

**God In Us**  
1 John 4:7-12  
Series “Here”  
**Jarrett Stephens**

Intro. — God IN us (Mission)

We have been talking the last several weeks in our *HERE* series about what the birth of Jesus really means, and what we have said is that his arrival to earth ensures us of three critical truths.

Whenever we think of Christmas, we need to remember that the baby in the manger shows us that:

1. God WITH us (incarnation)
2. God FOR us (salvation)

And today, we will be looking in detail at the third truth we discover in Christmas. It’s the title and direction we are headed this morning, and that is: **God In Us**

This truth is all about mission. Let’s look at our text.

**1 John 4:7-12 – “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (You see the themes of incarnation and salvation – now we see mission) <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us (there it is! God in us) and his love is perfected in us.”**

Now, if you have been a follower of Jesus for a long time or you grew up in a Bible believing, Bible teaching church, you know one of the foundations of our faith is that we believe there is one eternal God who exists in three distinct persons.

This is what we call or term the: “The Trinity”:

- God, the Father...
- God, the Son...
- God, the Holy Spirit...

One God – three distinct persons exhibiting different roles and functions within the Godhead.

You say, “Explain that one, Pastor Jarrett.” I can’t! I don’t have the time and it’s NOT the purpose of this message. I did do an entire message on the Trinity a year or so ago in our *These Things Never Change* doctrinal series. Go online and you can download it and listen or read about what we believe concerning this foundational doctrine of our faith.

Now, for the purposes of this message, it’s important to note the Trinity isn’t just a theological complexity or construct – it’s the foundation of mission. In the Godhead (role and function):

- The Father SENT the Son.
- The Father and Son SEND the Spirit.
- And now the Spirit-filled Church is SENT to the world.

Mission – what we are talking about today flows from the very nature of our triune God.

Now, as we get going on this subject, I want us to look at the work of the Holy Spirit specifically in the Old Testament...this is BEFORE the birth of Jesus!

We see him at creation! This is: **Gen. 1:1-2** – “**In the beginning, *God* created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the *Spirit of God* was hovering over the face of the waters.**”

**Gen. 1:26** – “**Then God said, “Let us (here it is! “us” – Father, Son, Holy Spirit) make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”**

God, the Spirit was active in creation, and what we see in the Old Testament is that he would at times come “on” people and give them a special anointing for a specific task.

For example, when Samuel anointed David, the scripture says:

**1 Sam. 16:13a** – “**Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward...**”

We see it in Judges 14 concerning the life of Samson. Whenever he was being threatened whether by a lion or an opposing army, the scripture records (v. 6, 19) – that the Spirit of God rushed upon him.

The Spirit of God “rested” of the elders of Israel (Numbers 11:25) when they shared the burden of leadership with Moses.

So, in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit was present and active. Now, if the Holy Spirit is God himself, fully divine and personal, we shouldn’t be surprised to see him actively at work in the most important moment in human history - the birth of Jesus.

Recall Gabriel sharing with Mary that she would give birth to the Messiah:

**Luke 1:34-35** – “**And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.”**

Just a few verses later – Mary travels to Elizabeth’s house to visit...Elizabeth has recently found out that she too was pregnant (this baby would be John the Baptist) – and the scripture states:

**Luke 1:40-42** – “**and she (Mary) entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.<sup>41</sup> And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,<sup>42</sup> and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!”**

Zechariah is “filled with the Spirit” (Luke 1:67) when his son was born and the Spirit enables him to speak a prophecy over his son’s life – that he would be a “prophet of the Most High”.

The Holy Spirit “was upon” Simeon in (Luke 2:25-27) and it was the Holy Spirit that showed him when Jesus was being presented in the Temple eight days after his birth that this child was (Luke 2:32) “a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to the people of Israel.”

At the baptism of Jesus (Matt. 4:16), the Holy Spirit descended like a dove and “rested” on Jesus. It was the Holy Spirit that opened people’s eyes to the ministry of Jesus enabling them to believe and follow him.

