

## Special Delivery of Love

1 John 4:7-21

### Introduction

- Jean Jacket for Christmas
  - College- very little can surprise at this age
  - Mentioned a jean jacket
  - Opened up all my presents that I expected, with one left, I was surprised
  - Continue to wear it today with the memory of that Christmas, but also the love and thought my parents put into that present.
- Continue our sermon series called *Special Delivery*
  - Today's focus is *Special Delivery of Love*
  - **1 John 4:7-21**
  - Each passage has brought to light the significance of God's Special Delivery of His Son
  - The gift of God's Son is our salvation: Love, Joy, Peace and Hope
  - Today's passage happens to be the same passage I preached from over Valentine's Day
    - Similarities to **1 Corinthians 13**
    - *God is Love (vs. 8)*
    - Why return to this passage?
      - Primarily because of **verse 9 (ESV), "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."**
      - What I love about the Bible is that we can read the same passage but it can speak to us from different angles.
      - This passage fits perfectly into what we have been discussing in our sermon series
- Main Point: Special Revelation
  - God reveals himself through his love
  - If we can believe in God's love through the act of God sending His Son into the world on our behalf, then we must allow God's love to manifest Himself, abide in us, grow in us- so that we may reflect God's love to the world.
  - This is how we take part in God's Redemptive Plan- allowing God's love to manifest in our life and be revealed to the world.

### Example of Love

- Think of someone who has shown you the definition of love
  - There is a good chance that whatever example that has been given to us of love impacts the way we love others
    - If love was shown through gifts
    - If love was shown through serving
    - If love was shown through making memories

- If love was broken, we may not trust it or know how to receive it or share it
- What makes God's *Special Delivery* significant is that God reveals the very best (or perfect) example of love through His Son
  - Sin has distorted our understanding of love
  - Sin is why God sent his son in the first place
  - Separation from God is like a baby in the womb being separated from the mother- the baby will die
- 1 John 4:7-8 (ESV), "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."
  - Love is at the very core of God's character
  - Anything that God does, is related to his love for us
  - If we are going to reflect the love of God to others, we have to live by the example that God has set
    - Our act of love is related to knowing God
    - Love is birthed in us through our relationship with God
- Covid has challenged our love
  - Stuck inside with kids
  - Isolated from others, how do we continue to share love
  - Challenged our personal freedom- yet sometimes love is not about what we get in return, but what we give to others. How we respond to this challenge reflects the kind of love we have. In this, we have the example set by God

### Unselfish Love

- Update on Activity Bags
  - Goal of \$800, already exceeded within the first two weeks
  - Purpose of these bags: God loves you, the church is still here, we are here for you
  - Simple example of our passage today
  - Sure there are toys and such inside- but what these bags reveal is far greater than what is inside- it reflects who we are as a church through Christ.
- 1 John 4:9-12 (ESV),
 

"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that <sup>a</sup>God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, <sup>a</sup>not that we have loved God <sup>a</sup>but that he loved us and sent his Son to be <sup>a</sup>the propitiation for our sins.<sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> <sup>a</sup>No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and <sup>t</sup>his love is perfected in us."

  - Live through Him
    - Example set by God
    - Unselfish love
    - Sin separated us, but God's love allows for us to be restored
    - Last week- life supply

- God abides in us, his love is perfected in us
  - Similar to birth narrative (Luke 1:34-38)
    - Luke 1:34 (ESV), “And Mary said to the angel, ‘How will this be, since I am a virgin?’”
      - I think I love well or understand love until I reflect upon the example of Jesus
      - Is my love really sacrificial or is it selfish?
      - We all have a “Love Threshold”
        - Love is challenged
        - Choose how we express it
        - Maybe because I am an only child
        - Something each of us has to search our heart for
    - Luke 1:35, 37 (ESV), “And the angel answered her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy- the Son of God. For nothing will be impossible with God.’”
      - When I think about loving like God has loved us, it seems impossible.
      - Consider this impossibility or limitation of our love in relation to Mary, a virgin, giving birth to Jesus
        - Only the work of God, through the Holy Spirit, could make this happen
        - Jesus’ birth was not orchestrated by humans
      - In the same way, the kind of love that God requires of us is not something we can do on our own
        - As we place our faith in God’s love revealed through Jesus Christ, in many ways we are “carrying” Jesus in our hearts
        - Just as a baby must grow within the mother’s womb, we must allow God’s love to grow in our hearts
    - Luke 1:38 (ESV), “And Mary said, ‘Behold I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.’”
      - To love like God has loved is impossible without God’s help
      - Mary basically said, “I don’t understand it all, but God I’m giving myself to you in order for your will to be done.”
      - This is what we must do in order for God’s love to be manifested in our lives.

### Peace Through God’s Love

- Story of Beggar on Vacation
  - Story of how he lost everything, needed money to get back home
  - Hesitant to give- could I really trust him
  - Wife found some money to give him

- Later I asked, where did he go?
- As we pulled away, we found him at another car with what looked like the same story shared with us.
- Did he really need the money or was he just trying to work us?
- Amy's response: "It's not up to us to judge. God knows his heart. We give what we think is appropriate and God will work it out in the end."
- Made me think: What if that experience had nothing to do with the beggar, but everything to do with teaching us a lesson about God's love for us?
- **1 John 4:16-17 (ESV), "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. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgement."**
  - We will be judged by whether we confess God's love for us through His Son and what we do with the love that God has shown for us
  - Gifts of Peace and Hope
    - We can rest assured in the love that God has revealed to us
    - It covers our sins- it works through our imperfections
    - God's love not only cleanses us but it provides us with a way to love others
    - Peace in knowing God's love- we do not have to fear judgement- covered in God's grace
    - Hope in what God will do.
- Example how I express my love
  - Love through the church- God's mission
  - Encourage devotion to God
    - Church
    - Family
    - Friends
  - I know I'm not perfect with love, but I hope to leave an impression or legacy that points beyond me to the God who first loved us.

### Conclusion

- **1 John 4:14-15 (ESV), "And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God."**
  - My wish for you this Christmas is that you will see God's Special Delivery sent through the gift of His Son into the world
  - He is the Savior of the World
  - Through our confession of faith- we can be assured that his love for us covers our sins
  - As Jesus comes to reside in our hearts, we must like Mary, allow for the Holy Spirit to do His work so that our lives are changed and we reflect God's love to the world.

- 1 John 4:21 (ESV), “And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.”
- Main Point: Special Revelation
  - God reveals himself through his love
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