Good Morning!

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 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. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

In this passage from 1 John 4, we have some of the most cherished and misunderstood concepts in the Word of God. Many of you older people recognize the first two verses as a song or little ditty that someone put together to help learn those verses. Actually, the author’s thought was to put those verses into our minds and therefore to live by them.

Here John gives us a reason and a standard to mark the believer, and it is love. There are four words used for love in Greek. The word used here is that word meaning a self-sacrificing love. Aristotle explained it as a love that does what is right for someone else even when you get no benefit from it. Even when the doing of that good may cause you harm. You do it because it is best for the other person. This is the type of love is expressed throughout John’s first letter. Christ’ gift of Himself to us is that standard. His dying on the cross was the simplest and greatest expression of that type of love.

The standard in this passage is extended to those “born of God.” That is everyone we call a believer. To be a believer, or one born of God, is to love. To not love is to demonstrate that you are not born of God. It is a simple equation. John believes that everyone he is talking to is a believer. That can be found in his address of these people as “Beloved.” We would expect him to use the more common term “Brethren,” but he uses a term that is built off the same Greek term for love, Be*loved*. John wants those in the family and therefore “Beloved,” to follow a logical path. We need to love because that is what believers do. It is the life that we received from Christ. We did not initiate this love nor are we in any way responsible for that love.

God the Father sent his only Son. He sent Him to die to satisfy the godly wrath of Heaven. That wrath was directed at us – rightfully. His death satisfied that wrath and brought life for us. If we are born of God, then as His children we will reflect the same love our Father displayed. We will follow our Lord Jesus Christ in that love. Why? Because God loved us like that, so we also need to love one another.

It is a simple equation. It is not an easy equation.

In Jesus Christ, who is our Beloved…

Pastor EA