

**I JOHN 4**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I John chapter 4 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

As we have seen so far in our study of this letter, John opens up in chapter 1 by speaking of *THE LIGHT OF GOD*, that there is no darkness in Him at all.

Then, as we moved into chapter 2 John is still speaking of *THE LIGHT OF GOD* but now John is admonishing us to abide in the light of God so that it will be manifested in our lives, so that we will shine brightly.

Last time, in I John chapter 3 we began a section dealing with *THE LOVE OF GOD* and how rich, how deep that love is. In fact, God loves us so much He has adopted us into the family of God!

Tonight, as we move into I John chapter 4, John is still speaking of *THE LOVE OF GOD* but now he is admonishing us to abide in that love so that God's love will not only flow into our lives, but through our lives touching the lives of others.

If you remember from our study last time, we read in I John 3:24, "**Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.**"

That is a transition to what John is going to be talking about before he deals with *THE LOVE OF GOD!*

The point here in I John 3:24 is that we have the truths of God found in the Word of God. And, not only do we have these truths of God, but, as believers, we have the Holy Spirit in us, guiding us, teaching us, directing us.

You see, He is the Spirit of Truth!

And if that was all there was, truth, there would not be a problem. But as we know, especially in the days we are living in, there is a spirit of error out there trying to deceive us.

One writer put it like this. He wrote,

It is easy to determine intellectually that the equation  $2 + 2 = 5$  is mathematically incorrect:  $2 + 2$  does not equal 5 . . .

It is easy to verify intellectually that Abraham Lincoln actually lived and served as President of the United States.

However, spiritual truth and error are not identified by reasoning alone. Satan desires spiritual truth's destruction, and failing that, he desires its corruption.

In John 7:17 Jesus says, "If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority."

We learn here that the gateway to spiritual truth is not so much the intellect but the will.

Because there is spiritual truth, there is also spiritual error and falsehood. Spiritual truth and error are not discerned by logical or intellectual reasoning alone.

Intellectual reasoning is part of the truth discernment process, but truth is not discerned that way *alone*.

Some of the brightest people on the face of the earth are dead wrong about some things they believe and teach. Spiritual truth is not discerned, known, or identified by reasoning alone.

Spiritual discernment plays a crucial role as well. To know God you must come to him in faith and love.

Intellectuals who are intoxicated with their own wisdom and knowledge can't quite seem to figure out that their own investigative methodologies are flawed to the core when it comes to discerning spiritual truth.

- David L. Allen, 1-3 John – Fellowship in God's Family, p. 175

Absolutely. And that is a big problem in the church today. People are lacking discernment and they are buying into all kinds of false doctrine, false teaching that is leading them away from God, not drawing them closer to God.

Remember the warning that Peter gave us in II Peter 2:1-2, **“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.”**

Yes, false prophets and false teachers have always been around, bringing in their destructive heresies. The sad thing for me is that Peter tells us **“many will follow their destructive ways”** and we are seeing that today!

So, the big question for us is this. *“How can we discern between the truth and the errors?”*

John is going to explain that to us next as we abide in ***THE LOVE OF GOD***.

With that said, let's begin reading in I John chapter 4, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

**I JOHN 4****VERSE 1**

Over and over we see in the New Testament these warnings to beware, to pay attention, to be on guard, but for what?

We are to be aware, to be on guard of false teachers who are bringing in their false doctrine and trying to deceive us into believing what they are teaching.

And the problem today is that many may refuse to do what John is instructing us to do. What is John telling us that we need to do with these false teachers and their false teaching, or for that matter, any teacher with their teaching?

He is telling us that we need to test the spiritual experiences they are having to see if they are found in the Word of God. He is telling us that we need to bring their teaching alongside the Word of God to see if what they are teaching is from God or not.

One writer put it like this. He wrote, *“The term translated ‘test’ is a present imperative form of the verb dokimazō. The term was used to refer to a metallurgist’s assaying of metals to test their purity and value. John’s use of the present tense indicates that believers are to continually test the spirits to see whether they are from God.”*

And yet, when what these false teachers are teaching is not found in the Word of God, they will tell you that *“God is bigger than His Word and thus, what they are saying is of God!”*

I don’t care who the teacher is, how well you know the teacher, what schooling they have, we are to test the spirits to see if these things are from God or not. And test these things all the time!

