

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to 1 John 4

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through 1 John

A very personal and practical letter that the Apostle John has written to us to remind us of the reality of who God is, who Jesus is and the reality of what does it mean to be a Christian.

And the majority of the focus or theme of the letter is one of fellowship.

And John wants us (believer) to ask ourselves –

Is our vertical relationship right?

Do we have genuine fellowship with God?

Do we have that right relationship with God – with Jesus bring the bridge that makes it possible.

Do we love God?

Why is this important?

This is important because if our vertical relationship is not right – then our horizontal relationships will never be right.

We cannot love one another if our vertical relationship is not right.

And by love – I mean a biblical love, a sacrificial love, the love that Paul talks about in

1 Cor 13

An agape love

So what John is going to show us in our text this morning is that –

Loving one another proves that we are believers and know God

Loving one another proves that we see God's love

Loving one another proves that God's Spirit is really inside of us

Do we love God?????

Because the truth as we will see – is that we are never nearer God, than when we love

Let's pray...

[Jhn 17:23, 26 NKJV] 23 "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. ... 26 "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare [it], that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

[1Jo 4:7-16 NKJV] 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

I had you make a note of the word beloved –

Notice -

That the call to love is given to those who are loved.

John doesn't start off by saying – love one another

He says, beloved

In the Greek – what John is saying is –

To you who are loved, let us love

To you who are loved, let us love

Notice that God doesn't just call anyone to love – like He loves

He calls those who are loved and those who have experienced His love – to love others.

And we have the assurance that if we love, we are believers and we know Him

Now – it is important to note that each time the word love is used in this verse – the word agape or a form of the word agape is used.

This is real love church -

This is biblical love

This is divine love

This is a love that is holy and just and perfect and reflects the nature of God and the character of God.

Human love is different from divine love.

Human love is all about emotions

Human love is based on what we give and what we take.

God's love is not based on our ability or inability to respond to His love.

8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

What does – does not love mean?

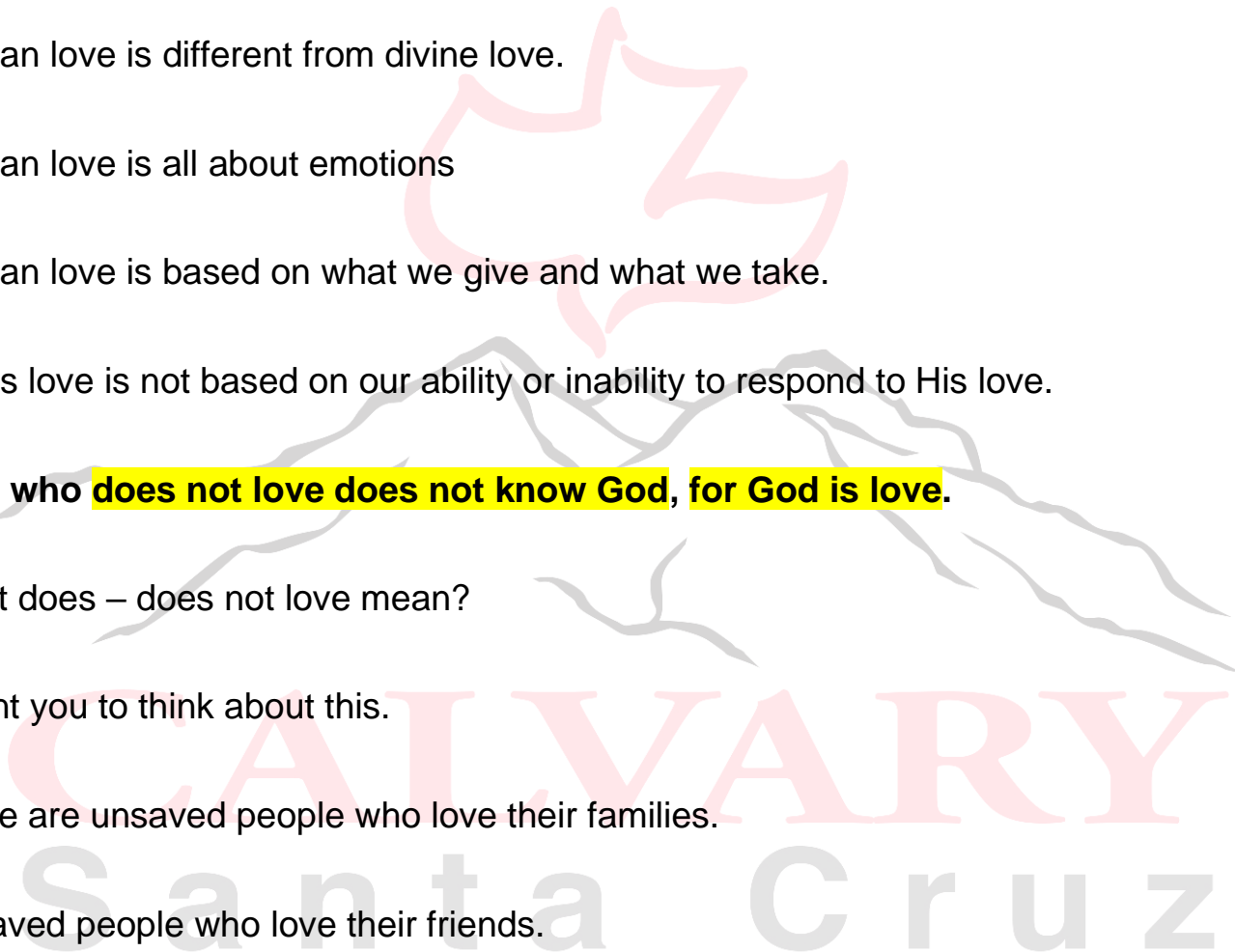
I want you to think about this.

