

GOD IS LOVE #1

By Don Krider

Lord, in times past, in diverse manners and sundry ways, You spoke unto the fathers by the prophets. But in these last days You have spoken unto us by Your Son. We pray that as we continue to study that the Word of God will be breathed into our hearts, that our hearts may be opened.

We pray to be like You, to live where You live, and walk in the way that is pleasing to you. Let us have the circumcision of the ear to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. But Lord, above everything else, let us have the genuine love of God flowing in our hearts, and by this all men will know that we are your disciples. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen!

We are going to go first to **I John 4**. This was written by the disciple whom the Lord loves. This was the one who was closest to Jesus during The Last Supper. He was the one who leaned on the breast of Jesus - heard His very heartbeat (**John 13:23; 21:20**). I would like us to really be that close to the Lord in such a way that the world can see Christ in each one of us all the time.

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

Ps. 103:10 says, "**He hath not dealt with us after our sins.**" Aren't you glad that He has dealt with us according to His mercies and His love? If God had dealt with us according to our sins, none of us would be here today. The world would have been destroyed. But because of the love of God and of His mercy that endureth forever, and because of His tenderness toward us, we are found a place in Christ to live, to move, and have our being. Because of that, we need to show that same love to others.

Ninety percent of the problem in marriages today is that people are trying to love one another without God. You cannot. Love is not a thing. Love is a person. **GOD IS LOVE**. No matter how much human affection you have to one another, it will wear out. You must have God to have love because God is love. The one thing about a born-again Christian, that should be the main attribute of their whole being, is that they are a child of love. A continual love flows out of them, for he that is born of God, loveth. He that is begotten of God loveth for God is love. No marriage will work without it; nothing can move without the love of God.

The church today is trying to substitute programs; they are trying to substitute everything in the world, to take the place of God's love. They are doing it because God's love will kill you. It killed Jesus.

1 John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

Just because you can quote a lot of scripture doesn't mean that you know God. The attribute, the sign, that you are of God, is love. **Gal 5:22** talks about the fruit of the Spirit. That fruit is singular; the fruit of the Spirit is **LOVE**. That love is full of joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, and temperance.

Here God said, "He that loveth not hath not known God " ...doesn't know God. You can talk about God, you can talk about everything in the world, but unless the love is there, you don't know God. "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love."

1 John 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

There are people today who need to see some dead Christians who have died to sin, died to self, but have come alive unto God. They are not selfish, they are not self-centered, they are not in it for gain, they are not in it for employment, they are not in it to be recognized as any great person, but they have come to die to self that others might live. They have come to lay down their life that others might know what life is all about.

The church needs some people who know how to love. Love is a strong working, powerful source. God is love and when He destroyed the enemies of Israel, He loved Israel. When He destroyed Korah and his men, and everything that pertained to them, He opened the earth up and they fell straight into the pit with all their stuff and the earth closed upon them (**Num 16th chap**).

It was love that caused God to destroy the enemies of Israel. God takes something from you because He loves you, not because He hates you. He chastens you because He loves you, not because He hates you. He corrects you, because He loves you, not because He hates you. He allowed Job to suffer all that he suffered because He loved Job, not because He hated him.

The first thing the love of God will do is kill you. It will make you come to the place where you will deny yourself, where you will hate the works of the flesh, and all you will want is Jesus Christ. You will know God. You will know Him as the Creator, as the Savior, as the Healer, as the Deliverer, but above that you will know Him as the Lord.

Very few people know Jesus as Lord. They know Him as a Savior, they know Him as a healer, they know Him as a deliverer, they know Him as a supplier of their need, but when He becomes the Lord of your life, He becomes everything. Then you realize that what He does is in His time and in His hand, and how He does it belongs to Him.

Something happens to us in our natural body and the first thing we begin to do is question, "**why**"? God said, "It is not up to you to know. I am performing a work in you." No glass on a shelf in my house ever asked, "Why did you pick me instead of the other glass. Why is it you always use that other glass to drink out of? How come you never use me to drink water?" It never says that. It is just obedient to be in my hand to be filled with water and I

drink out of it. If we would come to a point of total surrender in Christ and begin to love one another like God told us, it wouldn't make any difference who God used. We would all rejoice when one member was glorified or exalted. We would enjoy the presence of God, and we would begin to rejoice with that person, rather than say, "Why does God use that person? God never uses me. Why has this thing come upon me?"

Paul had the answer to it. He said, "*All of these things have happened unto me for the furtherance of the gospel (Phil 1:12). In afflictions, in fasting, in prayer, in shipwreck, in stoning, left for dead, in the deep three days (2 Cor. 11:23-30).*" But he said, "*None of these things move me*" (Acts 20:24). Hallelujah!

