

# 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

#### 189- God's Love Brings Forth Our Love- Part 4

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WAOY Friday-Monday 05/16-19/08

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 we have gone over this verse in great detail- but there remains one more aspect to what John is teaching here that I need to talk with you about- so please bear with me.

We need to keep in mind as we ponder God's great love toward us and our love toward each other- that this is what makes the Christian Church so unique. You see, we are not supposed to love each other simply because it is nice or sweet- but we are to love each other because when we love each other- that act causes the people of the world to accurately see the Head of the Church- Jesus Christ.

We have to remember, dear friends, that we are not supposed to do what we are supposed to do simply because it is right. We are to do what we are to do because in doing that- we bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ. And conversely- when we do *not* do what the Bible clearly commands of us- we are bringing dishonor and we are shaming Jesus Christ. That is why all of this is so important.

For example, we have today a whole cadre of books teaching us the latest and greatest techniques on how to win souls and grow the Church. And for the most part- most of all that these Church growth gurus write has got nothing to do with actually seeing souls birthed in the Kingdom. How can I say that? Because most of them use nothing but pragmatic methods that come from the lost, pagan world. Now to be sure- when you employ Madison Avenue Marketing techniques- you

will draw a crowd and you will absolutely put more people on your pews- but we have to remember, dear friends, that getting more people to come and actually seeing souls saved is not the same thing.

Now the reason that I am making this distinction is to make this point. By us being so willing to apply what these modern writers teach- you would think that we don't already have a tried and proven method already at our disposal to seeing souls won to Jesus Christ. By the excitement that these new methods have generated in the modern Church- you would think that we have all been standing around for 2,000 years waiting for someone to give us what we needed for the Church to be relevant to lost people.

You see, I don't believe what we are being fed today. I don't buy into the notion that things are so radically different today than before and so we need to abandon the way we have been doing Church for 2,000 years in order to reach this generation. I don't buy that for one second- and you shouldn't buy into that notion either.

People are not any different today than they were in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. So I don't believe that Generation Xer's have different souls than I did back in 1971 when God saved my wretched soul or in the early fourth century when a womanizing drunk named Augustine was saved.

For people to suggest that we need to radically rework the Gospel and throw out 2,000 years of Church history in order to draw a crowd into the modern Church- to me is the height of arrogance and pride. God's Plan to win souls is the same today as it was when Paul wrote **2Timothy 4:2-5** and said:

**2** preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

**3** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,

**4** and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

**5** But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

*That* is God's Plan for evangelism and it works just fine in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century- thank you very much.

We have to get out of our heads that it is the straight and narrow path or the life of self- denial or the persecutions or the trials that Christianity promises that is keeping people away from the Church. That is simply not true. When the Church was first born- they preached the Gospel without fear or fail under penalty of death and most people who joined the Church back then were martyred or put in prison. All of them were unbelievably persecuted- and yet look at what Dr. Luke said was the result of all of that harshness by reading **The Acts 5:14**:

**And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to *their number*,**

But we *do* have a problem today that *is* keeping people away from the Church. But it isn't the Bible- and it isn't the straight and narrow path- and it isn't the life of self- denial; or the heaviness of the Cross because Jesus said that all who were His disciples would live that way and carry that burden with joy.

No, what is keeping people away from the Church is not the fact that believers are told to crucify their flesh or mortify the deeds of their bodies or to separate from ungodliness or to abstain from the very appearance of evil. And it isn't because the Church expects out of people the very same thing that Jesus expects out of them and it isn't because the Church teaches that being saved is the same thing as being a bond slave to Jesus who has lost all rights over his own body and who now lives his life for no other purpose than to please the Master. None of that is what is keeping people away from the Church. No, those things are all part and parcel to what it actually means to be a Christian.

No, what has blackened the testimony of the Church is people *inside* the Church who lay claim to being saved and yet who do not serve Jesus Christ and who do not obey the Bible. That is the *real* problem. And please permit me to give you some very concrete examples.

When we say that we are saved and yet we do not obey the Bible- we are testifying loud and clear that we don't *value* the Bible. Now think what that means. Because if we who are saved don't value the Bible enough to actually obey it- then why in the world are we asking the lost people to value it?