Remember the warning that John gave back in I John 2:18, **“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.”**

Not only that but listen to what Paul wrote in I Timothy 4:1, **“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.”**

Make no mistake about it, we are living in the **“latter times”** or the end times and we have seen a huge increase in false teachers with their false doctrine coming into the church.

The false prophets, the false teachers are out there, the spirit of Antichrist is at work and we must be able to discern what is of God and what is not of God!

But how do we do that?

Let’s read on and see what John has to say because this is important for us to stay the course, to keep the faith. We must know what is true and what is not true.

### VERSES 2-3

Hopefully this makes sense to you. True prophecy, and true teaching, will present a true Jesus.

And, like it was in John’s day, there were those who taught about Jesus, but it was not the truths of God, they made a Jesus to their own liking, it was a false Jesus.

Remember back in I John 2:22 we were warned, **“Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.”**

In other words, some were denying the deity of Jesus Christ.

Here John is saying that others were denying that God became flesh and dwelt among us.

We see that again in II John 7 where we are told, **“For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”**

And that same spirit of Antichrist that was around in John’s day is still at work today!

Let’s think about this for a minute. Do you really think the Devil cares if you love Jesus, if you pray to Jesus if your Jesus is a false Jesus?

Of course he doesn’t care, in fact he promotes these false representations of Jesus.

Let me give you a couple of examples to show you how a false Jesus is being presented today, not by Jehovah Witnesses or Mormons or the like, but by the church itself, they are beginning to not only accept it, but teach it to their people.

In the book, *Messiah and the Second Coming*, we are told,

Jesus was one soul who reached the state of Christ Consciousness; there may have been many others. He symbolized the blueprint we must follow . . . The way is open to everyone to become a Christ by achieving the Christ Consciousness through walking the same path He walked. He simply and beautifully demonstrated the pattern.

- Davis and Rice, *Messiah and the Second Coming*, p. 49

Also, out of *Science of Mind* magazine, John White wrote,

The significance of incarnation and resurrection is not that Jesus was a human like us but rather that we are gods like Him – or at least have the potential to be. The significance of Jesus is not a vehicle of salvation but as a model of perfection.

- John White, *Jesus, Evolution and the Future of Humanity*,  
(*Science of Mind* magazine, Oct. 1981), pp. 40-42

Sadly, this New Age Jesus is being taught in the church today as Willigis Jager so clearly shares with us in his book, *Contemplation: A Christian Path*. He wrote:

Salvation will now be nothing other than a realization of the fact that “the kingdom of God is within you” . . . This is the good news Jesus proclaimed to humanity. The kingdom is already within all of us.

- Willigis Jager, *Contemplation: A Christian Path*, pp. 93-94

The warning to us from John is that we have a Spirit tester to see if what they are saying, what they are teaching is from God.

If they deny His deity, if they deny His humanity, if they bring to you a Jesus that is not found in the Word of God, then they have the spirit of Antichrist and not the Spirit of God working in them.

Make no mistake about it, we as Christians should be able to discern truth from lies. Remember what John said back in I John 2:24-27, **“Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us - eternal life. These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.”**

That anointing that John is talking about is the Holy Spirit opening up the Word of God to our hearts and our minds. You see, the Holy Spirit along with God’s Word will keep us in the truth.

But there is a problem. You see, we have a choice here, as you deviate from what the Holy Spirit is telling you, as you deviate from God's Word, you are traveling down a slippery slope away from the true Jesus!

Folks, it is very clear. Jesus said in John 8:24, **“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am [He], you will die in your sins.”**

Jesus is saying that He is Almighty God, it speaks of His deity.

Not only that, but in John 1:14 we are told, **“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”**

This is speaking of the Incarnation, that God became flesh and dwelt among us.

So the Word, Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man in the Incarnation and if you deny this you are a false teacher with false doctrine that you are promoting. I didn't say that, but John did through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit!

And think about this lie about us being gods! The Bible is clear on this, we are not gods, nor did we forget the fact that we are gods! I have to admit I am forgetful, but what kind of god would I be if I couldn't remember that I was god, and you couldn't remember?

That is just plain foolishness.

You see, we are sinners separated from God by our sins and apart from receiving the atoning work of Christ into our lives by faith, acknowledging that He is God, you will die in your sins!

The spirit of antichrist is at work, and because of that, use your truth tester to expose those deceptions so that you will know the truth and the truth will set you free from the lies!



And yes, this Antichrist spirit is at work, but it will have its ultimate consummation in an end-times political and economic ruler. But that spirit of the Antichrist is found everywhere a false Jesus is promoted in place of the true Jesus of the Bible.

