

1st John

Lesson 13 “The Love of God”

I. Introduction - Over the last year, we have studied one of largest and most influential churches in the first century, which was the church in Ephesus.

A. The Apostle Paul started this work and then turned the church over to his protegee Timothy. After Paul’s death, John became the apostolic authority to this church and the churches in Asia Minor and did a lot of ministry in Ephesus.

B. *1 John* is a follow up to *Ephesians*, *1st* and *2nd Timothy* which were written to the church in Ephesus. This letter was written in Ephesus and went to this church and other churches in this region.

1. John wrote to combat the first heresy in the early church, Gnosticism.
2. Gnosticism taught a dualism (2 gods - a higher level god who was distant and removed and a lesser god (The demiurge) who created the world and everything in it. Gnostics taught all matter was evil and so it was impossible to do good because everything created was inherently evil, therefore why try to do good?
3. Gnostics also taught Jesus didn’t come in the flesh because if He did, He would have been evil since all matter is evil.
4. Taught Jesus didn’t come to save us from our sins, but from our ignorance.
5. The gnostics didn’t focus their teaching on the scriptures, but rather a mystical *gnosis* (knowledge). This was secret knowledge and for the select few.
6. All of these teachings contradict the message of the gospel and discipleship. Jesus came in the flesh to save us from our sins and reveal the father. God created the world in His image and it is good. Jesus came to transform us and the world back into the original image. Jesus’s teachings weren’t secret, but declared plainly in the scriptures and the church was told to share and disciple the world.

C. Last week we talked about the “Foundations of Faith.” The foundation of our faith is Jesus identified with our humanity took on a flesh and blood body to pay for our sin. He did this because of His great love for us.

Tonight we are going to continue talking about the love of God in way that could almost seem repetitive. Much of *1st John* is repetitive. Why?

1. **Philippians 3:1** Hearing the same things can seem tedious, but it is actually safe. Faith doesn’t come by having heard. It comes by hearing.
2. Repetition is the motor of learning. There is something powerful about hearing and doing the same things over again to drill the truth into us.

II. The Love of God

A. 1 John 4:12-21

1. **Verse 12** Didn't Moses see God? **Exodus 33:11** but then God later said You can't see me and live? Then **Exodus 33:20. This now gets repeated in 1 John 4** So what gives?
 - a. I could just try to avoid this, but its Wednesday night so let's play around with it for a minute.
 - b. **John 1:18** Whatever we have experienced in God so far, there is more. Most likely, Moses did not see God in His glory in **Exodus 33:11**. Saw Him in His glory at Mount of Transfiguration.
 - c. Until we experience the more, we walk by faith on what we clearly know. Ex: **1 John 4:2, 1 John 4:14**. Never let what we don't understand stop us from walking in the light of what we do understand.
2. **Verse 13** God marks us as His chosen people by giving us His spirit. Intimate act. This makes us special and empowers us to love others.
3. **Verse 14** John and the Apostles saw Jesus be sent and savior of the world. This wasn't just a theory they heard, but an experience they had.
4. **Verse 15** When we confess Jesus as Lord, God moves in and we abide in God. Intimate act.
5. **Verse 16** God doesn't just possess love. I possess a Bible, but I am not a Bible. God is love the same way I am a man. If you cut me open I have X&Y chromosomes. If you cut God open, He would bleed love. It's His nature, not just one of His many aspects.
6. **Verse 17** We have confidence in the day of judgment (there is one coming when Jesus returns) because Love has been perfected in us and made us like Jesus. As He is, so are we! Our confidence is in God's love!
7. **Verse 18** The anecdote to fear isn't always more faith scriptures. Often it is mediating on the love of God. Ex: **Galatians 5:6** - Love empowers faith as it takes our eyes off of us.
 - a. Love is the anecdote to fear. Faith is the anecdote to sight. Ex: Phone Center testimony of woman who kept trying to get into faith and was frustrated. When she received God's love, faith came.
 - b. My badge testimony. **Luke 12:32**.
8. **Verse 19** The key to loving God more is receiving His love for ourselves. We cannot give what we don't have. Ex: Counseling advice to those who feel like they don't love God enough. Often people are looking for more disciplines and are frustrated instead of experiencing God's love.
9. **Verses 20-21** Very similar to **1 John 3:14-15**.
 - a. Repetition is the motor of learning. **Philippians 3:1**
 - b. The Overflow of God's love is to love.

III. Conclusion - The Love of God came to transform us into the image of God. This love is supposed to be experiential, but until we experience it, we walk by the truth of scripture while we believe for more.

A. Pray Closing Prayer

B. Sign Off for Online Audience

IV. Discussion Questions

1. What impacted you the most from this teaching?
2. Tell about a time you had to walk in love toward others by faith because you did not experience love for them. How did you do this?
3. What is the most profound encounter with the love of God you ever had? How did it change you?
4. Tonight Brian shared that the anecdote to fear isn't necessarily more faith scriptures, but it is focusing on how much God loves you. What are your thoughts on that?
5. **1 John 4:17** says "As He is, so are we in the world." Name one area in your life we can agree with you about that you would like to look more like Jesus.

