

So That You May Know

An Expositional Study of the Epistle of **1 John 4:11**

Chapter 19- God's Love Brings Forth Our Love

188- God's Love Brings Forth Our Love- Part 3

WAOY Thursday 05/15/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about how "God's Love Brings Forth Our Love". So, let's open our Bibles and read **1John 4:11** again together:

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Now as we read this verse- most people would nod their head in agreement with what John is teaching here. But then we run in to the reality of actually loving one another and that's when all the trouble starts. Perhaps some of you are like me and you have found that all Christians are not that easy to love. We extend ourselves to others and they slap us away; or we endeavor to be nice- and we are rebuffed. So we say to ourselves, "*Well, I tried.*" And the net result of this is that we feel entitled then to stop trying and to be disobedient to what John commands us here.

Brothers and sisters, the reality of what John is saying in this verse has got nothing to do with how someone *responds* to our efforts to love them. John didn't say that God's Love will always result in a mutually loving environment. He simply said that we are to love. Therefore, how others may or may not respond to our efforts to love them has got nothing to do with the fact that we are told to love one another.

"*Well, what do you expect me to do, Brother Blair, love someone who doesn't love me back?*" Yes, that is exactly what John is saying here. John says that we are to love one another- *not* based on how someone responds to my effort to love them- but we are to love one another based on the Love that God has for us.

And to love like this does two things. First it humbles us and then it causes us to gaze upon the magnificence of God's Love manifested in Jesus Christ. So, let's go over each of these things together.

Firstly- the humble thing. Dear friends, we have got to understand that God is not like us. God is higher than we are- His ways are higher than our ways and God doesn't think- nor does He act like us. And so for us to serve Jesus Christ is for us to begin to place a high value on those things that God values; to highly esteem those things that are important to God- rather than to lift up those things that are important to us.

And one of the most valuable things to God- is humility. So being humble is one of the most important characteristics that anyone could ever have. Humility is more important to God than riches, long life, or even good health. To be humble is to be more closely like God than almost anything else- which is why it is one of the hardest things to do.

And therefore- I would suggest that *anything* that helps brings humility into our lives is good. And anything that keeps humility away is evil. Now be careful when you agree to what I just said because I am going to give you some very practical examples of what kind of things bring humility into our lives.

For example- one of the surest ways to arrive at humility is for us to be "humiliated". To be humiliated is the act of receiving humility. But even though many of us have prayed to be humble- very few of us would ever volunteer to be humiliated- especially to be *publicly* humiliated. And yet being publicly humiliated is almost guaranteed to bring humility into your life.

But if we truly value humility- if we really highly esteemed humility and if we really believed that being humble is good- then we would never resist the act of being made humble. We wouldn't get angry or insulted when we were publicly humiliated.

So why *do* we get angry when we are humiliated? *Why* are we so insulted when somebody humiliates us? If humiliation is the pathway to genuine humility- why does being humiliated bother us so much? One word, pride.

You see, dear friends, it is precisely because we are *not* humble that being humiliated insults us so much. Which is why they call this having a "wounded pride". And we don't have to be taught to be prideful- it is engrained into our DNA as fallen people. Manifesting

human pride and arrogance and self-righteousness is what it means to be fallen and sinful and depraved. And in order for anyone to be saved- they must first be brought to a place where they know they are not righteous or good people and where they understand that they are sinful and deserving of the Wrath of God. And the one thing that stops people from coming to that conclusion naturally- is their human pride.

And so the Grace of God must break the staff of our pride BEFORE anyone can be saved. And that is what the “Offense of the Cross” is all about.

You see, if all the Gospel is- is the silly little slogan, “God loves you and has a Plan for your life”. That would never offend anybody. Missionaries and Preachers and Evangelists would never be murdered and martyred for saying something like that. No, the offense of The Cross is that human beings are not good people. There is no good in any of us. There is no nobility; no righteousness; *nothing* that would make any of us attractive to God.

And every act of our will as lost people is in rebellion to God. Every choice we make as unsaved people is to glorify sin and self. We do not normally seek after God or a Savior as lost people. The Bible says we are all evil- all the time. And that is insulting. That is offensive. That truth humiliates us.

And so a person like that would never suddenly repent and trust in Jesus unless God sovereignly moved upon him to bring conviction of sin into his life. A person who is trying hard to be a nice person in his own strength would categorically reject the notion that he is all evil- all the time. And the reason he would reject it is because he thinks he is a real good person.

So the Bible clearly and repeatedly informs us that we are not good at all. And that is just insulting which is why so many leaders don’t teach about Human Depravity- it is a humiliating Truth.