There are unsaved people who love their families.

Unsaved people who love their friends.

Unsaved people who love their spouse.

Unsaved people may even make the claim that they love God.



Before I became a Christian – if anyone were to ask me, “Do you love God?” – I would have said, “absolutely”

John is not saying that every display of love in the world is proof that they are a Christian.

It is possible for an unbeliever to know love, to show love and to do acts of love -

So - What is lacking???

A personal relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The person who does not have this divine kind of love has never entered into a personal experiential knowledge of God and have never experienced His love.

What he/she knows - is in his/her head but it has never reached into his or her heart.

On the other hand, the one who loves – knows God – has experienced God

Don't lose sight of the context of this letter

John was dealing with the false teachings of the Gnostics

And so, John has given us these tests –

There was a moral test of righteousness

There was a doctrinal test of truth

And you have this test of love

The Gnostics were going around saying, “I love God”

And John is basically saying, “Then why doesn’t your life reflect that?”

That is the moral test

“I love God”

John would say – how is that possible if you don’t embrace the truth

(doctrinal test)

“I love God”

John would say – how is that possible if you treat people so incredibly bad.

(divine love test)

John called them out

Remember what I said in our study last week –

Love is doing the right thing – speaking the truth even if it may offend someone.

I also had you make a note of the last portion of verse 8

for God is love

This is one of the most profound statements in the bible.

And I would also say it is one of the most controversial verses in the bible – and I say this because when unbelievers are challenging us on the character of God – one of the things they will say is –

If God is a God of love – why did He allow this to happen.

John tells us that God is love

What this means is that God is the originator of love and He is the source of love.

Sometimes we might hear someone talk about someone else and they may say – he is a very loving person or she is a very loving individual.

That is not what John is saying here.

To say that someone is loving – it speaks of their personality trait

John is not talking about God's personality trait – he is talking about God's essence.

He is saying God is love

That means that God can't be other than the source of love.

We can love and then that same love turns to hate

In order for us to hate – you know what we have to do, we have to suspend love.

We either love or we hate.

We do one or the other.

God never ever – suspends His love.

