

## II John 4-11

“God’s love is like a birthday cake: it’s something that’s meant to be shared and enjoyed with others.” When I first heard about this, I think this is a very interesting explication or illustration of “God’s love”. I clearly remember one of my birthday when I was very small, the whole family (10 total including my grandma) shared a medium size cake. Each only had a small slice of the cake but the laughs and whip cream on our faces made it the most joyful birthday I could remember.

I have and had great joy when God’s love is shared. How was your experience?

Today, we study the topic of love from I and II John. The three letters of John were written by apostle John between AD 85 to 95. The letters indicate John tried to correct the people at that time with the issue of Gnosticism. John explained the true identity of Jesus Christ to the readers and told them to stay away from false teachers. A major theme in the first and second letter of John is love.

### 1) The Truth and Love

The Truth mentioned in verse 4 is Jesus Christ, and it is further expanded on in verses 7 and 8. Jesus love us and he came down on earth to die for our sins (I Cor 15:3-5; I John 4:10). “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (John 15:13). Many people likes to give many love stories and examples to make their talk appealing, but none has deeper love and more powerful than Jesus’ death.

Further, the Bible states God is Love in I John 4:8. Love is the character of God.

### 2) The command

#### a) Not a new command

John wrote it to the local Christians. Verses 5 and 6 states “And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.” Not a new one because it was not originated from John. This was Jesus’ teaching (John 13:34-35; John 15:17; Mark 12:29-31). Some Jewish Christians and those Christians have Jewish background knew the command was also given in OT (Lev. 19:18).

#### b) Walk in obedience

This is God's command and therefore we have to walk in obedience. That is it! One sentence or one word "obedience", and nothing else need to be added or explained.

c) Love shall be our character

The essence of the command is "Love is you". Love shall be who you are. It is a present continuous tense. God is love and we imitate Him (Eph. 5:1-2).

d) Have God or not having God

Verses 8 and 9 state that whoever follows Jesus Christ has Him and the Father, and will be rewarded fully. Otherwise, that person doesn't have God.

### 3) Love in action

Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. (I John 3:18). Whenever we serve others, we serve God (Matthew 25:35-40).

In I John 4:12, it states "No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us." In a simple today's language, if God lives in you and you love others in action, that is exactly what God want. Although we are not perfect and still growing in practice of truly loving others, people can see God through us.

### 4) Beyond a command - Joy in love

Sometimes one think of obeying a command is a chore and not a joy. It is true that loving some people like your enemy is not easy. However, we should have joy when we share our love.

Have you shared God's love and enjoyed with others; much more so than sharing a birthday cake?

When we shared the Good News to someone with love, and he/she accepted Jesus as savior, we have great joy. "I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent." (Luke 15:7)

"Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people." (Philemon 1:7)

We have joy when we see others' walk in the truth that is to follow Jesus. Loving others is a big component of walk in the truth. Verse 4 states John had great joy knowing the local Christians were walking in the truth.

In summary, the truth cited in this book is Christ Jesus. We are to walk in the truth and not just listen to or admire it. Then we will love one another as stated in verses 5 and 6. Love shall be the character of you and me. This love is genuine. Christ's love compels us to act (II Cor. 5:14). The proof of our love is in our walk; walk with joy and results in joy.