



## Sermon, Sunday December 26, 2021 “God’s Love and Ours”

**SCRIPTURE: 1 John 4:7-16** <sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. <sup>9</sup> God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. <sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. <sup>16</sup> So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

### Introduction: The Command of the Lord

Dear Brothers and Sisters! Today is Christmas Sunday. Let us greet each other with "Merry Christmas".

Henri Jozef Machiel Nouwen, a Dutch Roman-Catholic priest, author and theologian, in his book, “In The Name of Jesus,” writes that the reason we do not love each other is that we insist on being right. He says that it is because we lose the place where love should be while fighting each other for what is right.

**It is easier for us to stand in God's place than to love an invisible God.** Such a human figure can be seen in the story of the Garden of Eden in the Genesis of the Old Testament. Adam and Eve chose to stand in the place of the Creator (God) rather than keep (obey) the Lord's command.

**Also, we prefer to control people to our will rather than love them.** This human tendency is found in the many Israeli kings (rulers) who failed to show justice and love to the Lord's people as God's representatives in the Old Testament. **And we're used to making life our own rather than loving it.** This human tendency is found in the attitudes and actions of those who seek to use the Lord and His good creations as instruments for our pleasure and satisfaction.

For these reasons, it is difficult for us to practice love. But the Lord commands us to “**love one another.**”

Why does the Lord command us to love one another? **Because when we love one another, God lives in us, and His love is perfected in us. (1 John 4:12)**

But as Christians, knowing and doing the benefits of love through the Lord's Word is another matter. In most cases, people find it difficult to practice love for the Lord and their neighbor because of weakness.

That is why even the Apostle Paul confesses in **Romans 7:19**, “**For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing.**” And the Apostle Paul says in **Romans 7:24** like that “**what a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**”

But the Apostle Paul clearly declares that if the Spirit of God lives in us, we will not live under the dominion of our sinful nature. He says, “**You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.**”(Romans 8:9)



When we love, the Lord is with us and the Holy Spirit is with us. After all, if we do not love, we again fall under the dominion of our sinful nature. Also, when we love, we know who the Lord is. (1 John 4:7) Then by what power can we love? It is through the love of Jesus Christ on the cross.

## **Body: God is love**

### **1. Jesus' love on the cross**

Today's text is **1 John 4:10**, **“In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.”**

This verse clearly states how we can realize God's love in our Christian life. Through Jesus' death on the cross, we can know the size of God's love.

Then how can we realize the size of Jesus' love on the cross? It can be known through the Holy Spirit who dwells within us when we sincerely confess that “Jesus is the Son of God.” And the Holy Spirit who dwells within us guides us to love the Lord and our neighbor.

The Bible tells us that love does not belong to us from the beginning, but belongs to God, so only the Lord can achieve true love in us. Also, the love that God shows us is the result of God's own thorough sacrifice. We cannot have perfect love without God. This is because we cannot make perfect sacrifices like God through our own efforts.

### **2. Our Love**

The Apostle Paul clearly knew the nature of human beings. He says in **Romans 5:7-8**. **“Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”**

Man speaks of the noble love we have achieved. In such a story, there is the heartbreaking love between a man and a woman, a sacrificial love for children, an amazing sacrifice for social justice, and a noble service for the country. But, without the love of Jesus on the cross among all these achievements, perfect love cannot be achieved.

Are these words of the Bible difficult to accept? Have you ever been disappointed by the visible appearance of Christians and the church in our eyes? Is it too difficult for you to accept Christians' faith and the church's creed about Christ's love?

Although it is difficult for us to abandon our doubts about Christians and the church because they are based on our experiences, nevertheless, there is no love greater than the great perfect sacrifice of Jesus' love on the cross.

Love belongs to the Lord, and love was accomplished through true self-sacrifice of God through the crucifixion of Jesus. Also, love is made perfect in us through the Lord living in us. A Christian must believe and be sure of this love of the Lord.

## **Conclusion: Love one another**

Now let's summarize today's sermon. For Christians who know the value of Jesus' love on the cross, the Lord's command to "love one another" should be what we should do. Christian love comes from God and He works in us through the Holy Spirit.

And the love of the Lord restores the individual, community, and creation completely and brings peace. Christmas is the completion of this love of God. We have a mission to enrich that perfected love. I hope that we will all be able to handle those things well.

