

Text: 1 John 4:1-11 NAU (New American Standard, 1995 Version)

How Are You Loving Others?



Saturday, 5/1 at 4:00 | Sunday, 5/2 at 9:00
Fifth Sunday of Easter – 2021

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Last week we put a dipstick into our **hearts** to check for the **love of God**. These are some questions we will answer today:

- Who is telling the truth?
 - What is the truth?
 - To whom are we listening?
 - How did God love us?
 - What should we be doing toward others?
1. **Prophet Test:** ¹ **Beloved, do not believe every spirit** *[thus, every teaching]*, **but test the spirits** *[the teachings]* **to see whether they are from God, [Why?] because many false prophets have gone out into the world.**
- a. What is a true prophet? Someone who speaks for God – *by rightly proclaiming the Word of God.*
 - b. How can we determine if a person is true or false? Compare his words with the Bible.

2. **Truth Test:** ² **By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit [thus, every person or teaching] that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; ³ and every spirit [person or teaching] that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist [people and teachings that oppose Christ or a false Christ], of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.** // To test for the truth, ask these two questions:

a. What is he teaching about people?

- i. When a person does good, God will accept him. **OR**
- ii. No person can make himself acceptable to God.

b. What is he teaching about Jesus? For example:

- i. **Jewish leaders:** No God and Jesus connection.
- ii. **Traditional Judaism:** No teaching about Jesus.
- iii. **Muslims:** Jesus is only a prophet.
- iv. **Roman Catholics:** Jesus + works earn heaven.
- v. **The Bible:** Jesus alone receives the gift of heaven.

3. **God Is Greater:** ⁴ **You are from God, little children, and have overcome them [the false teachers]; because greater is [God] who is in you than [the devil] who is in the world.** // All false teachers – *whether they know it or not* – are antichrist, *thus against Christ and His all-sufficient work.* The devil wants everyone to believe what is false, but God – *who is greater* – **✠** has set us free and **✠** dwells within us!

4. **To Whom are We Listening?**

a. The false teachers: ⁵ **They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the**

world listens to them. // The “world” means the *sinful world*. All of us are **IN** the world, *but false teachers and those who listen to them are OF the world*. That means they belong to the world, are outside of God’s kingdom, do not understand God’s truth, and – *without repentance* – will be apart from God forever.

b. The teachers who represent God: **⁶ We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.**

i. By God’s truth we have been set free from sin, death, and hell. Therefore, let us grow up in learning God’s truth and doing God’s truth!

ii. I hope you understand and apply what I preach and teach, *but ONLY DO SO WHEN MY PREACHING AND TEACHING AGREES WITH THE BIBLE!*

5. **Love or Lack of Love Identifies People:**

a. Love: **⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.** // Last week we checked our hearts for the **love of God**. When we take sincere and loving action toward those who are in need, *then we know we are born of God and know God!*

b. Lack of love: **⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.** // What does it mean to “not love”? Some people take no action to help those in need; that is obvious. Others take action, but they are motivated by personal gain; such action is not love.

6. **God's Love for Us:**

- a. He sent His Son: ⁹ **By this the love of God was manifested [revealed] in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him [John 3:16].** // When we were spiritually dead, God sent His Son for our salvation – *God did it AND revealed it to us.* God showed us our helpless condition; *then He saved us through Jesus!*
- b. He punished His Son for our sins: ¹⁰ **In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.** //
 - i. Some have this view of God's love: **We did good, so God loved us and saved us.**
 - ii. But reality is the opposite: **We did bad, but God still loved us and saved us!**

Conclusion: ¹¹ **Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.**

- **Truth** – Since “*God is love,*” *God took sincere action for us!*
- **Relevance** – All recipients of God's love *ought to take sincere action to help people who are truly in need!*
- **Inspiration** – Our sincere acts of love *can point others to the ultimate, saving love of God in Christ!*

Let Us Pray: Dear Holy Spirit, open our eyes to see who is truly in need, *then move us to take sincere and loving action!*