

It's Hard to Believe that You're Loved
TTAHTD #13 | 1 John 3:19-24
May 9, 2021

Scripture Reading

1 John 3 ¹⁹This is how we will know that we belong to the truth and will reassure our hearts before him ²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows all things. ²¹Dear friends, if our hearts don't condemn us, we have confidence before God ²²and receive whatever we ask from him because we keep his commands and do what is pleasing in his sight. ²³Now this is his command: that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴The one who keeps his commands remains in him, and he in him. And the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit he has given us.

Pre-Sermon Remarks

- Series overview: Prayer, Abuse, Hell, Other Religions, Addictions, today: **LOVE**

Introduction

John Lennon *All you need is love...it's easy!*

Big idea: Everybody needs love

- Theological: image-bearers of God, we are created for relationship | TRINITY
- Emotional: experiencing so many other benevolent feelings is based on feeling loved
- Biological: babies die from "failure to thrive" without skin-to-skin contact
- Societal: not just the Beatles, countless thousands of songs have been written

****Love is at the core of being**

1. Central attribute of God Exodus 34:6, Psalm 136, 1 John 4:8
2. Central command for us Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:36-40

Defining love **Things that are hard to do: define love!*

1. Action | *giving, serving, protecting*
2. Feeling | *words, emotions, touch*
3. Commitment | *Hebrew hesed = faithful/covenantal/steadfast love*
 - Without action, love is sentimentality
 - Without feeling, love is robotic
 - Without commitment, love is using another

Made to receive love

From God	From family
From parents	From friends
From spouse	From self

* Problem: we have a hard time receiving love! We have a hard time "feeling" loved.

**Receiving some help from John, the disciple whom "Jesus loved" | 1 John = the love book

Feeling condemned

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Five reasons why we don't feel loved by God

1. Some don't feel loved by God because they don't yet know God.

Knowing God

1 John 4 ⁷Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

- Love is not God. But this central essence of God's nature is love.
- *Well then, how can I be known by God?* Great question: you have to know Jesus.

2. Some don't feel loved by God because they think love is based on behavior.

God's love, not ours

1 John 4 ⁹God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

- *What about all the verses in 1 John that talk about us loving others, and not sinning?*
- Tension: God's love will change/fuel our behavior, but it's not based on our behavior.
- All of the Christian life is responding to God's love, not earning it.

3. Some don't feel loved by God because they are harboring sin.

Harboring sin

1 John 4 ²⁰If anyone says, "I love God," and yet hates his brother or sister, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother or sister whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹And we have this command from him: The one who loves God must also love his brother and sister.

- Again, remember what we just read: response, not earning
- But the reality is that when we hold onto hatred, or any other sin, it robs us of the experience of closeness with God.
- Analogy: marriage, or friendship.
 - If I buy my way into their friendship, then it's not real love
 - But if I love them, I won't desire to do hurtful things to them

4. We don't feel loved by God because we're bound up by pride and focused on others

Eyes on others

1 John 3 ¹¹ For this is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another, ¹² unlike Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

- Jealousy is a form of pride. Jealousy says, "I want what they have, I deserve what they have, I'm going to take what they have."
- Comparison is a love destroyer. The more we look at others, the less we look at Jesus.

5. We don't feel loved by God because we're bound up in shame.

Bound by shame

1 John 2 [on the subject of antichrists] ²⁰ But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth...²⁶ I have written these things to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. ²⁷ As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you don't need anyone to teach you. Instead, his anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie; just as it has taught you, remain in him. ²⁸ So now, little children, remain in him so that when he appears we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

- Shame is as old as Adam and Eve in the garden

Ed Welch Shame and guilt are close companions but not identical. Shame is the more common and broader of the two. In Scripture you will find shame (nakedness, dishonor, disgrace, defilement) about ten times more often than you find guilt. Guilt lives in the courtroom where you stand alone before the judge. It says, "You are responsible for wrongdoing and legally answerable." "You are wrong." "You have sinned." The guilty person expects punishment and needs forgiveness. Shame lives in the community, though the community can feel like a courtroom. It says, "You don't belong—you are unacceptable, unclean, and disgraced" because "You are wrong, you have sinned" (guilt), or "Wrong has been done to you" or "You are associated with those who are disgraced or outcast." The shamed person feels worthless, expects rejection, and needs cleansing, fellowship, love, and acceptance.

Culture's solutions

In love with love (love is love, all you need is love)

In love with romance (the most common form of the above)

In love with self (you just gotta love yourself, girl)

Everybody needs Jesus' love

1. In Jesus, we get to know the God whose name is love
2. In Jesus, our acceptance is not based on our performance
3. In Jesus, we can put sin to death and be truly changed
4. In Jesus, we can learn to live with humility before him
5. In Jesus, we can be set free from the crippling effects of shame and false love

Walking in love

1. Receive Jesus' love
2. Know your identity in Christ
3. Bring your shame into his healing light
4. Learn to give and receive love in various ways
5. Let God's love empower you on mission

Benediction

1 John 4 ¹⁶And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him. ¹⁷In this, love is made complete with us so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because as he is, so also are we in this world.