

# The Power of Love

Lesson for Sunday, April 13, 2025

TEXT: 1 John 4:13-21

## INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ Philosophical question to get things started: Why do people do what they do?
  - In today's world, we often play the blame game. It's my parent's fault, my boss's fault, my spouse's fault, etc.
  - The reality is that our actions are often determined by our identity – who we are and who we think we are.
- ⇒ In today's text, John wants us to be loving (what we do), but first he wants us to know who we are in Christ (our identity).
- ⇒ Quick Bible search: Distribute these verses before class and ask the class members to read their verse privately and discover who the Bible says we are in Christ. At this point in the lesson, just have the class members say something like this: "In Romans 6:11, we are dead to sin & spiritually alive."
  - 1 John 2:12 (forgiven); 2 Cor. 5:21 (declared righteous); Rom. 8:16 (child of God); Phil. 3:20 (citizen of Heaven); Gal. 2:20 (crucified w/Christ); Rom. 8:17 (heir of God); Phil. 2:15 (blameless & innocent); Rom. 5:1 (at peace w/God)
  - Not a bad list! If we are saved, this is our identity!
- ⇒ When we remember our true identity in Christ and what we have received from Him, we will love others as we have been loved by God.

## BIBLE STUDY:

1. Love is an evidence that we have the Spirit (1 John 4:13-16).
  - a. When we experience the power of divine love, we experience the work and enjoy the fellowship of the divine Trinity.
  - b. In verse 13, we abide in the Spirit's presence.
    - i. John wants his readers to know they abide in God and God abides in them through the gift of the Holy Spirit.
    - ii. How do we know? Verse 12 provides part of the answer: "because we love one another...and His love is perfected in us."
  - c. In verses 14-15, we confess the Son as Savior.
    - i. Our love for others is motivated by our realization of all Jesus has done for us.
    - ii. John once again directs our attention to Jesus and what the Father has accomplished by His Son.
    - iii. Think about all we have learned about Jesus just in this study of 1 John: He has revealed the Word of Life (1:1); brought eternal life (1:2); cleanses us from sin (1:7); is our Advocate (2:1); propitiates our sins (2:2); an example to follow (2:6); makes possible the new birth (2:29); takes away our sin (3:5); destroys the work of the Devil (3:8); gave us life (4:9).
    - iv. How can we not love Him and serve Him after all He has done for us? And remember, the best way to show your love for Him is to love others – especially when we share Jesus's love with them.
  - d. In verse 16, we know the Father's love.
    - i. Once again, John declares, "God is love."

- ii. The more we know Him and all He has done for us, the more we will love Him.
- 2. Love gives us confidence as we await the Day of Judgment (1 John 4:17-18).
  - a. Loving others out of gratitude for how we have been loved in Christ has consequences not only for the present, but also for the future.
  - b. We can be confident for the future (vs. 17).
    - i. Abiding in the love of God gives us confidence, boldness, for the judgment day.
    - ii. John says we can not only be ready, but we can be confident. Why? Because we are in Christ – abiding in Him and He abiding in us – we stand in relation to God and the world the same way Christ does!
  - c. We can be confident with no fear (vs. 18)
    - i. This verse is the same as verse 17, just stated negatively.
    - ii. Those who do live in fear of future punishment give evidence that something is wrong, that God’s perfecting work of love has not done its work in their lives.
    - iii. What are we to do? Love others as Christ has loved us! When we are living as God intended, the threat and fear of punishment will disappear.
- 3. Love is a command because it reflects God’s character (1 John 4:19-21).
  - a. John speaks plainly, “You cannot love God without loving your neighbor.”
  - b. To love God and hate your brother is to live a lie (vs. 19-20). If I am not loving others as I ought, then I do not know God’s love as I should.
  - c. To love God and love your brother is to obey God’s command (vs. 21). The God-ward and human-directed aspects of love cannot be divided. They are the “heads and tails” of the same coin of love.

#### APPLICATION/DISCUSSION:

- ⇒ We are right back where we were last week. Biblical texts such as these force us to evaluate ourselves and how we are living our lives. Encourage your class to ask themselves the question: How loving am I?
  - Evaluate relationships, people, circumstances, etc. Are you known for your love? Or are you known for your short fuse and cutting remarks?
- ⇒ If I am not loving others as I should, the solution is to fall more in love with the Lord.

NEXT WEEK’S TEXT: 1 John 5:1-5