

February Teaching Theme: Lent

讲员 Speaker: Pastor Tian

题目 Topic: "Love Each Other in Christ"

经文 Scripture: 1 John 4:7-21

Monthly Theme: This month, we will spend time reflecting upon matters of spiritual formation, discipline, and the process of sanctification in light of Lent season. This month for much of the Global Church begins a season called "Lent," from February 17th to April 3rd. Lent is a time to "travel with Jesus towards his death." In this season, we spend extra time in repentance through self-examination and renewal through identification with Jesus on his journey. This season is characterized by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (generosity). Much of the Christian life and spiritual formation is the battle of living like Jesus and not participating in evil (sin). Growing into the likeness of Jesus is both the Holy Spirit's work and the choice to submit to the Holy Spirit in the choices we make. We kicked off the series this month, spending time reflecting on "Who We Are Becoming" and with whose eyes we see the world, ourselves, and others. Pastor Tian continued two weeks ago, talking about winning the battle in Christ. Last week, Dr. Hamilton examined two important parables Jesus told about prayer, found in the Gospel of Luke. And on this final Sunday of February, Pastor Tian examined 1 John 4:7-21.

二月 February – 四旬期 Lent

7th – Who Are We Becoming? (Phil 3)

14th - 舍己的争战 The Battle of Self-Denial (罗马书 Romans 7:7-8:1-2 and/or 诗篇 Proverbs 5) (四旬期 Lent)

21st – 祈祷与谦卑的争战 The Battle of Prayer & Humility (路加福音 Luke 18:1-14) (四旬期 Lent)

28th – 爱的争战 The Battle of Love (约翰一书 1 John 4:7-21) (四旬期 Lent)

Resources:

[Sermon Video](#)

[Sermon Slides](#)

[Agape/Love](#) (Bible Project) [English - 4:49]

Subtitle Available on Youtube in Chinese

Discussion Questions (Pastor Tian):

- (1) Ready 1 John 4:7-21 together. What observations do you make and what stands out to you? How would you summarize the passage?
- (2) 约翰为什么要强调弟兄姊妹要彼此相爱？这对我们今天的教会有哪些提醒？Why does John emphasize that brothers and sisters should love each other? What reminders does this have for our church today?
- (3) 如何理解上帝的爱？上帝的爱与我们的爱之间有哪些不同？How do you understand God's love? What is the difference between God's love and our love?

- (4) 什么是你生命中的“最爱”？你愿不愿将他/它们献给上帝？Who is the "favorite" in your life? Are you willing to dedicate him/them to God? (In other words, what is the most important thing in your life? Would you offer them to God? I.e. wealth, career, status, dreams for children, etc.)
- (5) 生活中你是否有被伤害或伤害他人的经历？结果怎样（你是否真实的饶恕他人或经历被饶恕）？Do you have any experience of being hurt or hurting others in your life? What is the result (do you truly forgive others or experience being forgiven)?

Important Notes (Pastor Will):

Agape Love (what John is talking about) is a choice that you make to seek the well-being of people other than yourself.

This is not always easy (or even often!). But *it is exactly in this type of choice of love that we will experience life!* **Here's why:** Agape love - the kind that extends to even those who reject us, the kind of love that puts another person's good above our own - that's the kind of love God has within himself ("God is love") and for us.

Theology Lesson: God has always existed as a community of perfect self-giving love, which is what we call the *Trinity* (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). By God's very essence, God is always focused on loving the other (a love so perfect that God is 3-in-1!). This is the type of love the Bible tells us compelled God to create. This is the type of love that compelled Jesus to willingly give up his life for the good of all humanity. God wants to invite us into this perfect loving relationship of Father, Son, Holy Spirit - making a way for us to be in a relationship with Him. (Dr. Carissa Quinn)

Notes on 1 John 4:7-21:

- Verse 7 **"...for love comes from God."** (source)
- Verse 9 **"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him."** (How)
- Verse 10 **"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."** (Why)
- Verse 11 **"Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."** (Why we should love others)
- Verse 12 **"No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us."**
 - Recall, this is just like what we have continually talked about, that when we live like Jesus, the spaces we occupy give people a taste of "heaven on earth." When we act in love, people get a taste of God himself.
 - Interestingly, John tells us that those who **"live in love"** experience God. Our **"love is made complete"** and we can experience assurance/confidence on **"judgment day"** (when King Jesus returns), if **"in this world, we are like Jesus."** This is our continual pursuit and goal as Christian is to know God and to live like Jesus. (v.16-17) SO, when we speak and act in sacrificial love we are not only giving people a taste of "heaven on earth" but we also will experience God

and confidence in our walk with Him. **“Perfect (or complete) love drives out fear...”** A loving relationship (with both God and others) isn’t characterized by fear but confidence and assurance. (Note: this is different than the word translated fear elsewhere in the Bible, like **“Fear God and keep his commandments.”** This “fear” is better understood as “reverence” or viewing God as “awesome.”)

