

Fear 3

Part 3: God with Us: Perfect Love Casts out Fear

(preached 8/8/21)

[Prepare for altar call at end.]

Please turn to *1 John 4*.

Sermon #1: Fear is a not a virtue and not from God.

- If fear has a grip on us, then perhaps our problem isn't that we think it's bad, but that we think it's good!
- Maybe we think it protects us, grants us peace, security, morality, self-control, greater wisdom, good discernment, and the ability to predict the future.
- If we believe this we must repent not of being afraid, but of falsely believing our fear can give us these things and that we need it.
- Fear is not found within either the fruit of gifts of the Spirit.
- All the things we think we get from fear are available from the HS including peace, security, wisdom, discernment, self-control, and the ability to prophesy.
- Fear paralyzes, stops, prevents, and delays us from DOING. Proverbs equates it to laziness and compares it to a man who surrounds himself with a wall of thorns—he's unable to do anything.
- The Lord has given us the Holy Spirit Who grants power, love, and a sound mind.
- POWER means to enable us to perform mighty acts including miracles!
- LOVE translates to "a feast a charity."
- SOUND MIND means a disciplined, peaceful, and self-controlled mind/thinking.
- In sermon #1 we cast off the spirit of fear and embraced the Holy Spirit!

Sermon #2: False Sense of Earthly Security.

- When we strive for earthly security vs. that which we find in Christ, we are insecure.
- Fear and Insecurity are a married couple of false gods: when fear comes upon us, we lose our sense of security and, all too often, we'll do anything to get it back.
- We'll bring our money, freedom, rights, relationships, jobs, and possessions and sacrifice them at the altar of earthly security, hoping it will wave its hand and grant us peace.
- In the wake of 9/11 we were willing to give up certain rights and freedoms and give the Government emergency powers to make us feel safe again.
- Covid has been a test for everyone, believer and unbeliever.
- It's struck FEAR into the hearts of millions, disrupting our sense of normalcy and "same old same old."

- In our desire to return to a sense of well being and peace we allowed the state to shut down the Church, private businesses, charity organizations, and threaten the owners and pastors of the same with arrest and conviction.
- A Florida Pastor, Rodney Howard Brown, was arrested and led away in cuffs in the middle of his church service...in AMERICA!
- Whenever evil sees that its being submitted to it gets bolder: despite the fact that the constitution states only Congress can pass laws, the CDC has issued a ruling to extend the eviction moratorium despite the Supreme Court saying they can't do that.
- Vaccines started out as a "choice" but now anyone refusing the same cannot travel via plane, will be fired from any government employment, and in NYC proof of vaccination will be required to eat at a restaurant or go to a sports game.
- We've learned over and over that when you give the state "extra" power, it rarely gives it back...***so why are we American citizens submitting to all this?***
- BECAUSE WE WANT TO FEEL SECURE. Even though the state is rolling over our rights, taking our freedoms away, presenting contradictory "scientific" data, and even acting illegally, we'll follow along as if it were the Psalm 23 Good Shepherd.
- Our desire for normalcy will inspire to place our trust, hope, and faith in the state to make us lie down in green pastures, drink from the still waters, and restore our souls.
- Our craving for peace and a sense of well being will lead us to look to the rod and staff of government to comfort us and we hope they will be the ones who keep our cups running over.
- ***True peace and security is only found in Jesus!*** What does that look like?
- His WILL, WHO he's made us into, His Word the Bible, His fruit, His gifts, and His plan.
- During the Tribulation, the Prophet Daniel states the Antichrist will corrupt people to the point where they will take the Mark of the Beast...how will he do this?
- BY PROMISING SECURITY. People will sell their souls just to feel secure in the chaotic times that will exist during that time.
- Let us seek the One Who has all of this and more vs. placing our trust in a state that doesn't care about us, but is only following the evil agenda of fallen angels.
- Pursuing the Lord and His peace give us righteousness and it's only His perfect love that casts out fear.

