

Why Do We Share Jesus?

1 John 4:7-21

Key Verse: 21

“And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.”

Today we begin a new series entitled “Sharing Jesus.” We are starting this series because we want grow in the aspect of sharing Jesus with other people. In doing so, our relationship with Christ will deepen as we get to know Him better and as we experience putting His love for other people into action. If you have become a Christian, one of the first things you realize is that you should spread the gospel. In other words, you should tell others about Jesus (share Jesus) and what God has done for you. But many people are reluctant to do so. So we want to think about the question: why do we share Jesus? When we turn to the book of 1 John 4, we find that to answer this question all revolves around love. Love is why we share Jesus. How? Let’s find out.

Love is a powerful thing. Having it, has changed lives, losing it has started wars, experiencing it can bring salvation. Sometimes it’s simple, other times it’s complex. Often it’s fleeting, but sometimes it’s eternal. So what is love? This can be one of the most difficult questions to answer. Throughout the centuries, relationships have while others have crashed. Most people think they know what love is but in reality they have difficulty giving the proper definition of love. To some love is friendship set on fire, while others think it is like luck. No matter how you define it, love is something that impacts the world and makes it go around. William Shakespeare said, “Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none.” Mark Twain said, “Love seems the swiftest, but it is the slowest of all growths. No man or woman really knows what perfect love is until they have been married a quarter of a century.” Elaine (age 7) said, “Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other.” Karl (age 5) said, “Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken.” (E-harmony dating site) Love can inspire us to do great things on the other hand it can make us do foolish things.

In order to know what love is, we first have to know where it comes from. Let’s read verses 7-8 together. “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.” From these two verses it’s clear to see that the source or origin of love is from God. As proud humans, we like to think that love comes from us, that we are able to do something with our love. But spiritually speaking, love comes from God. In this passage the word “love” appears 27 times and God appears 20 times. This implies that God and love are connected. In fact this passage clearly states: “God is love.” It says it not once, but twice so that it will sink in. Since God is love, he is the source of real love. Just as a battery is the source of power in our cell phones, or the engine is the source of power in our cars, God is the source of love for our lives. And if you want something, you have to go to the source to get it because at the source you are

going to have the greatest supply and the purest form. If you want water, you go to a water source and if we want love we have to go to God.

But as we know, in the world there are many counterfeits. And some counterfeits are so close to the original that we're easily fooled. And some people don't care if they have the original because a copy may be cheaper and easier to get. But why would you settle for an imitation if you can have the real thing? If the source of our love is not God, then we find that it is limited and unsustainable. When we think about the topic of love, most people think about the romantic side of love, or the emotional type of love. While this can be really good, if it is all we have, it will eventually fall short. Emotions are unreliable and can change like the blowing of the wind. This was the case with Amnon and Tamar. "Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, 'Get up and get out!'" (2 Samuel 13:15) But God's love is faithful, consistent and unchanging. (Heb 13:8) God's love is genuine, real and will never let you down.

When God is the source of our love, our supply is unlimited. We don't have to go some place to get recharged or filled up like we do with our cars. The supply of God's love is unlimited. Not only that, when God is the source of our love, we get to know him better because when we love others, we have to draw near to God and rely on him to do it. It's something that we have to do together so we get to know God a little better. Also we can know God better through the experience of loving others. If you want to know what it's like to be a parent, you need to have kids. If you want to know what it's like being an athlete, you need to go into training and compete. Likewise one way to know God is to love others. When we love deeply, not the shallow superficial kind, we begin to understand God's heart and how hard it is to really love genuinely. To be consistent, compassionate and patient is not always easy. Usually we can take just so much and then we want to explode. But in the process of experiencing this, we become more thankful to God because we realize how hard it was for him to love us and just how much he bore with all our shortcomings. The reason we know how to love in the first place, is because God has instilled it in us when he made us.

The Bible describes love like this: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." (1 Cor 13:4-7) I think that everyone likes these verses, even people who don't believe in God. I've seen them used in cards and on web sites. They have become the definition of love. Everyone wants to be loved like this, but it's hard to love others like this. And in some rare cases love can go beyond this. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." (Jn 15:13) This is the ultimate expression of love. And we usually find it between soldiers where one makes the ultimate sacrifice for another, or between family members. Stories like these always catch our attention

because they are so rare. When we think of love in terms like this, usually our focus is for those who are close to us, those we like.

But here is where we reach the limits of man's love and we see the immensity of God's love. God's love goes even farther than this. Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'"⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Mt 5:43-48) Who can do that? I have run into some pretty terrible people in my life who have done some nasty things to me. And even though I wouldn't call them friends, I wouldn't call them my enemies either. An enemy is a strong word. God's love extends to his enemies. While we were sinners, God's enemy, Christ died for us. (Ro 5:8) Verse 10 shows the ultimate expression of God's love, let's read it. "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." God's love is the highest expression for love there is. He gave us his one and only son, whom he loved, so that our relationship could be restored. "This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him." (v9) This shows that there is nothing that God would not have done to bring us back to him. God didn't hold anything back from us. God did this out of his amazing love for us so that through Jesus' sacrifice, we might have eternal life. God's love is not grounded in human virtue or good deeds but it's rooted in Christ's atoning sacrifice for our sins. True love requires a tremendous life-giving sacrifice. This is the ultimate expression of love and it becomes the definition of true love.

God's love is so great that it makes us complete. Take a look at verse 12. "No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us." And look at verse 16. "And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him." Sometimes man's love can be incomplete. This can be so irritating and unsatisfying like an unfinished puzzle or if the ending of a movie gets cut off. The first time we watched "Forest Gump," our VCR died before we could see the end. To be left incomplete was so unfulfilling. However when we love, God's love is made complete in us. God loves us, in turn we love others, this shows our love for God and God lives in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. Verse 13 says, "We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit." We are complete, God lives in us and we live in God. Another sign that God lives in us is when we acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God. (v14, Mt 16:17)

Another way we are made complete in God's love is found in verses 17-18. "In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in

this world we are like him. 18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” Through God’s love, we don’t have the fear of judgment. When we are caught disobeying the law we are fearful because of the judgment we will receive. But when God’s love is complete in us, we are not afraid any more because Jesus paid our price as an atoning sacrifice, so we are no longer under God’s judgment and have been set free. Not only that when we love others, we are actually fulfilling God’s law. [⁸ Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰ Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.] (Ro 13:8-10) Perfect love drives out fear. And we know that nothing can separate us from the love of God. (Ro 8:39)

Finally we come to John’s conclusion. Let’s read verse 21. “And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.” Ultimately God has given us his command to love others. And when we obey his command it is one way that we reveal we love God. So how can we love God? First off we can’t hate. Verse 20 says, “If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.” Therefore we need to forgive our brothers. How can we love if we don’t forgive? Also we need to rely on God’s love to love others. (v16) If we rely on our love, we already know those limitations, so we have to come to God for wisdom on how to do this. It means we have to overcome our emotions. When we reach our limit, we have to come to God in prayer and ask for his help, just like Jesus did in the garden of Gethsemane. Ultimately God has to be living in us, for us to be able to love others. That’s why Paul longed to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. When God lived in Paul, he was compelled to love and live for others. He was driven, compelled not because he “had to” but because “he wanted to” do it. Paul said, “For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.” ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.” (2 Cor 5:14-15)

What compels you? What do you love? As we begin our six week series on sharing Jesus, my hope and prayer is that you may receive the love of God and be compelled to share that love, how God loved you, with other people. In the following week, let’s try to let our actions speak for us. Let’s put what we have learned through today’s passage into practice. Let’s put it into practice practically. I know that we are all busy, or shy, or we don’t know how to, but the truth is those are just excuses because the bottom line is you just don’t want to do it. And no one will force you to do it. You have to be compelled by the love of God to do it. But I warn you, that if you are not compelled, there is something wrong. How do you answer the question: Why do you share Jesus?