

Series: "LOVE LETTER from JOHN"

For Message: 1 John 2:7-11

Message Title: "The Old and The New"

Introduction: Welcome to BMZ CHURCH! Glad you're here as we CONTINUE our WORSHIP SERIES called: "**LOVE LETTER from JOHN**"! This is a SUMMER Bible Study to help us continue to GROW in our FAITH, so we are ENCOURAGED to SHARE it with OTHERS. When we are FOCUSED on God's WORD, we are LESS DISTRACTED by the THINK/GS of THIS WORLD.

John wants us to experience REAL LIFE, according to JESUS ... what we are CREATED to EXPERIENCE! FELLOWSHIP with OTHERS, GOD, and JESUS. JOY may be FULL and OVERFLOWING. Meaningful and DEEP PURPOSE.

Last week we talked about LIGHT vs. DARKNESS and SAYING vs. DOING. We said SIN is a BARRIER to the REAL LIFE JOHN WRITES about. The JOY and FELLOWSHIP is BLOCKED by SIN. So, we TALKED about HOW to HANDLE the SIN in our LIVES by CONFESSING and CONQUERING SIN. BY CONFESSING and WORKING to CONQUER our SINS, we are WALKING / LIVING In the LIGHT ... in CHRIST. IF/WHEN we CHOOSE to LIVE in the LIGHT, there will be EVIDENCE!

TODAY, IF we are LIVING in the LIGHT (OBEDIENT to GOD through CHRIST), an EVIDENCE will be our LOVE for OTHERS. We are OBEDIENT. GOD COMMANDS it. BECAUSE we **KNOW** God's LOVE for US, we **SHOW** our LOVE towards OTHERS.

GOD COMMANDS us to LOVE OTHERS, and WE have an OPPORTUNITY to SHOW our LOVE for GOD by our OBEDIENCE.

Let's talk about JOHN. JOHN is KNOWN as the BELOVED APOSTLE because he NOT ONLY WROTE about LOVE EXTENSIVELY in his GOSPEL and his LETTERS, but JOHN LIVED out of LOVE. His READERS KNEW him as a VERY LOVING PERSON.

But I want us to REMEMBER that JOHN was NOT ALWAYS GOOD at LOVING OTHERS. In Luke 9 we're told the JOHN and his brother JAMES wanted JESUS to CALL DOWN FIRE to DESTROY a SAMARITAN VILLAGE. JOHN had HATE in his HEART. THEN, Jesus TRANSFORMED HIM.

Okay, LET's TALK about an OLD COMMANDMENT that is NEW! WHAT?

HOW IS AN OLD COMMANDMENT MADE NEW?

As JOHN writes about "**LOVE**," let's REMEMBER there are DIFFERENT TYPES of LOVE. You and I have ONE WORD for "**LOVE**" ... it's "**LOVE**." But in the GREEK, there are MORE than ONE. SO, you and I say, "**I LOVE BAKED BEANS ... Rollercoasters ... and MY WIFE**." And I DO! But, NOT IN the SAME WAY!

In the GREEK, you have BROTHERLY Love (PHILIA), PHYSICAL INTIMACY Love (EROS) and a COMFORTING LOVE (STORGE). BUT...

What JOHN WRITES here in 85AD is "**AGAPE**" Love. This is the UNCONDITIONAL LOVE our LORD shows US. AGAPE LOVE is LIMITLESS ... it ENCOMPASSES CHRIST-LIKE LOVE ... LOVE for Brother, Neighbor, Enemy ... PRAYING for those who PERSECUTE you! That is "**AGAPE**" LOVE. Here we go ... **1 JOHN 2:7 = 7Dear**

friends, I am not writing a new commandment for you; rather it is an old one you have

had from the very beginning. This old commandment—to love one another—is the same message you heard before.

Here's something kinda COOL. CHRIST-LIKE LOVE is both OLD and NEW. It seems CONTRADICTIONARY, but LOVE NOR the COMMANDMENT to LOVE are NEW. When Jesus was asked about the GREATEST COMMANDMENT, he quoted the OLD TESTAMENT to answer. LOVE your GOD with ALL your HEART, SOUL, MIND, and STRENGTH (Deut. 6), and LOVE your NEIGHBOR as YOURSELF (Lev.19). This LOVING both NEIGHBOR and GOD was in PLACE LONG before JESUS arrived on the SCENE.

