

THREE KINDS OF LOVE: DIVINE, DUPLICATED, DEFICIENT

Once again in this little epistle, the Holy Spirit will dig a little deeper into the subject of love. Someone has said, as love was considered earlier in this letter, love was presented first as a matter of light and darkness: it was presented next as a matter of life and death. In the passage before us we will find love (for the brethren) to be the acid test of sonship and fellowship, with the Father.

As we learn about love, we learn it is the very nature of God. Therefore, it stands to reason those who claim to be a child of God—and therefore, a partaker of the “divine nature” (**1 Peter 1:4**)—will manifest God’s love as God manifested His love through His Son, especially at Calvary.

May I be bold by saying something I think to be very important? Since God is love, shouldn’t those who claim to be united to Him by a new birth love the brethren? How can we claim to be a child of God if love is not “shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” as Paul taught in **Romans 5:5**? As I have said before I say again, men can say anything they want to say, but the proof is in the pudding.

From this point the chapter can be divided under the following headings:

Verses 7-10: Divine Love

Verses 11-19: Duplicated Love

Verse 20: Deficient Love

As we begin with **verse 7** we find the writer once again using the word: “Beloved.” This is a reference to those *divinely-loved ones* or those who are loved by God. This word is used as a particular reference to His children. Remember, although “God so loved the world” this letter is a personal and intimate letter written to His “little children” or His little born ones. In the word “beloved” we find God tenderly addressing His children.

As he continues, he writes something very important here in **verse 7**. He says: “let us love one another.” Although this phrase appears to set forth an option, if we are a true child of God and are a partaker of the nature of God, love is more than an option or a choice: it is a command. In fact, we will find it is not just a command. It is a factor by which it can be determined whether one confessing relationship with the Father is or is not, in reality, one of His little children. What do I mean by that? Since “God is love,” according to **verses 8** and **16**, and we claim to have

become a recipient of the very nature of God and then we do not love our brother or sister in Christ, the Holy Spirit through John says we are not of God, in fact we do not know Him. Listen to the **verse 8** as John says plainly and emphatically: “He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is love.” I’ve always heard plain speech is easily understood and this is plain speech.

What the great Apostle is saying is very logical. The fact is, love, or the absence of love, in the life of a believer for another believer is a valid test by which we are to examine ourselves. Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 13:5** we have a responsibility to do so in order to determine, if in fact, we are “in the faith.” As John has said, if we have a personal relationship with God who is love, then we must of necessity show that love we claim to have in how we live out our lives, especially towards those who are of like faith. Isn’t this what **Galatians 6:10** says: “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” So, isn’t it obvious? If we possess the nature of God, should we not love one another? I think so....

It is my opinion that **verse 9** ranks up there with **John 3:16**. We do not hear **1 John 4:9** quoted or referenced as often as **John 3:16**, but when it is considered, its beauty and bounty can be easily seen. It reads as follows: “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” Isn’t that simply wonderful?! I thought you would think so.

1 John 3:18 taught we are not to love in “word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” The Father would never expect something more from His children than He is willing to do Himself. So, God’s love was “manifest” or brought out into the open or made public, if you will, in His Son who lived among us. It began in an eternity past when the eternal Godhead put together a plan of salvation for man whom He was yet to create. God knew if He created man He would also have to redeem man. He knew that in creation all it would cost Him was His breath. He also knew that in redemption it would cost Him His blood.

From the manger in Bethlehem to the cross at Calvary, the love of God was displayed in undeniable ways for at least thirty three and a half years. Even in the message the Apostle Paul preached in his own defense before Agrippa and the others gathered with Agrippa in **Acts 26:26** we learn the things Jesus Christ of Nazareth did while He, as a man, walked among men. There Paul tells us those thing Jesus Christ of Nazareth did He did not do in a “corner” or in secret. The

things He did and taught were done in the open (**John 18:20**) and witnessed by throngs of people.

It was God's love that motivated Him to send His one of a kind Son into this world. If God "sent" His Son into this world that means He came from another place. It would mean He existed before He took upon Himself the form, the fashion, and the likeness of man. (**Philippians 2:7-8**) It would mean John was right when he wrote in **John 1:1, 14** that "In the beginning was the word, the word was with God, and the word was God...and the word was made flesh and dwelt among as the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth." It would mean the Gnostics were wrong in their teaching about the humanity of Jesus. In fact, it would mean He was fully God and fully man existing in one body. It was a body that was birthed in Bethlehem, crucified, buried, and raised in Jerusalem, and seated at the "right hand of the majesty on high." (**Hebrews 1:3**)

The idea behind the word "sent" is that of a commission. Jesus was a Heavenly envoy displaying openly His credentials in the miracles He performed and the duties He carried out such as dying for the lost at Calvary. In dying for the sinner and as a sinner He was able to offer a salvation to anyone and everyone. Only after God's justice and holiness was satisfied could He offer such a gift of grace. The fact God sent His one of a kind Son into this world to die as the sinners substitute resulted in God being able to offer salvation to "whosoever will."

