

## **God Is Holy Love.**

1 John 4:8 New American Standard Bible

*The one who does not love does not know God, because **God is love.***

1 John 1:5 New American Standard Bible

*This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that **God is Light**, and in Him there is no darkness at all.*

## **Introduction**

### **Common Misunderstanding of God**

- Discussion (3 minutes) on “God Is Love.”
- Aesop’s fable of the Hare and the Tortoise tells us about the race between hare and tortoise. The lesson: steady one wins the race. Once I heard another story of the hare and the tortoise where the hare never wins the race. Really?!
- Here’s how: knowing that the hare is faster than the tortoise, and to equalize the chance of winning, the tortoise starts the race ahead of the hare. By the time, the hare reaches the tortoise’s starting point, the tortoise advanced a little further. And, by the time the hare reaches where the tortoise was, once again the tortoise was a little ahead, and so forth. So, the argument claims that the tortoise reached the finish line before the hare. The hare will never be the winner, because it will be always behind the tortoise. Of course, this logic is faulty because it ignores the speed (the distance over time). In reality, the hare will overtake the tortoise within any given time.
- For the sake of fun: here’s another example of physics lesson. All the Chinese (over 1.5 billion) are ordered by the government to climb up on a step stool. With the command from the Communist Party, all of them jump from the step stool at the same time to the ground. What would happen to the earth? An earthquake? A tsunami? Nothing. The impact on earth would be same as that of one person falling down on the ground.
- Why am I talking about the children’s fable and physics this morning? Because I am taking you to another faulty theology on God’s character. It is about divine love.
- Love. It is one of the most beautiful words and concepts we know. Isn’t it? I heard one Christian summarize many God’s attributes (love, justice, mercy, kindness, forgiveness and so forth) with one word: love. God is love. So far so good. However, based on the sentimental and emotional ideas of love, some folks have gone astray

failing to understand who God truly is, the author of love. They believe and love to quote that God is love (1 John 4:8). They further argue, since God is love, He must be indulgent, benevolent, and soft all the time. Promoting such theology, they “divorce God from moral standards and concerns” (J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, p. 122). Since God is love, they continue, He cannot also be a God, as you’ve seen in the Old Testament, who condemns and punishes the disobedient and the wicked. Consequently, they reject the God of justice and the God of retribution in preference of the God of love and grace. E.g.1. Marcionism in the second century A.D. rejected any hint of the Old Testament God and only accepted 10 chapters from Luke and ten letters of Paul. The rest of the New Testament along with the entire Old Testament was rejected. E.g. 2. A preacher in the 19<sup>th</sup> century taught that the God of love welcomes everyone to Heaven, no hell, regardless of their moral behaviors. Thinking of the harsh treatment of his former owner, a former slave rejected such a theology.

## Content

- “God is love” must be understood in light of other truths on God such as God is light.
- God is light. What comes to your mind when you think of light? E.g. My living room brings in morning sunlight that exposes all floating dust/water stains on my clean drinking glass. I realized that we can’t hide anything from God and that nothing impure will stand before God.
- J. I. Packer writes: “*Light means holiness and purity, as measured by God’s law; darkness means moral perversity and unrighteousness, as measured by the same law (1 John 2: 7-11, 3: 10)*”— (*ibid*, p. 121).
- Remember: God is love but He is also light. God is kind but He is also just. God is merciful yet He is also holy. Those who come near God and claim for His love also ought to walk in the light, i.e., to obey God’s commands and live the life that is pleasing to the Lord. You cannot claim that you know God who is love and light when you hate your brother and remain in darkness, John the Apostle says (1 John 2:11).
- God is holy. Listen to what He says about Himself: *For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be **holy**, because I am **holy*** (Leviticus 11:44).
- God is love, but He is light, He is also holy. So, we must say God is Holy love.

## Conclusion

Lenten Challenge 2021 (sign up sheet in the narthex)

Challenge begins on February 22 and ends on April 2 (6 weeks).

Reading (1 John)

- 1 Book (1 John---the First Letter of John, not the Gospel of John)
- 1 Chapter a Day
- 5-10 Minutes/Day
- Monday through Friday
- Repeat 6 times.
- Benefits: Spiritual Growth

Take up this challenge for this Lent! You will be blessed.

Name	Name

Amen.