

April 26, 2011

The Love of God

1 John 4:11-21

¹¹Beloved, if God so **loved** us, we also ought to **love** one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we **love** one another, God abides in us and his **love** is perfected in us. ¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶And we have come to know and to believe the **love** that God has for us. God is **love**, and whoever abides in **love** abides in God, and God abides in him. ¹⁷By this is **love** perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in **love**, but perfect **love** casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in **love**. ¹⁹We love because he first **loved** us. ²⁰If anyone says, "I **love** God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not **love** his brother whom he has seen cannot **love** God whom he has not seen. ²¹And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also **love** his brother.

We've seen this love – hate, abiding language before!

What is John's definition of "Love"? And how does God demonstrate this?

How are we to apply this definition of Love to loving our brothers?

12 "No one has ever seen God"- sinners can only see God through faith in Christ Jesus

13-16 Form a great explanation of how the three persons of the Trinity work together for our salvation

13 "because he has given us his Spirit"- (3:24)- the Spirit creates and sustains our faith

14 This verse is part of the "by this we know..." from verse 13, don't let the period fool you!

15 Following this Trinitarian declaration of salvation, "Whoever confesses..." is a fruit of such faith

16 *Luther: These are simple words, but they are words that require faith in the highest degree – faith against which everything that is not of the Spirit of God fights. Conscience, the devil, hell, the judgment of God, and everything resist, in order that we may not believe that God is love but may believe that God is an Executioner and a Judge. By "the world" I also understand the adversaries of the Word and the sects. Here, therefore, it is taught in brief that one must cling to faith against these assaults. Consequently, he who has a true knowledge of God abides in Christ, and God abides in him.*

17 "love is perfected"- similar to 2:5, God's love has a goal- that we believe in Jesus' sacrificial atonement
"we may have confidence"- when God's Love is perfected we do not fear judgment day (v18)

18 Think of how free our consciences are now that God's love has been perfected in Christ Jesus!

17-19 Given all the talk of Fear and Love here, how should we understand Luther's Explanations of the Commandments, "We should fear and love God ..."?

20 *TLSB- The real, tangible way to show love for God is by loving one's brother*

21 "this commandment we have from him"- John 13:34

The Spirit, Water & Blood

1 John 5:1-15

¹Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. ²By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep on doing his commandments. ³For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. ⁴For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

⁶This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷For there are three that testify: ⁸the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree. ⁹If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. ¹⁰Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has

borne concerning his Son. ¹¹And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

¹³I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

¹⁴And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

¹⁶If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. ¹⁷All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

¹⁸We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

¹⁹We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

²⁰And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. ²¹Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

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- 1 Loving our fellow Christians should be a given- it's one big, divine, loving family!
- 2 VMT- "keep on doing his commandments" not ESV "obey"
- 3 "this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments"- God's love enables our righteous acts
"not burdensome"- for the Old Adam, under the Law they are, but not the New Man freed from Sin
- 4 "born of God"- this birth comes from faith (5:1) and also is connected with your baptism (Jn 3:3, 5)
Faith overcomes the World! Marvelous! It's not our feelings or experiences, but believing God
- 5 clarifying what "our faith" consists of: "the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God"
- So what does John mean by the Son of God? He goes on to explain-
- 6 "came by water and blood"- His baptism and crucifixion, the beginning and end of his earthly ministry
"the Spirit ...testifies"- Jn 1:29-34, 14:26, 16:13-14- this is the Spirit's work for the creation of our faith
- 8 "the Spirit & the water & the blood"- Oh, the sacramental implications!
- 9-12 Very cut & dry, plain & simple- this testimony is from God and it is life, rejecting it is death
- 13 "to you who believe"- many mistake this when speaking of 1 John and the Gospel of John
- 14-15 So, ask for Porsches or intercession for those in need?
- 16 "sin not leading to death"- if the brother is a Christian, he should be open to rebuke & repentance
"I do not say that one should pray for that"- *TLSB- If one refuses to repent and confess Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God, there is no point in asking God to forgive that person who stands condemned by his own stubborn unbelief and refusal of God's love (Jer 7:16, John 3:36)*
- 17 "sin that does not lead to death"- the penalty of sin is death, Christ has paid that and though we often sin and fail, we are forgiven as often as we repent and confess our sins. In this we have life.
- 18 "keep on sinning"- such persistence and unrepentance is in accord with the sins of death
Luther: This is a strange thought. The same man sins, and at the same time he does not sin. It is here that those two statements of the apostle John are brought into harmony. The first is found in 1 John 1:8: 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves'; the second occurs in 1 John 3:9 and 5:18: 'No one born of God commits sin.' All the saints, therefore, have sin and are sinners; yet no one of them sins. They are righteous in accordance with the fact that grace has worked healing in them; they are sinners in accordance with the fact that they still must be healed.
- 19 Satan controls this world (Eph 2:1-3), but God's kingdom of Grace has rescued us (Col 1:13)
- 20 Understanding of the scriptures, the true triune God, and salvation is centered on Jesus Christ
- 21 "Keep yourselves from idols"- Teachings that present Jesus as anything other than both true God and true man ultimately presents an idol. Likewise, any teaching that denies Jesus as the savior of the world is an idol. And any teaching that denies this salvation in Christ by grace alone inevitably creates an idol out of whatever object, teaching, person, or event they do trust in.