TODAY. We're going to see how to cast the false gods of fear and insecurity out of our hearts and minds! We turn now to 1 John 4, beginning at verse 7.

1 John 4:7-12 (ESV)

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

OWN DEFINITION & EXPRESSION. Everyone has their own definition and expression of love, so it's important ***you don't interpret these verses through said definition/expression.*** The definition and expression of love that John is pointing to is in verses 9-10 which will I read again:

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

GOD WITH US. The name of God's Son is Christ Jesus Immanuel and His Name translates to "God With Us" which is the subtitle of today's sermon. Let's break down what John is telling us:

Verse 7a: let us love each other from and with the same love that comes from and IS God.

Verse 7b: we're empowered to love each other that way because we're born again—a new creation made in the likeness of Jesus. The only reason we know God, that is to be in relationship with and understand God—is because we have been recreated in His image. His Spirit—Who produces the fruit of Love—lives forever within us.

Verse 8: anyone who doesn't know THIS type of love doesn't know God because the Lord doesn't just have love, like an emotion, He **is** the embodiment of it.

WE HAVE IT. Let's pause: the name of Immanuel Jesus means "God with Us" which means that ***to have Jesus as our Savior means we have His love.***

THE LOVE OF CHRIST ISN'T JUST DIRECTED TO US, BUT THROUGH US TO EXPRESS THE VERY PERSON OF JESUS TO EACH OTHER.

EMPOWERING COMMAND. ***John telling us to love each other isn't just a commandment, but he's telling us what we're already empowered to do.***

BRIGHT FLASHLIGHT. Imagine that you're given an incredibly bright flashlight with an everlasting battery that casts forth a powerful beam of light wherever its pointed. Someone is lost in the woods, in the dark, and when we direct said beam of light toward the woods the person is able to find their way out.

WE DIRECT THE BEAM. We are not the light nor are we the source...but we direct where it shines. The same is true for the love of God—we already have “it” because we already have God (and He us!). John is merely telling us to direct the beam at each other.

NOT 5 LANGUAGES. Now we need to understand God's expression of love, so that we don't try to insert our own. It's not one of the 5 love languages.

Verses 9-10: it's in the form of Jesus with us...within us. Its expression is the ultimate manifestation of grace: He took our sins and gave us His righteousness. He took our punishment and gave us His reward.

DOES NOT MEAN. Us shining the same beam on someone else does NOT mean we take someone else's sins and give them our righteousness or that we take someone else's punishment and give them our reward. Only God is capable of doing that.

EVERY CHRISTIAN HAS RECEIVED. It means that we recognize that the brother or sister John is encouraging us to love has received the same from Jesus, just as we have. The context of John telling us to love each other is toward people within the Christian faith.

MOST ACCEPTING SAVIOR. Christ and therefore Christianity is the most accepting faith on the planet. Jesus doesn't care about your race, age, gender, or social status. He doesn't care whether you're rich or poor, if you were sinful rebel or tried to live right, or what you formerly believed. Anyone who repents and received Him as their Savior, He will not cast out but will embrace! He invites everyone who is heavy laden to come to Him!

Now we need to look at every Christian that way. It's tempting to believe we're trying harder than others in the church.

- We're more dedicated to studying the Scripture, attending church, tithing, evangelism, and doing good things for others.
- We might feel we make more of an effort to volunteer or live a holy life than another.

SAME JESUS. Yet in the end, every true Christian has received the same propitiation—which is an old word for substitution—for sins as we have. They have the same Jesus in them in the form of the Holy Spirit.

¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

You and I struggle. We still sin, disobey God, set a bad example to others, and go our own way.

YET GOD OUR FATHER STILL SEES HIS SON JESUS INSIDE OF US AND CHOOSES TO SHINE THE BRIGHT BEAM OF HIS LOVE TO AND THROUGH US.

So we ought to love each other.

¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

Let me read this verse from the AMP:

1 John 4:12 (AMP)

¹² No man has at any time [yet] seen God. But if we love one another, God abides (lives and remains) in us and His love (that love which is essentially His) is brought to completion (to its full maturity, runs its full course, is perfected) in us!

MUST UNDERSTAND V 12 TO GET V 18. There's a good chance you know the verse coming up, which is verse 18 that God's perfect love casts out fear. Therefore it's vital we understand verse 12 to fully apply verse 18.

HUMAN LOVE. Human love is not perfect and therefore it's not complete—only the love of God that we've been talking about is.

Here's our question: **how can the love of God be completed IN US so that we can finally be free of fear and insecurity?**

Here's how: ***the love of God cannot just come to us—which has already happened—it must go through us and shine on others.***

GOT THE FLASHLIGHT. We already have the high powered flashlight. It will never stop working nor will the battery wear out, for the battery is the Holy Spirit Who is eternal. There are two things that must be done to make a flashlight effective:

- 1) turn it on
- 2) direct the beam with purpose.

The love of God that casts out fear and insecurity within us is only complete when we are shining said love on our fellow Christians.

LOVE GROWS COLD. In Matthew 24 when speaking of the last days, Jesus said “the love of many will grow cold” and He follows that up by saying that both hatred and offense will increase as a result. One more thing that will be prevalent during that time is fear and insecurity. Let’s put it together:

If fear, insecurity, and offense are present and consistent in our lives, then we are not shining the love of God on others.

- We cannot pick fruit from the tree of fear and expect the fruit of the Spirit to flow through us.
- We cannot be receiving gifts from the spirit of fear and expect the gifts of God to be given to us.

If fear, insecurity, and offense are few and far between in our lives, then we’re positioned to shine the love of God on others.

1 John 4:13-21 (ESV)

- ¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.
- ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.
- ¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.
- ¹⁶ So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.
- ¹⁷ By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.
- ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.
- ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us.
- ²⁰ If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.
- ²¹ And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Verse 13: if the love of God is shining through us and lighting up the path for others, then we live in God and He lives in us.

Verses 14-15: John repeats himself by defining God’s Love which is in the Person of Jesus. God’s love is not an emotion or feeling, it’s Jesus.

Verse 16: the love of God matures and is completed within us when we believe and know that He died for our sins even though we didn’t deserve it...at all. Before we were Saved we were enemies of God, no matter how good we thought we were. Romans 5 goes on to say that it’s rare someone dies for a friend, far rarer for someone to die for an enemy...yet that’s exactly

what Christ did. He didn't just die for me or you, but for all Christians...even the one who annoys you or doesn't seem to be taking the faith as serious as you.

Verse 17: Judgment Day! There will come a time when all of humanity will kneel and bow before the One True God, Lord, and King: Jesus Christ! No more "eye has not seen and ear has not heard" stuff, but we will physically be in the physical presence of Christ.

For the born again Christian there will be no fear on that day.

NERVOUS? Why not? Remember the last time you had to stand up and speak in front of a crowd or perhaps had a yearly review at work? Called into the principle's office? Were you nervous? When I used to go to TKD tournaments I would be a nervous wreck beforehand, my stomach turning over and over almost to the point of nausea. Why? I was afraid. What was I afraid of? That I would underperform, mess up, forget something, with an entire crowd watching. That upon that failure people would judge me negatively.

JD SHOULD BE NERVEWRACKING. Therefore one would think that Judgment Day would be the most nerve wracking moment of all time for any human being because we'll be standing before the God and Creator of the Heaven's and the Earth! A God Whose standard for righteousness is 100%, just as if we'd never committed a single sin ever, to get into His Kingdom!

NO FEAR. Yet John reassures us that a born-again believer will have NO FEAR, not be nervous, not feel insecure, not be worried of messing up or underperforming when that day comes. Why not? Because the love of God has been completed within us. Since we are made in the likeness of Jesus, then just as Jesus is right now (a holy Son of God) so are we in THIS world.

¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

NO PUNISHMENT. A born again Christian isn't going to be punished by God on Judgment Day and isn't being punished by God now. Why not? John has been telling us this entire chapter: Jesus was our substitute: as the Lamb of God He took the punishment for our sins and He absorbed all of God's just wrath upon Himself.

\$64,000 QUESTION. Now let's get back to fear and insecurity—when it comes down to it and bad things happen, what's the question many of us ask? I have counseled hundreds of people in my lifetime and most of them ask this question: *is God punishing me for something?*

- Why did 9/11 happen? Was God punishing the US?

- Why did I get sick or get into this accident? Perhaps God is angry with me and is making me pay.
- Why did something happened to my loved one? Was it something that I did, and God punished me by taking my loved one from me?
- Why did I lose my job? Why has Covid-19 come? Why does it seem like a dark cloud follows me around?

HIDDEN BELIEF. Too many of us live with the hidden belief that God is still exacting some sort of justice from us and I say “hidden” because it tends to come out when something bad has happened.

ISAIAH 53, BUT.... Perhaps we come to church and quote Isaiah 53 (He was pierced for my transgressions...), but there’s still a nagging notion that ***Father God can still get mad at us and visit some vengeance upon us.***

And that thought instills FEAR and INSECURITY.

Look at verse 18 again: ***fear has to do with punishment.***

As long as we believe God is still punishing us, we will be afraid and insecure.

“Wait a second Pastor Scott, you’ve told us that God still corrects, rebukes, and disciplines us. How does what you’re saying now line up with what you’ve said in the past?”

- Punishment is all about justice and not about discipline.
- A judge punishes and a father disciplines.
- The difference is a mile high wall and not a dotted line.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT. If you commit a crime you’re arrested and brought, bound in cuffs, before the judge. ***The judge’s priority isn’t rehabilitation but the Law and the repayment of debt to society, period.*** He hears the charges, renders a verdict, then passes a sentence—a punishment—that befits the level of the crime. ***A judge must satisfy the scales of justice.***

DAD FINDS OUT. If you’ve done something wrong and your dad finds out, he calls you to him.

- He approaches you from the standpoint of the love he has for you as your dad and **justice isn’t his goal.**

- Your character is his priority and the motivation for his correction, rebuke, and discipline is exactly that—so that you will become a better person.
- So that you won't go off the rails and down a bad path.

FATHER GOD IS LIKE THAT. Some of you might be thinking “*my dad wasn't like that at all!*” which is fine, but that's the way God our Father is.

- As His kids, when you and I sin, He's not concerned at all with balancing the scales of justice...
- all of that was satisfied by Jesus being the sub for our sins on the Cross. All of Father's just wrath was taken out on the Person of Jesus on the Cross.
- God is no longer our Judge, He's our Dad.
- He doesn't want us going off the rails.
- He sees where our current choices and lifestyle is leading, so He intervenes to inspire us to get back on His path.
- He does so from the standpoint of a loving Father Who wants and KNOWS what's best for His kids. He doesn't punish.

Fear enters into us when we think God is still making US pay for our own sins.

- That somehow Jesus bleeding and dying the Cross wasn't quite enough and that God wants some blood from us.
- Or that He only forgave us for the sins we committed up until we got Saved or serious about Jesus, and that we're responsible for everything after.
- Or perhaps we've gone too far...sinned too much or committed one so terrible that God decided it was time for some fiery wrath to come our way.

FEAR CREEPS IN. Either way fear will creep into our hearts and insecurity into our minds.

- We must go back to the first love and wisdom we had at the beginning, when our faith was new: that Jesus shed His blood and forgave us of all.
- There is no more judgment, wrath, or punishment for us because Christ satisfied the Law and balanced the divine scales of justice once and for all time.

ALTAR CALL

Isaiah 53:1-12 (ESV)

¹ Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

² For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.

³ He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as

one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?

⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.