



1 John

Lavish Love

God is Love!

1 John 4:7-21

Message #9 of 10 – S715

Sermon given on November 27, 2016



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

God is Love!

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Opening Comments

- Turn to **1 John 4**
- Today, we continue our series **Lavish Love**
- In 2012 the most frequently asked question, according to Google was, ‘What is love?’
- If you Google that, after the service, the top result is the song, ‘What is love?’ by Haddaway
- If you were to read the next ten or twenty results, you would come away with the idea that no one really knows what love is
- Here a couple of quotes I found **Susan Sontag**
Nothing is mysterious, no human relation. Except love.

- **Ambrose Pierce**

Love, n. A temporary insanity curable by marriage.

• Love is not easily understood, but it is important **Thomas A. Kempis**
Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing broader; nothing is more lovely, nothing richer, nothing better in heaven or in earth.

- Today John is going to help us to understand why love is so mysterious
- He is going to tell us that love can be known, but not understood fully
- If you are able and willing to do so, please stand as we read today’s text as a sign of reverence for God’s Word
- Read **1 John 4:7-21**
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **God is Love!**
- John will use the word ‘love’ 26 times in these 15 verses
- John wants to understand three things about love
- First thing about love – **Love can be known**
- He begins our text with an exhortation to love
- **1 John 4:7**
- One of the traits that marks a Christian life is love

- Notice John says ‘let us love’ – engaging our will to choose to love one another
 - ‘love is of God’ = God is source and originator of love
 - This is not talking about the physical attraction and infatuation that most people call love
 - It is a reflection of His very nature
 - **1 John 4:8**
 - ‘God is love’ – these three words are so packed with truth that we could take the rest of our time to talk about it
 - Suffice it to say that everything that God is and does flows out of the reality that his very nature is love
 - The reason love is so difficult to define is that to fully explain love you would have to be able to define God – humanly impossible
 - John tells us here that love is the fruit of knowing God. The better we know God, the better we love
 - He also says that if we do not love one another, the reason is because we do not know God
 - Only a saved person can be commanded to love, because we were given the capacity to love like God loves **Romans 5:5**
- The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**
- If we don’t love, it is either because we choose not to love, or we don’t know how to love
 - The better we get to know the God who loves us, the easier it is to love Him and others
 - And the more we choose to love God and others, the better we get to know God
 - And John reminds us that God sent us an example of His love
 - **1 John 4:9**
 - Because God loves, He acts
 - God knew that we would need an example of love, sent His perfect Son, Jesus
 - And He wasn’t waiting for us to love Him first, because that would have never happened
 - **1 John 4:10**

- ‘propitiation’ is a theological term = to appease God’s holy wrath over sin = Jesus took the wrath we deserved, because both He and the Father loved us that much **Romans 5:8**

God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- I don’t mind being called a ‘sinner’ – I am one! But more importantly, it reminds me God’s love – God sent His Son Jesus to save me from my sin because of His amazing love for me – God’s love is greater than my sin
- God loved us first, because that was the only way we would be able to love Him back
- **1 John 4:11**
- Human love is a response to divine love
- Love can be known as we get to know God
- Regularly I meet with people about the relationships of their lives
- And invariably, one of the things that I tell them is to love the other person
- They might tell me that they are loving – but it is not helping
- The problem is that often they don’t know how to love them
- Illustration: electrical outlet – US versus Indonesian
- Outlet and plugs are incompatible – needs an adapter
- If I want to love Kelly, I need to adapt the way I love her to a manner that she can receive that love from me
- If I try to force my way of loving on her, it just causes damage to the relationship
- As we get to know God better, our capacity to love increases, and becomes more focused – we love better
- Love can be known – by getting to know God
- Our second reality about love – **Love can be seen**
- Love is more than just a feeling, though feelings are certainly a part of love
- **1 John 4:12-15**
- ‘No one has seen God at any time’ – God is spirit
- If we love one another, the reality of God is seen by others

- In fact, to the degree that others see us loving each other, is how clearly they are likely to see God
- God is invisible **Colossians 1:15**
He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.
- God sent Jesus so that we would know what God's love looks like
- God is invisible and so no one will ever see Him unless they see Him through our love for others
- **1 John 4:15-16**
- John says that one of the proofs that the love of God abides in us is that we confess that Jesus is God
- This is one of the essential doctrines of the faith
- That means if you get this one wrong, you aren't saved
- If you believe that God sent His Son Jesus, as God in the flesh, to take your punishment on the cross, then you are saved and God abides in you, as does His love
- That's important because there is a terrible consequence to not believing that
- Our third point – **Love can make us fearless**
- **1 John 4:17-18**
- John is saying that a 'day of judgment' is coming
- That seems like an unusual thing for John to talk about as He is telling us about God's love
- God is love – love is bound up in His nature – so much so that everything He does is done in love
- There are other attributes of God's nature besides love **1 John 1:5**
This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
- If you were for that study = God is perfectly holy
- Anything contrary to God's holiness = sin
- In Romans 3 Paul says that God is just = righteous judge
- God's holiness demands justice for all who have sinned
- God's love made a way to escape the judgment for our sins
- Once we have received Jesus, we need no longer fear the judgment that is coming – in fact, we can have boldness = confidence

- ‘because as He is, so are we in this world’ = right with the Father in heaven
- John is talking to all believers – no fear of judgment from the Father
- Like telling a child, ‘Wait until your father gets home’
- Would instill fear in those who expect to be punished
- But those who are right with the father, would look forward to his coming
- If you are a Christian, you should have no fear of judgment **John 5:24**
Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.
- Is it possible for a Christian to live in fear and torment
- Yes, it is proof that they are not abiding in the love of God and expressing that love as they ought to others
- The closer you get to God, the less fear you will have
- And not just regarding judgment, but also over the natural circumstances of your life
- As you get to know God’s love better, you learn to trust God more fully, no matter what comes into your life because you are resting in His love
- **1 John 4:19**
- God has always loved you – even while you were living your life apart from Him
- God loves the whole world – each person on the planet equally, but not the same
- Imagine how much more He can cause you to experience His love now that you are one of His children
- As we grow in our knowledge of God’s love to us, it makes more fearless in our expression of love to others
- John closes this chapter with a call to spiritual honesty and faithful obedience
- **1 John 4:20-21**
- Love and hate are incompatible roommates in the heart of a Christian
- What John is saying is that if you hate another Christian, one of God’s other children, then you are not loving God

- Let's be honest – there are some Christians who are hard to love
- Which is easier; to love God or to love people?
- It is harder to love God because the way we are to love God is by loving the things He loves, including people who are hard to love
- Personally, I am finding that as my faith grows, the easier it is for me to love the unlovable people who come into my life
- And I can do it fearlessly, because I know that God will use the love He expresses through me for His purposes, for His glory, for their blessing, and to grow my faith
- Love can be known – as we get to know God better and better, especially as we get to know Jesus, through His Word and by the Spirit
- Grow in your knowledge of God and watch your love grow
- Love needs to be seen – this world needs to see the love of God being expressed by the children of God, first to the children of God and then out to the whole world – so that they can come to know the love of God and the hope that love promises
- Love fearlessly – love God with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and then love others like it doesn't matter how they respond, because in reality God is responsible for the response
- You abandon yourself to His love, and then fearlessly love others
- And then watch as the world around you starts to change
- Amen - have a radical week