

"I loved You First" - God

1 Jn 4:7-12

INTERVIEW BLACKMANS

Remember your beginning of your love relationship with someone special? That sappy little exchange that made everyone else want to throw up? "I love you, I love you more, no, I love you more, I loved you first." Don't lie, you did it too!

For a while there was a billboard ad campaign that would have various comments from God. If you were to do a billboard from this passage it would say something like; "I love you First!" – God.

A couple of weeks ago, we spent some time talking about loving each other. I want to come back to that subject a little more because John in his writing after talking about false teachers comes back to love. Obviously, this was important to John and to God. Today, let's look at the origin of love and why we need to practice it.

PRAYER

I. Love Comes from God

A. Love Each Other

1. Jerome was a church father who lived around 380 AD when he wrote a commentary on Galatians. In that commentary he tells this story about the Apostle John. "When the blessed evangelist John, the apostle, had lived in Ephesus into his extreme old age and could hardly be carried to the meetings of the church by the disciples, and when in speaking he could no longer put together many words, he would not say anything else in the meetings but this: "Little children, love one another!"
2. When at last the disciples and brothers present got tired of hearing the same thing again and again, they said, "Master, why do you keep saying the same thing?" John replied with a saying worthy of him: 'Because it is the Lord's command, and it is enough if it is really done' "(Jerome, Commentary on Galatians 6:10 AD 387-388")
3. Vs 7 begins with a command from God. "Let us love one another"
4. I have been preaching here for almost 25 years and have been in ministry for 30 years now. One of the things that I have seen

destroy churches and people alike is a refusal to live out this passage.

5. Christians can be the meanest people around at times.
6. We can be cruel to those who don't believe as we do.
7. We can be vicious to those who don't share our love for God.
8. But we save our worst hatred for our fellow believers.
9. The things I have seen and heard where Christians attack Christians often sickens me.
10. Never, Never, has God said you don't have to love that person because you disagree with them on whatever issue.
11. In fact, listen to vs 8 again: **1 John 4:8 (ESV) — 8** Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.
12. If you aren't loving each other YOU DON'T LOVE GOD!!!!
13. Wow, that is tough stuff!

B. The Origin of Love

1. In the last half of vs 7, John reminds us that love comes from God.
2. Think about a Child. Do they love their parents or grandparents simply because they are biologically related? No! They love because these adults loved them first.
3. It's the same with our relationship with God, our love is a response to His love.
4. In Genesis, we read about God creating the world and eventually mankind.
5. Satan gets into the garden and corrupts man. In effect, he severed the perfect relationship between man and God.
6. At the moment mankind sinned, we lost all hope of ever being spiritually pure again.
7. Satan won. He destroyed God's most cherished creation... or so he thought.
8. In Gen 3, God tells the serpent, you did some damage that is going to cost me deeply. Remember John 3:16? But Jesus will crush

you. He will undo the damage you have done and bind you forever from destroying those I love.

9. From the very beginning and even before, God loved us and made sure we would be safe and protected.

C. He showed us what love is.

1. Francis Chan tells a story about a close friend of his and the wedding he performed for her. Jean was older at this wedding. Her first husband had passed away leaving her to raise their mentally challenged daughter all alone. April was a 28 year old woman, but had the mind of a 6 year old. Jean falls in love with a man who was younger than her. During their counselling, she admitted that she struggled to see why he would love her as she was older and wrinkled. Rick looks at her and says, those aren't wrinkles to me, they are dimples. Francis says that's the kind of guy Rick was. At the wedding, they go through the vows and ring ceremony and then Francis stops and says, "Rick also has a right for Jean because he wants to show he is fully committed to her as well." At the point, this 28 year old with a 6 year old mind starts bawling and runs up to him and hugs him and keeps repeating, I love you, I love you, I love

you, I love you. Not a dry eye in the entire room including Mr. Chan.

2. That wedding is a wonderful analogy to what Scripture is all about.
3. 2 Cor 11:2 tells us that God looks at us as his bride
We are like Jean, we understand how pitiful we are, how flawed we are, but God doesn't see our flaws, he loves us too deeply.
4. He sees dimples where we see wrinkles.
5. But the Bible doesn't stop there. Several passages tell us that God has also adopted us.
6. God loves us so deeply that not only does he see us as his bride, but he adopts us as his special child as well.

D. Our response to God

1. Rom 8:25 tells us we should respond with Abba Father to our adoption by God.
2. It was a phrase of intimacy of a child to a father.
3. Think of your daughter calling you daddy; That term of love that responds to a father's love.
4. We need to run to God, bawling our eyes out in love, telling him over and over again, "I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you."

II. Love One Another, Part 2

A. Text

1. John goes back to his theme of we need to love on another.
2. Why?: because God loved us. How?: by loving as God loved us
3. **1 John 4:11 (NLT) — 11** Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other.

B. Application

1. John wants us to understand what we need to do to love one another.
2. First and foremost, we need to confess Jesus is the son of God.

- a) Loving each other is based on our common love for God.
 - b) If I don't love God; If I don't believe Jesus is the Son of God, I cannot truly love those around me.
3. Vs 16 tells us that when we abide in love, we abide in God.
 4. Vs 20 tells us we cannot love God if we don't love our brothers and sisters in Christ.
 5. Vs 21 John says that we are commanded to love each other if we claim we love God.

C. The reward

1. John tells us that if we abide in love, we abide in God.
2. And here is the most important part of that verse. God abides in us.
3. We become perfected in God
 - a) The Greek word for perfected means to become entirely accomplished; complete.
 - b) When we love each other as God has loved us, we are completed, fulfilled, we are the finished project God designed.
4. John doesn't stop there. Vs 17 is so, so incredible.
5. **1 John 4:17 (NLT) — 17** And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but

we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

- a) So many Christians fear the day of Judgement.
- b) All our sins will be made known.
- c) That isn't what the Bible teaches us.
- d) Our sins were obliterated, made to be remembered no more.
Heb 10:17

- 6. We can approach the day of Judgment in complete confidence.
- 7. Not worried or scared, but confident as a child who approaches the father that loves and dotes on them.
- 8. We come before him with no flaws, no sins, no failures; but with love.

D. Invitation

- 1. LEAVE SCRIPTURE UP UNTIL TIME FOR INVITATION SONG
- 2. **1 John 4:13–15 (ESV) — 13** By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. **14** And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. **15** Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.
- 3. Will you confess that Jesus is the son of God?
- 4. Will you testify that God sent Jesus to save the world; Including you?
- 5. Will you abide in his love? Will you love others who also are abiding in his love?
- 6. Those who love him; obey him;
- 7. He commands us to repent of our sins.
- 8. He commands us to be baptized and have our sins washed away.
- 9. He commands us to love each other as God loved us.
- 10. If you need to make changes in either of those areas, this is a perfect opportunity to do so.