

Capacity To Love

2-20-22

1 John 4:7 (ESV)

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

A message to the church about those in the church. A message to believers about other believers. Whoever truly loves “their brother and sister in Christ” not only is born of God but also “knows God.” The word love used here is *agapē* meaning giving, sacrificial, expecting nothing in return. This love in its pure form only comes from God. The church should be recognizable by its love for one another. This is not a virtue innate in us nor is it learned behavior. It is “from God.” He is the originator—the giver of love. Because love has its origin in God, those who belong to God should demonstrate love in their relations with one another. This is the proof we have been born of God. For *agapē* love can occur only among those who have come to know God’s love in Jesus Christ, which has made them God’s children. So, those who love their brothers and sisters in the community of faith show not only that they are members of God’s family but that they know God as well. This knowing is not knowing about, informational, or doctrinal facts, but is personal, relational knowing, the knowing among members of the same family. Jesus said this very clearly.

John 13:35 (ESV)

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

An honest question is how can we live up to this command?

1 John 4:4 (ESV)

HE who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Love is from God. Only our deep relationship with God can empower us and sustain us in this sacrificial *agapē* love for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Our lack of *agapē* love confronts us with a harsh reality about our walk with God.

1 John 4:8 (ESV)

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Verse 7 says, “Everyone who loves ... knows God.” Now verse 8 says, “Whoever does not love does not know God.” *Agapē love is the evidence of authentic spirituality.* Instead of softening this truth about loving the brothers and sisters, God gives HIS OWN act of *Agapē* love as an example to us.

1 John 4:9-10 (ESV) **NO/OH**

⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In 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.

God showed his love among us. He sent his only Son into the world that we might live through him. God makes clear that the love he speaks of involves concrete and objective sacrificial acts. *Thus, it is God’s love for us that defines what true love requires. Agapē love is the commitment to sacrifice one’s most beloved possession for another’s gain.*

We rejoice in God's sacrificial love for us! Receiving God's *Agapē* love, we are called to live out that same love.

1 John 4:11 (ESV)

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Oh, my goodness. God is telling us to love our Christian brothers and sisters the same way God loved us. We desire to walk in the power of God and witness all the miracles of God. However, the prerequisite is loving the brothers and sisters in Christ. God shows that the true nature of love is unselfish and sacrificial. God shows Jesus, who laid down his life for his brothers, as the example for believers to follow. We can't help but be loving because He is pouring love into us. Thus, we have an of inward constraint. The Capacity to Love!

Romans 5:5 (ESV)

God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Anyone walking in the power of the Holy Spirit loves the brothers and sisters. **No one has ever seen God, but when we love one another, God is visible! Perfect love revealed!**

1 John 4:12 (ESV)

No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

God gave us perfect Love which give us the Capacity To Love!

John 3:16 (ESV)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.