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God is Love

1 John 4.7-8

Series: Blessed Assurance (Communion Series)

The Village Church

March 1, 2026

I. Introduction

- A. George Grant makes me tired
 - 1. He's actually a little younger than I am – by a year or so
 - 2. But while I was twiddling my thumbs doing very little, it seems, over the course of my career, he was busy
 - 3. He's a pastor; he's been a church planter
 - 4. He founded a study center and a classical Christian school in Franklin, TN
 - 5. He founded several Christian schools in northern Iraq
 - 6. He even helped found a Christian liberal arts college
- B. But those are just some things that George Grant did
 - 1. Someone once said that George never had an unpublished thought
 - 2. He wrote or co-authored about two books a year for the past 40 years
 - a. I can't read as fast as he writes!
 - 3. Some of the things he wrote are extraordinarily influential and important
 - a. He wrote an exposé of Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, exposing her astonishing commitment to eugenics
 - b. He wrote books on history, books on culture, books on the arts, books on the family
 - 4. One of his most influential books for the church was *The Micah Mandate*, a wonderful exposition of Micah 6.8
 - 5. He wrote novels, books on Christmas, books on citizenship
 - 6. I use regularly his *Christian Almanac*, a daily devotional guide through Christian history which he wrote with Greg Wilbur
- C. George Grant is just one of those Christians who looms large in the evangelical landscape
 - 1. When I do the unbiblical thing, and compare myself with another, I wonder how I've so wasted my life!
- D. In my prior church in Morgantown, WV, we had George come and give a couple of lectures
 - 1. I was teaching a short course in our study center on the biblical roots of the Middle East Christ
 - a. He had written a book on the subject: *The Blood of the Moon: Understanding the Conflict between Islam and Western Civilization*
 - b. Somehow, we were able to get on his schedule

- E. I picked up George from the airport and we had a chance to get to know each other, albeit briefly
 - 1. But in the course of the drive, I said to George, “With all the things that you do, how do you have time to write?”
 - 2. I’ll never forget his answer
 - 3. He said, “But Andy, I *am* a writer”
 - F. Writing, you see, was not something George *did*
 - 1. Writing was who he *is*
 - 2. Writing was the essence of his nature
 - 3. And if writing is the essence of his nature, whatever else he *did*, he must write
 - G. Understanding who someone *is*, is critically important for understanding why someone does what he or she does
 - 1. And that’s especially true about God
 - H. There are many ways to discern the nature and character of God
 - 1. A study of His attributes is an important enterprise
 - a. Whether done as a series as I’ve done on Sunday evenings a few years ago
 - b. Or whether we simply recognize God’s attributes as they appear to us in whatever passages of scripture we are studying at the time
 - 2. One of the things we discover when we explore the nature and character of God is that the number of times God says in His word that “I *am* _____” the way George Grant said “I *am* a writer” are actually few and far between
 - a. In fact there are only four such statements when God says in His word something like “I *am* _____”
 - 3. One is “God is spirit” (John 4.24)
 - a. Another is “... God is a consuming fire” (Deuteronomy 4.24, Hebrews 12.29)
 - b. Yet another is “God is light” (1 John 1.5)
 - 4. But our all-time favorite is “God is love” (1 John 4.8, 16)
 - I. God *is* love
 - 1. That’s who He is
 - a. It’s not something He does
 - 2. Though who He *is* affects what He does
 - a. And who He *is* affects what we do too!
 - b. As believers in Jesus, we can’t help but be impacted on the nature and character of the God we adore and worship
 - 3. And that’s what we see in the passage that is before us this morning
- II. 1 John 4:7–8 (ESV) —
- A. 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.
 - B. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

III. Testing Assurance

- A. We return this morning to our communion series entitled Blessed Assurance
 - 1. And our text for this series is the 1st Epistle of John
- B. The purpose of 1 John is the assurance of salvation
 - 1. **1 John 5:13** (ESV) —
 - a. 13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.
 - 2. That's why it's particularly appropriate for a communion message
 - a. For we should, as we approach the Lord's table in the appropriate manner, with the appropriate attitude, with the appropriate recognition of the presence of Christ, sense the assurance of our salvation
 - 3. And 1 John helps us sort out the issues which affect our assurance
 - a. And it gives us four tests of assurance
 - b. Tests, which, as we do the kind of self-examination called for when we approach the Lord's Supper, help us to sort out genuine assurance from the myriad of false assurances which seek to distract us from what truly matters in our relationship with God
- C. Tests which if we are able to see in ourselves these evidences, we are able to be encouraged in our faith, confident that we truly belong to the family of God
 - 1. Tests
 - a. **The Test of Love** – that if we truly love our brothers and sisters, we can be assured of our salvation
 - b. **The Test of Obedience** – that if we obey the commands of Christ, we can be assured of our salvation
 - c. **The Test of Truth** – that if truly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the incarnate Son of God, we can be assured of our salvation
 - d. **The Test of Abiding** – that if we continue in our commitment to follow Christ we can be assured
 - 2. Once John as laid out these tests in the early chapters, he revisits them – as any good teacher would
 - a. Elaborating on them
 - b. Examining them as a jeweler would examine the facets of a diamond
 - c. Discovering every nuance of beauty, light and clarity in the process
- D. Once again in our text this morning we return to the test of love
 - 1. And he begins with a reminder of our obligation with respect to love
 - 2. **1 John 4:7** (ESV) —
 - a. 7 **Beloved, let us love one another...**
- E. Ok, we've heard that before, haven't we?
 - 1. The OT spoke of loving one's neighbor (**Leviticus 19.18**)
 - a. It spoke of loving the sojourner who is among you (**Leviticus 19.34**)
 - 2. Jesus echoes the Law on several occasions, telling us to love our neighbors as ourselves (**Matthew 19.19, 22.39**)

