**Our Love Level**(*Sermon based on a devotional by Tony Evans*)

1 John 3:24-4:16

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| **Slide** | **Sermon** |
| 1 | Title Slide -Our Love Level |
| 2 | **Introduction:**  Most of us have alarm systems in our homes. They are there to check for intruders who want to break in and destroy our peace and rest, create chaos, confusion and danger. These alarms go off when intruders break in so that we are alerted to them and can address them.  Guess what? If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, then God has given you a built-in alarm system. This built-in alarm system is designed to go off when the evil one is seeking to bring distortion in your life, confusion into your life and chaos into your life. This alarm system is called the spirit of God; the Holy Spirit. One of his responsibilities is the role of distinguishing truth from error and letting you know which is which.  4:1 “Beloved, do not believe every spirit. But test the spirit to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” – 1 John 4:1  There are many deceivers out there who want to deceive us so that we do not get our full benefit of our faith because we are believing and operating with a lie.  So how do you know whether something is false or not?  It says in 1 John 4:2-3 –  (2) “By this you know the Spirit of God: Every Spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh from God; (3) And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that is coming, and now it is already in the world!” |
| 3 | It is all about Jesus Christ, what you believe about Jesus Christ.  This truth about Jesus Christ: He has come from God. This is NO small thing! It is an affirmation of the incarnation. It is absolutely critical to understand that Jesus is not just an elevated man or being that God came upon and turned into a great prophet.  You see there were people confusing people to make them think less of Jesus Christ, the God-man and who he is. They were respecting him, elevating him but were not deifying him.  John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.”  John 1:14 “…And the Word became flesh and lived among us.”  John 1:18 “It is this Word, Jesus Christ, who makes God known to us.”  You see, Jesus is God’s selfie.  Jesus is the means who reveals God, who is spirit and essence to humanity.  It is in the person of Jesus Christ that humans and God come together.  Jesus – 100% human, 100% God, who reveals God to all humanity.  Think about it:   * Jesus was born in a stable yet at the same time created Mary & Joseph as well as the animals around the manger. * Jesus was sleeping on a boat yet could stop the storm. * Jesus was hungry yet could feed 5000+ with a couple of dried fish and a few loaves of bread. * Jesus was crucified on a cross yet rose from the dead to new life.   To reduce Jesus to merely a man, a great prophet, a human miracle worker or to make him so spiritual that you lose his humanity is to NOT understand who he is; in his core, to NOT know Jesus is the God-human. It is to be fooled into non-truth. He is more than a great man, a great prophet. Jesus Christ is God & human!  So in 1 John 4:5 –  This thinking who diminishes Christ is from the world  but in verse 6 **it says we are from God; He who knows God listens to us.**  If you know God, you listen to the truth communicated in the Word of God given by the apostles. They witnessed Jesus Christ, they walked with Christ, they saw Christ, they talked to Christ, they experienced Christ. So we are not getting secondhand information. We are getting firsthand truth recorded in scripture.  When you are in fellowship with the Spirit because you are walking according to the Word, depending upon Him for guidance, His alarm will go off to help you distinguish truth from error because that is one of the Spirit’s jobs from scripture, according to the apostle John.  When that happens, you begin to experience God on a deeper level |
| 4 | 1 John 4:7-8 “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love”  When you are not being deceived by false spirits, then that frees God up to express God’s love in you, to you and through you. You become an expression of God’s love. No small thing to say God is love – no other deity could ever say that because they have never lived in an eternal relationship.  But God has. God the Creator/Father, God the son, and God the Holy Spirit have lived in an eternal relationship. And love has to have a relationship to exist and to grow.  Think about it on a human level:   * Husband & wife – love depends upon both being committed and choosing to express themselves in love * Child & pet – both must give and receive love. Image of a girl petting her dog and the dog nestling in close.   Love demands a relational context in which it can be expressed.  Love demands relationships and only the triune God has lived in an eternal relationship. |
| 5 | Dumbing down Christ is dumbing down God and implies that there was a time when that relationship didn’t exist and therefore God’s love didn’t exist.  God is love; is in the eternal relationship of love. And what God wants from us is to express that love to others.  1 John 4:9 “By this, the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent his only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.”  God is love so he shows love.  Love is always visible and never just verbal. When it is being expressed, it is the well-being of the one receiving love that is the focus.  Because God loved us, he sent Jesus into the world to die on the cross for our sins to provide forgiveness and eternal life. It was a great sacrifice even though we didn’t deserve it.  And God says, because God is love and wants to express his love to you, God wants us to love others.  1 John 4:11 “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”  When you are not deceived by the enemy and God is free to love you, then that love will flow through you and you will experience more.  The more of God’s love you show and give, the more you will experience and receive it. If you want more of God’s love, then love and give more of God’s love so that others can be loved. That will open the floodgates of God’s love for you, and it will overflow to others |
| 6 | 1 John 4:12 “No one has seen God at any time, if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.  **Ex.** I wish I could see God. You can’t see Him in spirit, but you can see him in experience because God will perfect, expand, show his love in us as we express it to others.  **Ex.** Boiler at an older school where water is heated in a big tank and piped to classrooms into radiators. There is a small tube with water and a line.   * if tube of water is high then tank is high * if tube of water is low then tank is low * we know how much God is operating in you by how much love you are showing to others   You can’t see God, but you can see the love sharing to others. When that love increases you can feel how much love is boiling in your soul.  When that love level gets low, then you are not experiencing all of God’s love that He wants you to experience because you are not being like God in loving others. |
| 7 | So why don’t you raise your water level, raise your love level? Seek out people to love with the love of Jesus, so that God can give to you, boomerang it back to you. Because the more love you give others, the more love God will pour in.  Note: This is true with you showing love through giving of your resources to God’s work. The more you give, the more God gives back to you. It is another expression of loving others so that God can pour His love into you.  The more love you give to others, the more love you will receive from God. |