Listen to how The Living Bible puts I John 4:1-3, **“Dearly loved friends, don’t always believe everything you hear just because someone says it is a message from God: test it first to see if it really is. For there are many false teachers around, and the way to find out if their message is from the Holy Spirit is to ask: Does it really agree that Jesus Christ, God’s Son, actually became man with a human body? If so, then the message is from God. If not, the message is not from God but from one who is against Christ, like the ‘Antichrist’ you have heard about who is going to come, and his attitude of enmity against Christ is already abroad in the world.”**

We have the truth. We have the Holy Spirit showing us what is right and what is wrong. Yes, the spirit of the Antichrist is working in this world big time. And we see that the darkness is growing and because of that it is easy to lose perspective and give up, to become fearful because of what we are seeing.

John is going to help give us a correct perspective of the situation so we can have that hope even when the darkness seems to be growing!

#### VERSE 4

John is telling us that the child of God should not fear the spirit of Antichrist. Yes, we should be aware of what is going on, we should be aware of their tactics, but we should not be fearful!

Why should we not fear what is going on in this world?

Like John said in I John 3:24, we have the Spirit of God indwelling us and thus, because of that we need not fear. The indwelling of the Spirit of God in our lives is greater than he who is in this world!

Make no mistake about it, our victory is in Christ!

Remember, Jesus and Satan are not the same, not even close! They are not brothers like the Mormons teach, Jesus is God, He is eternal, He is the creator of all things, and yes, even Satan who was called Lucifer before his fall. Jesus is Almighty God!

And you can read of Lucifer's rebellion against God, this anointed Cherub who was the worship leader in heaven and yet it was not enough, in Isaiah 14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:12-17. In these chapters you can read of this fall from God.

And, during the battle of Armageddon, Jesus will destroy the Antichrist and his forces with the words that proceed from His mouth and Satan will be bound.

Thus, the secret for a victorious Christian life whether it is dealing with heresy or anything else, is for us to rely on God, that we trust in Him.

We don't stand strong in the power of our might, but in the power of His might!

John put it this way in I John 5:4-5, "**For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?**"

It is not complicated, but are we willing to believe it and walk by faith?

And please understand that when John speaks of "**the world**" it is this fallen world system that Satan is in control of and he will use it to promote his evil plans, this lies, his agenda, to keep people lost and in darkness!

But the wonderful news is this, as Jesus tells us in John 8:31-32, **“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”**

If you want to be a disciple of Jesus, then abide in His Word and the blessing of doing that is you will know the truths of God found in the Word of God and it will set you free from the lies of the Devil!

Again, I know some struggle with this fear of all that is going on but notice that John has placed our victory in the *PAST TENSE!* He wrote, **“You are of God . . . and have overcome them . . .”** Who have we overcome?

The false teachers with their false doctrine that have been spurred on by the devil himself! We are victorious already not moving towards victory!

As one writer put it,

Thus you are able to overcome false teachers and false doctrine, because the Holy Spirit in you is greater than the spirit of antichrist in those who are false teachers.

Union General George McClellan always seemed fearful that the enemy had superior forces; so he never attacked Robert E. Lee in the early days of the Civil War.

At Richmond he sent a spy, Allan Pinkerton, to assess the Confederate forces. Pinkerton assumed there were more Confederates than he could see, so he inflated the numbers.

As a result McClellan did not attack.

That is often the way we Christians are. We overestimate the power of the enemy, and we underestimate the power of God.

May we understand that, as The Living Bible puts I John 4:4, **“Dear young friends, you belong to God and have already won your fight with those who are against Christ because there is someone in your hearts who is stronger than any evil teacher in this wicked world.”**

May we not forget that fact!

#### VERSES 5-6

We might call these verses – ***WHAT LANGUAGE DO YOU SPEAK?***

And what I mean by that is this. Are you speaking the language of the world, with its worldly or secular ideas? Or are you speaking the language of God, are you living your life according to the Biblical standards?

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 12:34b, “. . . **for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.**”

You see, whatever is influencing your life will overflow in the words you say. And isn't it interesting that as the unsaved world speaks, calling good evil and evil good, the people rejoice.

But as we speak, standing up for righteousness, the people fight against us.

Case in point. In an article from the Christian Examiner, way back in July 2006, talking about the rating of a Christian movie called Facing the Giants that was released in the fall of 2006 and it was given a PG rating by the movie industry.