More often than not, choosing to act in agape love is incredibly difficult or even painful to do. A worthwhile question for us to reflect on is, “What are some practices we can do to help us choose love when it is difficult?”

- We learn in 1 John that there is a direct connection between our experience of God’s love and our love for others. When it is incredibly difficult to love; when doing what’s best for another person is painful, or when we are having a hard time feeling love for a person - **our starting point can be to meditate and reflect on the depths of God’s love for all humanity, for us.** That the God of the Universe wanted to create us so that we could experience the depth of love that exists in Himself. That this all-powerful God who needed nothing in himself loved us so much that he became a powerless, vulnerable human and suffered and died so we could be united to God and participate in His love. (How AMAZING!)
- We see throughout 1 John that the key to “loving” and “living like Jesus” is the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. John constantly reminds us that God **“has given us of his Spirit.”** With this in mind, we can literally ask the Holy Spirit for help to love in a difficult situation.

Sermon Summary (Elder Yin):

在基督里彼此相爱

田传道2/28/21

"亲爱的弟兄啊，我们应当彼此相爱，因为爱是从神来的。凡有爱心的，都是由神而生，并且认识神。没有爱心的，就不认识神，因为神就是爱。神差他独生子到世间来，使我们借着祂得生，神爱我们的心在此就显明了。不是我们爱神，乃是神爱我们，差他的儿子为我们的罪作了挽回祭，这就是爱了。亲爱的弟兄啊，神既是这样爱我们，我们也当彼此相爱。从来没有人见过神，我们若彼此相爱，神就住在我们里面，爱他的心在我们里面得以完全了。神将他的灵赐给我们，从此就知道我们是住在他里面，他也住在我们里面。父差子作世人的救主；这是我们所看见且作见证的。凡认耶稣为神儿子的，神就住在他里面，他也住在神里面。神爱我们的心，我们也知道也信。神就是爱；住在爱里面的，就是住在神里面，神也住在他里面。这样，爱在我们里面得以完全，我们就可以在审判的日子坦然无惧。因为他如何，我们在这世上也如何。爱里没有惧怕；爱既完全，就把惧怕除去。因为惧怕里含着刑罚，惧怕的人在爱里未得完全。我们爱，因为神先爱我们。人若说「我爱神」，却恨他的弟兄，就是说谎话的；不爱他所看见的弟兄，就不能爱没有看见的神。爱神的，也当爱弟兄，这是我们从神所受的命令。"

约翰一书 4:7-21

一，时代背景，

约翰，在拔摩岛后，在小亚细亚牧会直到死，约翰看见内部教会问题，虽外界动乱逐渐平静，但教会内部信仰变化，诺斯底主义的影响，反对基督道成肉身的人。约翰再次提醒大家：“论到从起初原有的生命之道，就是我们所听见、所看见、亲眼看过、亲手摸过的。”约翰一书 1:1，生命之道是他亲眼见过的。鼓励弟兄姐妹不要被若斯低主义影响，说耶稣不是道成肉身的。让基督徒不要失去爱神和爱人的激情，“凡有世上财物的，看见弟兄穷乏，却塞住怜恤的心，爱神的心怎能存在他里面呢？”约翰一书 3:17。知有需要但不帮弟兄的是不爱神的。

二，理解爱的真实含义

"亲爱的弟兄啊，我们应当彼此相爱，因为爱是从神来的。凡有爱心的，都是由神而生，并且认识神。没有爱心的，就不认识神，因为神就是爱。神差他独生子到世间来，使我们借着他得生，神爱我们的心在此就显明了。不是我们爱神，乃是神爱我们，差他的儿子为我们的罪作了挽回祭，这就是爱了。"

约翰一书 4:7-10

现代人类进入自我优先的模式，把神的爱变成自我中心的爱，神的爱是围绕着我们来转。成功神学就是典型的。好像神爱我，我一定会成功，上帝会给我所需的，不是神中心。圣经中的爱不是神给我们所要的，圣经爱是按神的旨意。我们以前常听到的"没有无缘无故的爱或恨"（黑格尔）。这已经似乎在世上成为罗辑。但神的爱不是世上的人说的爱，有人会觉得不现实的，但其实我们在神里面是完全且可能的。神的爱超过人的理解，爱不可爱的。有时神的爱我们不易理解。十字架上的爱不仅是神的爱表现，而且也在从中显出我们的罪。在此神的爱帮助我认识我们的罪，爱是愿意为我们付出代价，神爱不是溺爱，是要改变我们生活方式，从罪中救我们出来。带人进入真理，爱中有鼓励或也会有指责。

