

GOD IS LOVE

1 John 4:7-21

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INTRODUCTION

Love is the greatest and most essential virtue of Christians that produces other virtues – fruit of the Spirit through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us (**1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 5:8; 1 Cor. 6:19**).

As the church does not and cannot exist without Christ, so is love, for without it, Christians living on earth is impossible (**1 Corinthians 13:1-3**).

In the text above, Apostle John makes it clear that Christians have **Agape**, the love of God, through the gift of the Holy Spirit that makes us partakers of God's divine nature (**2 Peter 1:4**). Consequently, Christians must practice love, for God is love.

Let us now examine our topic in line with the text.

LOVE IS GOD'S DIVINE NATURE (Verses 7 – 13)

The apostle began with a strong admonition for Christians to love one another because whosoever is born of God loves and know God. Anyone who does not love does not know God.

God is love (**verse 8**). God's nature and essence are love. His

wisdom, will and works are love; He is the fountain, author and commander of love...**for love is of God (verse 7)**.

Truly, divine love comes from heaven. Whosoever claims to know God (believes and worships Him) but does not love is a liar for God is love. God's divine love is first seen in creation which He lavished on man (**Genesis 1**) and the climax of His love is the sending of His Son, Christ to die for the salvation of mankind (**John 3:16**),...So that we might live (have eternal life or live forever), **verse 9**.

Not that we love God but He loves us and gives Christ as propitiation for the sin of the world, **verse 10**. ...even when we were yet sinners Christ died for us (**Romans 5:8**). That if God so loves us, we ought to love one another, **verse 11**.

Apostle John here emphasizes the need for all Christians to realize the degree of love God has shown to us (**John 3:16, 1 John 3:1**) and thus urges us to demonstrate true love for one another in the church and beyond. It is in showing love to one another that is evident that

the Holy Spirit indwells us because He (Holy Spirit) is the Spirit of love who has shed His love abundantly in our hearts **(Romans 5:5)**.

Besides, no one has seen God at any time but His Son Christ and He has shown us the true love of God which all believers must emulate and practice.

WITNESS OF TRUE LOVE (Verses 14 - 16)

Here we see the apostle affirming that he and other apostles had seen the true love of God manifested in Christ as the Son of God, **verse 14**. They saw Christ as the Son of God in the transfiguration, performing unusual miracles, dying on the cross and resurrecting for man's salvation.

This gave him the boldness to say whosoever confesses Christ as the Son of God (and then get baptized,)... receives the Holy Spirit **(Acts 8:37,38; 2:38)** and God dwells in him and he dwells in God, and the true love of God is manifested in him, **verse 16**. He is enveloped in God's love, holiness, glory and power.

LOVE REMOVES FEAR (Verses 17 - 21)

In **verse 17**, the apostle asserted that if we are perfected in love, we have boldness on the Day of Judgment. When we truly

practise the love of God, on the day the whole world will be judged we will have holy boldness and happiness to meet the Judge, Christ, our friend and advocate because we keep His commandments **(John 15:13,14; 1 John 2:1; John 14:15)**.

Those who fear are not perfected in love for fear has torment but perfect love removes fear **verse 18**.

The same God of love is also severe and a consuming fire **(Romans 11:22; Hebrews 12:29)** and as such those who are not perfected in love are terribly afraid of that judgment day and they even fear to do good **(1 Peter 3:13)**.

We do not know how to love but God first loves us and teaches us to love Him and one another **verse 19** - *for God so loves the world (John 3:16)*.

This degree of God's incomprehensible love for mankind calls for our maximum love for Him, one another and all people **verse 11** - *beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another*.

However, if we claim to love God but hate our brother whom we see, we are liars, we do not have the true love of God **verse 20**. By this statement, the apostle indicates that it is easier to love who we see as a proof of our love for God whom we have not seen.

In **verse 21**, Apostle John said that the command to love one another was given by Christ. **...this commandment we have from Him...**during His earthly ministry (**John 13:34-35** *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*

God did not send His Son to die for a particular race, so our love for one another must be extended to others outside the church especially preaching the gospel to them (**Romans 13:8**).

CONCLUSION

Love is the sum of God's nature and law. That God is love is indisputable as His divine and unfading love is seen in human daily existence and the gift of His only begotten Son for man's salvation (**Genesis 1; Matthew 5:45; John 3:16**).

Thus, practical genuine love must be seen among brethren in every local congregation of the Lord's church which must be extended to the world, interestingly through the gospel so that they can enjoy the love, for our God is love.