For example- John says here that because God's great love towards us was manifested in and by and through the death burial and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ that we now "ought"- in other words, we now have the duty; the responsibility; and the obligation to love one another.

So when we don't do that; when we give all kinds of reasons why we don't do it- but nevertheless- we don't do it- we are testifying that we don't think it is important to obey what the Bible teaches. And that will keep souls away from Church. Let me show you how. Please read with me what the Lord Jesus said about this in **John 13:35**:

**By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**

Look at what Jesus said and did *not* say here. Jesus did *not* say here that all men will know that we are disciples of Jesus Christ by the beauty of our sanctuaries or the size of our choirs or the magnificence of our praise band. Jesus didn't say that the way that we prophesy will show the world that we belong to Jesus. No, Jesus didn't say if we just keep the message short and fill it up with clever sound bites and cute, catchy phrases that men will know that we are Christ's. And Jesus did not say if we would just go out in the streets and raise the dead and cast out demons and heal the sick that people would know that Jesus was in us. No it is much simpler and much more profound than that.

Jesus said that by this one single thing will all men know- they will not doubt; they will not wonder; they will not even have to ask- all men will *know* that we belong to Jesus- by the love that we have one toward another.

You see, dear friends, the love that is in the Church of Jesus Christ is unlike any love that can be found anywhere else on earth. I have heard that the reason the young men join gangs is because in the gang- these troubled young men find love. Well, they might find more love in a gang than they do in their broken homes- but if you want *real* love- you need to go to Church. Nowhere on earth can you find love like you can find it in the Church that is following Jesus- nowhere. Not in business; not in any organization or club; not in Government. The lost, pagan unsaved world doesn't have clue about love- they are separated from

love; they have never touched it; they have never experienced- not one time ever.

But in spite of that; In spite of the fact that they are absent love- the people in the lost unsaved world will know love when they see it. When true genuine godly love is manifested before them- the hardest heart will immediately know it and acknowledge it.

And as soon as they see real godly love manifested- they will know two things:

1. That this love is real and it is supernatural and it is from God
2. That they don't have it

Let me read you a verse from Luke diary of the Church in **The Acts 8:1:**

**Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.**

Now they had just stoned Stephen to death. They took this man and they formed a circle around him and they threw large, heavy rocks at him- hitting his face and his shoulders and his arms and chest until they killed him. Stoning took anywhere from 10 minutes to two hours depending on how well they could throw rocks. But it was *always* brutal and it *always* ended in death. They didn't stop throwing rocks until the guy stopped breathing.

So, what was Stephen's crime? Surely this man must have been a homosexual or an adulterer or a drug dealer or someone who was trying to overthrow the Emperor. No, Stephen was a Christian and he told the people the Truth and instead of admitting that they were wrong and repenting- they killed the preacher.

But before they threw the first rock- they had to receive permission from the highest ranking priest who was on the spot. So they found a Pharisee named Saul and they asked him for permission to kill this Christian. And Saul gave them that permission and they laid Stephen's clothes at Saul's feet- signifying that this deed was done on Saul's okay.

Now look at what happened next. It wasn't enough to just kill the man. No, because of what Stephen preached- the Bible says that great

persecution arose against the Church and the believers were all scattered. So naturally, people were living in fear for their lives and to associate with Stephen at that point or to associate with what Stephen had preached was a sure ticket to jail. But look at the very next verse:

### **The Acts 8:2**

***Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him.***

So after Stephen had been stoned to death for preaching the Gospel; after great persecution against the Church was made; and after the believers were all scattered- then devout men publicly demonstrated their love for this man and they buried Stephen- proudly associating themselves not only with the man- but boldly identifying themselves with what Stephen had preached. And the Bible says that they were unashamed to make loud lamination over this man- proving that they genuinely loved him and that they valued him as a brother and showing that hard hearted Pharisee that they did not blame him for what was happening to the Church and the great persecution that they were all suffering under.

Now Saul had never seen anything like this before. He had never in his life seen real genuine godly love manifested before and it wasn't two weeks later that the love manifested through a stoning and a funeral would grip the heart of the greatest enemy that the Church had ever had and make him its greatest proponent and its most articulate spokesman as the Pharisee Saul was gloriously transformed into the Apostle Paul.

And this is why John said that we ought to love one another. May God help us all.

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