If that's so, then HOW is "**LOVE ONE ANOTHER**" NOW something "**NEW**"? OK ... BACK to the GREEK language. In the GREEK, there are TWO different words for "**NEW**." One is "**NEW IN TIME**" and the other is "**NEW IN CHARACTER.**" Example: You can get a 2023 CAR and it is NEW in TIME. OR, you can have a CAR SO NEW in CONCEPT it is REVOLUTIONARY. It's STILL a CAR. It MIGHT have come out 5 YEARS ago, but it's still a NEW CONCEPT (Electric Cars?).

The COMMAND to LOVE each OTHER is NOT NEW in TIME, but it is (according to Jesus and John) NEW in CHARACTER. The OLD Commandment to "**Love One Another**" has TAKEN ON a NEW MEANING... **3 WAYS:**

#1 = It is New in EMPHASIS

Now, in the OLD Testament, the COMMAND to LOVE one ANOTHER was one of MANY LAWS ... but ACCORDING to JESUS, the TIME has COME to make the LAW of LOVING ONE ANOTHER the PRE-EMINANT LAW. Jesus gave (John 13:34) a NEW COMMANDMENT ... was it NEW in TIME? NO! Was it NEW in CHARACTER? YES. JESUS hit the 'RESET' BUTTON on this COMMANDMENT in the UPPER ROOM. He went BEYOND the GOLDEN RULE. He went BEYOND the GREATEST COMMANDMENT. This was/is the ULTIMATE COMMAND of JESUS.

He said, "**A NEW COMMAND I GIVE YOU: LOVE one ANOTHER as I have LOVED YOU, you MUST LOVE ONE ANOTHER.**" PAUL called it "**The LAW of CHRIST.**" Don't BREAK the LAW! ALL the other COMMANDS and LAWS FALL UNDER the COMMAND of THIS COMMANDMENT! JESUS put THIS LAW in a NEW CATEGORY. It is the ELITE COMMAND.

WHY? Well, IF you LOVE as CHRIST DOES, will you COMMIT ADULTERY? No. Will you MURDER? NO. Will you DECEIVE / LIE to OTHERS? NO! IF you LOVE the way CHRIST DOES, will you COVET your NEIGHBOR'S STUFF? NO. Will you STEAL their STUFF? NO! This LAW of CHRIST has a NEW EMPHASIS. IT is #1!

Here's what JOHN SAID as he WROTE about this OLD COMMAND ... **1 JOHN 2:8 = 8Yet it is also new. Jesus lived the truth of this commandment, and you also are living it. For the darkness is disappearing, and the true light is already shining.**

By 85AD, the CHRISTIANS in the ROMAN EMPIRE were SHINING BRIGHTLY (see Paul's letter to Timothy) in their DARK WORLD of PERSECUTION. HOW were they SHINING BRIGHTLY? By MAKING the COMMAND / LAW of JESUS their #1 PRIORITY. They were LOVING OTHERS. NOT like they LOVED BAKED BEANS, but LOVING in the SAME WAY CHRIST LOVED THEM. UNCONDITIONALLY! And JOHN was REMINDING them that the STRATEGY was WORKING!

OKAY, it is NEW in PRIORITY / EMPHASIS. This COMMAND is ALSO ...

#2 = It is New in EXAMPLE

Jesus SPOKE of this AGAPE LOVE NUMEROUS TIMES and in NUMEROUS WAYS. PAUL wrote the THINGS he saw in JESUS in 1st Corinthians 13. WHY? Because HE had the EXAMPLE of JESUS. And PAUL understood IF we do NOT ABIDE by the LAW of CHRIST, LIFE would be NOTHING and we GAIN NOTHING (you should read it!).

LOVE (SET as an EXAMPLE by JESUS) is PATIENT and KIND, it is NOT JEALOUS, CONCEITED, PROUD, or RUDE. LOVE (like JESUS) does NOT DEMAND one's OWN WAY. LOVE like Jesus is NOT IRRITABLE, NOR does it KEEP a RECORD of WRONGS against ANYONE, etc.! Paul = Now, we MUST FOLLOW SUIT! It's the LAW!

