

September 15, 2024

1 John 4:13-21

### Opening Prayer

Today, 1 John talking about Love – This has been a mainstay in John's letter

How did we get here?

Remember for us it has been months; for John it was one sitting.

First John has been a wonderfully diverse book -with a cyclical rhythm

- Jesus is real and He continues to impact us daily not just during His time as deity in flesh
- We talked about light and the power of light to drive out darkness and that mankind often prefers darkness and hiding our deeds to being exposed to light.
- We looked at the blood of animals and the blood of Jesus that purifies us
- Then to what we actually believe and having to live it out.
- We talked about getting it right in relationships. On to stages of life and maturity – ROL as well
- Antichrists and demystifying and not catastrophizing situations
- Understanding that God is not like man and He lavished His love calling us children of God – God will not write you a “dear John” letter.
- Craig explained how John goes on about being children of God and not knowing the full scope of it and that we need to live holy lives.
- Then sin and lawlessness, amnesty and no one who is born of God will continue to sin.
- Don't be like Cain Genesis 4: <sup>6</sup> Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? <sup>7</sup> If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”
- Don't forget the questions of: can do, should do and must do.
- Godliness vs spirituality – Godliness requires something of us
- We are to abide in Christ - to accept and be guided by or continuing for a long time
- Test the spirits – Satan is a liar and the father of lies and wants to deceive us – Be discerning.
- That God, who is in us, is greater than Satan who is in the world – King of Kings and ruler of all.
- Jesus is the only one who has seen God and He interprets the loving Father for us – not thru the Law and rules
- Every act of God is a loving act even if it does not seem like it at the time. – Collateral Redemption.

Remember the audience – the Gnostics – salvation thru special knowledge – bi-une body/soul and spirit  
Spirit and body are different parts and don't have any impact on the other. Ascetic or Licentious are the extremes.

1 John 4:13-18 <sup>13</sup> This is how we know that we live in Him and He in us: He has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. <sup>16</sup> And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. <sup>17</sup> This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

13: There is reciprocal abiding (God in us and we in God) - Possible only thru the gift of the Holy Spirit, by whom the relationship with the Father and with the Son is sealed eternally. Trinity all present here.

14: “We”, referring to the apostles and those who knew Jesus

Again, as an eyewitness of Jesus, His Life and transfiguration

A statement to the Gnostics that Jesus is the savior of the world, not thru knowledge or special revelation

Not just a “good guy” or teacher or prophet – Who do you say that I am?

Christ the son of the Living God.

Although no one has ever seen God – we do “see” by faith that the cross of Christ was for our sins and for our salvation.

**15: Anyone who confesses/acknowledges God’s act in his Son is included in the divine fellowship in which the Father is in the believer and the believer is in the Father.**

**Initially, John connected the fellowship with obedience to the command to love on another (3:24).**

**Then he showed its dependence on the gift of the Spirit (4:13).**

**Here he shows that the fellowship is built on Jesus,**

**who must be acknowledged as being one with the father (2:23),**

**as the one who came in the flesh (4:2)**

**and as the Son of God who was sent “to be the Savior of the world” (4:14-15)**

This is just good solid theology and correction for the Gnostics

Who Jesus is? – One with God – Deity come to earth – Savior of the world

16: First we must know and rely on the fact that God loves us. (not always a given)

Second, we come to realize that we are relying on His love, that is His very nature, God is love – do we really know and believe this, or just head knowledge?

Third, we discover that to live in God means to live in love.

Returning to 1:3 <sup>3</sup>We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

John is restating what he began with at the beginning of this letter about Jesus true nature Jesus is the Son of God and the revelation of God’s love and loving action toward mankind including me.

17: John introduces the theme of Judgment in the context of the commandment to Love because Jesus himself made this command so specific and established Love as the basis for judgement. To live in love is to live in God and this results in complete confidence for prayer and judgement

**In this world we are like Jesus:**

**Commentary:** In view of the context, it is best to understand these words to mean that just as Jesus “abides” in the love of the father, (Jn 15:10) an abiding that already marked His earthly existence and gave him “confidence” before God in the face of temptation, trial and death, so “in this world” we also may abide in the Father’s love and share in that same confidence.

18: There is no fear in Love – love gives us confidence in God, His ways and provision for us; Jesus

If we abide in God’s love we will be without fear.

Love and fear are incompatible – they cannot coexist

If we understand the true depth of Love of the Father and His intentions for us, we have confidence to do all that He has set before us –

Jesus had this depth of understanding and it allowed Him to be totally obedient  
**confident that every act of God is a loving act –  
even if it does not feel like it.**

Perfect Love casts out fear. – what does that mean to you?

He just talked about Love and fear not being able to coexist.

Is this a Platitude? – something that is said so often it loses its meaning

Christian Truism? – something we say, but don’t really know how or why?

**Commentary:** This “love” is so powerful and life changing that when we know it, we are forever removed from the “fear” (punishment) of God

Remember the continuums?

Who is God? Angry Dictator \_\_\_\_\_ Loving Father

Who am I to God? Fodder for hell fire \_\_\_\_\_ Beloved creation

When we move to the right, we are better able to accept His love and not fear Judgment

Perfect love may cast out fear, but fear is remarkably potent in casting out love.

—P. D. James, English author

Story: Kid's Bible and picture of Adam and Eve shrinking back from God.  
They had only known loving relationship with God, but thru sin that was broken.  
They didn't know how to handle broken relationship, they had never experienced it  
What did God do – He loved them and provided covering for their - nakedness and shame.  
God did not take away the consequence but removed the fear of judgement.  
Love and fear can't coexist.

Let's read the entire verse:

18: There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

Seems like John is saying we have to choose fear or love.

*Thomas a Kempis in The Imitation of Christ. Christianity Today, Vol. 41, no. 3.*  
He who loves God with all his heart dreads neither death, torment, judgment, nor hell, for perfect love opens a sure passage to God.

Discussion Questions:

Verse 16 talks about knowing and relying on the Love of God  
Have I or Could I make that a “front of mind” initial thought?  
And if so, what difference would it make in my daily life?

Have you ever used, “perfect love casts out all fear” as a platitude?  
Knowing that John is talking about fear of judgement does that change your understanding ?