SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Sermon: "Loving One Another" Series: "Abide: 1st John"
Pastor Dave Sattler NSAC April 10, 2022 1 John 4:7-21
Other Texts: Deuteronomy 6:5/11, Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 5:8

I. Introduction Questions:

- Why do you suppose the Apostle John used the phrase "Love One Another" so often (32 times) in his writings?
- What's the significance in John calling his audience "Dear Friends?"

II. Read Biblical Text — 1 John 4:7-21

III. Discussion Questions:

1. God is the Source and Prototype for love. (V7-12)

- Where does true love come from? (7)
- Note the text says, "God is love" (8). Not 'love is God.' How can love itself become an idol and how does this affect people?
- The Bible mostly talks about *agape* love—pure, wilful, intentional, self-sacrificing love that only comes from God. How does God demonstrate this brand of love to humanity? (10, read Romans 5:8)
- How does God's demonstration of love differ from the commonly-held belief that one should only offer love to those 'worthy' of receiving it?
- How does God's love provide motivation for our love of others? (11).
  Pastor Dave quoted John Stott, Q: "No-one who has been to the cross and has seen God's immeasurable and unmerited love displayed there can go back to a life of selfishness."

2. The Spirit enables us to love one another. (V13-16a)

- What role does the Holy Spirit play in our ability to love others? (13)
- What's the difference between Christian love and the feeding-the-homeless-donating-to-charity-paying-it-forward love of today?
  Pastor Dave said, Q: "Christian love relies on, solely depends on, and flows from God alone. True Christian love gives God the glory and points people to Jesus."

3. God's love drives out fear and hatred. (V16b-21)

- How does abiding in God's love give us confidence before God? (16-17)
- Read V20 again. How does God's love drive us away from hatred?
  Why do you become cool when you discover faults in others? Why do you distance yourself from people that annoy you? How do you treat people who are different? Why do you stick to yourself?

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IV. Application Questions:

A. *Living in God's Incredible Love for Us. (V19)*

- How might 1 John 4:19 summarize what it means to be a Christian?
- "Humans have been designed to receive and give love." Agree? Discuss.
- What problems can arise when we don't know we are loved by God?
  Pastor Dave said, "We are prone to try and 'suck' love from wherever we can find it—often, in all the wrong places—even catch ourselves on a precarious quest to find love through our success and accomplishments, or through sex and relationships."
- Describe how God's love forms the foundation of our lives. What does it mean to know God's love, experience it, and root ourselves firmly in it?

B. *Loving And Being Loved By People Close to Us. (V17)*

- Why is that family members, colleagues, fellow congregants, teammates, classmates we have to deal with day after day can be some of the most difficult people to love?
- John gives this incredible declaration: "When we love one another in this world we are like Jesus." (17) How do you feel about representing, even being Jesus to other people?
- A primary avenue by which we experience God is through the Body of Christ, the Church (in all its mess, and beauty), and through church people. Why is this sometimes/often difficult for us to receive?
  Pastor Dave said, "This flies in the face of our lone-ranger ideas about Christ-following: 'I'm self-sufficient. I'm not needy. I don't need help from anyone. I can do it myself.'"
- How might we rebuild our church relationships that have taken a hit during CoVID? What effort or risk might it take from us to do so?
  We need to put ourselves in proximity to other people—to make an investment in church community. Come early to church and talk to people. Stick around after church. Join a home group. Find a place to serve. Sign up for an event or ministry outside of Sunday Services.

C. *Loving One Another Makes God Visible Among Us! (V12)*

- How can our loving others cause God to show up in our midst? What might this cost us?
  Q: "This is the love Jesus taught. This is the love Jesus lived all the way to the cross. This is love: freely giving ourselves for others so that they might experience flourishing life together with us, even if we feel they don't deserve it, even when it hurts us to do so." — Michael Pahl (May 8/17)