

Message 3

Walking in Love

Scripture Reading: Eph. 5:1-2; 1 John 2:3-11; 3:14-18; 4:7-12, 16-19; 2 John 5-6

I. “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”—Eph. 5:1-2:

- A. As the children of God, we are God-men, born of God, possessing the life and nature of God, and belonging to the species of God—v. 1; 1 John 3:1; John 1:12-13:
 - 1. God is our real, genuine, Father, and we are His real, genuine children—1 John 3:1; Eph. 5:1.
 - 2. Because we are the children of God with the life and nature of God, we can be imitators of God—Eph. 5:1.
 - 3. As the Father’s children, having the Father’s life and nature, we can be perfect as our Father is perfect—Matt. 5:48.
- B. To imitate God, we need to walk in love because God is love, lives in love, and walks in love—Eph. 5:2; 1 John 4:8, 16:
 - 1. All of God’s interactions and dealings with man are in love (vv. 9-10, 16); now that we are beloved children, we need to walk in love in order to be like this God of love (vv. 7-8, 11-12, 16-19).
 - 2. To walk in love is to walk in intimacy with God—cf. 1 John 3:1:
 - a. In the Father’s presence, we not only enjoy grace, the expression of love, but we also enjoy love itself.
 - b. In our daily walk we should always care for our Father’s feeling, for we live intimately in His tender love.
 - 3. The goal of the book of Ephesians is to bring us into love as the inner substance of God that we may enjoy His presence in the sweetness of the divine love and thereby love others as Christ did—1:4; 3:17, 19; 4:15-16; 5:25; 6:24.
 - 4. As those who have been regenerated to become God’s species, we, the children of God, should be love because God is love; since we become God in life and in nature, we also should become love—1 John 4:8, 16.
 - 5. The standard, pattern, and model for walking in love is Christ’s walking in love—Eph. 5:2:
 - a. God’s love is manifested through Christ; without Him, we would not know how much God loves us—Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:9.
 - b. Ephesians 5:2 says that we should walk in love, even as Christ also loved us; He loved us to such an extent that He sacrificed Himself for us—1 John 3:16:
 - 1) When Christ came to the earth to manifest God’s love, the greatest and most central thing He did was to sacrifice Himself for us—John 15:13; Gal. 2:20; 1 John 4:10.
 - 2) As the beloved children of God, we should live in love, and the chief principle of a living in love is to sacrifice oneself for others—3:16; cf. Phil. 2:17; 1 Thes. 2:8.
 - c. Ephesians 5:2 speaks of “an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor”:
 - 1) On the one hand, Christ sacrificed Himself because He loved us; on the other hand, He did so in order to become an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor; the issue of His sacrifice was not offered to Himself nor to man but to God.
 - 2) All genuine deeds of love are for others, and the results should be offered to God.
 - 6. In summary, the principles of walking in love are, first, to sacrifice oneself; second, to be for others; and, third, to become God’s enjoyment.

II. “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God, and everyone who loves has been begotten of God and knows God”—1 John 4:7:

- A. First John 3:10b—5:3 are a portion on the practice of the divine love; in the divine birth there is a virtue that enables us to practice the divine love:
1. If we would experience and enjoy the divine love and have it become the love by which we love others, we need to know God experientially by continuously living in the divine life—2:3-6; Phil. 3:10a.
 2. God first loved us in that He infused us with His love and generated within us the love with which we love Him and the brothers—1 John 4:19-21.
 3. The life which we have received from God is a life of love; Christ lived in this world a life of God as love, and He is now our life so that we may live the same life of love in this world and be the same as He is—3:14; 5:1; 2:6; 4:17.
 4. Our natural love must be put on the cross; one difference between God's love and our natural love is that it is very easy for our natural love to be offended.
 5. We must be persons who are flooded with and carried away by the love of Christ; the divine love should be like the rushing tide of great waters toward us, impelling us to live to Him beyond our own control—2 Cor. 5:14.
 6. The commandment regarding brotherly love is both old and new; old, because the believers have had it from the beginning of their Christian life; new, because in their Christian walk it dawns with new light and shines with new enlightenment and fresh power again and again—1 John 2:7-8; 3:11, 23; cf. John 13:34:
 - a. The commandments of the Lord are not merely injunctions; they are His words, which are spirit and life as a supply to us—6:63.
 - b. God's love is His inward essence, and the Lord's words supply us with His divine essence, with which we love Him and love the brothers.
 - c. We should love God and His children with the divine love that is conveyed to us through the words of the Lord to become our experience and enjoyment.
 7. 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—1 John 4:11-12; 2:5.
- B. First John 4 tells the secret of how to stand boldly before the judgment seat of Christ—abide in love—vv. 16-18; 2 Cor. 5:10, 14:
1. To abide in love is to live a life in which we love others habitually with the love that is God Himself so that He may be expressed in us—1 John 4:16.
 2. Perfect love is the love that has been perfected in us by our loving others with the love of God; such a love casts out fear and has no fear of being punished by the Lord at His coming back—vv. 17-18; cf. Luke 12:46-47.
 3. Love is the most excellent way for us to be anything or do anything for the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:31b—13:8a.