Because it is not what He does – it is who He is.

He cannot do other than be who He is.

So His love is constant – even when He is expressing wrath.

He is no less – at that very moment – a God of love.

God is love –

We need to understand something –

When John speaks of God's love, it is always in relationship to the manifestation and revelation of God's Son.

According to John, God expresses His love in giving – He sends His Son,

God expresses His love in dying – He sends His Son to atone for sin.

Everyone has their own definition of what love is –

Ask anyone

What is love?

What does love mean to you?

How has love been demonstrated to you?

And for the person that believes that love is a feeling or that love is the right to express themselves in whatever way they want to – even though they don't have the bible's definition of love, they have a definition of love.

But according to the bible, the new birth, by the Holy Spirit, gives us the power to love in the way that the bible talks about love

And that love that the bible talks about will always reflect the character of Christ.

[Gal 5:22-23 NKJV] 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

According to the bible, our love is reflected on the choices that we make and the actions that we take –

So the decision we make become an expression of what we really truly believe about love.

So – John speaks of the source of love

And now he will speak about the Son of love

9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

If God proclaims His love in verses 7,8

He proves His love in the next few verses.

This is such a beautiful verse –

It is one of those verses that would be good for us to meditate on.

Because in this simple verse – we have the substance of God's love.

John doesn't write that the love of God is some philosophical abstract or a concept.

John writes that the love of God was manifested

That word "manifest" means it was declared, it is obvious, it is clear

God laid it out there for the world to see in unmistakable fashion.

How?

By sending His Son, to give His life on the cross for you and for me – so we can have eternal life through Him

God's love was manifested – clearly seen.

God doesn't simply say He loves us

He doesn't say, "Hello people – I love you, I love you, I love you"

He sends His Son

And in the same way, we as believers don't simply say, "We love the Lord"

We show our love by our actions. Why?

John is going to say – because this is what our Heavenly Father has done for us.

Church,

The greatest proof for God's love and the motive for God's love

God sends His Son

10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins.

Here in verse 10 – John tells us that the definition of love is not found on how much we love God but rather it is seen in His love for us.

God initiates the love.

And then God extends the offer of love.

(who loved who first?)

As I was working on my sermon Friday night –

I was meditating on this verse -

Bridget was downstairs and I sent her a message and asked her –

Bridget, who loved each other first?

Who initiated love first

Me or you

Of course she said that she initiated it – and she told me the reasons why -

And I still believe that I initiated it – however, I am starting to lean that she initiated it.

There is an 80% chance that she initiated it.

However, the bible makes it abundantly clear who initiated the love first – it leaves nothing to the imagination.

The bible proclaims that -

Love begins w/God, not us.

He saw our condition and He decided that He was going to save us.

