

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups. Feb. 12th 2007

Deeper – 1 John 4:7-21

Word : Key points from Sunday's Sermon



1 John 4 : 7-21 Are you Sure God really loves you ? Three critical statements

- The key to the universe : 'God is love'
- The key to life : 'We love because He first loved us'
- The covenant of intimacy : 'We live in Him and He lives in us'

'God is love' : Note it isn't Love is God. BUT God is LOVE, not abstract love but **love in action** the Trinity Father Son and Spirit loving and relating to each other. Dynamic, not static, love flows between the three constantly. Love is not a characteristic but the very essence of God the Trinity. John tells us that God is the source of love. 'God is Love' underpins the entire universe, the controlling principle of the universe is not an abstract quality of love, but a sovereign living God who is the source of all love, and who himself loves.

'We love because He first loved us' With all the evil and suffering around us can God be bothered with each individual ? He is so great he is well able to be bothered with every detail of our lives and who we are. God's love is expressed in Jesus, sent to be with us and to be one of us. God's love is not conditional on us earning it or being worthy of it. We can see this dynamic of God's love in action in two ways

Verse 10 1. *The Love of God is seen in action in Jesus death on the cross.* This is Love which benefits others to the point of self sacrifice. **Verse 11** 2. *In our sacrificial love for each other ;*

'We live in Him and He lives in us' Can meet Jesus today : in the church.. We are included in the fellowship and relationship of the Trinity. God's love is encountered on Earth in the love Christians have for one another. John stresses *the reciprocal movement between God, who is the source and the inspiration of all love*, and the conduct of the Christians community in response to that love. What is central here to How is the mutual abiding . *Resource to love God and to love one another* The Holy Spirit : *By the Holy Spirit we know God's power on earth* : God is in us, and we know that we belong to a dimension beyond Earth : We are in God John is saying that the Christians will know God intimately, like the embrace of the father. And that we **can** be sure of His Love: *know and trust/rely ..* because we have personally experienced it. It made possible by the Son's mission into the world. The world is also a sphere where evil forces are at active. So we are called to be in the world without ultimately belonging to it. we do that : By loving God and one another. Such real love results in confidence and boldness that *'flings fear out of doors* : Literally John wrote (rather like the fictional Yoda) **'Fear there is not in Love'** Ultimate assurance is not found in us loving God, but in **GOD loving US first**.. We can only love others because God has loved us, **BUT** the vital and practical test and outworking of our love of God IS to be found in our love for others.. so John then commands us to love.. when we know God's intimate love of us in all circumstance than we can obey this command to love others.



Witness: Questions to discuss

1. What evidence is there in the Bible of God loving us first?. What evidence is there in your life ?
2. Where is God's love found in the face of the evil of this world ? What are your fears?
3. How has God deepened your experience and appreciation of His love ?
4. to what extent is your thinking and your living and your being marked by : Romans 5:5, Romans 8:18,37-39. John 13:35
6. How is God deepening our relationship of love and trust with him as a *church family* ?

Feed back any thoughts, encouragements and concerns to cluster leaders.