

Theme: Authentic love is based on the nature of the Trinity, revealed in Christ's death, completed when Christians love one another, and gives confidence as we face the day of judgment.

## I. Intro - True Love

- A. Everyone loves to talk about love!
- B. Hard to find people who say they are against love!
- C. But, like freedom, most conceptions of love are false
- D. What is authentic love?
- E. How is authentic love related to God & His Gospel?
- F. What does authentic love have to do with Christian life?

## II. The Source of Authentic Love - The Trinity

- A. The source of authentic love is God Himself
  - 1. First fact: authentic love comes from God  
Dear friends, let us love one another, for **love comes from God**. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 1 John 4:7
  - 2. Second fact: authentic love originates in God  
**This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us** and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins....<sup>19</sup> **We love because he first loved us.** 1 John 4:10, 19
  - 3. Authentic love originates in God. There is no love apart from God. Even the atheist who loves someone can only do this because they are created in the image of God.

## B. The character of God is love

Whoever does not love does not know God, because **God is love**...<sup>16</sup> And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. **God is love**. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. 1 John 4:8, 16

- 1. Love is not something God does - He is love
- 2. Like holiness and integrity - God is love
- 3. All that is good is good because it originates in God Himself. God does not align with the true, the good, and the beautiful - they are merely a description and reflection of His nature and character.

## C. The Being of God is love - the Holy Trinity

We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his **Spirit**.<sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the **Father** has sent his **Son** to be the Savior of the world. 1 John 4:13-14

- 1. Note Trinitarian reference in heart of passage
- 2. The Trinity is the foundation for all love in universe
  - a. Trinity acts in love and brings salvation
    - 1. Father loves us - and send His Son to save us
    - 2. Son loves - and becomes human, lives, dies and is raised for us
    - 3. Spirit loves us - and regenerates us and dwells in us, so we experience God's love, salvation
  - b. Trinity is love - Father, Son & Spirit in bond of love
- 3. Love is the relationship of Trinity - apart from Trinity there would be NO love in the whole universe.

### III. The Revelation of Authentic Love

#### A. God's love is revealed in the cross

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:9–10

1. Authentic love is not just emotion - it is action
2. God's love becomes manifest/revealed (1 John 1:2)
3. Jesus is the revelation of God's love

#### B. Authentic love is seen in the cross of Christ

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> **This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.** 1 John 4:9–10

1. People will often say Jesus shows us love
2. But people are repelled by the cross - for it convicts us of sin
3. Authentic love is Jesus made propitiation - He appeased the righteous wrath of God against our sin. Authentic love does not embrace or paper over sin - it pays the price to rescue from the clutch of sin.
4. But remember - the whole Trinity is involved in this act of authentic love.

### IV. The Completion of Authentic Love

#### A. This is why we are called to love one another

Dear friends, **let us love one another, for love comes from God.** Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.... <sup>11</sup> Dear friends, **since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another....**<sup>19</sup> **We love because he first loved us...** <sup>21</sup> And **he has given us this command:** Whoever loves God **must also love his brother.** 1 John 4:7, 11, 19, 21

1. **Because God is love & loved us, we are called to love**
2. Path = God is love, so He loves, so we love
3. Furthermore, as John has shown throughout the letter, all of this is the fruit of regeneration.

#### B. Opposite is unthinkable for a regenerate child of God

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.... <sup>20</sup> If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. 1 John 4:8, 20

1. Those who do not love do not know God
2. Once again - knowing God produces fruit - love
3. It is impossible to love invisible God and not love visible people

#### C. The completion of authentic love

No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made **complete** in us. 1 John 4:12

1. God's love is complete when we love one another

2. τελειώω - complete/finished/reached its goal

3. Authentic love first flows between the Father, Son and Spirit, then from the Trinity to us, then through us out to one another and back to God.

#### D. The result of completed authentic love

In this way, love is made **complete** among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love. But **perfect** love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made **perfect** in love. 1 John 4:17–18

1. John is speaking of complete love that has reached its goal (complete & perfect same word as in v12)
2. When we receive God & His love, it drives out fear
3. When God's love flows through us we are becoming like our Father
4. When God's love is received by us and given to others, it reaches its goal. The result of this is we no longer fear God, and our dread of judgment day is driven out by authentic love.

## V. Applying the Authentic Word

### A. Do we understand authentic love?

1. We talk a lot about love, but do not understand it
2. Bob Dylan - Watered Down Love (1 Corinthians 13)  
Love that's pure hopes all things  
Believes all things, won't pull no strings  
Won't sneak up into your room, tall, dark and handsome  
Capture your heart and hold it for ransom

You don't want a love that's pure  
You wanna drown love  
You want a watered-down love

Love that's pure, it don't make no false claims  
Intercedes for you 'stead of casting you blame  
Will not deceive you or lead you into transgression  
Won't write it up and make you sign a false confession

(Chorus)

3. We think of love in purely human terms without reference to God, but authentic love originates in God, and is always oriented to Him
4. We think love condones every choice of others, but authentic love never leads to or condones sin, but rather sacrifices to see people restored to God and righteousness.
5. Authentic love is received from God and given to others. It only reaches its desired goal when it is given to others.
6. Authentic love is based on the nature of the Trinity, revealed in Christ's death, completed when Christian's love one another, and gives confidence as we face the day of judgment.

### B. The Table of Authentic Love (1 John 4:10-11)

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 John 4:10–11

1. At the Table we see the Authentic love of God
2. At the Table we are called to love one another

## The Path of Authentic Love

1 John 4:7-21

July 26, 2015

Communion

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

Teaching keywords: love, God's character, Trinity, fellowship, confidence

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. <sup>13</sup> May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. 1 Thessalonians 3:12–13

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

<sup>13</sup> We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.

<sup>16</sup> And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

<sup>17</sup> In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

<sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup> If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. <sup>21</sup> And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother. 1 John 4:7–21