

VOTC 3 - 1 John 4:7-12, “God’s love Displayed”

Welcome back listener to our next meditation on motivations for Christian love.

Last time we considered our first motivation for why Christians are called to love. It is because of WHO God is. John reminds us, God IS love. His character grounds our obedience as Christians are who are seeking to live as imitators of God.

But John doesn’t just speak of love in the abstract, but he tells us about the *manifestation* of love that took place 2,000 years ago. The love of the infinite and invisible God became something that could be touched, seen, looked upon, and heard. In Jesus Christ, God’s love reached all the way down to earth, & we saw it when Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, and forgave those who needed pardon. God’s love is most vividly and gloriously displayed in Christ. We learn here a second motivation for why we are to love, because of What God did.

Because of *What God Did* (v.9-10)

1. We often wonder what love is. Many definitions floating out there. We say we love everything from our friends to our favorite pizza. We admire movies and books that display love. We sing about love, but what is it really? Here is love displayed for us. God’s love was manifested/revealed/displayed in the sending of his Son.
 - a. God *sent* – love is an active thing. It’s not merely an emotion, but an action that arises from a heart of compassion. The origin of love his God himself. His love is *supernatural, everlasting, and high above the heavens*.
 - b. Yet, the wonder of the Christian gospel is this. The God who is love planted his feet in the in the dirt of our world. God *sent* his Son into time and space, and his love was exhibited in a concrete way so that fallen creatures like us might know God
 - i. We don’t have to *wonder* or *guess* at what love really is, we just have to look at the sending of Jesus. You’ll notice, the focus is on the love of the Father. Earlier John focused on the love of the Son, “*Jesus he laid down his life for us, we also ought to lay down our lives for the brothers*” (3:18). Here John points us to the Father’s heart.
2. God gave what was *most precious to him* (v.9). *Begotten* is not the best translation. ESV better. The focus here is on how Jesus is God’s *only* Son, his *unique* and *beloved* Son.
***Have you ever had to give away or sacrifice something that was precious to you?
 - a. EX: Children often have a treasured possession they carry with them – stuffed animal or a toy. For adults it’s probably our phone! For kids, if someone asks them to play w/ their fav possession, they hold onto it tightly. It’s their treasured possession! We want to keep it close! *Children, when God sent Jesus into this world, he gave to us what was most precious to his heart.
 - b. In the scriptures, the greatest human example of this is *Abraham* in **Gen. 22**. All throughout his life, God tested Abraham and slowly grew his faith.

- c. He was called to leave his homeland for a land he would receive by faith
 - d. He and Sarah were very old and trust in God's power to provide a child.
 - e. **Gen 22** is Abraham's greatest test. God says, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."
 - f. But in Gen.22, God provided a substitute sacrifice in Isaac's place. The blood of the lamb was given on Isaac's behalf. Here beloved, the Father sent his only Son to be the sacrifice for sin.
3. ***God sent his son to meet our greatest need!*** God not only sent Jesus into the world, but he sent him here to die. Do you understand your greatest need today? We are those who sinned against God. John says, "*NOT that we loved God.*" We have actually hated God at times – we've chosen things above him. Treated him as small. Given him our left-overs. Not trusted in his provision or grace. We all have sins that we are ashamed of sharing w/ other people. We've sinned, & we deserve justice.
- a. But God sent his Son to the propitiation for our sin. That word ***propitiation*** is one we've see before in Jn. It means Jesus came to satisfy the wrath of God by taking away the guilt of sin. The love Gods shows us is a *holy* love, a *righteous* love, a love that comes in the context of God's divine *justice* satisfied on our behalf.

As the old hymn declares: (William Reese)

*"On the mount of crucifixion, Fountains opened deep and wide
Through the floodgates of God's mercy, Flowed a vast and gracious tide
Grace and love, like mighty rivers, Poured incessant from above
And Heaven's peace and perfect justice, Kissed a guilty world in love."*

- b. Do we see how our greatest need today has been met by the love of God in Christ? The call of scripture is you humbled ourselves like that the tax collector in **Lk. 18:13 who was convicted of his sin and said, God, be merciful/propitious to me, a sinner.** God so loved this world that he gave us what was most precious to him in order to meet our greatest need.
4. HOW does all this inform our love??? John turns around and says – *IF God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.* When we consider the ***quality*** of God's love – that he gave us his very best to meet our greatest need, we see that is how we are to love.
- a. APP: We are to give what is precious to us: our time, our resources, our spare bedroom, our retirement funds, our labors, our comfort. God did what he did for those in GREAT NEED. Likewise, we love those in great need like the poor, the oppressed, handicapped, abused, neglected, we are loving like God!
 - b. What area in your life can you love like this? What needs are around you that you meet in love? may we ask the Lord to open our eyes to see those needs around us, and our hearts to desire to meet those needs in love.

Thank you for listening, we hope you'll join us next time for our final meditation. May God help you to love more like him.