

THE LOVE WITH WHICH WE CAN LOVE OTHERS

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(Scripture Lesson: 1John 4:1-21)
(Text: 1John 3:1)

Last Wednesday, Jan. 21, 1962 I received a letter from our secretary at Central Church, telling me about the celebration of the 50th Wedding Anniversary of Mr. & Mrs. Juanito Corales. One thing that is embodied in this letter is that, I shall give the message during the Wedding Anniversary.

And so this afternoon, for our meditation, I have chosen as our text, this verse- 1John 3: 1- "See what love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God."

Although I am not yet married, and I don't know when I shall get married, may I say the following things regarding marriage.

First, marriage, I believe from the Christian point of view must be established by love. Without love, there is no real marriage that can be established.

Second, marriage, must be fed with love. Without love, a married life cannot continue in its mission and purposes, so it needs to be fed with love.

Third, marriage must be sustained by love. Without love, a married life is meaningless. And so, our topic for this meditation is "The love by which we can love others".

From the verses that I have read, there are two main things that we ought to remember.

First is, that God is a loving God. And to prove to the world that He is a loving God, He sent His Son to be the expiation for our sins.

The second thing that we ought to remember from the verses that I have read is that since God is a loving God, we also ought to love one another.

When John wrote his three Epistles, he used the word "love" (as a noun and as a verb) 51 times. In 1 John he used it 44 times, in 2 John, 5 times and in 3 John, 2 times. But what was in the mind of John when he said that, "God is love"? What did he mean by saying that "God is love"?

I think you agree with me when I say that John had fully realized the fact that the very nature and character of God is "love". And that whatever He does, He does it in love. From this point I would like to quote a statement from the Interpreter's Bible which says, "To say that God is love implies that all His activity is a loving activity. If He rules, He rules in love, if He judges, He judges in love". This God who is "love", did not enjoy Himself sitting in His heavenly throne, came to us and revealed Himself in His Son Jesus Christ. Paul said: "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh". This truth is considered

very much in the Gospel of John. It says; "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father." Again in the Epistle of John we read: "In this love of God was made manifest among us that God sent His only Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

In the language of John we are guided to see that we can know God as "love" only through the Son. In fact, it is only through the Son that we can know the full nature and character of God as "love". And only as we are rightly related with God through faith in Jesus Christ, that we can have in us the love of God. And John says: "Beloved, if God so loved us we also ought to love one another."

Starting from this point, let us now venture to find out what John meant when he said that we ought to love one another. In the language of John, love does not just mean a human love that seeks for a return. It is a love that comes from above having the power to transform our selfish love. And so to love one another according to John, means the following:

To love one another is to have a forgiving spirit. John says, "If anyone says, I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen." From the point of view of genuine Christianity, I believe John advocates that it is not a hard thing to love even those who do not love us. The reason for this is the fact that the love by which we love our fellow men is the love of God. And once the love of God reigns in us, there is no place for us to hate our brothers, because the same love is constantly creating in us the forgiving spirit. John says, "See what manner of love the Father has given us, that we should be called the children of God."

Second, to love one another is to be concerned with ones' spiritual well-being. God in Christ laid down His life for us, just because He was very much concerned with our spiritual upbringing. He loved us so much even to the point of death. And so, we as Christians, according to John, who have already received the love of God should also be concerned with the spiritual upbringing of our brethren, even if it means death. John says: "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Finally, to love one another, according to John, means passing out of death into life. In other words, if we love one another it is an indication that we have already passed out death. Again, John says; "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love remains in death." The language of John is very clear in this aspect. The sure sign that we have already life, life eternal, is when we have "love".

Love is of God that came to us in Jesus Christ. When we believe in Him in confidence and in trust, we receive God's love and to have this love is to have eternal life. Amen.

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