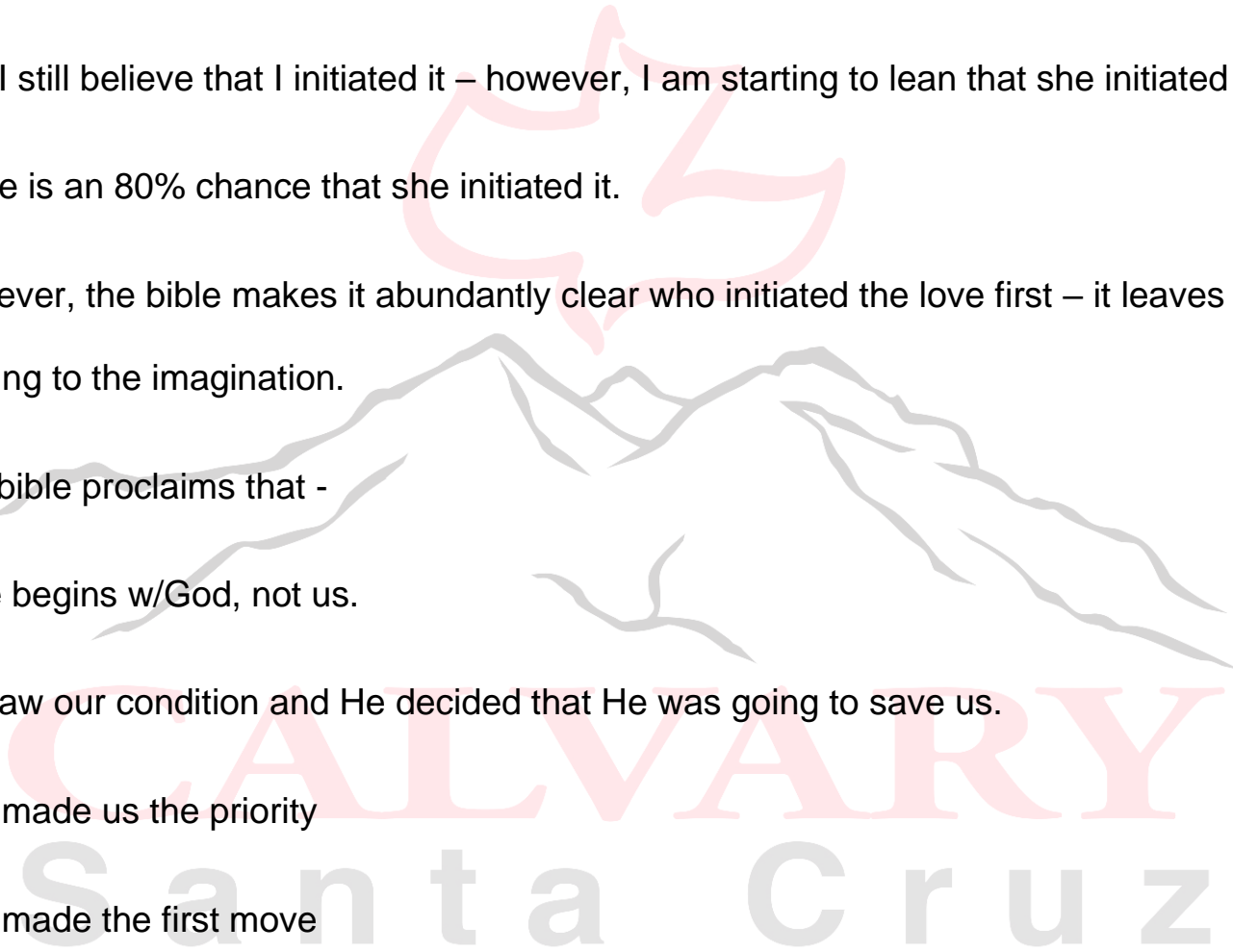
God made us the priority

God made the first move

God initiated the relationship

He didn't love us because He felt sorry for us

He didn't love us because we were lovable or deserving



[Rom 5:8 NKJV] 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

That means that God set His love upon us when many of us were angry

When we were rebellious,

and when we were selfish.

But church –

It is that same love that enables our love for one another

It is that same love that moves us to share the gospel with the nonbeliever

His love enables our love.

If not for God's love, we'd never know love.

Church –

We need to grasp that we are not saved because we love God

We are saved because He first loved us.

How does God's love save us –

He sent His Son

According to the scriptures, salvation is never man's search for God but rather it is

God's love in search of us.

I had you make a note of the last portion of the verse –

Because John, when he speaks of the sacrifice of Jesus, he speaks of one element of that sacrifice that was made for you and me

And that is -

the propitiation for our sins

We are not saved because Jesus lived a holy life.

We are saved by His sacrifice

Jesus' death on the cross appeased the wrath of God that was meant for you and me.

Jesus averted the wrath of God for you and me.

He turned it away

How did He do that?

He consumed it.

And in so doing, He became the propitiation for our sins.

Loved ones –

It is sad to hear believers talk about their fear of God's wrath in their lives.

Because they don't understand the idea of propitiation.

They don't understand the idea that what Jesus did on the cross is finished.

