christ!

And, when you fall short of this clear command and fail to love your brother or sister in Christ as you are called to do - confess your sin to the Lord, reflect on his great love for you expressed through Christ's death and resurrection for you, and pray for the Holy Spirit to produce His fruit of love in your life so you can, with His help, love those in your life who are hard to love.

Sermon Questions

What Does it Say?

1. John starts out verse 7 with the exhortation, “Beloved, let us love one another...” What 2 reasons does he give in verses 7 & 8 that we as Christians should love one another?
2. How has God demonstrated his love to the world according to verse 9?
3. What additional point does John make about God’s demonstrated love in verse 10? Look at Romans 5:8 also where the same point about God’s love is made by Paul.
4. In verse 11 what does John say should be effect of God’s love toward us?
5. Look at verses 13-15. How do you see the Trinity working together in these verses? What function of the Holy Spirit is emphasized in these verses? How do these verses relate to verses 4 and 6 in this chapter?
6. Look at verses 16-18. Here John is talking about God’s love being perfected in them. What signs does John talk about in verses 17 and 18 which show that God’s love is being perfected in them?
7. Look at verses 19-21. In these verses what way does John say that we can know our love for God is genuine?

Sermon Questions

What Does it Mean?

1. What does John mean when he says in verse 8 that “God is love”? Does it mean that God is the source of Love? Does it mean that God is love in his inmost being? Does love define who God is? Does God have any other attributes in addition to love?
2. What are some other prominent attributes that God has according to the Bible? Look at 1 John 1:5, John 4:24, Hebrews 12:29, Romans 3:26?
3. What are some of the deep implications of John’s statement in verse 11, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” What should be the quality and character of our love? What should be the motivation of our love? Whom should we love?

4. Meditate on verse 12. No one has ever seen God directly, but how has God shown us what he is like? See John 14:8-9 and Hebrews 1: 1-3. How has Jesus shown that God is love? How will we reveal to the world what God is like?
5. If we abide in God and He in us by his Holy Spirit (vs. 13) why is it impossible for us to continue to hate our brother?
6. Verses 16-18 talk about God's love for us. When we fully comprehend and experience God's love for us why does that cast out fear and bring confidence into our lives?

Sermon Questions

How Does it Apply?

1. What does this passage say about how you can become motivated to love others?
2. What does this passage say about how you can become able to love others?

Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important. It answers the question, how do we apply what we are learning in 1 John to our lives today?

Many groups have found that it is helpful to sometimes break up into a men's group and a women's group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "neighbors and nations." Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

May the Lord bless and encourage you as you lead your groups! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!

What does it say?

1. We as Christians should love one another because love is from God—God is the source of love. Also God is love, that is, love is a big part of the essence of God.
2. God showed his love to the World in that he sent his only Son so that we might have eternal life through him.
3. God showed his love in that he loved us before we loved him. He loved us in spite of our rebellion against him. He sent his son as a propitiation (to absorb God's wrath) for us.
4. John said that if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
5. God, the Father, had given them of his Spirit to dwell within them, and the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. The Spirit has given them faith to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. The church members had overcome the false prophets because the Holy Spirit in them was greater than the spirit of the antichrist.
6. The signs that God's love was being perfected in them were their increased confidence for the Day of Judgment and their decreasing fear of punishment.
7. We can know our love for God is genuine if we also love our brothers.

What does it mean?

1. It means that God is the source of love and that a major part of God's essence is love. Love does not define who God is, because God has other important attributes in addition to love according to the Bible.
2. God is light (1 John 1:5). God is Spirit (1 John 4:24). God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29), and God is just (Romans 3:26).
3. The quality or character of our love should be like the love of Jesus for us—He loved us even though we were not lovely. He loved us so much that he gave himself for us. Our love should not be dependent on the loveliness of others, and it should have the character of giving to others. The motivation for that kind of love is that Jesus has loved us that way. We should love those that God has put into our lives—family, fellow church members, co-workers, neighbors.
4. God has shown himself to the world through Jesus. Jesus has shown the world that God is love because of how he lived his life on this earth and because of how he died for his children. We can continue to show the world what God is like by loving the way that Jesus loved us.
5. If God is love and God lives in us by his Holy Spirit we will grow in the character qualities of Jesus—the fruit of the Spirit. The first fruit of the Spirit cited in Galatians 5:22-23 is love.
6. When we begin to understand God's love for us and we begin to experience (feel) that love, we will be able to rest in the assurance that we are God's children and his heirs. This assurance will drive out fear and develop confidence in our relationship with God.