Now this is a family movie, and a PG rating is given to those movies in order to warn parents that there might be some profanity, violence or brief nudity.

Not in this movie but listen to what the article said:

“Facing the Giants” is too evangelistic. The MPAA, [Motion Picture Association of America] Fuhr noted, tends to offer cryptic explanations for its ratings. In this case, she was told that it “decided that the movie was laded with messages from one religion and that this might offend people from other religions.” . . .

“It is kind of interesting that faith has joined that list of deadly sins that the MPAA board warns parents to worry about.”

- Christian Examiner, Film Rated PG to Warn of ‘Thematic Elements’ of Evangelism, July 2006, p. 16

Now we should also not be surprised by this, and today, in 2021 we see that the door is open to silence even Dr. Seuss for the books he wrote.

Remember that Jesus warned us in John 15:18-21, **“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.”**

Let me make this point in regard the word in verse 6, **“us.”**

The Roman Catholic Church, in its official doctrines, says that the Roman Catholic Church is what is being spoken of here with the word **“us.”**

Thus, if you don’t adhere to the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church you do not know God, the truth is not in you!

That is interesting because the Roman Catholic Church did not exist in John's day, Peter was not the head of it, there is no record of that.

And there is a dispute to when it really started, but it took place sometime after 313 A. D. The reason I say that is because for the first 280 years Rome was persecuting Christians, not embracing them! So this is long after John wrote this letter, so this is not speaking of the Roman Catholic Church.

Then who is it referring to?

John is speaking of the Apostles and those that wrote the Word of God, those that received these revelations by God's Spirit.

Boice put it this way, ***“If this were a mere individual talking, the claim would be presumptuous. But it is not. This is one of the apostles citing the collective testimony of all the apostles and making that testimony of truth and sound doctrine.”***

Now some love to say that the books of the Bible were not put together until a much later date. They say it was done at the Council of Nicea in 325 A. D., but that is not the case. Let me show you what I mean. We are told by one Christian historian,

“The New Testament canon is believed to have been developed by the mid-to-late second century – by then the early church fathers had quoted from all 27 books of today's New Testament. It was established not by a single meeting or by a pronouncement by a group of Christian leaders, but by the progressive, unhurried acceptance of those 27 books by Christian congregations in the era of the early church.

Historically, Christianity has attributed the emergence of the New Testament as an act of the Holy Spirit. By the time the famous church councils began meeting in the 4th century A. D., the New Testament canon was already well-established by the use of those 27 books within the early church. So, the councils did not actually pick books and declare them to be the Bible; instead, they recognized or acknowledged the canon that already existed.”

Another writer put it like this, “Ultimately, what happened was that these letters circulated, and more and more groups of Christian people were edified by these writings and came to witness together that these writings were from God. The Church used these writings and was deeply edified by them; they were believed over time that they were from God, and so the final acceptance of the recognition of the 66 books of the Bible as Scripture took place at the Senate of Carthage in A. D. 397. That is not to say that prior to that there was not wide recognition of most of the Bible (we are talking here mostly about the New Testament . . .”

And then the warning, “In a world rife with demonic false teaching, believers must constantly test the spirits to discern what is from God and what is not. Using the tests that John has outlined here, they can discern true spiritual gems from doctrinal ‘fool’s gold.’ Like the noble Bereans, today’s saints are called to compare every spiritual message they encounter to the revealed standard of Scripture (Acts 17:11). Only then can they obey Jude’s admonition to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3). By faithfully guarding the truth in the present, believers will preserve it in purity both for themselves and for future generations.”

Can you imagine if we did not have the Word of God to compare what is being said to see if it is true? And yet, that is how some approach the Scriptures, if they are not the truths of God they will listen to man rather than God!

But as John said, “. . . we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” I John 4:6.

#### VERSES 7-8

Do you see where this love comes from?

No, love does not come from Hollywood, even though they think it does and they try to tell us how to love. Not even close.

No, it does not come from Dr. Ruth, she can talk about love, but she does not understand where love comes from. And the love she speaks of is far different than what we read in the Bible.

Love comes from God into our lives and then that love flows to others through us.

Thus, this *AGAPE* love stems from a regenerate nature and fellowship with God.

Paul put it this way in Romans 5:5, “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

Like I have said, the love of God flows into our lives and thus, it should then flow through our lives or as Jesus said in John 13:34-35, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

If God is love, and He is, then being a child of God that love should be seen in us also!

