

## **19 We love, because He first loved us.**

John says “we” and so confesses His love for God, and for believers. “We love because He loved us first.” You can just hear John’s delight, as he includes himself as a beneficiary of God’s love. John is making sure that we all know the ultimate source and cause of our love for one another and for God. God is the source of our ability to love with a love that removes fear.

John always talks about God loving us (3:1) **3 See how great a love the Father has given us, that we would be called children of God; and in fact we are.** We recognize the magnitude of God’s great love for us most clearly in Jesus’ atoning sacrifice at the cross 1 John 3:16 **16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers and sisters.** We can say we love in many ways. We can say ‘I love you’ with words or flowers or a greeting card, or a note, or a hug, or time spent together, but God demonstrated His love for humanity with a very costly gift: the gift of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. It was the best gift ever. It cost God His son. The Apostle Paul put it this way: Rom 8:32. **32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?** And, of course John 3:16 **6 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.**

The test of any love is how much it is willing to give to be in relationship. God gave His Son as the supreme gift and thus proved that His love knows no bounds.

Jesus Christ, God’s Son, equal with God the Father: **6 who, as He already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross.** Jesus left the glory that He had always known, being worshipped by angels from before time began, emptied himself, of all that, humbly taking the form of a bond-servant, and entered space and time. He became a human being Galatians 4:4-5 **4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons and daughters.** He dwelt among men as a man, qualifying Him as our kinsman-redeemer. He lived a sinless life and was therefore able to go to the cross and die as a perfect substitute for mankind. God revealed His love by sending His Son to be a once for all sacrifice for sin and bring about salvation. He took our punishment and paid the penalty of death that Justice demanded. The result was that God’s Justice was satisfied. God could receive man back to fellowship with Himself without compromising His Holiness and Man could be reconciled to God.

The love of God is a proven love. We can be certain that God loves us as we look at Jesus’ death for us. As 1 John 4:9 says: **‘In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.’** God sent His son into the world to die for us, as the lamb slain from the foundation of the earth. Or, as 1<sup>st</sup> John 4:10 says, **10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.**

As we look to this great demonstration of God’s love toward us, we find our reason to love one another. Our love is not self-originated, it has its origin in God. It is from Him through us, and is the appropriate response to understanding that God loves us! The character of God is love. He is divine love and He initiated love in our heart and inner soul. We are called to love Him because He loved us first. A deeper level of loving God because He loved us first God’s love for us streams from the perfection of His character and the eternal excellencies of His attributes.

It is only because of His love for us that we are able to love Him back. How wonderful to know that we are not only the object of God’s divine love, but that His desire is that we reciprocate His love. By His grace He has poured the love of Christ into our inner being so that we can love with the same supernatural love with which we are loved. God is love, and through His love we can enter fellowship with one another, it casts out fear, and gives us confidence, and our ability to love rests on something greater and stronger than our own will to love, it depends on God’s love, our response to what He has

already shown us, not our ability. If our love for God is real, then it will manifest itself in our love for other Christian brothers and sisters. And, as God's love flows outward to our brothers and sisters in Christ, we have assurance before God of our relationship with Him. God's message is a message of love. And John makes sure that we get the picture. In 1 John 3:11 **11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we are to love one another;** John really wants us to know that loving one another with the love of Christ has always been God's expectation of us. Again and again, John reminds us that in order to walk as Jesus walked, in love and devotion to God, we must keep God's commandments.

We are commanded to love. **John 13:34-35 34 I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another."**

We act like our heavenly father when we love, and we demonstrate that we are His children when we love one another. This wonderful love of God for those that trust in Him is available to us, and to demonstrate toward one another, allowing us to experience the inner Joy and profound peace that God wants for His children.

We are commanded by Jesus to emulate this love, "love as I have loved you," so that Christ is seen in us. Yes, indeed, "we love Him because He first LOVED us."