

The First letter of John

True Knowledge

Answers to Session Five – God is Love

We were looking at 1 John 4:7-21 in particular to isolate and highlight the answers to the questions. An easy session, but one which concentrates us on God as Love itself.

1. Who has been born of God and knows him?

“Everyone who loves him” has been born of God and knows God. 4:7

2. How does God show his love for us?

“He sent his one and only son into the world that we might live through him”. 4:9b and *“sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins”*. 4:10b

3. Why is it so important to love one another?

Because God loves us so much that he *“sent his one and only son into the world that we might live through him.”* 4:9 and he *“sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”* 4:10. *“Since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another”*.4:11

We should also add to that, although it's not in these verses, because Jesus told us we should.

4. How is God's love made complete in us?

By living our lives in love, because then God can fill us with his love and so make us complete.

5. How do we know that we live in Him and he in us?

“If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the son of God, God lives in him and he in God.” 4:15

I think 4:14 is John speaking for himself and others, who knew Jesus during his time on earth, and are eye witnesses. But with faith we can still testify to the truth of the verse.

I had been preparing this session then watched a live streaming of the service of Ordination of Deacons from Christchurch Cathedral, Oxford. (My Great nephew's wife was being ordained). In his sermon the Rt. Rev. Steven Croft took a clause from the Liturgy of Ordination to emphasise. It was that, “Deacons are called.....as agents of God's purposes of love”. It seemed particularly apt as we ponder “God is love”. The Bishop went on to say, “When you face a problem and don't know what to do, choose the path of love.

6. The words “water and blood” have a great significance for John. We are reminded of John 19:34, when John saw blood and water flowing from Christ's side after the spear had pierced his heart. By linking the words to the death of Jesus we think of what he said just before he died in John 19:30, *“It is finished”*. It was the moment of his victory over death. This explains 1 John 5:4, *“This is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith.”* With faith we have eternal life, because Jesus defeated death through the cross.

On the other hand think of what Jesus told Nicodemus, *“I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit”*, and he goes on, *“Flesh gives birth to flesh and Spirit gives birth to spirit.”*, John 3:5-6. At birth there is a lot of water; amniotic fluid, but it is more likely baptism we should be thinking about. Baptism is the symbolic acknowledgement of repentance and recognition of faith. At Jesus’ baptism, John the Baptist saw *“the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him”*, John 1:32. The moment when John the Baptist understood for certain who Jesus was.

Our faith is given by the grace of God and we receive the Holy Spirit.

I wonder if the importance of blood and water is, in John’s mind, linked to the certainty of Jesus humanity and the Spirit of his divinity?

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