

# Love of God Transforms 1

(preached 6/19/22)

Please turn to *1 John 4:7*

LOVE OF GOD. We're starting a new sermon series where we'll talk about the Love of God and the other types of love spoken of in the Bible. Not only will we learn the difference, but how they're applied to our Christian walk behind our Good Shepherd Jesus.

Let me start with the following statements:

**The Love of God transforms us from our old selves into our new selves.**

**His love is His primary motivating factor to transform humanity.**

**GOD'S LOVE NEVER AFFIRMS OUR OLD SELVES. NEVER.**

**GOD'S LOVE NEVER AFFIRMS OR ACCEPTS ANY WORD, ACTION, OR LIFESTYLE THE BIBLE CALLS SIN. NEVER.**

*God's love never turns a blind eye/ignores anything the Bible calls sin. Never.*

**God's love acts in partnership with His holiness—they are never opposed or at odds with each other.**

**God never compromises one iota of justice or truth for the sake of love.**

**God never compromises one iota of love for the sake of justice or truth.**

**GOD IS 100% LOVE, TRUTH, AND JUSTICE ALL THE TIME WITH NO CONTRADICTIONS OR COMPROMISE.**

*God's love is completely pure with no bias or blemish.*

*God's love is complete: it never increases or diminishes.*

**God doesn't withdraw or hold back His love for any reason, even when we sin.**

**We are transformed to become more like Jesus when we're receiving and flowing in God's love.**

Said receiving and flow ALWAYS lead to loving our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

**It's impossible to love God but not like our brothers & sisters in Christ.**

**THE CHURCH SHOULD MODEL JESUS AND PRACTICE TRANSFORMATIONAL INCLUSION: WELCOMING ANYONE SEEKING BE SAVED & SANCTIFIED.**

*Sanctification is the lifelong process of a Christian repenting of anything the Lord calls sin and embracing holy living.*

TODAY. Today's sermon focuses on *how God's love transforms us to become more like Jesus as we grow older in all the ways I just mentioned.*

LOVE INTERPRETATIONS. The word "love" gets tossed around a lot and everyone saying or hearing it seems to have their own interpretation of what it means and how its expressed.

*We're going to focus on the Church—believers—and our relationship with God and each other in today's sermon.*

FALSE GOSPEL RESULTS. In the last sermon series we saw the results of the "everything is awesome!" gospel being preached here in the 2020's producing what I believe to be false converts who end up "falling away" at relatively small provocations.

***One of the fruits of said "gospel" is the false belief that God accepts and affirms our old selves, its passions, and persuasions.***

LADIES MAN HEARS GOSPEL. Once upon a time, for example, if a "ladies man" heard the Gospel one of two things would happen: 1) he was convicted of his fornication and lack of

commitment (another form of love) and repented, not only being Saved but turning from his “playing the field” lifestyle and getting married. Or 2) he rejected the Gospel outright and therefore Salvation, preferring to remain in his current lifestyle. He would stay away from church and Christians for fear of “being judged” for the way he was living.

**CONFESSIONS—AUGUSTINE.** In his autobiography “Confessions” St. Augustine speaks of his life before getting Saved...he was a ladies man. When the Holy Spirit began to draw him toward the priesthood, Augustine actually plead with God to give him more time because he enjoyed his lifestyle. What’s more is that he was living with a woman at the time God called him to repentance and salvation. Augustine admits the relationship was entirely based on lust and was one he enjoyed immensely. What to do? He “sent her away” and confessed it caused him great pain to do so—but he chose the call to be Saved and to the Catholic Priesthood.

**HE WAS ALL IN.** While I don’t agree with all of Augustine’s doctrine, his conversion was radical and his dedication was 100% all in. He literally gave up just about everything to follow Christ. He didn’t try and have “the best of both worlds.” He never believed that God would accept or affirm his previous passions that led to his lifestyle. He realized if he obeyed God’s call, he would need to crucify his flesh and its desires.

**INSPIRATION?** Let’s ask the big question: ***how does one go from a lifestyle of fornication to that of celibate priest for the majority of his adulthood?*** What inspired Augustine to this extreme lifestyle change?

**JESUS’ DISCIPLES TOO.** The same can be asked of Jesus’ disciples too...all had lives of their own before following the Lord and some were even married with kids. They too gave up everything to walk behind the Good Shepherd. What inspired them to undergo such a major transformation?

**It was God’s Love.**

**GOD OFFERS MORE.** It was only when the disciples of Christ and people like Augustine realized that God’s Love was offering a far greater destiny and inheritance than anything their flesh or this world had to offer, that they gave up this world so they could have the Kingdom.