But the Bible says that God resists the proud and only gives Grace to the humble. So until God sovereignly breaks the staff of our pride and reveals just how wicked we really are and until God sovereignly decimates every vestige of human self-righteousness through the clear and proper preaching of the Biblical Gospel- nobody would ever be convicted of sin; nobody would ever repent and nobody would ever be saved.

So part of the function of Grace is to break the human arrogance

that says that all we have to do to get right with God is to do something that will make God like us and to humiliate the individual to the degree that we know that he is lost; that he is underneath the Wrath of God; and that there isn't anything he can do about it. And in that broken and humble state- the Grace of God comes to do for him what he cannot do for himself.

And that is *why* Humility is one of the greatest virtues that anybody can ever have and why pride is one of the greatest evils that anybody can ever have. As I told you a while ago that humility is more important than wealth, long life and good health. And that means that human pride and arrogance and self- righteousness is worse than cancer, poverty, and death.

And so any teaching that helps to break the staff of human pride is of God and any teaching that builds up the self of man is *not* of God. And only the Biblical Gospel breaks the staff of human pride. All other religions and human philosophies build up human arrogance and self-righteousness by teaching that sinful people can be rewarded with Heaven based on something that they do- like partake of Communion or attend the Mass or go through the Rite of Penance or speak in tongues or be baptized or make a decision for Christ.

Now what we have to understand, dear friends, is that it is in us to naturally be prideful. In other words- part of what it means to be fallen is that we are prideful by nature. But humility is something that has to be given to us. So pride is the natural response to being lost while humility is a gift from God.

Now we all know people who are soft- spoken. And many times- we equate being soft- spoken with being humble. But true humility would always and in all cases lead that person to realize he is lost and deserving of hell and true humility would in all cases lead that person to repent and trust in Jesus. And so if somebody seems to be humble and yet is still lost- then he is not really humble at all- he is merely soft-spoken.

We must understand that pride lurks in the heart of every human. We are born with it- because it is the product of the Fall. Pride is wicked and evil and cannot be converted- it has to be destroyed. Pride cannot be converted; it cannot even be sanctified. Pride is never spiritual- it is always flesh. And the only thing that flesh can bring forth- is more flesh.

And because that is true- nobody has to be taught to be prideful. Nobody has to learn to be prideful. We are prideful by nature. We normally and naturally gravitate toward pride- *automatically*- by default- *especially* under times of pressure and stress.

Pride was birthed in our natures when Adam rebelled against God in the Garden. And in order to see the great horror of pride- you have to comprehend the magnitude of Adam's sin. You see, Eve was deceived by the serpent- but Adam was not. Eve was tricked; she was fooled; she was beguiled by the subtlety of the serpent. But Adam was *not* tricked; he was not deceived or fooled. Adam sinned because he *wanted* to; because he planned to sin; and because he despised God. Adam walked into sin with both eyes wide open. Adam designed his sin- he premeditated it. Adam, wanted to rebel against God because in his heart of hearts Adam did not want freedom- oh no, Adam already had freedom- no, Adam wanted out of the Garden and Adam wanted to be God. So it was his pride that doomed him.

And that is why the Bible teaches that it is the sin of Adam- *not* Eve- that destroyed the human race. Read with me **1Corinthians 15:22**:

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

The sin of Adam brought death to all Mankind. It brought immediate *spiritual* death, but it also brought about physical death as well. And that is why every human on earth- whether they are saved or not- dies today- because of that one sin. God created Man to live forever and if Adam, had not sinned- Adam would still be alive today. But because he did sin- we are all born spiritually dead; utterly and completely separated from God with the very same rebellious and prideful nature of Adam inside of us and we all will one day *physically* die.

But not only did Adam's sin negatively affect Mankind; it brought about enmity and violence between animals. It damaged the relationship between men and women. It created pain and suffering in childbirth, and it brought about the decaying of the earth.

So, the Fall and Original Sin is a real big deal and we all need to read and study and be taught about just how radical and how negative the Fall was on us all so that we may have a biblical view of life and the world.

So by nature, we are fallen, depraved, spiritually dead, rebellious, arrogant and prideful creatures- who are living and walking in hostile rebellion to God and the things of God.

So if we are to escape being dominated by our sinful flesh- we must welcome those things into our lives that humble us and which decrease the flesh and which build up the spirit. Now I'm not talking about working our way to Heaven and neither am I talking about legalism. I am talking about being sanctified. I am talking about so valuing humility; I am talking about so highly esteeming humility that we welcome into our lives *anything* that builds humility and that tears down pride- regardless of what it may do to our bodies or our plans or our dreams or anything else.

So John teaches us here that as we examine God's undeserved, unearned, and unmerited Love toward us that that is the humiliating and motivating factor as to why we ought- why we have the duty and the obligation and the responsibility- to love one another.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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