

“YOU GOTTA LOVE EACH OTHER!!”

July 19, 2020

I John 2:3-11

INTRODUCTION — A husband asked his wife, “Were you ever in love before me?” His wife looked into the sky thoughtfully, and answered, “No, honey—I once respected a man for his great intelligence. I admired another for his remarkable courage. I was captivated by yet another for his good looks and charm. But with you, well, how else could you explain it, except for love?!?” 1

Well, Jesus told us to “*love our neighbor.*” but— does it really matter if we “love” other people?? Yes— it makes all the difference!!

I. HOW DO WE KNOW IF WE ARE CHRISTIANS??? 2:3-8

A. How can we tell?? This— do we obey Christ?? 2:3

“Has Christ changed your life? Has your way of looking at other people and treating other people changed at all?? Does Jesus make a difference in you!?!?”

1. What was Jesus Christ’s command?? John 15:12-

“My command is this: love each other as I have loved you.”

B. What if we don’t do it?? I John 2:3-4

If we don't obey his commands, we are liars when we say we “know him” (= “are saved”, are Christians, we are believers). so----->>

II. TAKE— THE TEST OF LOVE --- 2:9-11

The opposite of “love” is hate, isn’t it???

A. What is it to “hate”?? 2:9 At least three kinds:

1st – Hate that is active — The Nazis in Germany in the 1930's and '40's

were full of active hate to all Jewish people and all non-Germans.

2nd —Hate that is passive — This is the kind of hate that people express when they turn their backs on those they hate — when they walk away on the sidewalk; when they turn away at the lunch counters. it can be the hate of *treating you like you are dead!!!*

3rd — Hate that is apathy— coldness, unconcern. “I don’t want to get involved.”

B. In stark contrast: love is — caring for others, especially for other Christians !!

1. Love is: befriending them. For Example: It helps to recognize that here, standing or seated near you is someone you will spend eternity with— so be their friend now— and get a start on ever-after!!

Another example was Glenn at Western Illinois University. Glenn had so many strikes against him in life— beaten, hated by his father, because of his handicaps. I, and my roommates, became his friends.

2. Love is: praying for them. For example: Tell people you will pray for them. Even pause in a quiet place, and pray right then!! It is a great act of love to take a person’s name in prayer before the throne of grace!

C. Love is— sensitivity to other Christians

1. It is: listening to other Christians, becoming aware of their needs and fears!

2. Love is: appreciating our differences. I have had deep spiritual experiences worshiping with our Episcopal brothers and sisters in Episcopal churches. Their worship services are quite a bit different — very formal, “high” church — *but it is a chance to praise God!*

3. Love is: reaching into the lives of other Christians. In Chicago,

many years ago, I went with my friend Bob Kasovic to a Lutheran and Roman Catholic charismatic prayer service in a Lutheran church school gymnasium!!

4. And that means, especially these days, our black, or African—American sisters and brothers!! Not just— not racist. If we truly love our sisters and brothers in Christ, we need to be anti—racist!!

D. How can we become this way??? (John 15:9b).

1. Fall in love with Jesus!! “*Remain in my love,*” Jesus said, “*love each other as I have loved you!!*” (john 15:12) In order to really love one another, we simply need to *remember how much Jesus loves us!!!* After all, He died on the cross *for our sins!!* Who could love us more??!? So— love the one who saved you and is saving you!!! *Worship him with your whole heart!!!*

2. Then: act like you love your brother or sister in Christ! I have spoken to you before about C. S. Lewis, the great Christian thinker and writer from England. He addressed the idea that “I can’t love my neighbor—I don’t even like my neighbor!”

Lewis said: “Do not waste time bothering whether you ‘love’ your neighbor; *act as if you did.* As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him. If you injure someone you dislike, you will find yourself disliking him more. Whenever we do good to another person (self), just because it is a person (self), made (like us) by God, and desiring its own happiness as we desire ours, we shall have learned to love [that person] a little more or, at least, to dislike [him/her] less.” 2 *Loving others is vital!*

Conclusion — Down in the deepest, darkest pits of ell, Satan was having a senior

staff meeting with his chief demons. Present were: Beelzebub, Wormwood, and Snufflegate. Satan said: “*We need a new plan, a new strategy of attack to deceive and confuse the human race, and especially those infernal Christians!!—
What to do?”*”

Snufflegate was the first to speak. “Let’s tell them that: ‘There is no God!’ ” Satan nodded his head in approval, and stroked his chin. “*Good, good— we can lead hundreds astray with that tact. Any other ideas??*”

Beelzebub scrunched up his face, and smiled (devilishly), and said: “Let’s tell them that — ‘There is no hell!!!’ ”

Satan smiled: “*Yes, that’s very good! We can lead thousands away from ‘the enemy’ with that approach. Now— anything else??*”

It was then that Wormwood looked up, with his eyes blazing with all the fires of hades: “We can tell them that: *It doesn’t matter!!* It doesn’t matter what they believe, or what they do, or think! It doesn't matter!!!” And Satan laughed with glee!! “That is the best plan!! We will lead millions astray!! We’ll tell them:

- 1) *It doesn’t matter* if you follow Jesus—
- 2) *It doesn’t matter* if you trust God every day!!
- 3) *It doesn’t matter* if you pray every day!!
- 4) *It doesn’t matter* if you love your sister!!
- 5) *It doesn’t matter* if you love your brother!!
- 6) *It doesn’t matter* if you love your neighbor!!

And with that lie, we’ll lead millions astray. We’ll create apathy, even hatred, and render ‘the enemy’s’ church ineffective!!! That’s what we’ll do!! We’ll tell them that: IT DOESN’T MATTER!!!”

My friends, that is a lie from hades, that: *It doesn't matter!* Because it does matter if you love your sister in Christ; or if you love your brother in Christ; or if you love

your neighbor!! It does matter, because how we live out our lives shows to God and to others that we take Jesus seriously; that we really are a disciple, intent on following Jesus Christ, our Savior and guide in life— every day!!!

It does matter, for now, and for *eternity*!! So, *love your brother and sister— love your neighbor, and reach out with care and love to all those around you!! I saw this week: “make heaven crowded !!!!”*

Before you get home tonight, turn to someone near you (and preferably not someone in your family), and greet them !! Tell them: “I love you for Jesus’ sake!”

Then, this week, call someone you know— and just check up on them— let them know that you care what happens in their life! Let them know you care— for Jesus’ sake!!!!

ENDNOTES:

1 Ed Rowell, ed. *Humor for Teaching and Preaching*. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), p. 108.

2 C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*. (New York: Macmillan, 1952), p. 127.