**Mark 8:34-36 (ESV)**

<sup>34</sup> And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

<sup>35</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.

<sup>36</sup> For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

FALSE GOSPEL FORSAKES THAT. Nowadays, however, according to the modern day Gospel you can have it all—you can have both the world and God's Kingdom. You can follow the passions of your flesh and Jesus at the same time and are still in good standing with Father, including all the blessings and inheritances that come with being one of His kids.

**THE HERESY OF THIS TEACHING IS THAT GOD BOTH ACCEPTS AND AFFIRMS THAT WHICH HE CALLS SIN.**

ACCEPTANCE is when we've declared "it is what it is." We don't like or agree with it, but accept its reality, presence, and affect and feel there's nothing we can do to change it.

Ex: we may accept natural disasters like tornadoes even though we don't like them. We accept the current record high inflation even though we detest it. We accept the disease or injury we live with and how it affects us, even though we don't like it and wish it would change.

AFFIRMATION is when we agree and applaud something, even if we don't do it ourselves.

Ex: some claim while they wouldn't have an abortion, they agree with others who make the choice to have one. If someone is heterosexual but openly agrees and affirms others who live the LGBTQ lifestyle or wants to be gender fluid.

***Does God love us just as we are?*** Even before we were Saved when we were sinners? Enemies of God? **Let's navigate carefully here!**

**Romans 5:6-8 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

<sup>7</sup> For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—

<sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- Father God gave us Jesus before we were born.
- Father God gave us Christ before we ever knew He existed.
- Father God gave us His Son before we ever sinned.

OPPORTUNITY ALWAYS THERE. The opportunity to repent and receive Christ was always there for us, whether we were acting like saints or wickedly. Look at verse 8: that means God loved us before and during all these things...not just after we were Saved.

BOAZ, who is a precursor to Jesus, loved Ruth, who is a precursor to the Church, before Ruth ever knew who he was. Before she had done anything to please him or said nice things.

***Nothing separates us from the love of Father:***

### **Romans 8:35-39 (ESV)**

<sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

<sup>36</sup> As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

<sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

<sup>38</sup> For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,

<sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- God doesn't stop loving a person who rejects the Gospel.
- He doesn't cease loving the false convert who treats him like a genie in a bottle.
- He doesn't withdraw from the Christian who backslides.

### **That being said...**

- Anyone rejecting the Gospel to the last moment will not be forgiven and Saved, and will not join Jesus in the Kingdom.
- God wants the false convert must stop treating Him like a servant and to serve Him instead.
- The Lord desires the backsliding Christian to repent and return to Him like the Prodigal Son returned to his dad.

**WHILE FEAR OF GOD DRIVES AN UNBELIEVER TO HIS KNEES, IT'S THE LOVE OF GOD THAT SETS HIM ON HIS FEET.**

**The false convert's love of self inspires her to treat God like a waiter, whereas love of God will cause her to bow down to worship Him as a King.**

***God's love is what draws back the backsliding Christian, realizing that while their actions have grieved Him, He welcomes them back with open arms.***

### **1 John 4:7-12 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

<sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

<sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

<sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the

propitiation for our sins.

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

<sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

AGAPE is the love of God and comes only from him and it's what we've been talking about this entire time. Human beings cannot produce this, we can only be a conductor of it and this is the love John is referring to in these verses.

**Verse 7:** the only way to be a conductor of God's love is to be born-again at which time we received the beautiful presence of God the Holy Spirit within us.

NOT HUMAN VERSION. In other words, we don't love each other with our love, the human version. We allow God's Spirit to flow through our hearts to love each other therefore lifting the heavy burden from us and giving it to Jesus where it belongs. ***Let Him love others through us instead of us trying to drum up our own.***

**Verse 8:** a hard hearted person is not allowing Jesus to love through them. The rock walls they've put up won't allow the flow of God's love to be received by another.

Also: God wants us to love Him with the same love He gives us! We cannot when we're hard hearted.

**Verse 9:** the example and manifestation of God's love was giving us Jesus. Jesus loved us so much that He chose to die in our place. He took our condemnation and gave us His commendation. He took our curse and gave us His blessing. He took our sin and gave us His righteousness. He took our destiny of Hell and gave us the Kingdom.

***Our own manifestation toward others will look similar: we will sacrifice personal blessing to bless others.***

**Verse 10** humbles us further: we didn't love God first. We didn't serve Him first nor dedicate ourselves to Him. He gave us Jesus before any of that, while we were still sinners and enemies of His!

