

VOTC 4 - 1 John 4:7-12, “How God Reveals Himself Today”

Welcome back to another episode here at VOTC. Today we are on our final meditation in our series on motivations for Christian love.

We considered first that we are to love because of who God is, John reminds us, God IS love. His command to love flows from his character, and as those who are redeemed by Jesus Christ, we are called to live as imitators of God.

Second, we considered that we are to love because of what God did. He gave to this world what was most precious to him when he sent Jesus to meet our greatest need in love. Lastly, John here gives us a final motivation for why we are to love, and it is because of how God reveals himself today. **Because of *How God Reveals Himself Today* (v.11-12)**

1. How does God reveal himself today? John reminds us here that God is *invisible*, & no one has ever seen him. John is probably not saying that no one has ever seen something of the glory and majesty of God. Think of the **Moses** at the burning bush, or **Isaiah** who saw the Lord high and lifted up. They saw something of the glory and awesomeness of God.
 - a. But we understand that no one can see God unless God chooses to reveal himself, and even then, he protects people so that the sight of him does not kill them.
2. John is also probably saying, no one has comprehended the fullness of God w/ their eyes or thoughts. God is the Creator, we are creatures. *He is immortal invisible God only wise.*
 - a. How does the glorious God of heaven and earth reveal himself to small and fallen creatures like us? Jesus supremely shows us the love of the Father. But now that he has ascended into heaven, John says when we love one another, God abides *in* us and his love is perfected in us.
 - b. What an incredible verse! *God dwells* where genuine Christian love takes place. And God’s love finds its perfection when we give that love back to him and reciprocate his love among one another. What a humbling thought.
3. God is present when we sacrificially give what is most precious to us to meet the needs of others in love. So much so that he says in **Matt 25:40**, that when you fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger, clothed the naked, visited the sick and the prisoner, “*as you did it to the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.*” WOW. What an incredible thought! We are serving the Lord Jesus in our love.
4. We might wonder, how can I truly love like God the Father? It’s *hard* to give up what is precious. It’s *difficult* and *unnatural* to sacrifice for the needs of other consistently. But beloved, you don’t do this in your own strength
 - a. It’s HIS LOVE is being perfected in you (V.12). The power to love like God is found in his gracious work within us by the Holy Spirit.

- b. *When we start to care about the things God cares about. When we start to love people that it doesn't make sense to love. When we start to bless those who persecute us, and share a kind word in return, we can say, "I know this is not of myself! I used to hate this group of people, or disregard these matters of justice, but now I have a heart that wants to help. Wants to meet the need. Wants to bless others, & not curse them." Why? because HIS love is being perfected in me!"
5. We ought to praise God when we see this kind of *peculiar* love bubbling out of us. Because we know it is NOT of us. It's HIS love being worked out in us and through us. As one Christian hymn puts it!

*Of Thy fullness Thou art pouring, Thy great love and pow'r on me
without measure, full and boundless, drawing out my heart to Thee*

6. Do you need this love today for a person in your life, or for a situation you are in??? If you need this love today, call out to God and ask him for help to love with His love. God's love is at work in us so that church might be counter cultural in our love. So that we don't just love people who are easy to love who look like us or think like us, but so that we love ppl very different b/c we are brothers and sisters in Christ.

Conclusion

7. Commentator FF Bruce said this, "the love of God displayed in his people is the strongest apologetic that God has in the world." Wow. What a quote. The opposite must also be true - our divisions and quarreling bring dishonor to God in the world.
8. And so may we take time we fix our minds on God's love today so that we might be motivated and strengthened to walk as imitators of God. Let us remember who God is (he IS love), what God did (he SENT Jesus into this world for us), and let us remember how he chooses to reveal himself today (he is present in our midst when we show love in his name).
9. Indeed, Jesus said to his disciples 2,000 those words we need to remember in every generation in **Jn. 15:35**, "*By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*"

Thank you for taking the time to join us for this series here at VOTC. We hope that it has blessed your heart as you thought about God's love. May it help motivate you today and in our day to love more like God.