

Love made Visible

Ray Stedman

I. Introduction.

A. Text: I John 4:7-12.

B. The Christian faith has pre-eminently emphasized truth and love. Jesus Christ is the eminent expression of both of these.

C. Christianity is to be an experience of living the truth in love.

D. One of the most common tactics of the enemy is to overemphasize a truth making it a half-truth.

E. Many have suffered vicious attacks toward their faith by other Christians, which raises serious questions about the genuineness of the attackers' faith.

II. We are to love others simply because others are people.

A. True love is an interest in and concern for another person simply because he is a person.

B. This kind of love can only originate with God because this kind of love is from God and God is this kind of love.

1. Wherever the life of God is found, this love is found.

2. "God is love" means that at the root of all that God does is love—even judgment.

3. The only reason we know that God is love is because He sent His only Son in love—nothing in nature says that God is love.

4. God's love is the love of the unlovely.

5. Jesus came that hate and bickering might be replaced by peace and acceptance—so that we might love.

6. Love ought to be measured by God's love toward us, not our warm affections toward Him.

7. Love that satisfies justice is righteousness.

C. If you have experienced God's love despite your rebellion, you can and ought to love someone else.

1. We owe it to others because we have the life of God in us.

2. If we do not have God's life in us, we ought not to pretend that we do love.

III. The only place that God's love can be seen is manifest in us.

- A. God's dwelling in us becomes visible through our love.
- B. Everyone around us is reading the gospel according to you.
- C. God's love only reaches its final manifestation when it is formed in man.
- D. Above all else, we are to put on love.

Application questions:

1. How would you respond to someone who claims that he or she only serves a loving God and not a judgmental one from the Scripture?

2. How does it help one to know in a challenging situation that God's love is measured by His love for us and not our love for Him?

3. Who have you had a difficult time loving of late? What can you do to reach out to that person with God's love this week?
