

Introduction:

- *"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."* (1 John 4:11, ESV)
- The love of God for us is the root of our love for each other.
- Love literally becomes the way that I show others God's love for them.
 - He values them!
 - We must value them with the same kind of love. I.e. It is a love that costs.
- Paul focused on God's love in a big way...
 - *"And it is my prayer that your love may abound (over-abundant excess) more and more, with knowledge and all discernment,"* (Philippians 1:9, ESV)
 - *"and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you,"* (1 Thessalonians 3:12, ESV)
 - *"so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,"* (Ephesians 3:17, ESV)
- To Paul, love affects everything Kingdom...evangelism, pastoral care, missions, marriage, work place relationship and relationships with people you often share conflict with. Wherever you encounter people, people are to encounter the love of God in you. That's why...
- Jesus gave us two commands:
 - Love God and love each other.
 - Do those two commands well and you will have fulfilled all the scriptures!
- I.e. Read the River: John Gullick Jan 2018 Trust the River; Have you ever been white water rafting? Who would like to go white water rafting. If you are going to go white water rafting you need to learn to trust two things:
 - Trust the river. Learn how to read the river. It reveals a lot. What is the river saying?
 - Trust the guide. Listen and do what the guide says.
 - To do both if you are going to ride the class 5. To ride class 5 you have to have prior class 4 experience or be class 5 certified.
 - Down stream V, eddies where current flows upstream (rest); rocks (go over or around); hydraulics...waves.
- God's love is immense! It is powerful! It is moving! And we are going to learn about it today.

I. God is Love! 1 John 4:8; 4:16

- A. That statement is huge claim! A powerful confession of who God is. It's ramifications for us who are disciples of Christ cannot be taken lightly!
1. The one who does not love does not know God. *"Anyone who does not love does not know God, because **God is love.**"* (1 John 4:8, ESV)
 2. Those who do know God, know and believe the love God has for us. *"So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. **God is love, and***

whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." (1 John 4:16, ESV)

- B. The fullness of God is so overflowing that we, the recipients of the Presence of God, experience His love! Think of all the words that describe God: kind, joyful, steadfast, beautiful, Giver, Helper, Comforter, Protector and the list goes on. It all flows from Him! He is love and love does all of that and more...in overflow mode!
- C. To really understand love we have to get to know God.
 1. Your knowledge of the Father grows as you recognize His love for you.
 2. You grow quickly when you trust the River guides. Holy Spirit, pastor, mentor.

II. The Greatest Commandment *So others can see!*

- A. The answer to the biggest question: *"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"* (Matthew 22:36, ESV) What is the most important commandment in the world?
 1. Jesus said to him: *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a **second is like it**: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* (Matthew 22:37-39, ESV)
- B. These two commands are inseparable! You can't do one without doing the other.
 1. Can we just be amazed for a couple of moments as we think about these two commands.
 2. If you do them both you are keeping all of the law and prophets!

III. Here Is What You Owe? *So others can see!*

- A. *"Owe no one anything, **except to love each other**, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore **love is the fulfilling of the law.**"* (Romans 13:8-10, ESV)
- B. Paul sees love so crucial between people that when it happens he calls it the fulfilling of everything God taught.
 1. He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.
 2. This is massive in our Christian faith! Think of what Paul is saying! Think of what I am repeating that Paul said!

IV. Faith Working Through Love *So others can see!*

- A. Paul writes to the Galatians: *"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor **uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.**"* (Galatians 5:6, ESV)

1. Love is the way faith expresses itself.
 2. Love is the way that faith proves it is real!
- B. *"So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."* (James 2:17, ESV)
1. Faith is dead without love. It is love that motivates faith to action.
 2. When love is absent faith is dead. Our faith is dead without love! *"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death."* (1 John 3:14, ESV)

V. The Mark Of True Christianity *So others can see!*

- A. Jesus said three times in two verses (love one another.) It must be important. *"A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another**: just as I have loved you, you also are to **love one another**. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have **love for one another**."* (John 13:34-35, ESV)
1. I.e. fish symbol, cross jewelry, t-shirt. all are badges of Christianity. Can you have those things and still not show love? Yes.
 2. Then what is the true mark of a Christian?
- B. What will help the world know that we are his disciples? If we have love for one another.
1. "The point is that it is possible to be a Christian and not show the mark. But, if we expect no christians to know that we are Christians we must show the mark." Francis Schaffer, Mark of A Christian. p.15.
 2. That mark is how we love one another. Fellow Christians and neighbors for all people have value in the eyes of God.
 3. I.e. It is the whole point of the story of the Good Samaritan.

VI. Where Should We Aim?

- A. The whole purpose of our teaching and preaching says Paul is: *"The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."* (1 Timothy 1:5, ESV)
1. Love from pure heart: moral cleaners and purity, free from stain.
 2. Love from a good conscience: good, excellent, self-awareness. No condemnation.
 3. Love from a sincere faith: love that is clearly (no strings attached) kind of love through faith.
- B. Those three things were the targets, or goals of all Paul's preaching and teaching. It is what he is after in the church. That the church would increase in love.

Conclusion:

- *"And it is my prayer **that your love may abound more and more**, with knowledge and all discernment,"* (Philippians 1:9, ESV)

- *“and may **the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another** and for all, as we do for you;”* (1 Thessalonians 3:12, ESV)
- *“so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that **you, being rooted and grounded in love,**”* (Ephesians 3:17, ESV)