Jesus cried a declaration of victory – “It is finished!” before giving up His spirit on the cross.

God's wrath was consumed by Jesus and now therefore there is no wrath and no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

None whatsoever –

This doesn't mean that there is no discipline.

Hebrews 12:6 says that God disciplines the whom He loves – that is not wrath.

We are disciplined out of love – it is an act of kindness to us.

So we shouldn't allow the enemy to deceive us into thinking that the circumstances or difficulties we are going through are the result of God's wrath upon our lives.

So our confidence is on the finished work of Jesus Christ upon the cross.

But the word propitiation goes beyond simply appeasing God's wrath

It also reconciles the lost sinner to a holy God.

His propitiation makes it possible for us to have fellowship with God.

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

In what way did God love us?

Did we initiate the relationship with Him? No

He initiated the relationship.

Did God say –

I will have a relationship with that person if they will have a relationship with me?

If that person will come up to me and say hi – I will say hi back

I will love them when they deserve to be loved

God didn't say that.

But here is the thing church

God's word invites us to initiate the relationship

God's word invites us to extend our hand to others in the same way that God extended His hand out to us.

God's word invites us to initiate love to one another – biblical love – even when the other person doesn't love us in return.

There are a lot of reasons to love one another

Simple obedience to God's word is reason enough

[Jhn 13:34 NKJV] 34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

But John provides the supreme motive for loving one another

If God so loved us – we also ought to love one another.

We are Children of God

We should reflect our Father's love and character

And that is the point that John is trying to make.

We are to love other people like God loves us.

And John has provided us the example of how to do it in our text this morning -

- **God's love is costly** – He sent His only begotten Son.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

It cost God something in order to love us.

His Son.

[Rom 8:32 NKJV] 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

If the Father already gave His ultimate gift, how can we think that He won't give us the smaller gifts?

Our love needs more than words

So we ask ourselves -

The people we claim to love, can they tell that we love them?

Does our love for others cost us anything?

- **God's love initiates**

“not that we loved God, but that He loved us” (vs. 10a)

(1 Jn 4:19 NKJV) We love Him because He first loved us.

Sometimes we have this idea that we'll be glad to forgive the other person, as long as they take the first step.

To love like God means – we take the first step.

Jesus didn't wait for us to repent and be a “nice guy” before He loved us.

We need to learn to take the first step in repairing a relationship.

It's not always possible, but we don't want to be the one who sit back and waits.

- **God's love covers** (we talked about propitiation – the shedding of blood is what appeased God's wrath)

[1Pe 4:8 NKJV] 8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."

When love abounds in a fellowship of believers –

We understand that everyone of us is imperfect.

We understand that we are still a work in progress.

So we tend to show grace and mercy to one another

But when love is lacking – every word, every gesture, every action will be viewed under the lens of suspicion –

and misunderstandings will abound, bringing conflict to the fellowship.

When Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, and showed such great love and servanthood to them, we might have expected Him to conclude by gesturing to His own feet and asking who among them was going to do to Him what He had just done for them.

Instead, Jesus said: If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet (John 13:14).

The proper way to love God in response to His love for us is to go out and love one another.

Amen!

Let's pray...

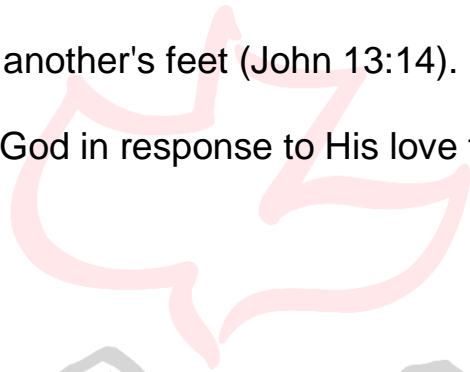
To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.



CALVARY
Santa Cruz

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

The love of God in Jesus Christ is unprecedented.

No other love has ever been more costly to its giver and less deserving in its recipient.

That in itself should move us to love.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'