

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

"God's Love"
1 John 4:11-21

Introduction

1. The matter of love is not easily done away. It is an item of Christianity which keeps coming up again and again--why? Because of its importance in considering anything related to the person of God.

2. Actually, God's love is the spring of all love, particularly Christian love. To understand love amongst the saints, it is necessary to know the love of God. Something of His love is discussed in the following statements:

1. LOVE -- the essence of God. v. 16.

Here is repetition of the truth stated in v. 8. Love is not something which God possesses, but what He IS! It bespeaks His personality and conveys the idea of self-communication. It is His innermost Being.

Thrice over in the Word, God IS something: John 4:24--God IS spirit. 1 John 1:7--God IS light. Here--God IS love.

2. LOVE -- the activity of God.

Not only IS God love, but what He does is full of love. Mark how love is related to the performance of God:

a. Stated. Three of these are listed in the text:

- 1) He first loved us, v. 19. The aorist tense gathers up all the marvel of His love and

puts a priority on His over ours.

2) God so loved us. v. 11. The conditional clause here is of the first class. The idea stated is assumed true. Best rendered: "Since God so loved us . . ." No doubt about this activity with God!

3) Love which God has in us. v. 16. Here the wonderful thought is that believers are the sphere in which God's love operates and makes itself felt in the world. What amazing grace!

b. Related. This whole idea of love and God connected with the dwelling of the Lord in and with believers. Mark how these texts bring this out:

- 1) If we love one another--God dwells v.12.
- 2) If we have the Spirit--God dwells v.13.
- 3) If we confess Jesus--God dwells v.15.
- 4) If we dwell in love--God dwells v.16.

Hence, God's love has activity. This activity of His love is both factual and spiritual. The former concerning the statement of His love; the latter concerning the dwelling of the Lord in His own.

3. LOVE -- the display of God. vv. 14-15.

This subject is probably the most acknowledged situation with God, at least amongst those who know the Lord personally. What is involved? Consider these big verbs:

a. See. V. 12 affirmed that no one has seen God (same verb), but John here notes that the Son has been contemplated! The perfect middle form of the verb enforces the continuing and abiding affect of the original vision. The deep personal interest is also patent.

b. Testify. This is exactly what our Lord charged His own with doing (cf. Acts 1:8; Luke 24:48). The content of the testimony is outlined: that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world (cf. Spirit in v. 13, hence the trinity mentioned).

c. Confess. v. 15. Here is a direct reference to the confession of our Lord's deity. It implies surrender and obedience also, not mere lip service (1 Cor. 12:3).

The beauty of this section is that John moves forthrightly forward and avers: "we have come to know and still know and believe. . . ." Would to God this were the honest and genuine confession of every tongue today!

Conclusion

God's love is a huge topic. Indeed, it is inexhaustible. But it can be observed that He IS love. His love is active toward us and results in a blessed experience of abiding in God and He in us. His love is so boundless that it has been displayed throughout the world in the sending of our glorious Saviour. What a thrill to actually have come to know and have come to believe until this very hour that wonderful love that God has in us! If this is not your knowledge and belief right now--we beg of you that you make it yours. Jesus is wonderful and precious to know!

NOTES: