

1 John 4:7-5:5

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- [0 : 0 0] Today's reading is a beautiful and a bold one. I loved how Harvey read that. I was really impacted just by the reading of God's Word. but do proclaim it.
- And you may have noticed that it is almost all about love. The word love is used 32 times in those verses that Harvey read.
- And you, like me, when you think about love, may actually go to 1 Corinthians 13. It's a real love text. But this 1 John chapter 4, I think, is even more.
- It's quite incredible. And I was reminded that Brenda and I had this read at our wedding service. I know 1 Corinthians 13 can be a common one, but this one's all about love, the love of God, but also our love for one another.
- To this point, we've learned that God is light for the most part in 1 John. But now the focus is on love. But we also, throughout the Bible, know that God is spirit and God is truth.
- [1 : 0 9] But today we settle on love. And so I want to look at three things. Not so briefly, sorry. It's a little bit longer than usual, but it's a very dense text. And I don't even get into all of it, but these three things.
- First, love's source. And then love's satisfaction. And then finally, love's spirit. So first, love's source. John's favorite word for the church is beloved.
- That's how he begins this chapter. He uses it in a few other ones as well and repeats it a little bit later on in our text today. But there are a lot of words or metaphors for the church.
- But this has to be my favorite one. And it seems like it's John's too. You may prefer other ones though. Maybe like the temple or priests or people or body or bride, all of which are great ones.
- But beloved is full of compassion and covenant and attachment and affection. And this is not just the way the apostle thinks of the church, but it's God's relationship with his people.
- [2 : 1 1] And so this is God's thoughts, his feelings, his beliefs about us. If we're not, sorry, if we are his beloved, then that means that he's our lover, not in a sexual way, but from a parent to his children.
- It's a paternal way as a father or a mother to their child, to their children. And this makes kind of a good text for a Father's Day, but also maybe for a Mother's Day as well.
- So look at your Bibles with me down to verse 7 in chapter 4, if you're not already there. And it's on page 1023. And you get there and you land on verse 7.
- It says, Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God. And whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. So beloved. The Father isn't explicit, that word here, but it is implicit when using the word beloved.
- And the Apostle John shows us the love source when he writes, love is from God in that first verse, or the seventh verse, but the first verse of our text.
- [3 : 2 3] The Father is not only love source because love is from God, but the Father is the one who not only conceives, we learn there, but also births his beloved spiritually.

And the love of God produces children. Because love not only originates from God, but it generates children out of God's love for us.

Notice, though, it doesn't stop there. The Father's love begets and births us, but someone assures us of this love. And the Apostle conveys this to us in verse 7 when he says, Whoever loves knows God.

There's the assurance. But love's source comes then full circle in that as the Father loves us, we become convinced of his love when we love the Father.

This convincing compels the Christian to confess then, as John says in verse 8, God is love.

[4 : 34] Repeats that later in the text, though, but God is equated with love. It's not love that's equated with God, but God is love.

Christianity doesn't kind of conceive of some kind of love and then equate God with that. No, God has revealed to the world to show us that the Father is love.

So love's source is the Father, and that takes us then on to love's satisfaction, which is the Son. And you'll notice the structure of these three things is actually Trinitarian.

So the first one's about God's is love. That's the Father's love for us. But now it's love's satisfaction, which is the Son. I'm sorry that when I hear the word satisfaction, I can't get the Rolling Stones' Mick Jagger's voice out of my head.

I can't get no satisfaction. I know it's long ago, and while not a theologian and academic, Mick was kind of smart. He went to the LSC, the London School of Economics.

[5 : 43] Mick Jagger was looking for satisfaction, I think, like all of us, a little bit in the wrong places and in the wrong people. Satisfaction is exclusively, though, and eternally in the Son.

So the Father gave satisfaction uniquely in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son to us. And how did the Father do that? Well, if you look down with me to verse 9, it reads like this.

In this, the love of God was made manifest to us. That God sent His only Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

And this is love. Not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

All of Scripture is the Word of God and His Word revealed to us. But this has to be one of the most important verses in all the Bible.

[6 : 46] I used to think it was Paul's teaching in Romans 5 about justification. This is a bright and bold synthesis of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I could just feel it when Harvey read it.

It is such a contrast to the common and cultural understanding of love. The world believes love is God. He's love.

But the world has it backwards. God is love. His love is like nothing else in our world because the Son manifest, revealed, this propitiation for our sins.

I know we don't use this word very often, but it is so worth explaining. It is a big word. Sometimes translated, an atoning sacrifice. Other times, a substitute.

But propitiation is a word worth sticking to and explaining. It's the one Anglicans have chosen to maintain no matter what in all of our liturgies.

[7 : 53] No matter what the revision. We'll say it later, you know. Propitiation is a great example of Christians taking a pagan concept and redefining it or redeeming it.

The other religions of the world used to try to make sacrifices to appease or to assuage the gods. The false gods were by nature angry and furious.

So out of fear, people made propitiation for their faults, their failings, their fallings, their sin. And this said something about the gods and the people.

But what does it say? The biblical God isn't by nature angry. Though he does get angry because of his love for us.

His anger is not simmering, but we know that he's slow to anger. And I wonder if you knew that actually anger, the anger of God, doesn't even show up until the 44th chapter of Genesis in the Bible.