The Holy Spirit has ALWAYS been – he’s the eternal God- active and engaged from creation of the world to the incarnation of the Christ-child and he will be involved at the consummation of history.

This is the work of the Holy Spirit. However, we MUST distinguish – this VERY important... We MUST distinguish between HOW the Holy Spirit worked in the Old Testament and HOW he works now!

In these Christmas accounts...the Spirit came *upon* Mary... he *filled* Elizabeth and Zechariah...he *rested on* Simeon. This was the Old Covenant pattern. But something revolutionary was about to change.

Recall what Jesus taught the disciples about the Holy Spirit as he was preparing to go to the cross...he’s getting ready to die and knows he’s leaving them. They won’t have Jesus to be beside them in a few days.

**John 14:16-17 – “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”**

THIS is “God in you” – the Holy Spirit. He would at one time come upon you...or rest on you...but Jesus says, after my death, I’m going to send him to live IN you!

It’s the difference between renting and owning. In the Old Testament, the Spirit would visit - like a consultant who shows up, does the job, and leaves. But now? He MOVES IN. He takes up permanent residence. You don’t just get the Spirit for special moments - you get Him forever – what a gift!

**Illus. Extravagant/Expensive gifts** – This week, I was online shopping as probably most of you in the room were...and I decided to go online to Harrod’s in London. If you’ve never been to London, it’s an experience...you have to go!

It’s CRAZY! It’s eight floors, a million square feet of space...it’s got several restaurants (incredible fish and chips I might add!), there are 330 departments in the building, 12,000 employees...and a lot of it is like extreme luxury items.

To be clear, when I go...I don’t go to shop. I go to eat and watch people who shop there! It really is amazing.

Well, as I as online shopping this week, I decided to search some gifts at Harrod's – they say this is the MOST luxurious store in Europe. Here are some of the most expensive gifts ever sold there!

1. Patchi Chocolates – it's the finest chocolate in the world – went for \$10,000 a box!
2. Diamond 2-Ball Putter - Commissioned by Golf club maker, Odyssey Golf. It's an 18-carat putter features a white gold head, 240 rubies and 378 diamonds for only \$161,000
3. Baldi-Harrod's crystal bathtub - Constructed from one block of the purest white rock crystal discovered in Brazil in 2006 – it went for \$790,000
4. Advent Calendar - manufactured by Porsche Design, it's nearly 6 ft tall and features 24 windows offering owners luxurious surprises such as a Porsche Design Indicator Chronograph watch in rose gold, a designer kitchen, and a speedboat. A pair of gold sunglasses, cufflinks, and running shoes were also added to the calendar. There were only seven created worldwide. Price tag - \$1 million
5. Stuart Weitzman Ruby Slippers - ruby encrusted pumps feature 123.33 carats and silky red satin. They are covered in 642 Burma rubies, and half a pound of platinum – sale is only for \$1.6 million

Now, all these gifts...extravagant...expensive...worth A LOT of money. But they all pale in comparison to the gift of the Holy Spirit. You can't put a price tag on "God IN you". You can't sale that at Harrod's!

And here's the thing: You get "God IN you" when you do what we talked about last week and receive him into your life. This is when you become a "child of God".

**John 1:12-13 – “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,**

**<sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”**

Paul put it like this in: **Rom. 8:9-11 – “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.”**

God's Spirit IN you is PROOF that you are his child...that you have been born again.

Listen: NOT everyone is a son or daughter of God! We are all created by God, but we don't become his children – we don't become a son or daughter UNTIL we call on his name...UNTIL we receive the gift of salvation by faith.

And what John writes in the passage that we started with today is that:

- if you need evidence for whether or not you have been born again...

- if you need to know certainty regarding whether or not you are a son or daughter of God...
- if you want to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God is IN you...

There is ONE way to tell...this brings us back to John's litmus test - Do you love others? If you love others, then you can KNOW that God's Spirit is IN you!

**1 John 4:7 – “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.”**

Now, before someone misunderstands what John is saying, let me be crystal clear: John is NOT saying that we earn our salvation by loving people. That would contradict everything Scripture teaches about grace.