三，彼此相爱

1，爱神，申6：4-5，双轨制爱，爱神很重要，不是爱人就可以了。爱人是爱神的一部分，但爱神是另一部分。爱神是当身体当做活祭。全人摆上。身体，感情。

北京和吉敏恋爱见证，等吉敏90分钟，身心摆上。爱神是身心向神有信心，愿和神化时间，建立关系。

A，愿意回应上帝的呼召。被呼召时你愿不愿意接受。献给上帝成为活祭。

B，将我们的最爱献于神，我们的儿女，我们心目中给儿子的定位，有没有牧师在定位中。或者去基督教大学还是不信神的名校？现在统计数字看到年轻人去教会很少。基督徒父母应该鼓励儿女们进入神职，将儿女献给神。所有职业都是改善当下，现今人的处境，唯有牧师的职位，不仅是改善当下，而更是为了将来，有一天与神同在住。

2，爱人，

A，彼此帮助，我们是神的手脚，在我们教会有很多爱人的例子。说容易，做不容易，当人见我们彼此相爱，他们愿意来到主面前。付出的代价是值得的。

B，彼此接纳和饶恕，只有身旁的人，亲朋好友，弟兄姐妹在相处中，容易伤害我们，饶恕彼此极其重要。当然这是易说不易做。但当基督改变我们的生命，我们可靠神而做。

爱城的故事。被杀安妮的哥所说的话。完全的爱只能神里面能找到。

四，结语

世上的爱有限，随时间改变，在基督里的爱长存。饶恕是必须，是神的命令也是我们向神的爱的反应，应该活出神的爱，荣耀神。

Love each other in Christ

Peter Tian

Open with psalms 100, praise the Lord

1John 4:7-21

In Christ, we have new identity, Royal priesthood, in Christ we are one family, in victory in Christ, today's topic is to love each other in Christ.

The background of 1 John, written at 90AD by apostle John. After the island of Patmos, John pastored church in Asia Minor till his death. He saw the crisis of change in church's faith and life—did not acknowledge Christ's incarnation, the reasons were the material world was evil, therefore the holy God would not enter human body. John here emphasized that they had touched Jesus's flesh. They also deviated the way of Jesus in their behavior—they lost the first love for the Lord and people. John emphasized God is love. Love shows in actions & truth not just talking.

1. The source of love is God

The meaning of love: we should love each other because God is Love, love overflows from the source

Since the fall of Adam, people live in self-centered life. The inherited pattern. If God loves me, he should answer my prayers, God serves me. So God's love is for my success and fortune.

1John 4:7-10

The way God loves us is according to his own design.

In the real life, when someone treats me well, he must have purpose. Human being's love is conditional.

God loves even sinners, those against Him, just as He prayed on the cross "Father forgives them for they don't know what they are doing."

He loves not because we are lovable.

The cross shows His Love as well as our sins. God's love helps us to know our sins, guides us to repentance. Not to spoil us, but solve our problems and change us to live in His way.

True love doesn't tolerate evil.

2. The practice of love--love one another

A. Love God

Between God and man, we need to respond to His love. Not social gospel

Love God with all your heart, all your mind, all your strength

Deut 6:4-5

Offering our bodies as living sacrifices to God

Romans 12:1

Not like the OT time burnt on the altar, Not really! It's LIVING sacrifice, not dead

When Betty and I became boyfriend and girlfriend, one day pastor Peter was worried, went to crossroad to wait for Betty to return for 1.5h.

The action followed the heart.

Faith in God, willing to spend time with God.

Respond to God's calling

Offering "the one" we love most to God, dedicate our loved ones, our children to Him.

Encourage our favorites to become servants of God.

For career expectation for them, consider pastor as the most glorious profession. A good fellowship in college is one important aspect of consideration for choosing colleges

Church attendance b/w age 18-22: 1/3 drop out, 1/3 only go once in a month, according to LifeWay's survey

We lose our children to the world. Pastor is the only career, focus on the future, so encourage your kids

B. Love others

Help each other in Christ, when one is weak, in need, we are Christ's hands and feet.

An example, one church member who got helped, and their family were touched and wanted to be baptized! What a joy!!

Lamentation for others' relationship with God

Forgive and accept each other too!

Willing to accept and forgive other, easily said than done!

As our life transformed in Christ,

1991 killing in University of Iowa

Lu Gang's letter vs. the victim Annie's family letter to LuGang's parents

Love wins over hatred

Complete forgiveness only found in Christ's love, overflow from the source of God's unconditional love

Summary

Only love in Christ is everlasting, unconditional, not because we are lovable

Love each other is God's command, also our way to respond to god's love!

Because of our love to each other, God is glorified