

“FAITH + LOVE!”

I. INTRO:

A. **St. Patrick's Day** - After legends & traditions are stripped away... **What's his real story?**

1. We learn from his brief autobiography - **Patrick** was born in Britain. He was carried off by pirates at age 16 & forced to work as a slave in Ireland (Roman legions were withdrawn for the defense of the Continent, the Irish, then called the **Scots**, began swooping down on the English coast, sailing up the rivers, raiding the settlements, & carrying off plunder & slaves). *As a swineherdman, he prayed ardently for his freedom.* After 6 years there, during which time he had a conversion experience, he escaped & returned to Britain & his family.

Subsequently he had a night vision in which he received a call to evangelize Ireland (the babies of Ireland pleaded with him to come back to their country & tell them about christ). **Apparently** he received his training in Britain, rather than on the continent, as many claim, & subsequently became the greatest single force in the Christianization of Ireland.

Evidentially Patrick was biblical & evangelical in his preaching & his ministry (early 5th century), & the churches he founded were independent of Rome.

So it may be concluded that he was neither Irish nor Roman Catholic.¹

II. FAITH + LOVE!

A. **FAITH!** (1-6)

B. In 3:24. John introduces the role of the H.S. in our assurance.²

1. Just as we can tell the *children of God* from *children of the devil* by their deeds **so** we can discern *God's Spirit* from *false spirits*, by **what they confess**.
 - a) Whether it's **cult members** at your door **or preachers on TV**, if they deny Jesus Christ came in the flesh, they are not from God. [No matter how educated they are, **or** how smooth they talk]
 - b) They are **counterfeits** & are from *the world*(5). We don't have to fear them, **because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.**
2. Almost everything connected with **God & truth** finds its **counterpart** in various forms of error.
 - a) In contrast to the **Trinity**, we have the **trinity of evil** (world, flesh, devil **or** Devil, Antichrist, False Prophet);

¹ Exploring Church History; Howard F. Vos, pg.53,54 **And**, Church History in Plain Language; Bruce Shelley, pg.156

² Chuck Swindoll; 1 Jn.4

- b) In contrast to **wheat**, we have the **counterfeit tares**;
- c) In contrast to **angels**, we have **demons**.

3. In **every age** the false has counterfeited the true:

- a) In Egypt the **magicians** imitated **Moses**;
- b) In the Apostolic **church** **Simon Magus** imitated **Philip**;
- c) In the **great historic revivals** there always sprang up many **spurious forms of enthusiasm** that were counterfeits of the true.

4. *“Half a truth is more dangerous than a lie!”* (Griffith Thomas; pg.299)

5. *“Those who modify truth have always injured the truth more than those who have denied it openly.”* (L. Palmer; 1st Epistle of John)

C. There is a **superhuman spirit** that lies behind the human teacher.

1. Behind every human is a **some spirit**, either the **Holy Spirit** or an **evil spirit**.
2. **And**, behind every spirit is his head, either **God** or **the devil**.
3. Thus, **test the spirit** behind the teacher to see whether they are from God.
4. **By the way a prophet** (or **false-prophet**) *was someone who spoke a message more than someone who foretold the future.* (think of content in the prophets, major/minor)

D. Understand, the church services of the apostolic period were much more **free & spiritual** than is true of many churches today. (Shepherd's Notes; 1,2,3 John; pg.59)

1. **The structure was less formal & less rigid. Many different people participated in the service. Anyone was free to address the congregation. In such an atmosphere, false teaching could easily be established.** (I've seen in Bulgaria & Belize)

E. I don't think its speaking about *merely* mouthing the right words (demons spoke the right words to Jesus).

1. There is a **Scriptural** claim & a **Satanic** claim:

- a) **Scriptural**- all messages acknowledging that Jesus **has** come in the flesh are of God
- b) **Satanic** - all messages that **do not**, are not of God.

