

I John 4:7-14 - Testing Our Love

EMC Wednesday Night Bible Study - 8-14-19

The Ground of the Social Test of Love

3x on test of love (2:7-11; 3:11-18)

“love one another” → 3x in 6 vv. (v. 7, exhortation; v. 11, statement of duty; v. 12, hypothesis)

The ground of the imperative:

- God is love in himself (vv. 8, 16)
- God has loved us in Christ (vv. 10-11)
- God continues to love in and through us (vv. 12-13)

V. 7 - Greek assonance: Ἀγαπητοί, ἀγαπῶμεν (“agapetoi agapomen”) - “Beloved, let us love”

- Urge to love and assurance to love: John _____ what he preaches
- Both integrity and testimony

Vv. 7-8 - his argument: “love is from God” (v. 7) + “God is love” (v. 8) = “everyone who loves is born of God and knows God”

“God is love” (vv. 8, 16)

- Stott: “Love is the most comprehensive and sublime of all affirmations about God’s *being*.”
- Wesley, *Notes*: “This little sentence brought St. John more sweetness, even in the time he was writing it, than the whole world can bring. God is often styled holy, righteous, wise; but not holiness, righteousness, or wisdom in the abstract, as he is said to be love; intimating that this is his darling, his reigning attribute, the attribute that sheds an amiable glory on all his other perfections.”
- Not “love is God” → _____
 - God is not an idea, but a communion of _____ (F, S, HS)
- Love elevated to _____ (essence/being): summation of Triune life
 - **Appendix I - The Trinity in the Gospel of John**
 - E.L. Mascall, *Whatever Happened to the Human Mind*: “The Trinity is not a doctrine, any more than the incarnation is a doctrine. There is a doctrine about the Trinity, as there are doctrines about many other facts of existence, but, if Christianity is true, the Trinity is not a doctrine; the Trinity is God. It is the secret of God’s most intimate life and being, into which, in his infinite love and generosity, he has admitted us; and it is therefore to be accepted with amazed and exultant gratitude.”
 - Love = essential statement about _____ God is

V. 9 - How we know this: Through the person and work of Jesus Christ

- Truth not inferred, but _____
- Not propositions, but intimacy through _____ (1:1-3; cf. Col. 1:15, 19; Heb. 1:3; John 8:19; 14:7)

V. 14 - This revelation has been witnessed and testified to

- Jesus revealed God’s nature as love. The Apostles _____ it and the Scriptures _____ it.
- Word vs. word → The Bible is the word of God insofar as it truthfully attests to the Word of God

One step further: v. 12 - "if we love one another, God abides in us"

- Not caretakers of propositions or formulas, but his _____ in the world by the Spirit (v. 13)
- Irenaeus: "Knowledge of the truth of God or the truth of the Gospel is not given in an abstract or detached form but in a concrete embodied form in the Church."
- C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*: "Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself."

V. 12a - "No one has seen God at any time"

- He is spirit (John 4:24) and invisible (I Tim. 1:17; 6:16). Nobody has seen him (v. 20) or can see him (Ex. 33:20) until he returns (3:2)
- BUT John 1:18 AND THEN 12b
 - Christ is making himself _____ to the world in/through us.
 - Reciprocation makes his love _____
 - John 3:16 + I John 3:16 = the whole gospel

Love originates in God (v. 8), is manifested in the Son (v. 9), imparted by the Spirit (v. 13), perfected in us (v. 12)

Appendix I - The Trinity in the Gospel of John

The Trinity in the Gospel of John