Everything that is happening to you today is to show the world that there are people who can live in the midst of tribulation and trial, and can live Godly and say, "Yes Lord, do what seemeth good in Your sight." Jesus never said, "Why did you pick me"?

Here was the manifested love of God in that God sent His Son to die. Now here is the manifested love of God in that we are dead to self but alive to Christ. We have come into the world. We have been sent of God just like Jesus was sent. We have been sent to die to self but live to God.

Everything that happens to you and me happens to the people in the world. There is nothing strange or new that is happening to us that hasn't happened to all men, but it is how we react that shows the love of God. When people come against us and misunderstand us, abuse us and misuse us, do they get out of us the love of God? Do we forgive them as Jesus forgave those who crucified Him? **He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"(Luke 23:34)**, or do they get a thousand reasons why we act like we do.

Do you want to save yourself a lot of breath? When it happens to you, just say, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." When somebody accuses you of something just say, "Thou sayest." I mean that. You see, there is such a beautiful place to walk in God that you don't have to defend yourself anymore, because **Rom 8:33** says, "*Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect for it is God that justifies.*" If you're busy justifying yourself, then God doesn't need to.

But here was the love of God manifested, that Jesus came to die. I have news for you: you have come to die also. You have come to lay down your life. You have come to deny yourself. You have come to die daily; to take up your cross and follow Christ (**Matt 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; Luke 14:26-27**) so that the world can see a perfect example of what a Christian is like and what God is like. **Jesus said, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father" (John 14:9)**. The Christian ought to be able to say, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Lord. He's just like this."

Paul said, "**Follow me as I follow the Lord**" (**1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1**). You might make a mistake, but God never does. You see, when we're dead then it's no longer we who live but

Christ liveth in us, and we won't care for anything except for God and the things of God, and what God wants to do.

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

You have come to die. That's when the love of God is manifested to the world. It isn't what I want to do anymore; it's what God wants to do with me. If God chooses that I should be stoned to death, that's for the glory of God. If God chooses that I go this way or I suffer this, it's up to God. So if God allows sickness or something to come on me, I don't fight it anymore. They are already whipped, and the Lord says His grace is sufficient for me (**2 Cor. 12:9**). I just say, "Well, bless God."

The love of God is to show people that you go through the same thing they do. You're not exempt from the trials. You're not exempt from the testing. You're not exempt from the things that every man goes through, but you have the power to live Godly in the midst of them. Paul said, "I will glory in my infirmities."

2 Cor. 12:9-10 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

We want to get out of them, when we should glory in them. Let's look at the account of Job and see how he handled all the calamities that fell on him.

Job 1:21-22 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

After that Job was smote with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown, and his wife came to him and said, "Why don't you curse God and die?" Job said:

Job 2:10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

He said, "Though I have lost my health, I've lost my family, I've lost everything I can possibly lose, I'll never give the enemy an ounce of credit. The Lord gave it and the Lord took it away." We suffer something and lose something and say, "The devil did it." The devil can't touch you unless God gives him permission.

You see, the love of God is that you are going to suffer just like every man suffers. You are going to be tried like every man is tried, but you are going to be able to manifest the love of God to those who persecute you, to those who speak evil of you, to those who work against you. You are going to say as Jesus said, "Father, forgive them. Don't lay this sin to their charge."

Someone said to me, "Yeah, but He was supernatural." No! He was a man. Everything He suffered, He suffered as a man. He knew what pain was like. He knew what hunger was like. He knew what thirst was like. If you want to go a little farther, take Stephen being stoned to death because of his testimony for Christ. What were the last words he uttered? He said, "Lay not this sin to their charge (**Acts 7:60**). Don't hold them accountable for taking my life."

Somebody speaks evil of us and we are waiting for the day for them to reap a crop, so we can say, "Yeah, I knew it was coming. I told him so." That's not the love of God; that's the lust of the flesh. The love of God wants man not to have to go through those things that separate him from God. The love of God doesn't want judgment; he wants mercy.

Love needs to be manifested today just like it was manifested when Jesus walked upon the earth. That love is still here; that power is still here. People need love today. They don't need lust. They don't need things that substitute for love. They need genuine love that can reach down where they are and not condemn them, but bring them out of it and pay the price that has to be paid to do it.

Let's read **1 John 4:9-12** again:

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein 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 ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

If this is the manner in which God loved us, then we had better love one another even as God loved us. God forgave me my sin. God forgave me my trespasses and God expects me to forgive every man that trespasses against me. In fact, He went a little heavier than that in His Sermon on the Mount (**Matt. chaps. 5&6**), which we call the Kingdom of God message.