3. Paul and James also admonish us to do the same (Romans 13.9; Galatians 5.14; James 2.8)
- F. In the gospel of John, Jesus urges us to love one another (John 13.34, 15.12, 17)
 1. An admonition that Paul echoes (Romans 12.10) as does Peter (1 Peter 1.22)
- G. But in our text, John tells us *why* we should engage in such love
 1. In fact, not only why we *should* engage in such love
 - a. But why we *must* love one another

IV. The Source of Love

- A. The first thing we see John say, is that the reason we need to love one another is that God is the source of love
 1. 1 John 4:7 (ESV) —
 - a. 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God...
- B. Love is from God – God is the ultimate source of love
 1. Now, normally we think of the love of God in relation to us
 - a. God loves us
 - b. In fact, God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him might have eternal life (John 3.16)
 2. But this text says more than that
 - a. It says that love is from God
 - b. Which means that long before the Father sent the Son, there was love in God
- C. Biblically, God is Triune
 1. He is Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit
 - a. One God, three persons
 2. We won't take the time to prove that from scripture
 - a. And as difficult as the Trinity is to understand, it's really very easy to prove
 - b. The Bible is clear – the God of the Bible is one God
 - c. But just as clear, there are three persons who relate to each other
 3. The Son is distinguishable from the Father
 - a. The Son prays to the Father
 - b. The Son does what the Father asks of the Son
 4. And the Spirit is distinguishable from the Father and the Son
- D. But the point of this is – there was mutual love and affection between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit long before there was ever a world or a humanity to love!
 1. Consider the love of the Father for the Son:
 2. John 17:24 (ESV) —
 - a. 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.
 3. John 3:35 (ESV) —
 - a. 35 The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.
- E. But then, this love is reciprocal – the Son loves the Father

1. **John 14:31** (ESV) —
 - a. 31 “but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father...”
 - F. So, we must love one another because the very source of love is God
 1. Love is from God!
 2. Human beings didn’t conjure up this idea by itself
 - a. It wasn’t some characteristic that emerged from evolutionary pressures
 - b. It didn’t arise from some primordial soup!
 3. Love, however our corrupted culture wants to distort it, is something that emanated from the Creator Himself
 - a. Because all true love comes from God
 4. He is the source of love
- V. **The New Birth and Love**
- A. The next thing John says about our obligation to love one another has to do with who we are as believers in Jesus
 1. If we are believers in Jesus, the only reason is that we have been born again
 - a. Born of the Spirit
 - B. **1 John 4:7** (ESV) —
 1. **7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God**
 - C. Being born of God, or being born again, is something that John is eminently familiar with
 1. For he records much of what Jesus says about it
 - D. Remember the interchange between Jesus and Nicodemus when Nicodemus came to Jesus at night?
 1. **John 3:3** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
 2. **John 3:5–6** (ESV) —
 - a. 5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
 - b. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
 - E. John summarizes the essence of this passage earlier in his gospel
 1. **John 1:12–13** (ESV) —
 - a. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,
 - b. 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
 2. If you’ve received Jesus as your Savior, that wasn’t some brilliant insight you had on your own
 - a. That wasn’t some reasoned analysis of your circumstances, and of the nature of the world you live in

