

1 John 4:7-5:4

God is Love

Good morning church. So very good to be with you this morning as we over today and next Sunday wind down our walk through a large portion of the New Testament. This morning, if you have a Bible or you're using a device, go ahead and turn or scroll/swipe to 1 John. If you need to use the table of contents – that's what it's there for. One of the last books in your Bible, right near the end, you'll find 1 John.

This incredible letter that John, the same guy that wrote 2nd and 3rd John, as well as Revelation and the Gospel of John, incredible letter that he wrote to the church. John is writing as an older man, a preacher/apostle/disciple of Jesus to this church. And his overwhelming concern for this church, is that they would have confidence in their relationship with God through Christ, confidence in their faith in JESUS – and live all of their days from this confidence that they have.

It's amazing to me what confidence can do for you.

- Sports – a certain pitcher or player that you've had success against
- School – a test that you've studied for and know the materials
- Business – closing deals starts to snowball
- Sharing Jesus with people
- Relationships – with your spouse, with a good friend

Not false confidence, but real confidence. Rooted in objective truth. BUT the difference between the confidence we have in some of these settings, and the confidence we have in our relationship with God through Jesus is that our relationship with God through Jesus ISN'T BASED ON YOUR PERFORMANCE → instead it's rooted in God's great love for people. For sinners. So great is the love that God has for people, it's indescribable, and incomparably glorious. It's a long passage for this morning, and I won't speak to every single detail, every comma, every word – but I think it goes together for us, and we will draw some conclusions from it on the great love of God for sinners.

READ 1 John 4:7 – 5:4

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ God's love was revealed among us^[b] in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him.

¹⁰ Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice^[c] for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God remains in^[d] us and his love is made complete in us. ¹³ This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit.

¹⁴ And we have seen and we testify that the Father has sent his Son as the world's Savior. ¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God—God remains in him and he in God. ¹⁶ And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him. ¹⁷ In this, love is made complete with us so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because as he is, so also are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; instead, perfect love drives out

fear, because fear involves punishment.^[e] So the one who fears is not complete in love.¹⁹ We love^[f] because he first loved us.

²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," and yet hates his brother or sister, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother or sister whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.^[g] ²¹ And we have this command from him: The one who loves God must also love his brother and sister.

5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father^[a] also loves the one born of him. ² This is how we know that we love God's children: when we love God and obey^[b] his commands. ³ For this is what love for God is: to keep his commands. And his commands are not a burden, ⁴ because everyone who has been born of God conquers the world. This is the victory that has conquered the world: our faith.

PRAY

As we consider these scriptures this morning, as we think through the confidence we can have in our relationship with God through Christ, We start at the foundational point that GOD IS LOVE.

I. GOD IS LOVE

We see this in V7 and V8. God is Love. And remember, love isn't some emotional sentimental feeling that varies based on what we ate last not. Love is a choice. An act of the will. God in his very being IS Love.

We can't even come close to comprehending the word LOVE apart from God. Because God is love and love is from God.

And we see in the nature of God's love – that it's costly.

- V9, V10 → God's righteousness has to be accounted for. His wrath has to be accounted for. His righteousness and His wrath are not at odds or inconsistent with his love.
 - Illustration from Matt Chandler – threaten one of my kids and watch out.
- The satisfaction of the wrath of God – as the CSB states it the atoning sacrifice – Jesus made comes at a tremendous cost.
- There was a cost, there was an action, all of which to bring about a purpose. To offer life to sinners like you and like me.

As we become gripped, down deep on our bones, of the greatness of God's love for us in Christ, to all who have turned from their sin and are trusting in Jesus alone, it will impact how we relate to one another. John calls us to love people – but ultimately, we only love, because we have first been loved by God.

II. We love because we have been loved

V7-8 – Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

We will never love people well until we have experienced the love of God through Christ. And said another way, once the Gospel, the love with which God has loved us, grips us, takes over our lives, we can't but love other people.

We love because we have been loved. At a great cost, with great action, to accomplish a great purpose → God has loved sinners. And the love of God propels us to a love for all people.

V11 – If (or SINCE) God loves us like this, we MUST love one another.

And then in V16, And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.

- Head
- Heart
- Hands

Love ACTS! Love acts. For it to be more than just an emotion, or a passing feeling, it MUST ACT! Love acts.

III. Love's Display

V20-21 John tells us that to claim to love God and at the same time to hate people – we are fooling ourselves. Because a love of God, will always be on display. And here we need to be really clear that we have a consistent and Biblical understanding of love. And we love like God loves – with a cost, action, and purpose – we don't turn a blind eye to sin – instead we point people to the only hope of the Gospel.

And we also need to understand when we talk about love, and specifically loving others → don't focus on perfection, rather consistency and growth. I know I don't love people perfectly. But I know my love for people (people like me, people unlike me, people that love me back, and people that hate me) has grown and is growing. As the love of God grows in you, your love for others will also grow. Not instant perfection, but consistent and sustained progress.

As we consider the greatness of God's love for us, and that our confidence before Him isn't based on our own performance but in Jesus' performance on our behalf, we need to see the simple joy of obedience.

IV. Simple Joy of Obedience

There's so much here in these verses, but ultimately, we have a picture of a joy-filled obedience in chapter 5:2-3

Obedience rooted in a love for God is **freeing**, not restrictive. Not only is it freeing it is satisfying, and joy producing. As we delight in God, as we are overwhelmed with a love for God, we do what He asks – we trust him enough to obey, and we experience deep joy as we do.

Closing 1

God wants us to know where we stand with him – to have confidence in Him and our standing before him if you are a Christian. If you have in fact turned from your sin and are trusting in Jesus. The Holy Spirit inspired John to write these things to us. And the undeniable testimony of a life that is filled with a (1) love of God, a (2) love for people and, (3) a joyful obedience will be a life that is confident in your position with God through Christ.

Closing 2

Some diagnostics questions:

Do you see in yourself, a growing love for God and for people? Are you willing to love people, all people, like God has loved you?

The most loving thing you can ever do, is to point other people to Jesus. Because there is no hope for any of us apart from Jesus. And as you love people, and you see God change people, you see your confidence and hope in the Gospel grow and grow and grow.

What has/is God calling you to obey that you are putting off? How will you respond?