

One Another – Love

Text : **I John 4: 7-14 , John 13: 34-35**

INTRODUCTION :

A. Question :

What is the greatest misconceptions the world has about Christianity ?

Answer :

That one can have a relationship with God w/o a relationship with His people.

1. Many call themselves Christians, but don't have a relationship with the church.
 - a. The sentiment was often expressed by *“I accept the man, but not the plan.”*
 - b. They claim to be Christian, but don't want to be a part of a church.
2. As well, there are some members of the church who don't maintain a positive or active relationship with the church.
 - a. Some Christians attend the same congregation for many years, but don't have a close relationship with other members.
 - b. This reflects a basic misunderstanding of the nature of the church.

B. God loved the church so much that He purchased it with His own blood.

1. **Acts 20: 28** – **Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.**
2. For sure, one who truly accepts Christ will also accept the church for which He died.

C. Christians need the church. The one who will follow Jesus is sufficiently different from the world so as to bring social pressure down on himself.

1. Put one red chicken in a pen of white ones and they'll peck it to death.
2. Jesus explained that this principle applies to Christians still in this world.
 - a. **John 3: 19-21** **This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.**
 - b. **John 17: 14** – **I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.**
3. Many years later John would warn the brethren.

I John 3: 13 – **Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.**

D. The fact is, by oneself he won't develop, mature and stay faithful as a Christian.

1. This is why Jesus places all saved people into His church.
Acts 2: 46-47 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.
2. By God's design, Christianity is a group activity :
 - a. It's a community of believers whose citizenship is in Heaven.
 - b. It functions as the family of God on earth.
3. That's why there are approaching sixty (60) “**one another**” passages in the N.T.

This will be the second in a series of lessons about those “one another.”
We have just finished lessons on encouraging one another, we will now turn our attention to the most import of those passages .. those about love.

I. The single most important aspect of the Christian religion is LOVE.

A. When asked which was the most important command of God, Jesus responded :

Matt. 22: 36-40 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ And He said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹ The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

B. Love is the single most often repeated command in the N.T.

1. Fifteen of the “**one another**” passages are direct commands to love one another.
2. It is commanded by more Apostles than any other command.
 - a. Jesus commanded it : (*agapao = be pleased with*)
John 15: 12 – This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. ¹⁷ –This I command you, that you love one another.
 - b. John commanded it :
I John 4: 20-21 If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. (*agapao = be pleased with*)

- c. Peter commanded it :
I Pet. 4: 8 – **Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another,**
because love covers a multitude of sins. (agape = good will, benevol)
- d. Paul commanded it :
Rom. 12: 10 – **Be devoted to one another in brotherly love;**
give preference to one another in honor; (philadelphia = feeling)
- d. The anonymous Hebrew writer commanded it :
Heb. 13: 1 – **Let love of the brethren continue. (philadelphia = feeling)**

C. God's emphasis on love indicates the importance He places on it.

II. Love is a command of God.

A. Thus, love is not optional.

1. We have just seen that love is the most often repeated command.
2. We cannot have a relationship with God if we do not obey His commands.
I John 2: 3-5 **By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. (cf ... John 14: 15, I John 5: 3, II John 6)**

B. Love is a decision to act in the best interest of another, not an emotion.

1. One cannot command another to feel a certain way. (*That's a recipe for hypocrisy.*)
 - a. Imagine if you had gone up to the object of your first serious crush and commanded that person to love you. **What result would you have expected ?**
 - b. We are commanded to love our enemies. Can you feel all warm and fussy toward someone who has killed those you love and seeks to kill you ?
2. **Love is a verb** ... Thus, we're commanded to act in certain ways toward others.
 - a. Don't seek vengeance against them when they wrong you.
Rom. 12: 17-21 **Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**
 - b. Look out for the interest of others. **Phil. 2: 3-4** regard one another as more important

III. Love cannot be defined apart from law. Love fulfills the Ten Commandments.

A. **Rom. 13: 8-10** Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For this, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

