

Scripture Reference: 1 John 4:7-12

Date: December 15, 2013

Title: "Those Who Love are Born of God"

Focus: Love is evidence of the incarnation.

Intro:

1. At Christmas we celebrate Jesus. Christmas is about Him. It commemorates the incarnation, God coming in human flesh.

2. There are times when people wish they could have been there to see that, to witness the incarnation, to see God in human form

3. The reality of the incarnation continues today. God's intent is to manifest Himself in those who surrender their lives to Him. The predominate way He is seen in humanity is through love.

Body:

vv. 7-8; The *Primacy* of Love

Love is the *Singular Defining Characteristic* of Those Born of God.

This statement does not originate from John. He is merely passing along what Jesus had told him,

John 13:34-35; *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

Church going people like to think they are identifiable by a host of issues:

Dress or make-up, worship style, teaching, language, music, doctrine, social activism, etc.

We like to believe that if we engage or disengage in such things to a given degree, then people will know God is with us.

There is a problem with this. A person does not need the presence of God in his or her life to function in any of these areas.

A person who loves God will do these things. But, if you do these things it does not mean God lives in you.

1 Cor. 13:1-3; *"If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it;* but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing."* (NLT)

Why is Love the Singular Defining Characteristic of Those Born of God?

John provides three reasons:

1) “Love is from God” - The origin of love, is God. It begins with Him and would not exist without Him.

2) Those who love are “born of God” - If God lives in a person, he or she will intrinsically evidence love. It will be a natural part of his or her person.

3) Those who love “know God” - You cannot interact with God and not run into His love. It is a basic operating principle of His kingdom.

vv. 9-10; The *Definition* of Love

John reference to “love” is something new, something that has been revealed to humanity.

When God says “love” and we say “love,” we are not talking about the same thing.

To understand what God means by love, John refers readers to:

1) The life of Jesus; Jesus birth was not natural, nor was it inevitable. His life was not purposed for self-fulfillment but for others. From the time of his birth to His death, He lived with the needs of others in mind.

Luke 19:10; "*The Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.*"

Jesus embodies love, "*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. Love never fails.*" (1 Cor. 13:4-8)

2) The Cross; Jesus gave His life for You. This is the greatest testament of love (John 15:13-14).

As great a virtue as love is among humanity, in comparison to this example, it comes up short.

vv. 11-12; The *Expectation* of Love

Moved by the Holy Spirit, John believed it right to expect God's disciples to express His love.

"*We also ought to love . . .*" It only made sense to John that those "born of God" and who "know God" will manifest this love, His love, towards others.

It is *natural* that God's presence in the life of those "born of God" will show itself in His love flowing out of them. This was his assertion in v. 8, "*The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*"

By His children evidencing His love, God is real to others.

It is as God's children experience His love that they are immersed in His love and grow to more fully experience it.

Closing:

1. Nothing reveals more the presence of God in a person than love.
2. Love is to be a natural expression of those who have surrendered their lives to Him.
3. Love is to permeate who we are and what we do. In interacting with people on the basis of God's love, they, and we, will know He is real.