**Verse 11:** we place the needs of our brothers and sisters before our own.

**Verse 12:** God is Spirit and when His Spirit lives in us, we'll have a tough time not expressing the same to others! God's love has been completed (perfected) within us in our spirit, who looks just like Jesus!

## **1 John 4:13-21 (ESV)**

- <sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.
- <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.
- <sup>15</sup> Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.
- <sup>16</sup> So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.
- <sup>17</sup> By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.
- <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.
- <sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us.
- <sup>20</sup> If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.
- <sup>21</sup> And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

**Verse 13:** it's God's Spirit Who enables us to love like He does.

**Verses 14-15:** God lives in us and we in Him! Jesus is the Key to this living!

**Verse 16:** look at the first part and repeat it to yourself—***our hearts must believe the love God has for us.*** I still see Christians struggle with "self-worth" and what not, telling me many still believe the Lord's love is like that of humans.

HUMAN LOVE is conditional and we take it away, withhold, and pause it when others sin against us. Period. Our love for others is based upon what they do and say, both good and bad.

TIMELESS. God's love goes beyond "unconditional." It's timeless. Not just present and future—but past. He knew of us, knew us, and loved us before we were even born. No human can do that. Only God can. Your mom getting pregnant with you didn't surprise Him. He knew your birthday since the foundation of the world. How's that possible? He's God.

**HE LOVED YOU THEN. BEFORE YOU DID ANYTHING GOOD OR BAD. BEFORE YOU HAD A NAME OR LOCATION.**

- He loved you the day you repented and got Saved.
- He loved you the day you backslid and walked away from Him.
- He loved you the day you signed the divorce papers.
- He loved you the day you came back to Him in tears.
- Our hearts must believe or we'll continue to "struggle with self-worth."
- We'll remain in doubts about our eternal security and be tempted toward dead works to get back into His good graces.

WE MUST BELIEVE. Our heart must believe in the love God has for us. We cannot abide in His love if our hearts don't believe in it the way it is and the way God expresses it.

**Verse 17:** does the day of judgment cause fear in you? Are you concerned as to whether you'll be "in" or not? If you're still afraid of that day and wondering if you'll measure up, then you don't believe that Jesus is the sub for your sins and therefore you don't really know what God's love is.

JESUS DIED FOR US IS LOVE. John repeats himself: that love is Jesus dying for our sins, being our sub. In other words, your Salvation depends on Jesus' work on the Cross. Once you accepted the deal, He gave you His perfect righteousness and took your imperfect sinfulness.

DOORS PAINTED. When you and I eventually stand before God at Judgment, He'll look and see our doors painted with the Blood of the Lamb. Death and Hell will pass over us and we'll enter into eternal life. We can enter Judgment Day with confidence because of Christ, and not the good lives we've lived.

**"As He is so are we in this world"** is a crazy statement. As Jesus is righteous, He made us that way. As Jesus is God's Son, He made us sons and daughters of God too. As Jesus will inherit the Kingdom, we will now be His joint-heirs. A Father doesn't isn't that crazy generous to someone He doesn't love.

***His love isn't the same as ours—it's on a level vastly higher and more pure than we will ever achieve.***

**Verse 18:** The punishment John is referring to is wrath for the sake of justice. Balancing the scales. Wrath is only satisfied by one payment: blood. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

FULL PAYMENT MADE. Thank God Jesus shed His blood...now that is love! God has already accepted full payment for every sin you ever did or will do. Paid in full. You have no debt with Father. He's not going to punish you because you've been justified. Root word for justified is justice. Justice has been satisfied on your behalf by Jesus' death on the Cross.

DISCIPLINE. God's discipline toward His kids are for our sanctification and not to satisfy justice and there's a major difference. The latter is to satisfy the Law, the former is done from love to improve their Christ like character—to promote us from one level of glory to a higher level.

**Verses 20-21** are a stumbling block to hard hearted Christians who attempt to parse loving God vs. people. I've had plenty tell me they love the Lord but can't stand His people...and these 2 verses reveal that to be a big fat lie.



**LYING TO SELF.** We're lying to ourselves to claim we love Jesus but don't really like His people. That attitude shows we're trying to use our own resources vs. those of God to love others.

**RIVER OF WATER.** Think of the Lord's Love like a massive flowing river of living water. Now imagine us being like a dam for it—open or closed. A closed dam blocks the river, but an open one allows it to surge forth.

**MIRACLES HAPPEN.** Christ would do this for our brothers and sisters, all of them, and when we're willing then miracles happen!