B. **One who loves God will fulfill the first four commandments.**

1. He will be faithful to Him alone ... no other.
2. He will not seek reduce Him to a carved image of anything.
3. He will never let His name be used disrespectfully.
4. He will honor Him with a weekly day of devotion. (*world views all time as theirs*)

C. **One who loves his parents will give them the honor and respect due them.**

1. The family is the foundation upon which society is built. (*weak family = weak nation*)
2. We all learn the concept of authority by being subjected to our parents.
3. In the U.S. God is falling into disrespect because parents haven’t taught their children

D. **The last five commands teach us what it means to love our neighbor.**

1. Not murder ... protect and preserve the lives of others ... right to survive.
2. Not commit adultery ... protect and strengthen the marriage of others
3. Not steal ... protect the property of others ... not oppress the weak
4. Not bear false witness ... protect the reputation of others
5. Not desire the property ... protect the right of others to prosper and to increase

E. **We are being taught that love is a conscious choice we make, not a feeling.**

1. Regardless of what we feel, we can always do the loving thing.
- * 2. *Love is treating other people like God treats us.* (*Grace, Mercy, Compassion*)

IV. The practice of love does not imply unqualified approval.

A. **Many today define love as making everyone feel comfortable and accepted.**

1. We love by our godly behavior toward others, not by unconditional approval.
2. Our modern PC culture advocates that we should make no one feel uncomfortable.
3. This attitude would justify grave abominations :

- a. Abortion ... “a personal decision, a woman’s right” ... no one else’s business
- b. Same sex marriage ... Destroys the very foundation upon which society is built.
- c. Love will not endorse or even ignore that which destroys.

III - *No one would allow a child to play with a poisonous snake.* (*barrio child*)

B. Jesus loves mankind so much he was willing to die for them, but demands change.

1. Jesus died for us while we were sinners, totally undeserving of His sacrifice.

Rom. 5: 6-8 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

2. Jesus continually warned sinner that they had to repent ... to change their lives. **e.g.**

a. **Matt. 4: 17** – From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (*repent = change*)

- b. Jesus demanded that people repent ... i.e., that they change.

Luke 13: 3 – I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

3. Jesus taught that those who would follow Him would call upon people to reform their lives.

Luke 24: 46-47 and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

C. Just as one who loves will not sin against another, he will also not sin with him. (*not encourage eternally destructive behavior*)

1. One who loves will speak up when he sees another in destructive behavior.

Prov. 27: 6 – Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy. (*He’ll encourage your sin.*)

2. We love another by treating him as our Lord would treat him. (*Call to repentance*)

D. The one who is in rebellion against God faces eternal destruction.

1. Love will not allow one person to say nothing while another goes into destruction.
2. Jesus did not demand the impossible.

Luke 6: 27-28 But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

- a. The rest of the sentence tells us how we love those who hurt us. (*Seek their good*)
- b. It does not imply that we say nothing about their actions ... Call them to repentance

CONCLUSION :

A. This lesson has not touched the hem of the garment, but time is limited.

B. We've observed that :

1. Love is the single most important aspect of the Christian religion.
 - a. Love for God
 - b. Love for everyone else
2. We have seen that love is a command to obey, not a warm and fussy feeling.
 - a. It is a verb ... an action that we can do.
 - b. Because it is a command, we must obey it. *It is not option.*
3. When we love we fulfill the law of God. (*cannot be defined apart from law*)
 - a. Loving God fulfills the first four commandments.
 - b. Loving others fulfills the last five commandments.
4. Love does not necessitate unconditional approval of the actions of one loved.
 - a. Jesus loved, but called others to repentance, **i.e.**, He demanded they change.
 - b. It is an unloving thing to watch others perish without warning them.

C. Love is not what comes naturally.

1. It is a learned skill.
2. It takes practice over time.

D. The first step in loving God is to surrender ourselves to Him.

INVITATION :

Lesson Text :**I John 4: 7-14**

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. **12** No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. **13** By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. **14** We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *to be* the Savior of the world.

John 13: 34-35

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