

## Message One

### Love and Life

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 13:4, 8-11; 8:1; John 4:24; 1 John 1:5; 4:8-9, 12, 16; 2:5; Rom. 8:2; 13:8

- I. **Life is the element of God; love is the expression of God as life; hence, God is love (1 John 4:16); God as life is expressed in love:**
  - A. Faith in the Lord is the way for us to pass out of death into life; love toward the brothers is the evidence that we have passed out of death into life; to have faith is to receive the eternal life; to love is to live by the eternal life and express it—3:14.
  - B. “Love never falls away” (1 Cor. 13:8a); it never fails, never fades out or comes to an end; it is like the eternal life of God; only life, which love expresses, is eternal.
  - C. According to 1 Corinthians 13:8b-11, all gifts are for the immature child in this age; they will all be rendered useless in the next age; only love is characteristic of a mature man and will last for eternity; we can have a foretaste of the next age by living a life of love in this age.
  - D. Love matures us in life; hence, we should pursue love which is to seek after growth in life—14:1.
- II. **Love and light are related to God as life; within this life are love and light—*Hymns*, #13:**
  - A. In His nature, God is Spirit, love, and light—1 John 1:5, note 3:
    1. Spirit denotes the nature of God’s person; love, the nature of God’s essence; and light, the nature of God’s expression—John 4:24; 1 John 4:8-9; 1:5.
    2. Both love and light are related to God as life, which is of the Spirit (Rom. 8:2); God, Spirit, and life are actually one; God is Spirit and Spirit is life; within this life are love and light.
  - B. When the divine love appears to us, it becomes grace, and when the divine light shines on us, it becomes truth:
    1. John’s Gospel reveals that the Lord Jesus brought grace and truth to us (1:14, 17), that we might have the divine life (John 3:14-16).
    2. Whereas John’s Epistle unveils that the fellowship of the divine life brings us to the very source of grace and truth, which are the divine love and the divine light—*Hymns*, #13.
- III. **“Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up”—1 Cor. 8:1b:**
  - A. The outward, objective knowledge that puffs up comes from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the source of death—1 Cor. 8:1, and note 4.
  - B. Spiritual (not fleshly) love, which is an expression of life as described in chapter 13, builds up; it comes from the tree of life, the source of life:
    1. This is the love of God (1 John 4:16) infused into us by faith, which has brought us into the organic union with God.
    2. By this love we love God (v. 3) and the brothers (1 John 4:21), and according to this love we should walk (Rom. 14:15); thus, our walk builds up (10:23).
- IV. **“Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor...For you were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light”—Eph. 5:1-2, 8:**
  - A. What a glorious fact that since we are God’s beloved children, we can be imitators of God; as the children of God, we have His life and nature; we imitate Him not by our natural life but by His divine life.
  - B. Love is the inner substance of God, whereas light is the expressed element of God; the inward love of God is sensible, and the outward light of God is visible.
  - C. Our walk in love should be constituted of both the loving substance and the shining element of God; these should be the inner source of our walk.

V. **“And for this very reason also, adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue; and in virtue, knowledge; and in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, endurance; and in endurance, godliness and in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love”—2 Pet. 1:5-7:**

- A. The Greek word *agape* is used in the New Testament for the divine love, which God is in His nature—1 John 4:8, 16.
- B. This love is nobler than human love, and it adorns all the qualities of the Christian life—1 Cor. 13; Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:13-14.
- C. This love is stronger in ability and greater in capacity than human love (Matt. 5:44, 46), yet a believer who lives by the divine life (2 Pet. 1:3) and partakes of the divine nature (v. 4) can be saturated with it and express it in full.
- D. Such a love needs to be developed in brotherly love to govern it and flow in it for the full expression of God, who is this love—v. 7.
- E. Faith can be considered the seed of life, and this nobler love, the fruit (v. 8) in its full development; the six steps of development in between are the stages of its growth unto maturity.

VI. **“Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves the other has fulfilled the law”—Rom. 13:8:**

- A. Love is not merely an outward behavior but is the expression of the inward life.
- B. In order to love people and thus spontaneously fulfill the law, we need the transformation in life and the life supply; we need God’s life and God’s nature of love to transform us and supply us in life, so that in love we may live out this God, who is love, and express His love.

VII. **“But whoever keeps His word, truly in this one the love of God has been perfected. In this we know that we are in Him”—1 John 2:5:**

- A. The love of God, the word of the Lord, and God Himself are all related to one another.
- B. If we keep the Lord’s word, God’s love has been perfected in us; it is altogether a matter of the divine life, which is God Himself.
- C. God’s love is His inward essence, and the Lord’s word supplies us with this divine essence, with which we love the brothers; hence, when we keep the divine word, the divine love is perfected through the divine life, by which we live.

VIII. **“If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us”—1 John 4:12b:**

- A. The Greek word for *perfected* means to complete, to accomplish, to finish; in God Himself the love of God itself is perfect and complete; however, in us it needs to be perfected and completed in its manifestation:
  - 1. It was manifested to us in God’s sending of His Son to be both a propitiatory sacrifice and life to us—vv. 9-10.
  - 2. If we do not love one another with this love as it was manifested to us, that is, if we do not express it by loving one another with the love with which God loved us, it is not manifested perfectly and completely.
  - 3. This love is perfected and completed in its manifestation when we express it in our living by habitually loving one another with it.
- B. Our living in which we love one another in the love of God is the perfection and completion of this love in its manifestation in us; thus, in our living in God’s love, others can behold God manifested in His essence, which is love.