What John IS saying is that love is the inevitable FRUIT of new birth. It's the evidence that the Holy Spirit actually lives in you.

Now, before we get into the practical application part of this message, let's just note that when we love others, we are simply modeling the character and actions of God. We “love”, this scripture says, because he first loved us.

And this passage tells us how God loves us and in doing so reveals how we should love others.

**1 John 4:9a– “In this the love of God was made manifest among us...”**

This word “manifest” here...it means to “come out in the open” or to “make public”.

**Illus. Mall** – You go by any department store right now and they are going to have the product they want to sale “out in the open” – it will be on display; it will be on a mannequin or in the window for all to see.

They don't want to hide what they want people to have...they want it out in the open for all to see...they want to “manifest” it!

Well, God didn't want to hide his love for man! He wanted it out in the open for all to see! So what did he do in order to make this happen?

**1 John 4:9-10 – “In this the love of God was made manifest among us that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”**

So, God manifested his love by “sending” his only Son – that word “send” is mentioned twice in (v. 9-10) – notice, love is expressed in action. He “sent” his son to be the “propitiation for our sins”. “Propitiation” means to appease the wrath of God! We talked about this last week! God is holy and just - sin must be punished. But God is also love. So how does he solve this divine dilemma? He sent his Son to absorb the punishment we deserved. Jesus's death satisfied God's justice AND expressed

God's love. This is what makes Christmas so profound - that baby in the manger was born to die for you. He sent his son...he GAVE us Jesus to be the propitiation of our sins!

Christmas and giving go hand in hand! You know, I thought about this while studying this week. It's possible to give a gift without loving the person you are giving the gift to!

**Illus. Christmas vacation** – I mean, just think about Christmas Vacation. Clark gave his boss a gift, but it wasn't because he loved him...he gave it to him because he was the boss and felt like he had to! Afterall, he was going to get that bonus for the pool – would've been a bad look not to get the boss something.

We can give all day long without loving the person we are giving to...BUT it is impossible to love without giving!

If you love, you will give...you will sacrifice...you will serve and give your time.

You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving. And because God is love (1 John 4:8) it is inherent within his character and nature to give – and he gave his very best, his son Jesus.

And the Bible teaches that WHEN we believe by faith in Jesus the finished work of Christ on the cross and in the resurrection (last week's message), his Spirit comes to live in us. And if God is "in us" we will love and therefore give to others like God does!

Let it sink in:

**1 John 4:12** – (this is where we get to the heart of mission) **"No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us."**

The invisible God becomes visible to the world by our love for others because he is living IN us and this empowers us for mission.

"God in us" – changes everything! It's what will change the world! I told you this message is all about "mission". Let me tell you why this truth "God in us" can change the world.

I want to note three ways this love manifests (made visible) when the Holy Spirit truly dwells in us.

### **1. Changes how we see people**

Jesus's earthly ministry always amazed me. You read about it and from the "get go" he was always reaching out and seeking after people that were not NORMALLY associated with God. Wasn't this the rap against Jesus that came from the religious crowd?

That he spent time with tax collectors and "sinners". He ministered and spoke to the poor and neglected in society. He would touch lepers and slow down long enough to speak to despised Samaritans. He engaged in conversation women who had pretty risqué backgrounds and his closest associates, his disciples were a bunch of blue collar no names.

Amazing! Think about who the news of Jesus's birth was first delivered to – the Shepherds!

They were considered outcasts...unclean...unreliable...their testimony wasn't even admissible in the court of law of the day, and yet, God in his sovereignty chooses to deliver the good news of Jesus to the world to them. What's the point in all of this?

The point is God does not see people in the same way the world sees people.

- The world sees strength and is attracted to it...
- The world sees charisma and want our leaders to exhibit it...
- The world sees power and might and that's what garners respect...

NOT so, with God! He looks at the heart...those who the world would dismiss, God readily embraces, and when he comes to live in us, we will see people the exact same way. This is what God's love does in our heart!

We love the outcast and the orphan. We love the weak and the widow. We love the person that drives slow in the left lane...that doesn't have their bags ready when going through security...that isn't ready for their order when they go through Chic-fil-a!