[9 : 01] And it's in Exodus that we learn, right? As he says, the Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Such an interesting phrase because this slow anger is bracketed, it's braced, it's contained by God is merciful and gracious. God is abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

And tucked in there is this anger, but slow to anger. This happens when Yahweh shows himself to Moses, of course, in the fiery bush.

The Lord is unique in that he is by nature both light, as we've learned, but also love. And because of this, he gets angry, which is an action.

What makes him slow to anger is our sin. And the ultimate way that he deals with this anger is for his son to suffer it in our place, and that's propitiation.

[10 : 09] The cross is the place where our sin, not Jesus' but the one that he takes upon himself, the one who is sinless himself, then becomes the propitiation for our sin, that penalty of sin.

And this is love satisfaction. God is satisfied with his son propitiation for our sin, not his, but the one that he takes upon himself.

So satisfaction that God's love is then perfected in us by the only one who is perfect. In verse 12 and 17, that's what we read.

You can look down. If we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. In verse 17, by this is love perfected with us so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment because as he is, so also are we in this world.

This is love's satisfaction perfecting us because of this propitiation of sin and God's satisfied with that. It's good.

[11 : 30] It's pleasing. So now love's spirit down with me to verse 13. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us because he has given us his spirit.

This is the spirit's love. And we have seen and testify that the father has sent his son to be the savior of the world who confesses that Jesus is the son of God.

God abides in him and her and he and her in God. And so we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.

So we have the father and the son and now we have the spirit love's spirit. Now last week was Pentecost.

This week is Trinity Sunday and last week was a big week. There were 13 confirmations and there were two ordinations. And it's fitting for a major feast of Pentecost.

[12 : 33] But even if we didn't have the confirmations and the ordinations, Pentecost is a major feast because like Christmas it celebrates the coming of God and Christmas is the coming of the son and Pentecost is the coming of the spirit.

It's so important that our late friend Jim Packer once said at Learner's Exchange that Pentecost is as important as Christmas. You never kind of get that would you by the way that we celebrate it in some ways.

But it is. God comes in the son at Christmas. God comes in the spirit at Pentecost. So let me settle on the certainty of the love's son in the spirit.

I'm sorry the love's spirit by the coming of the spirit. Last week we read John 14 or maybe we did. I don't know if you remember that or not.

But let me read this to you from John 14 and you can turn there if you want to. I don't have the page number for you but starting at verse 15 of John 14 Jesus is making the promise of his spirit and he says this if you love me you will keep my commandments and I will ask the father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him or knows him you know him for he dwells with you and will be in you.

[14:11] Jesus says three things about love's spirit here the holy spirit first that he's a helper second that he's a truth teller and third that he's a homemaker first he says I'll ask the father and he'll give you another helper to be with you forever the helper is the same way to interpret the word for spirit here it's not a bad word helper but in the past it's been advocate!

or counselor or comforter the advocate that we need when accused of breaking the law that sin for which we need propitiation and every person who falls short of the glory of God or every person who breaks the law needs an advocate a counselor a friend to plead his or her case and this spirit of love is the one who makes the case for our innocence even though we're guilty don't have what it takes to do it and only the spirit of Christ this helper the one who loves us can do it for us because he is another one exactly like Christ but not in the flesh in the spirit so Christianity isn't kind of a self help it's a spirit help so that's the helper briefly but he's also the truth teller Jesus continues even the spirit of truth which is what

John is! talking about in his first letter also in this gospel says this even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him or knows him almost all translations of the Bible render it this way unlike the previous one which is helper all of them say the spirit of truth so he's a teacher extraordinaire this spirit think about the best teacher in your life the spirit of truth isn't just inspiring though but full of substance he's the one who applies truth and yes doctrine to our lives so that we can live well and he makes us want to learn godliness and faithfulness and fruitfulness like never before so he's the truth teller the teacher that's what Jesus calls him a bit later in chapter 14 and finally the home maker the spirit yes is a home maker like the greatest mother ever and you're like saying now wait a minute

James where did you get that right in fact he wanted to get right past helper right past truth teller and right on to home maker but Jesus says you know him for he dwells with you and will be in you and the word that he uses in 1st John chapter 4 is abide the operative word here is dwell he's in you he's with you and so the spirit makes his home in each and every one of us that's what makes the spirit this home maker and he cleans house and he renovates the heart and we all long for this renovation don't we some of us like renovations so we watch them on the screens I've never watched one before but I guess two of the most popular ones are Hack My Home or from Fixer to Fabulous it's fantastic the holy spirit is this home maker renovating and taking up permanent residence in our lives some kind of spring flame but forever and eternally so this spirit love's spirit is the helper the truth teller the home maker but it's only because God is love and what does this make us then well if the holy spirit is our helper then we have to admit our helplessness which comes from humility the holy spirit is the truth teller then we have to embrace our learning status and be very teachable and if holy spirit is our home maker then we need to confess that our house is in shambles and only he can renew and renovate it so this is the message on trinity Sunday love source love satisfaction love spirit which gives us the certainty that we can actually know God and then it enables us to love God because as John says he first loved us and so we're enabled and empowered by God the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit to love one another because we have fellowship with God we can have fellowship with one another and as our Colic said today and I just repeat not reading the Colic but refer you back to it that this is what true religion is knowing that God is love that he first loved us so that we can love him and we can love one another as we love ourselves I speak to you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit amen