Matt 6:14-15 For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Your prayer life is finished the minute you hold ought in your heart. I don't care how little it is or how big it is, it separates you from God's forgiveness, and from there on in, you are on your own. I'm not teaching you something funny. I'm teaching you the word of God. It's only reasonable that we should love one another with the same love that God loved us with. But how did God love us?

Rom 5:8 But God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

"Well, Lord, I can love certain people; they are nice to me, they speak well of me. But Lord, you know those renegades over there, those Baptist folks across town and those Pentecostals; you know how they talk evil of me. They don't understand me."

I wish you could talk to the Roman Centurion who crucified Jesus and ask him if he understood Him. Or the thief on the cross, when Jesus said, "This day shalt thou be in Paradise with me." We still live in that flesh realm. We are affected by what people say or do to us, or their reaction. One of the greatest ways we judge whether we are going to love a person or not, is by their reaction to us.

We correct somebody in love because the Holy Spirit says, "This is not right. You need to do this..." and that person right away jumps on you and says, "Who do you think you are? Who gave you the right to be a judge?" You tell the brother in love because you love him, and right away you pull your little feelings back in and say, "Well, bless God, that's the last time I'm going to talk to you. Go ahead and stumble in the ditch and see if I care. Get killed. It will serve you right."

No! We should begin to pray for that brother to have an open heart of understanding. We talk about binding the devil, but we bind more people than we ever bind devils. We bind their hearts against us and against God. We bind their minds where they cannot accept the Lord because of our judgmental attitude, and because of the way that we manifest ourselves rather than the love of God.

Love is manifested when we go and we do whatever it takes. If we have to fast, we'll fast. If we have to give up our TV show or something and go into a closet to pray for a person, we are going to go there because we are going to deny ourselves. Then we are going to begin to see the power of God activated in that individual's life.

When you got saved, God saved you to go to war. God saved you to fight. He didn't save you to sit down. He saved you to go to war - to set the captive free, to bind up the brokenhearted, to declare the acceptable year of the Lord. He called you to go to a war of love that would destroy the enemy of men's souls: hatred, anger, malice, and all of the things that work against men. God called you to war against them.

"Well, Brother Krider, I'm saved and that's all that counts." You're not saved. No! When you get saved, it's no longer you who live but Christ who lives in you. When you are still selfish, there is something wrong with your conversion point.

1 John 4:10-11 Herein 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 ought also to love one another.

Not because they loved Him but because He loved them. How would you like to have a gospel written like this: "Whenever we get good enough then we can come to the Lord." I thank God that there is a gospel of love; that while I was yet dead in my sins and trespasses, Jesus was sent to die for me.

There are brothers and sisters today that are knocked down all over the country. They are bound because of what people have done to them. Not an action of love. Love reconciles, love restores; it doesn't destroy. The only thing love ever destroyed was the works of darkness and the powers that bind men.

God said, "Now here is love manifested...". It's still manifested the same way. The Son of God is still walking through the earth today. The members of His body are continually denying themselves and dying to self that they might live unto God. "Herein is love manifested."

You can talk about loving people, but He said not to love in word but in deed. How would you like Jesus to have sat at home with the Father and said, "Oh Father, I love them but they are all going to hell. I still love them but I am not going to go down there to that cross. They are going to slice me up. They are going to stick thorns in my head. They are going to beat me to a bloody pulp. They are going to turn against me. They are going to curse me, they are going to rail on me, but I love them, Father."

Love is an action. God is love. Love is a person. If you really love one another you are entering into God. God doesn't sit idly by when He sees brothers and sisters who have splits between them. He goes in the spirit of reconciliation and He gave to us the ministry of the word of reconciliation that we might reconcile men unto God.

2 Cor. 5:18-21 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Herein is love manifested - not that we are going to sit idly by while others are being torn to pieces in the body of Christ, but we are going to begin to cause healing to flow in the body of Christ.

"Well, Father, I love them, but you know I have other things to do. I have a universe to run. What is one little world if we lose it? What are a few million souls after all? I mean I was here in the beginning, so we'll just recreate it over again."

No, there was found in His heart a place for the people. There was found a love and a willing-ness to die and to suffer all that He suffered that He might bring many sons unto perfection.

Isn't it beautiful that we can do the same thing today? We can go out and reconcile brothers and sisters together. We can go out and move in the love of God and bring the love of God to people.

Isn't it wonderful, that you have the power to bring healing into the body of Christ? Isn't it wonderful that you have a commission that you can die today?

"Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done" (Matt 26:39).