Jesus COMMAND to LOVE as HE DID was NOT some EMPTY or ARROGANT STATEMENT. The DISCIPLES KNEW JESUS had ALREADY DONE IT! He SET the EXAMPLE. Jesus LOVED ALL KINDS of people ... He SHOWED LOVE towards TAX COLLECTORS, PROSTITUTES, and SINNERS. He showed LOVE to ROMANS, SAMARITANS, and GENTILES (demons into pigs). Woman CAUGHT in the ACT of Adultery. SAMARITAN woman at the WELL who was a BIT PROMISCUOUS.

Pause for a moment and THINK about HOW JESUS LOVED, NOT ONLY those who LOVED HIM, but THOSE who were his ENEMIES. The RELIGIOUS LEADERS who accused Him of being with SATAN and WANTED Him KILLED ... and then KILLED HIM ("Father, forgive them. They do not understand what they are doing"). The MOB who shouted, "CRUCIFY HIM!" ... He ALLOWED HIMSELF to be CRUCIFIED FOR THEM! He DIED for THEM. ALL of THEM. He DIED so THOSE who CRUCIFIED HIM might LIVE FOREVER in God's PRESENCE. ***"No GREATER LOVE than to LAY DOWN your LIFE for others..."***

JESUS is our EXAMPLE. WE are to LIVE and LOVE in the SAME MANNER ... **1 JOHN 2:9 = *9If anyone claims, "I am living in the light," but hates a fellow believer, that person is still living in darkness.*** You can NOT HEAD-FAKE GOD. LIGHT and DARKNESS are COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. Jesus set the EXAMPLE of LIFE.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER is NEW in EMPHASIS and EXAMPLE ... #3 =

#3 = It is New in EXPERIENCE

You and I, IF we TAKE this NEW COMMAND as CHRIST'S LAW and DO as our LORD COMMANDS, we will have NEW EXPERIENCES in LIFE. IT is EASY to TALK about CHRIST-LIKE LOVE. It is EASY to PRACTICE a "CHRISTIANITY of WORDS." We can SING the RIGHT SONGS, USE the RIGHT WORDS, and PRAY the RIGHT PRAYERS, and all the WHILE we're DECEIVING OURSELVES into THINKING we are GODLY.

Listen, it is IMPOSSIBLE to be in FELLOWSHIP with the FATHER and the SON (oneness) while being OUT of FELLOWSHIP with another CHRISTIAN. **1 JOHN 2:10-11 = *10Anyone who loves a fellow believer is living in the light and does not cause others to stumble. 11But anyone who hates a fellow believer is still living and walking in darkness. Such a person does not know the way to go, having been blinded by the darkness.***

Let's LOOK at the POSITIVE of LIVING in CHRISTIAN LOVE. What are the BENEFITS of ABIDING by CHRIST'S LAW of "LOVE ONE ANOTHER...?"

First, we will be LIVING in the LIGHT, in FELLOWSHIP with GOD, Christ, and OTHER BELIEVERS. And we will be LIVING in OBEDIENCE TO GOD.

SECOND, by LIVING by Christ's LAW, we will NOT STUMBLE in our FAITH JOURNEY, NOR will we CAUSE OTHERS to STUMBLE in THEIRS!

THIRD, we will GROW in our FAITH in JESUS and NATURALLY become more CHRIST-LIKE. WE will GROW in our FRUITS of the SPIRIT of CHRIST ... **GALATIANS 5:22-23 = *22But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace,***

patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Did you NOTICE the FIRST FRUIT Paul LISTS? LOVE! If we WALK / LIVE in the LIGHT (OBEDIENCE to GOD through the POWER of HIS SPIRIT) then the HOLY SPIRIT has OPPORTUNITY to WORK WITH / IN US. And the FIRST FRUIT the SPIRIT of GOD (God is Love) PRODUCES IN US is LOVE!

And LOVE does NOT LIVE ALONE. LOVE produces JOY. HATRED makes a person MISERABLE, but LOVE ALWAYS brings JOY! All the FRUITS of the SPIRIT start with the LOVE of CHRIST IN US. ***“Without LOVE, I AM NOTHING.”*** – Paul.

In 1st CORINTHIANS 13 ... USED at SO many WEDDINGS (The Love Chapter) ... YOU KNOW, I wonder if MARRIED COUPLES listened to and PRACTICED a CHRIST-LIKE LOVE with EACH OTHER, HOW MANY MARRIAGES would be BETTER? Paul writes that LOVE does NOT keep a RECORD of WRONGS ... it HOLDS NO GRUDGES. Can you IMAGINE what MARRIAGES would LOOK LIKE if we LET EACH OTHER OFF the HOOK instead of HOLDING GRUDGES. When we TRULY LOVE someone, our LOVE COVERS their SINS and HELPS to HEAL the WOUNDS they CAUSE. This does NOT apply to ABUSE / ADULTERY / ABANDONMENT. BUT these also can be FORGIVEN ... ONLY IF ... the REMORSE / REPENTENCE MATCHES the SIN.

