

Series: 1 Peter
Title: Above All Things
Text: 1 Peter 4: 8
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1 Peter 4: 8: And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

I. ABOVE ALL THINGS HAVE FERVENT LOVE AMONG YOURSELVES—

Fervent love is intense, unceasing love. Peter says, “Above all things” because we owe all that we are by grace to God’s love for us in Christ.

No man has God-given love in us by nature. A man may say he loves God and his neighbor but unless we have been born of God—what we call sweet is bitter. What man calls love for God is really “enmity” against God and hatred of one another.

Love is a word that is one of the most abused words in the world no matter what language it is spoken in—
Pastor Donnie Bell.

Truly, the believers “love” is the fruit of the Spirit of God—the gift of God in a believer. The first “fruit of the Spirit” listed by the apostle Paul is love. God is love. When God puts his Spirit in a sinner, we love. His love makes us to receive Christ in love and to love our brethren. But without the Spirit of God’s love being imparted within us, we hated Christ. The Lord Jesus said of the Pharisee’s, “Ye will not come to me that ye might have life”

John 5: 42: But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. 43: I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not:...

Romans 8: 7: Because the carnal mind *is enmity* against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

1 Corinthians 2: 14: But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

Not only this, but by nature what man calls love toward one another is only hatred. Paul said,

Titus 3: 3: For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

These things—*malice, envy, hateful and hating one another*—our life by nature--are as opposite to the love of God as oil is to water.

1 Corinthians 13: 4: Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5: Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6: Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7: Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

As we were born dead in sin into this world, we were like every other sinner: living in malice and envy, hateful [hating God], *and* [hating one another.] But exactly opposite to the hatred we are by nature is the love of God.

Titus 3: 4: But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

Let me give you several truths about God's love:

1. No sinner whom God saves first loved God. It was God who first loved his people.

1 John 4: 19: We love him, because he first loved us

2. The love of God is sovereign, particular love—Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated

Illustration: Will Hacker—Does God love everyone in this world?

3. The love of God is in Christ Jesus his Son.

Ephesians 1: 3: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

In love for that Father and those given him of the Father, Christ became Surety to fulfill all covenant obligations that we could not fulfill. Christ became the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—therefore we are not consumed—God's love is everlasting, unchanging, unchangeable love in Christ.

4. The love of God is manifested in what he did for sinners who had no love for God.

1 John 4: 9: In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Romans 5: 7: For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8: But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

5. Though we were born in dead in sin—hating God and hating one another—because of his everlasting love, God draws all his people unto himself by his invincible call of grace.

Jeremiah 31:3: The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

THIS IS WHY PETER SAYS, 'ABOVE ALL THINGS HAVE FERVENT LOVE ONE FOR ANOTHER.' BRETHREN, WE OWE ALL TO THE LOVE OF GOD.

II. WHAT WILL FERVENT LOVE DO?

Fervent love does for brethren what God the Father has done for us in his Son.

1 Peter 4: 8:...for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

This does not mean that by benevolent deeds toward our brethren we pay for our own sins therefore God blots out our own sins. The believer's sins are put away one way, by Christ Jesus—by his dying as our Substitute with our sins upon him.

This does not mean that we attempt to hide our own sins from God. We confess our sins to God, forsake them in repentance, trusting Christ alone, who cleanses us of all unrighteousness.

Proverbs 28:13: He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy.

1 John 1:9: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

It means if we love one another, we will forgive, the multitude of sins in our brethren. Nothing is more cherished to me from you, my brethren, than for you to love me though there is a multitude of sin in me not worthy of your love. Is that what you desire from your fellow brethren?_That is what brethren will do in love._The Lord Jesus said

John 15: 9 : As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love....12: This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13: Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

1 John 4: 11: Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another....

In Proverbs 10: 12 we get the true meaning in a contrast:

Proverbs 10:12: Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

Love is the exact opposite of hatred. Hatred stirs up strife—uncovers the sin of others, repeats the sin of others, defames, dishonors, brings reproach on another. But love covers all sins—we forgive one another, put one another's sin behind our backs, seek to preserve the honor of one another—even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us. It covers not just some sins but it covers ALL sins, the MULTITUDE of sins

Example: Noah and his sons. Ham uncovered his father's sin.

Genesis 9: 20: And Noah began *to be* an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: 21: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. 22: And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.

Proverbs 10:12: Hatred stirreth up strifes but love covereth all sins.

Galatians 5: 13: For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. 16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Shem and Japheth covered their fathers' sins and would not even look upon his nakedness.

Genesis 9: 23: And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid *it* upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces *were* backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

Christ would not look upon our nakedness. Christ took a garment—our nature—laid what we are upon his shoulders and paid the wages of our sin. Christ took his garment of righteousness and covered our nakedness. This is the love brethren born of his Spirit show to one another

There is no one to blame for our sin but ourselves. Notice how the curse was due to Ham himself (Canaan)—no one else to blame but Ham. He manifest his enmity against God, his hatred against his own father and against his brethren in what he did to his father.

Genesis 9: 24: And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. 25: And he said, Cursed *be* Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

But if this love of God is in us so that we cover the sin of our brethren there is no one to praise but God. Notice how who Noah praised God for the love shown him in Shem and Japheth.

Genesis 9: 26: And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. 27: God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

It was by God's grace alone that Shem and Japheth had this love in their hearts. Noah glorified and praised God for the love they showed him in covering his sin. When our brethren have love toward us, in spite of our sin, we say with Noah, Blessed be the LORD God. God's glory and God's praise is the substance of our love—it is why we love one another—that God might be glorified and praised. Peter says the same thing in our text. He gives us examples of how we love one another.

1 Peter 4: 11...that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Beloved, we owe all to God's sovereign, particular, everlasting, unchanging love—who loved us and gave himself for us that we might have eternal life.

1 John 4: 11: Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

Amen!