

Whom . . . You Love

1 Peter 1:6-9

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love . Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls. NKJV

Well Friday God blessed Nancy and I with our twelfth grandchild, Owen Tyler Reed Harmon. Now I love all my grandchildren. Even when they don't behave. Sometimes they even love me back. But I have one that is very verbal about it. Little Matt will come up to me just on the spur of the moment and say, "Grandpa, I love you." Of course he is young and there are times when I know that he doesn't look like he loves me. But he is at that stage when children just naturally love their parents and grandparents. Sometimes I think it is too bad they have to grow up from that.

In our passage today, Peter writes to his fellow Christians and reminds these second generation Christians that in their trials and afflictions they can rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory because they love Him. Even though they have never set physical eyes on Him. Yet they love Him.

- I. Love for God is the primary characteristic of the Christian
 - A. We teach many things about the Christian life.
 - B. We teach many things about the Bible.
 - C. We teach many things about God.
 - D. But the primary relationship with God is not intellectual.
 - 1. Now I do not minimize doctrine for without it Paul says in Eph 4:14-15 "that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting," NKJV
 - 2. And just because you love doesn't mean you cannot be deceived.
 - 3. So we are not going to give up on teaching the Bible here any time soon.
 - E. But no deep relationship was ever built on what someone knows but on what someone loves.
 - 1. If people do not love God they will retain little of what you teach about Him.

2. It will be just so much hay they must be mowed through.
 3. This explains why some people are always bored in church.
 4. They have no emotional attachment with the subject matter.
- F. But it is possible to have had it and lost it.
1. Rev 2:1-7

"To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,

'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. 4 **Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.** 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place — unless you repent. 6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.'" NKJV
 2. Look at all the good qualities of this church.
 3. But that one thing, "Lost Love" brought them into jeopardy of being extinguished as a church.
- II. Love for God is the all important issue.
- A. Maybe we have been doing it wrong all these years.
 1. We often ask people if they believe in Jesus.
 2. Maybe the question we should be asking is, do you love Jesus.
 3. Now I know that Peter talks about faith in that passage as well.
 4. And I know that Paul said we are justified by faith.
 - B. But in reality only God can see faith, but love is so evident by actions.
 1. When a young woman and man are seen together we don't see their faith in one another but we see their love.
 2. Love moves us to action.
 - a. It was God's love for us that moved Him to send His only begotten

Son to die on the cross for us.

- b. It was Jesus' great love for us that drew Him to the cross and held Him there as He died in our place.

3. Actions display degrees of love.

- a. Abraham loved his only son Isaac.

(1) Gen 22:2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love , and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." NKJV

- b. But when God asked him to sacrifice his son as a burn offering, that displayed a deeper more dedicated love.

- c. Abraham loved his son as much or more than any of us love our own.

- d. But when God called on him, his love for God held first place.

(1) Gen 22:12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." NKJV

4. Love and actions were tied together by Jesus as He spoke to Peter by the second fire.

- a. John 21:15-18

So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?"

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

He said to him, "Feed My lambs."

16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?"

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

He said to him, "Tend My sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me? " Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?"

And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You."

Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. NKJV

- C. Unless a person loves God they cannot move to the next two purposes in life.
 - 1. It would be like building the second story of a house before you built the first story.
 - 2. I think that many churches have not done well in this area.
 - a. It is not that we have not taught people to love each other.
 - b. It is not that we have not taught them to live rightly.
 - c. It is not that we have not taught them about God and the things of the Bible.
 - d. But we assumed that they had a deep and abiding love for God when they don't.
 - 3. Love for God is the foundation 2 Cor 5:14 For the love of Christ compels us, NKJV
 - a. For our worship.
 - b. For our loving others.
 - c. For our service.
 - d. For the live that we live.
 - e. It is our reason to get up in the morning.
 - f. It what gets us through the tough days and nights.
 - g. It compels us to study His love letter to us.

Is this the love that you have experienced in your life?

But has your love grown cold?

Jesus is waiting for you to return.

Just repent. Tell Him what you have done wrong and He can make it all alright again.