Then, PETER (part of Jesus’ inner circle with James and John) REMINDS us that we will HAVE a NEW EXPERIENCE when we LIVE according to the NEW COMMAND of JESUS ... ***1 PETER 4:8 = 8Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.***

Do you want to HELP SOMEONE who is DEALING with SIN? Good! LOVE THEM! LOVE THEM in the SAME WAY our EXAMPLE LOVED.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER, as JESUS LOVES YOU, we MUST LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There are TIMES in our LIVES when we do NOT KNOW what to DO. We are NOT SURE of HOW to LOVE ONE ANOTHER. Here’s the thing: WE, as PROCLAIMED FOLLOWERS of JESUS, need to SPEND more TIME DOING what JESUS MANDATED and LESS of what WE THINK. I know I DO.

Andy Stanley = ***When you are NOT SURE WHAT to DO, ask what the LOVE of JESUS REQUIRES of YOU.*** Let’s MAKE THAT our PRIORITY. It was JESUS’ PRIORITY. It was and IS HIS LAW!

NOW, we are NOT EVEN OUT of CHAPTER TWO of John’s First Letter to the Christians. BUT IF we FAIL to be OBEDIENT in this MATTER of LOVE, the REST of the LETTER may as well be THROWN OUT. The LIFE that is REAL is an HONEST LIFE of DOING, and NOT JUST SAYING. It is a LIFE of ACTIVE, DAILY LOVE in CHRIST ... where the RUBBER MEETS the ROAD ... in our FORGIVENESS, KINDNESS, PATIENCE, and SELF-CONTROL. We get to LIVE a LIFE of JOY and PEACE.

The LOVE LIFE is the ONLY LIFE ... the ONLY LIFE that is REAL.

Let’s PRAY Together!

Next Steps: *I will Memorize 1 John 2:10*
I will Read 1 John and 1 Peter 4
I will invite someone to worship with me this summer.

Hosting (Closing)

HEY, it has been a GREAT DAY here at BMZ... Glad you've been here with us!
In a moment, we are going to RECEIVE the OFFERING so please take this time to finish COMPLETING any information.

- Or NEXT STEPS on your CONNECTION CARD (**FULLY FILLED OUT!!**)
- AND when our ushers come around to RECEIVE our OFFERING
- You can drop that card in the offering basket.

IF you are a First-Time Guest with us today

• We are so glad you joined us ... And we have a GIFT for you.
It's this book "**UNSHAKABLE**" and it's at the BACK TABLE / By the DOORS...

- all you need to do is HIT "**SEND**" your COMPLETED Connection Card

+++++

- I just want to remind you ... STEWARDSHIP is DISCIPLESHIP ... we RECEIVE an OFFERING EVERY Sunday BECAUSE it's BIBLICAL ... AND it HELPS us GROW in our FAITH!
- STEWARDSHIP VERSE ... **1 JOHN 2:10 = 10 Anyone who loves a fellow believer is living in the light and does not cause others to stumble.**
- FIRST of our EARNINGS go back to the ONE who Blessed us in the first place! That's why WE/I do Automated Giving! I get paid ... the TITHE comes OUT FIRST!
- God's plan for BUILDING His Church was through TITHING and GIVING of the FOLLOWERS ... Share the GOOD NEWS! To REFRESH OTHERS!
- As Developing Followers of Jesus Christ, WE need to KNOW what the BIBLE says about GIVING ... NOT just what we THINK it should say.
- **MONEY is a HEART ISSUE.** And GOD wants what is BEST for your HEART! Listen, if GOD LOVES US so much that HE is willing to GIVE UP His OWN SON FOR US, WHY would GOD LEAD us ASTRAY in FINANCES?! USHERS ...
- NEXT WEEK: **LOVE LETTER from JOHN ... Now that we LOVE ... LOVE NOT!**

"Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy)."

Special thanks to Andy Stanley, Warren Wiersbe, Nelson Searcy, and R.A. Pegrum for outlines and ideas for this worship series