The last phrase of **verse 9** tells us those who have trusted Christ as Savior have Jesus Himself living in (and through) them. **Colossians 1:27** teaches having "Christ in you, (is) the hope of glory." Without Christ we have no life. In fact we are "dead in trespasses and sins" (**Ephesians 2:1**), but with Christ "because I (Christ) live(s), ye (those in Christ) shall live also." (**John 14:19**)

Man may deny the miracles of Jesus and even decry His teachings, but man cannot change the fact there was—a little over two thousand years—a man who lived among men doing miracles. Claiming to be God incarnate and going about doing good such as healing all manner of sicknesses and diseases. Who was crucified, buried, and raised out from among the dead just like God's Word said the Messiah would be. Let the Gnostics and all others refuse to accept as true the record we have of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. But, let them know neither their refusal nor doubts will do anything to change the facts we have concerning God's only begotten. He was brought out into the open. He was manifest!

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” **1 John 4:10**. Here again John emphasizes the fact of Jesus’ incarnation and the fact Mary’s virgin born son was in truth the “only begotten” Son of God. Truly Jesus was one of a kind. There was a time when He did not possess a body. He was pure spirit. He was incorporeal. But since what happened at Nazareth when “the power of the Highest...overshadow(ed Mary)... that holy thing which shall be born of thee (Mary) shall be called the Son of God.” (**Luke 1:35**) Nine months later we read in **Luke 2:7**: “And she (Mary) brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.” in Bethlehem (where **Micah 5:2** says He would be birthed) Jesus received a body which He would have for all eternity. In fact, the Bible teaches we have a man in glory! (**1 Timothy 2:5**)

One more thing about God’s love here, seeing that in this chapter we are told “God is love,” let it be known it was what can be found in God that moved Him to send His Son into this world “to seek and to save that which was lost” **Luke 19:10**. There was nothing in man which merited such a manifestation of love. In **Romans 3:24** Paul tells us we were: “justified freely” which means there existed no cause within us to prompt God to provide a plan of salvation for us. The cause was for His actions found in the heart of God and the fact: “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” **Romans 5:8**. Oh what a Savior!

Verse 10 closes with a marvelous reminder. It reminds us that God: “sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins.” If you remember, we looked at what it meant for God to be “propitiated” in **2 John 2:2**. There we discovered our God, the One True God, is not like the little gods of man which need to be appeased because they are angry and must be mollified by being offered some gift. No! The God of Christianity needs no gifts to appease His wrath or to make Him favorable to men. His Divine, one of a kind of love eternally springs from within and not without. It springs spontaneously from His heart.

Our God is not a little god like the gods of little man. No, He is Holy, just, and righteous. But, in order for His Holiness to be preserved while at the same time providing salvation for lost humanity, something had to happen. That something happened at Calvary where His only begotten Son became a substitute for the sinner and where God laid upon Him my sins, your sins, and the sins of all the world. Paul tells us in **2 Corinthians 5:21**: “He (God) hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin became as sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

The word “propitiation” actually means “a mercy seat.” It was in light of the events which transpired at Calvary that God’s throne of holiness, justice, and righteousness became a place of “grace and mercy.” It was because of the blood our Lord shed there on the tree. Because the “just (died) for the unjust” God the Father became able to forgive the sins of all those who would ask Him to. Isn’t it still good news to know the good news of the Gospel is still for “whosoever will” even today.

It is with that marvelous truth I will bring this study to an end. There is no love like the love of God. It is a one of a kind love. It is a love which surpasses the love man knows as far as light surpasses darkness.

As I said in the beginning of this lesson, we will be looking at:

Divine Love

Duplicated Love

Deficient Love

Although we have not plummeted in the depth of God’s **Divine Love** (actually we haven’t much more than scratched its surface) I pray enough has been said to cause us to rejoice in knowing God’s love moved Him to grace us with His Son as our Savior just like John said He did in **John 3:16**.

If we have learned nothing more than “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so” we have learned a great deal.

Lord willing, we will consider what **Duplicated Love** is in our next lesson before we complete this study with a look at **Deficient Love**.

Tom Price, 2020