

August 25, 2024  
1 John 4: 7-12

## Opening Prayer

Let's start today with a few continuums, where do you land on these pre message?  
Who is God? Angry Dictator \_\_\_\_\_ Loving Father  
What is God's purpose? Indifferent \_\_\_\_\_ Relational  
Who is Jesus? Historical Figure \_\_\_\_\_ Incarnate Son of God  
What is Jesus purpose? Good Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Atoning Sacrifice  
Who am I to God? Fodder for hell fire \_\_\_\_\_ Beloved creation  
What is my purpose? Eat, Drink, be Merry \_\_\_\_\_ Revealer of God

1 John 4: 7-12 <sup>7</sup> 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.

In this text we see God – Jesus - Mankind

7: John is back to “dear friends” so speaking to the community.  
Love comes from God.

It does not come from US. It is not an innate virtue nor is it learned behavior.  
It is “from God” – the originator and giver of Love

**8: Those who do not love, do not know God at all. God's very nature is love. Love here is not to be understood as one of God's many activities; rather, every activity of His is loving activity – even when it does not feel like Love. (Soverignty)**

**Since this is true of God, our failure to love can only mean that we have no true knowledge of God, we do not have His nature.**

**9: God's activity of Love here is the most important one ever.**

**God, who is love, sent Jesus.**

**This involved action not just theory or talk of such things.**

**Death was our present condition – but because of the loving kindness of God sending Jesus and Jesus obedience to the plan all the way to completion – we can have life thru Jesus.**

**Because God, in His love, sent Jesus so that we have life and not death**

10: Pay attention here, this one is crucial. Creator loved His creation.

We did not love God first. HE loved us first

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this:

**While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

**God’s love for us defines what true love requires –  
the commitment to sacrifice one’s most beloved possession for another’s gain.**

Still continuing in verse 10 It should be enough that God sent His Son (STOP)  
But the additional activity of God’s Love is as “an atoning sacrifice”

Atoning sacrifice – not a new topic for John. March 3 message. Quick Review

1 John 2: 1-2 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. <sup>2</sup>He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Advocate

: one who defends or maintains and promotes a cause or proposal or group

: one who pleads the cause of another before a [tribunal](#) or judicial court

### **Commentary**

Our advocate does not maintain our innocence but confesses our guilt.

Then He enters His plea before the Father on our behalf as the one who has made the “atoning sacrifice for our sins”

And His sacrifice is not only for our sins, “but for the sins of the whole world.”

This statement asserts three things:

Christ sacrifice is sufficient for all - It is necessary for all

Jesus is the only one who can do this.

Atonement - reparation for a wrong or injury:

- satisfaction for the sins of the world;
- redemption from the Devil or from the wrath of God;
- a saving example of true, suffering love;
- the prime illustration of divine mercy; and victory over the forces of evil.

This goes back to the transference of Sin – scape goat

Pastor Michael Jakes says it this way.:

When speaking of atonement, it is important to understand that it is first and foremost, an act of God's infinite love for us.

He knew that there was no other way for man to restore the deep and intimate fellowship that was lost in Eden.

Atonement addresses and answers the ultimate and universal problem of man, which is sin. Man's sin resulted in the need for a Savior.

From the book of Genesis, we read "the first gospel" – a promise looking forward to the One who would come to atone: Jesus (Genesis 3:15).

11: God set the example, we are instructed to follow that example.

12: No one has ever seen God –

**This is commonly considered a reference to the false teachers who may have claimed "visions" of God – visions through which their own knowledge was mediated to them.**

Consider Joseph Smith and the buried tablets that lead to Mormonism.

Remember, we are still very close in the text to "test the spirits"

If someone claims to have knowledge that does not line up with – Word – be aware

If someone tells you that God told them something – be cautious –

it does not mean they are lying, but it does not mean they actually heard from God.

When we put God's stamp on our words, we take away opportunity to weigh that word.

Mark Buchanan in a sermon I was reading, addresses this text wonderfully

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

Then in John's Gospel, right at the beginning of John 1:17-18

John writes this: "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." "No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known."

