



Exploring God's Love through the Bible:
God's Love in the Petrine and Johannine Epistles
February 19, 2017

Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Question: How does one cover three weighty Epistles in one sermon?

Answer: One cannot!

- So my goal today is to simply give you the main theme in these biblical letters, and highlight their connection to the love of God towards his people in Scripture.
- Again, it is important to note that biblical Epistles are **occasional** letters. They were written in a certain context, and they were written for a reason.
- We must also remember one of our critical hermeneutical rules: *God's Word to them is God's word to us, particularly when we share a similar context.*
- Since the context of the Epistles are the problems and the encouragement needed in the local church, **they apply to us today.**
- Besides salutations and specific mentions of certain people, **the Epistles should be taken as they are and obeyed in love.**
- When we see them as ancient texts for a different time, or no longer relevant, we miss the **protections** they give us from the schemes of the enemy, and the love of God therein.
- So let us hear the Word of God in First and Second Peter, and First John, and I'll throw in a bit of Jude for free.

Key Themes in these Epistles that Illustrate God's Love

1. The Call for Holiness in the Midst of Suffering (1 Peter)
2. Instruction to Persevere in the Midst of Falsehoods (2 Peter)
3. Exhortations to Walk in Love and in Truth (1 John)
4. Motivation to Contend Earnestly for the One, True Faith (Jude)

THE CALL FOR HOLINESS IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING (1 PETER)

- Writing to dispersed Christians (1 Pet 1:1), Peter, through the Holy Spirit, encourages followers of Christ who are suffering.
- God loves us SO much that when we are called to endure, strength and hope remains...

Born into a living hope! (v3)

Given an incorruptible, unfading inheritance kept in heaven! (v4)

Kept by the power of God unto salvation! (v5)

Grieved by various trials yet rejoicing! (v6)

A tested faith that honors Christ! (v7)

The inexpressible joy of faith in God and our salvation! Praise His glorious Name! (v8-9)

- Because of the great love of God in the midst of our suffering Christians are to look upon those hardships in light of Christ's **sacrifice**, and live accordingly!

1Pe 1:13-16 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

1Pe 2:17-25 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. 18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. 19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. 25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

INSTRUCTION TO PERSEVERE IN THE MIDST OF FALSEHOODS (2 PETER)

- Although the church was young at the time of this writing (likely mid-60's AD), false teachers, as we've seen in other Epistles, were already a problem.
- God loves us SO much, He instructs us in the truth and warns us away from heresies! He does not want His children deceived!

2Pe 1:16-21 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. 19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

2Pe 2:1-3 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

2Pe 3:1-4 This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: 3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

2Pe 3:8-12 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then that all these things shall

be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, ¹² Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

Oh what love, to urge to view life through eternal lenses and give Him glory therein!

EXHORTATIONS TO WALK IN LOVE AND IN TRUTH (1 JOHN)

- To rightly understand 1 John, it's helpful to know that he too was writing to fortify the church against heretical doctrine.
- His exhortations about love (what 1 John is often known for) are set in a broader context of remaining **steadfast** and **true**. The saints were to, in love, help one another know light from darkness, true from false, and the children of God from those of the devil.
- God loves us so much, he pours His love into our hearts to keep us **together** and walking in the **Truth!** This was John's heart: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." (3 John 1:4)

1Jn 2:1-5 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: ² And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. ³ And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴ He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

1Jn 2:22-27 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. ²³ Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. ²⁴ Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. ²⁵ And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. ²⁶ These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. ²⁷ But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

1Jn 3:7-10 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. ⁸ He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. ¹⁰ In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

1Jn 4:1-6 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. ² Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: ³ And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. ⁴ Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. ⁵ They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. ⁶ We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

MOTIVATION TO CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE ONE, TRUE FAITH (JUDE)

- Jude, another half-brother of our Lord (like James), sums up much apostolic writing when he says:

Jud 1:3-4 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. ⁴ For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

- God love us SO much, He commands us to contend for and fight for the true Faith! Enemies are always creeping! :)

FINAL EXHORTATIONS

Biblical love in the Church is always connected to what is **true**, and cannot truly exist where **error** flourishes. This is a consistent theme in the Epistles: to root out and abhor evil and to love in deed and in truth (1 John 3:18).

I submit these are loving commands given by a God who is passionate about the purity of His Church.

He is passionate about you. He DOES NOT want you tossed to and fro by suffering, false doctrines, and false teachers. He loves you!

Christ calls you to Himself in grace and love. You MUST know who Christ truly is to truly know His grace and walk in His magnificent love.

Precious saints, follow after Him in purity. Resist everything against Scripture; fight against the spirit of error and the manifest works of the children of the devil.

Preach the Gospel with love as we await His coming.

A FAMILIAR DOXOLOGY

Jud 1:24-25 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Amen.