

—{1}. **1 John 4:7-11** **Appropriating God's Love**

A. Introduction

1. Scripture Reading: 1 John 4:7-11 (NAS): 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

2. Appropriating God's Love ... what do I mean?

- a. the most common meaning of the term "to appropriate" today is to take for one's use without permission
 - (A) is that what we mean? ... close, but not exactly!
 - (B) to devote (money) for some purpose
 - (C) we mean to take possession of God's love as our own personal property, for our own use and enjoyment
- b. and what do we mean by love?
 - (A) the world has its definitions of love, be it physical desire, natural affection or philanthropic motives
 - (B) **A woman writes this letter. "Dear Jimmy – no words could ever express the great unhappiness I've felt since breaking our engagement. Please take me back. I miss you. No one could ever take your place in my heart, so please forgive me. I love you. Marie. P.S. And congratulations on winning the state lottery."** —{2}.
 - (C) that isn't love – not the agape love Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7, "Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."
- c. now this is amazing: though God's love is beyond our ken and beggars description, and the poet

expresses it well:

Could we with ink the ocean fill
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were ev'ry stalk on earth a quill
And ev'ry man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry,
Nor could the scroll contain the whole
Though stretched from sky to sky.^{-(3)}}

(A) yet, God want us to make this, His love, our very own

3. this being a communion Sunday, and we have just celebrated what Jude calls a 'love-feast" I want us to meditate briefly upon how this appropriation of God's love is realized by salvation
 - a. that it comes from being born of God
 - b. that it comes from knowing God
 - c. that it comes from Christ's atoning work

B. Appropriating God's Love Comes from Being Born of God

1. "... everyone who loves is born of God ..."
 - a. not one of you had anything to say about your birth
 - (A) you didn't choose your parents, your siblings
 - (B) you didn't choose your country of birth
 - (C) you didn't choose your circumstances
2. and the Bible uses 'being born' as a description of salvation
 - a. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3 NAS)
 - b. Paul tells us that our salvation, our being born of God in the fashion just described, is an act of love of God: "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself ..."

(Ephesians 1:4-5a NAS)

c. John describes the saved elsewhere with these words, “**who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**” (John 1:13 NAS)

3. yet, in the matter of our spiritual birth, we find that we have a responsibility, too; we are involved
- a. let us reread that verse in context: “**But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**” (John 1:12-13 NAS)
 - b. from our perspective, our salvation, our spiritual birth is conditioned on our response to Jesus Christ: “**that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved**” (Romans 10:9 NAS)

C. Appropriating God’s Love Comes from Knowing God

1. this is a corollary, a natural result, of being born of God
 - a. in the natural course of things, one result of being born into a family
 - (A) is to come to know one’s parents and family members
 - (B) parents desire that their children come to know them and to appreciate and to share their values
 - (C) sometimes this goes well; sometimes not so well
 - b. our heavenly Father has the same desire for us
2. “**everyone who loves is born of God and knows God**”
 - a. for, we read, verse 8 ... “**God is love**”
 - b. love is one of the properties of the nature of God, which together with His holiness, wisdom, power and so on, cause Him to plan our salvation
 - c. we come to know God through the recognition and the acceptance of His Son, God incarnate; through confession of Jesus as our Lord
 - d. when we realize that truth and know God in a personal way, then His love takes hold of and shapes our lives, as verse 9 says, “**so that we might live through Him**”
 - e. knowing the God of love will have the effect that “**the love of God {be} manifested in us**’

D. Appropriating God's Love Comes from Christ's Atoning Work

1. How can I portray or picture God's love?

- a. how can I properly appreciate it so I can make it my own?
- b. if I were an artist with paints, what could I draw that would convey the height and depth and breadth of God's love? – no canvas and no colours could capture it
- c. if I were an artist with words, they are all too inadequate even as the poet I quoted earlier expressed so well
- d. but God drew a vivid, graphical illustration of His love
- e. He did it with a simple, wooden cross

2. "In this is love, not that we loved God, and that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

- a. could it be expressed more clearly, more distinctly, that the source of any love we have, is to be found in God Himself?
- b. as we sing on Resurrection Sunday, 'Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!' –^{4}.
- c. God's love is demonstrable love
 - (A) to doubt's questioning 'If God loves us, why ...'
 - (B) comes the irrefutable answer – He gave His Son
 - (C) the indescribable gift of His Son with whom the Father and the Spirit have had eternal communion
 - (D) is given as a means of atoning mankind's (that is my, that is your) sin and restore us to fellowship with Himself

E. Conclusion

1. the Spirit of God, through the words of the Scriptures that He has inspired, frames as commands what He works in our lives

- a. it is expressed twice here "let us love one another ... we ought {owe it} to love one another" (verses 7, 11)
- b. though God's love is implanted in us at our conversion
- c. yet, in a very real way, just as is the case in our salvation, so we have a responsibility, too
- d. having been made free by the Son, we are free indeed

- e. so that Peter could command, *"Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;"* (2 Peter 1:10 NAS)
2. yet, on the other hand, the love that Christ commands
- a. does not have its source in our own selves, in our own will, in our own personality or character; it does not result from our endeavours, our intellect or our physical strength
 - b. *"for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."* (Philippians 2:13 NAS)
 - c. I have quoted Romans 5:5 a number of times as we have been examining 1 John together (and will probably do it again, for it is fundamental to understanding this letter) and it applies here as well: *"... because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."* (Romans 5:5b NAS)
 - d. Have you given to Him His proper place and residence in your life? ... in salvation? ... in His life-changing work? ... you are invited to do so as we sing "Love Lifted Me"

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NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
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