People – all people are created in the image of God, and because of this we love them – regardless of WHO they are, HOW much they have or WHAT they can offer us.

People – ALL people is who Jesus came to save, and when he lives in us, it changes us...we stop seeing people as interruptions or projects or hindrances to what we want, we see them as individual image-bearers of God who are objects of his love.

**Matt. 9:36 – “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”**

And like Christ, we serve them. We give to them our time and attention. We sacrifice for them. We make this invisible God, visible to them by our love.

? – With Christmas being this next week, think about that as you are out and about...there are a ton of ways you can show love to people you will interact this week. “God in us” changes the way we see them!

- Think about this when you are in the shopping lines and come to the cashier...can you imagine what they have dealt with that day?
- Think about this when you see your co-worker this week that experienced death or loss earlier this year...have compassion. This Christmas will be different!

“God in us” changes the way we see people.

**Illus. Las Vegas Raiders Chapel – young lady working the valet**

## **2. (“God in us) Changes how we spend our time**

Remember the scene right before Jesus ascended back to God?

**Acts 1:8 – “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”**

Notice Jesus didn’t say, “You SHOULD be my witnesses.” He said, “You WILL BE my witnesses.” This isn’t a command – it’s a promise. When the Holy Spirit comes in, mission comes out. It’s inevitable. You can’t have God living inside you and not overflow with his love to others.

Salvation is reorienting our lives around what is most important...mission flows from salvation. When we come to know Christ, our priorities change. We see people differently and we start spending our time differently.

When God lives IN me, I realize that life is no longer about me! And as I cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit in my life – this is called “progressive sanctification” – what I do with the time God has given me becomes an act of worship to him.

I realize that I am living on borrowed time. I start numbering my days as the Psalmist wrote When God lives in me, he gets the say on how, where, and who I spend my time.

I know as we approach a new year, we like to look at our calendars and make resolutions and figure out where we are going to make cuts in our life and what we are going to add to our lives that is meaningful and beneficial.

Ask yourself this as you look at your calendar in preparation for the new year:

- Are you using your time in the way that God would?
- Are you going where he would go?
- Are you doing what he would have you do?
- Are you investing in your children, grandchildren?
- Are you making disciples?

Are you doing what you need to do to grow spiritually – “linger longer”? If the Holy Spirit truly lives in you, your calendar should reflect HIS priorities, not just yours.

### **Illus. Experiencing God**

“God in us” changes the way we see people. It changes the way we spend our time. Third and finally:

### **3. Changes how we steward our resources**

I told you before you can give without loving but you can’t love without giving. When we realize God lives “in” us, it will change the way we steward what he has entrusted to us.

We are managers that will be held accountable for how we steward- not just our money, but our time (as mentioned previously), our giftings and talent...our opportunities and relationships.

I don’t know of a stronger testimony to a watching world that God is “in us” than how we steward what we have. It tells the world what is important to us...what means the most to us...what we really treasure and prioritize.



Does your giving reflect that you treasure Jesus above stuff?

Look...some will spend more on buying Christmas gifts this week than we'll give all year to advance the gospel. That's not judgment...it's just math. I want to make a challenge this year that you make the largest gift purchase be to the Kingdom.

As it relates to mission, radical generosity shows that God truly lives in us and that his message to people matters most to us.

God gave his best...we should give God our best!

**2 Cor. 8:9 – “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor (he gave his all), so that you by his poverty might become rich.”**

“God in us” shows the world (his love is manifested) THROUGH our actions – specifically in how we see people, how we spend our time, and how we steward our resources. In these things we make an invisible God, visible!

As we approach Christmas this week...as believers...Let us think constantly and continually on these truths surrounding the fact that Jesus is *HERE*:

He is WITH us...He is FOR us...He is IN us.

Will you pray with me?

---

*Please Note: This document is not meant to be a published, cited, annotated research paper. It is simply a transcript of a spoken message, provided as a resource. Many commentaries, articles, and other sermon helps were likely studied and contributed to the forming of this message.*