- b. No – if you believe in Jesus it’s because you were born from above!
 - c. You’ve be born of God
 - 3. God, by the Holy Spirit, came to a spiritually dead corpse and breathed new life into it!
 - a. And that’s the reason you’re able to love
 - b. And that’s the reason you *must* love one another
 - 4. If God is the source of love, and if you’ve been born of God – you too must love!
 - a. It’s in your nature to love!
 - b. Because the source of all love is the source if your own spiritual life
 - c. Because whoever loves has been born of God!
- F. Now perhaps I can sense an objection
 - 1. Maybe you know of someone who is not a believer
 - a. But they, by all accounts, are very much loving people
 - b. They give of themselves for others
 - c. They are willing to forgo their own advantages and comforts for others
 - d. Others would say about them that they are loving
 - 2. And there is much to commend this observation
- G. Let me share a couple of thoughts about our loving non-believing friends
 - 1. First, the Creator of all things has made human beings in His image
 - a. Sin has tarnished that image of God in humanity to be sure
 - b. The image of God in human beings has been corrupted, to be sure
 - 2. But the remnants of the image of God is not entirely absent
 - a. And even in unbelievers, glimpses of the image of God in human beings can be observed
 - b. It can be observed in the intellect – humans use cognitive faculties that emanate from the mind of God
 - c. It can be observed in the emotions – humans have the capacity to feel empathy with others because they emanate from the heart of God
 - d. And even humans can love in some measure because the remnants of the image of God includes God’s love
 - 3. But, for those who are born of God, born again, born of the Spirit – those dimensions of the image of God in humanity are redeemed and restored
 - a. And the impulses of God-love are growing to become the dominant affection in those who are born again
 - b. And yes, we still struggle with the flesh, the sinful nature
 - c. Which wars against the spirit
 - 4. But ultimately, the love of God in those who are truly born again will prevail
 - 5. With respect to those who do not believe in the Son of God and who nevertheless love in some, sometimes significant, measures – they often rely on the borrowed capital of the God whom they reject!

- a. That happens all the time with other human faculties – the intellect and the emotions
- b. And it happens with love
- 6. People who talk about love reject the God who alone is the source of love!
 - a. We pray that the light will turn on for them
 - b. And they will see that genuine love exists because of God – not because of some human innovation

VI. **The Knowledge of God and Love**

- A. The next thing that John mentions has to do with the knowledge of God
 - 1. Those who love also know God
- B. **1 John 4:7** (ESV) —
 - 1. **7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.**
- C. Those believers who genuinely love their brothers and sisters have not only been born of God, they actually know God in a way that others cannot
- D. Love in biblical terms involves the self-giving, self-sacrificial love of one human being for another
 - 1. Giving up one’s advantages and prerogatives – one’s rights – so that others may benefit
 - 2. And the ultimate self-sacrificial love is that of the Lord Jesus Christ’s life and death for us
- E. **Romans 5:7–8** (ESV) —
 - 1. **7** For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—
 - 2. **8** but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- F. This displays the ultimate test of love – the love of God
 - 1. That God sacrificed His own Son, not for anyone deserving – for no one deserves the favor of God
 - a. We are all sinners
 - b. We have fallen short of His glory
 - c. We have all transgressed His law
 - 2. But God loves such people!
 - a. God loves the undeserving sinner!
 - b. Loves him so much that He sent His Son to die for us
 - c. Turned His back, as it were, on His Son
 - d. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” was Jesus’ cry on the cross
 - e. The Father, with the mutual agreement and willingness of the Son, inflicted the wrath of God which we sinners deserved, on the Son
 - 3. And only Christians can come to understand that kind of love
 - a. And practice it in some measure
 - b. By forgiving those who have sinned against us
 - c. And by loving those in most need of the favor of God

- G. This is the knowledge of God
 - 1. Because God, who is the source of love
 - a. Who has, by His Spirit, given us the capacity and impulse of love
 - 2. Has also given us knowledge of God that can't be gained in any other way!
 - 3. It is an experiential knowledge
 - a. That as we practice the sacrificial love of God, we grow in our knowledge of God
- H. Of course, John, as the consummate teacher, contrasts this remarkable relationship with it's opposite
 - 1. **1 John 4:8** (ESV) —
 - a. **8 Anyone who does not love does not know God...**
 - 2. Those who don't love the way God loves, do not know this God
 - a. This God becomes merely an academic construct
 - b. An idea
 - c. A proposition to be debated
 - 3. Because only those who truly love the way God loves can really know God
 - a. Know Him experientially
 - 4. Not just know Him from a distance – like we know another person's name
 - a. But really know a person by relationship

VII. **The Nature of God and Love**

- A. All of this happens, of course, because God *is* love!
- B. **1 John 4:7–8** (ESV) —
 - 1. **7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.**
 - 2. **8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.**
- C. “Because God *is* love”
 - 1. That's who He *is*
 - a. That's His nature
 - b. It's not just what He does
 - c. It is His essence
- D. God *must* love
 - 1. Not because some other being obligates Him to love
 - a. But because that's who He *is*
 - 2. George Grant writes because he *is* a writer
 - a. God loves because He *is* love
 - 3. And you and I *must* love one another
 - a. Because we are born of God
 - b. We share His nature to a degree by His Spirit who lives within us
 - 4. Peter amazingly speaks of our becoming “partakers of the divine nature” (**2 Peter 1.4**)
 - a. That doesn't mean that we become God
 - b. But it means that by His Spirit we are able to love one another
 - c. And that we *must* love one another