F. **Jesus Christ - has come - in the flesh** - This simple phrase carries the essential elements of Christian faith. *(It involves the acceptance of Jesus as the preexistent, incarnate Christ)*

1. **Has come** - combating **Cerinthus's** teaching that the Spirit of Christ only came on Jesus **for a time**. *[he was an heresiarch/heresy chief]*
 - a) He **has come** (*perfect tense* - means the incarnation is an **abiding** reality)

G. **LOVE!** (7-21)

H. (7) “**Faith** is the flower that receives the dew & the sun, while **love** is that flower reflecting beauty & fragrance.”³

1. *This is so profound!*

2. **Faith only** - I just take in (belief), I don't give out (love; beauty/fragrance) (i.e. Dead Sea)

a) No love, no fragrance or beauty.

3. **Love only** - “I just give out (love), I don't take in (faith/belief; reading/study/the word)”.

a) No faith, no dew or sunshine. Flowers don't grow in caves.

4. So, **faith & love** must go together!

I. (7b,8) Many spiritual leaders have taught this **ideal**, but John goes further & gives us **the moral reason for love...which is rooted in the Person of God!** (read 7b,8 “for...”)

J. (8) **God is love** - One of the most profound statements in the bible. *Perhaps the fullest meaning could never be completely explained.*

K. But you can't say, “love is God”. *Because love doesn't completely describe God, but God completely defines love.*

1. **He is love. His nature is loving, & love can never be absent from His being or any of His actions.**⁴

L. Everything God does He does in love because He is love. **He is the source & origin of love.**

1. **The climatic demonstration** of His love came when He sent His own Son to die for us on the cross.

a) Love must have an *object* of its affection! How can one say he loves, when there is nothing to love, there must be an object of your love... **You are the object of His love!!!**

M. (11) The children should be like the Father!

N. **God so loved us** - “*so*”. Ponder its meaning!

1. **God's love is: spontaneous** in its **source**; **universal** in **scope**; **long-suffering** in **intensity**; **self-sacrificing** in **character**, **aggressive** in **action**; & **constant** in **duration**.⁵

2. Then our obligation because of that...we also ought to love one another.

a) **Ought** = *opheilo*. **Moral obligation. We're bound to loving them.**

b) “**We also ought**” should weigh heavily upon us day by day.

³ Anonymous. From Griffith Thomas; John; pg.307,308

⁴ Shepherds Notes: 1,2,3 John; pg.65

⁵ Griffith Thomas: John; pg.304,305

- O. (12) *Our love for others* makes God's love **real & visible** to them.
1. It displays the reflection of our Father.
- P. (13) It also makes God real & personal to us.
- Q. (16) *Merely **reading** in the bible about about God's love is not enough!* Seek to ***experience*** that love in your heart by sharing it with others.
- R. (17) *Love gives us confidence.*
- S. (18) *Love protects us from fear.*
- T. Just as **truth** is victorious over **lies**(1-6), **love** is victorious over **fear**.
- U. *As you **mature** in your love for God, you realize that you have **nothing to fear**, for your Father has everything under control.*
- V. You **trust** those you **love**, & **faith and love** will give victory over **fear**.
- W. (20) Once again, the man who **talks w/o doing**. **Mere words w/o deeds**.
1. **He is a liar** - that's "*plain speak*"!
- X. *So the end of this matter is this: **loving God & loving others** is a package deal. You **can't** have one w/o the other.*
1. There is a natural, logical kind of loving that loves **lovely things** and **lovely people**. That's logical.
But there is another kind of loving that **doesn't** look for value in what it loves, **but that CREATES value in what it loves**. Like a small child's rag doll. When a little girl, has a little rag doll, it is often an inseparable companion. She has other toys that are intrinsically far more valuable, but none that she loves like she loves the rag doll. Soon the rag doll becomes more and more rag and less and less doll. It also became more and more dirty. If you tried to clean the rag doll, it became more ragged still. And if you didn't try to clean the rag doll, it became dirtier still. The sensible thing to do is to trash the rag doll. But that was unthinkable for anyone who loved the little child. If you loved the little girl, you love the rag doll - it is part of the package.
- Y. We're under a new law—the law of LOVE.