

1 John

January 12, 2020

“Love that’s what is all about!”

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany

Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

[**Introduction**] Six years old! And Johnnie comes home from first grade,  
and he asks his mother,  
“Mom, where do I come from?”

Oh dear, His mother thought.

And she wished his father was here to answer *THAT* question.

After she had slowly and carefully explained,  
she asked Johnny, “Why did you ask?”

He said, “Well, my friend Bobby came from Chicago,  
so I was wondering where I do I come from?”

Misunderstandings! Oh, how they exist.

There are some misunderstandings — when we talk about God’s love.

So, I would like to make three points—  
three points to understand God’s love for us.

[**FIRST**] FIRST “**love begins with God.**”

God is ALWAYS the beginning.

Vs. 7 of our Epistle lesson says, “*Beloved, let us love one another  
for love is from God, and whoever loves — has been born of God and knows God.*”

By ourselves, we are incapable of loving.

But many people believe that love originates with themselves.

But if we were to love, love our own way,

it would be a very selfish and self-centered kind of love.

BUT as Christians, we know that God is the origin of love.

God first loved us, and He enables us to share *THAT* love with others.

God is not only the origin of love.

Vs 8 tells us “**God is love.**”

The very nature of God is love. Think about it. Try to wrap your mind around that.  
Everything that God does and says originates from His love — for us.

He created us in love,  
and, when we fell into sin,  
instead of giving up on us or destroying us,  
He set about to redeem us.  
He showed His love for us  
as He sent His Son to pay the sacrifice for sins.  
He sent His Son into the world to die on the Cross  
as the propitiation for our sins.  
In verse 10, we see that propitiation means  
that He was the atoning sacrifice for our sins.  
A sacrifice had to be made for our sins.  
In other words, Jesus Christ was OUR REDEEMER.

Jesus was the perfect lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world,  
and He does that so that we might live through Him.

Because of God's love and forgiveness, we have eternal life in His name.  
So we see, "Love begins with God."

[*Second*] FIRST "love begins with God."  
Second, "God's love has a dramatic effect upon us."

Vs 7 says we are born of God.  
Through Holy Baptism, we are born again of water and the Spirit  
and become children of God.

Our old natural birth has been superseded by a new supernatural birth.  
We have been transformed or changed.  
AND We are no longer the same persons because of that transformation.  
Once, we were lost, but now we are found.  
At one time, we were dead,  
and now we are made alive.  
At one time, we were enemies of God,  
and now Scripture says that we are considered His dear friends,  
No better yet! His dear children.  
AND Not only are we born of God, we know God.  
We possess knowledge of God that unbelievers do not have.  
We do not just know about God intellectually,  
but we know God personally and intimately,  
because we are the recipients of His love.

And we also love others because God first loved us (verse 11).

This is one of the effects God's love has on us.

It enables us to love others as He first loved us.

Our love for one another

is in response to God's infinite love for each and every one of us.

We show the same kind of selfless, sacrificial love toward others

thereby witnessing to the love of God in Christ Jesus.

The Apostle John says it very well: ***"Beloved, if God so loved us,  
we also out to love one another."***

You see, love that is of God is dynamic and explosive.

It cannot be and just remain between God and me.

Its presence in our lives is shown by the way that it reaches out to others.

### [**THIRD**]

FIRST Love originates with God, and

SECOND God's love has a dramatic effect upon us. AND

THIRD **"Love becomes the distinguishing mark of Christ's followers."**

After Jesus had washed His disciples' feet, we are told in John chapter 13,

He tells His disciples:

***"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I  
have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know  
that you are My disciples if you have love for one another."*** (vs 34-35).

Unbelievers recognized Jesus' disciples by their love.

Believers gave evidence to being disciples by their love for one another.

***"They will know we are Christians by our love..."***

When the early church was just getting started,

those outside the church would watch

how people inside the church treated one another

and they responded by saying, "My, how they love one another."

You see, they will truly know we are Christians by our love.

Our standard for loving is Christ's love for us.

AND His love...

He loves us unconditionally without setting any limits.

He loves us sacrificially.

However our love is not always like that because we put conditions on our love.

Sometimes we say, “I will love you if you do this, this, and this.”

Or we say, “I’ll love you until you do something that upsets me or bothers me.”

BUT the reality is that as followers of Jesus,  
we are under obligation to keep on loving.

To love is one debt that is never paid off.

St. Paul tells us in Romans 13:8,

***“Owe no one anything except to love each other.”***

**[Conclusion]**

Whenever we talk about love,

we have to remember that love is more than simple warm feelings.

Love is an attitude that reveals itself in action.

Love is really more a verb than a noun.

Read the great love chapter 1 Corinthians 13 sometime  
and see how Paul describes love.

He says, ***“Love is patient, love does not envy or boast, it does not insist on its own way, it is not irritable or resentful.”***

Paul then says, ***“Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things”*** (verse 7).

Love is hospitality!

Love is sharing your time, talent, and treasure.

Love is...

February is almost here, and the stores are ready for you to buy your Valentines.

This year... as we think about love,

love that originated from God,

love that changes us and transforms us,

love that is the distinguishing mark of Christians

we have to ask ourselves,

**“How can we love others as Jesus loves us? AMEN!**

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As followers of Christ, “Keep loving one another earnestly

And show hospitality to one another without grumbling.” AMEN! (1 Pt 4:8-9)

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