**This is John's logic. If you add up John 1 and [1 John 4](#), you get this:  
No one has ever seen God.  
It doesn't matter how many ranks of sinners there are,  
how holy a Christ seeker is, or a God seeker.  
Nobody has ever seen God.  
But Jesus came and he made God known, and then he went up to heaven  
to stand at the right hand of God.  
So John in his letter says, "No one has ever seen God;  
but if we love, we make him known."  
We actually complete something in ourselves,  
something that's unfinished,  
something that's broken,  
something that's messed up—  
the deeper work of God, by his Spirit,  
completing his work of forming us in Christ through our loving,  
our opening of ourselves to the lavish love of God.  
We are made complete, and we actually make God known.**

Now that word *make known* is fascinating. The word in Greek is *Exēgesatō*.  
There is a technical word that anybody who's taken any Bible courses knows:  
*Exegesis* or *exegete*.

When you exegete a passage of Scripture:  
You do not impose your own interpretation on it.  
You work with the original language.  
You work with the thought world that it was written in.  
You research the context historically and culturally,  
You dig down in the text to discover the original meaning.  
And when you've done that, you've exegeted the passage of Scripture.

**What John is saying is that Jesus exegetes the original purpose of God.  
Jesus reveals, he unfolds, he unpacks for us.  
He removes all interpretations that we might bring—our worldly  
interpretations,  
imposing the way we see things—and Jesus peels all of that back  
and gives us God in his full nature.  
And then John says that now you get to "exegete" God by loving.**

The heart of God is "You are so welcome to my presence and relationship,"  
and this radical, costly, extravagant welcome of God is extended to you and me.  
We experienced it. Jesus came, exegeting God.

He came to reveal the heart of God, to reveal the radical, costly, extravagant welcome of God.

God's like this, not like this.

And now we get to exegete. We get to live out the welcome of God.

You know that the religious people in Jesus' day absolutely hated Jesus and what He was doing in exegeting God in this way.

**They were trained in the law of Moses.**

John says in John 1 that "the law came through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

What the Pharisees, the teachers of the Law, misunderstood as they taught the Law is they thought the law was a revelation of the nature of God.

They thought that by teaching the Law, practicing the Law, that they were exegeting God,

showing the original nature, true purpose, real character of God.

The Pharisees had taught and practiced that God was a nitpicker,

God was a rule keeper, God was a stickler for the rules.

In their mind that was the heartbeat of God.

But Jesus comes and exegetes God in a whole new way:

God full of grace and truth.

Jesus was exegeting the true nature of our God.

Eugene Peterson captures in *The Message* the stories that Jesus tells about God's heart for lost things. In the beginning of [Luke 15](#) he writes: "A lot of men and woman of doubtful reputation were hanging around Jesus, listening intently.

The Pharisees and religious scholars were not pleased, not at all pleased.

They growled, 'He takes in sinners and eats meals with them treating them like old friends.'" But the heart of our God is this heart of radical, costly, extravagant welcome. You are so loved.

Jesus exegetes/reveals God and then he asks us,

*Would you exegete/reveal God for me?*

*While I've gone to heaven to be at the right hand of the Father,*

*will you somehow communicate to each other and to people out on the streets what God is like, that the very nature of God is*

*"You're so welcome to be in relationship with Me"?*

The Apostle John is saying that once we are immersed and overwhelmed by God's love, our natural response is to share that love with others. In fact,

John says that you will know the difference between a Christian and someone who is not a Christian by looking at how they love others.

When Jesus was asked to boil down the Christian message into one statement, he said, “*Love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength AND love your neighbor as yourself.*”

Bob Goff, author of both *Love Does* and *Everybody Always*. Says  
“Jesus talked to His friends a lot about how we should identify ourselves. He said it wouldn’t be what we said, we believed, or all the good we hoped to do someday.  
Nope, He said we would identify ourselves simply by how we loved people. It’s tempting to think there is more to it, but there’s not.  
Love isn’t something we fall into; love is someone we become.”

This message challenges me to the core and reveals how far I have to go to truly look like Jesus daily. Refiners Fire.

Discussion Questions:

Any surprise or changes where you landed on the continuums post 1 John 4 7-12?  
Who is God  
What is His purpose  
Who is Jesus  
What is His purpose  
Who am I  
What is my purpose

Are there changes I need to make in exegeting God’s nature from the Law to Grace and truth?

How am I doing in exegeting God’s loving nature to those around me?  
Any refining needed?