And this *AGAPE* love is an action word. It is not based upon feelings, but in reality, in doing. Remember what Jesus said in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”



And in I Corinthians chapter 13 we see the definition of God's love, this **AGAPE** love and in this definition the words are all verbs, action words, not feelings!

And that is how we are to love, with action, tangible love, not just empty words! That is the love that God gives to us and, once again, we are to give to others!

Now, after John tells us that "**God is love**" and unless we manifest His love towards others, we really don't know Him, he then goes on to tell us starting in verse 9 how God's love was manifested towards us and how we need to demonstrate it to those we come in contact with.

### VERSES 9-11

This is a hard one to argue against!

You will see what I mean as we go through these verses.

Now here is the problem for man. Sin has separated man from God.

It is as we are told in Psalm 85:10, "**Mercy and truth have met together;**

**Righteousness and peace have kissed.**"

That is a problem. You see, how can God show His mercy to fallen man by not sending him to Hell and yet, still be true to His Word.

What do I mean by that?

**"The soul who sins shall die. . ."** Ezekiel 18:20.

So how can God make peace with sinful man, how can He enter into fellowship with sinful man?

Remember what we read back in I John 2:2, "**And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins . . .**"

And what we also read here in I John 4:10.

That is the answer, God sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

In regard to this word “**propitiation**,” Alford tells us: *“The word implies that Christ has, as our sin-offering, reconciled God and us by nothing else but by His voluntary death as a sacrifice: has by this averted God’s wrath from us.”*

You see, when God says that He loves us they are not just empty words. God shows us He loves us by His action.

If you doubt God’s love for you, then look to the cross for in that we see God’s love for us.

Paul, in Ephesians 3:14-19 tells us of this love, **“For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”**

It is a love that in its width Jesus opens His arms to all of mankind.

It is a love that in its length it never ends.

It is a love that has a depth that can reach to the most wicked sinner and pull him out of that mire.

It is a love that has a height that reaches up into the heavens, where we will be gathered up one day!

That is God’s love for us!

Spurgeon put it like this, “If there was to be reconciliation between God and man, man ought to have sent to God; the offender ought to be the first to apply for forgiveness; the weaker should apply to the greater for help; the poor man should ask of him who distributes alms; but ‘Herein is love’ that God ‘sent.’ He was the first to send an embassy of peace.”

The Father sent His only begotten Son to be the propitiation for our sins, He took our place on that cross of Calvary and endured the wrath of God that was due us as the sins of the world were placed upon Him. That is **LOVE** – it is seen in His actions, His work towards us!

And is it really such a great thing that we love God? Not at all, look at all He has done for us. You see, we love Him because He first loved us!

And that folk’s is the amazing thing, that God loves us, miserable sinners and was willing to die for our sins and did and then adopted us into the family of God! That is how God can show mercy to us, through Jesus’ finished work on the cross of Calvary and He can also be truthful to His Word!

Now here is the kicker because John is going to apply this to our walk, how we are to love.

As John finishes up showing us the **AGAPE** love of God towards us, he then says, **“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”** I John 4:11.

Okay, God has done this for you, now you go and do the same to others, love them as God loves you.

That is the pattern, receiving from God and then giving to others.

It is as Jesus said in John 13:14, **“If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.”**

I know, for some it is hard to show this kind of love but think about it. It would be like having a drainpipe that is clogged. The water goes down, but it has no place to go, it can't flow through the pipe. Thus, there is a problem, and it needs to be fixed.

The same is true for the Christian who says he can't love others, there is a problem, and it needs to be fixed. You are not to have the love of God just flow into your life, but you are to let the love of God flow through you and touch the lives of others.

God pours His love into our lives not just for us but so that it might flow through us!

### VERSE 12

David Guzik wrote,

This is the greatest evidence of God's presence and work among us - love. Since no one has seen God at any time, this provides evidence for the presence of God.

Some people think the greatest evidence of God's presence or work is power. Some people think the greatest evidence of God's presence or work is popularity. Some people think the greatest evidence of God's presence or work is passionate feelings. But the greatest evidence of God's presence and work is love.

Where God is present and working, there will be love.

Sometimes Jesus seemed weak and lacking in power, but He was always full of love. Sometimes Jesus wasn't popular at all, but He was always full of love. Sometimes Jesus didn't inspire passionate feelings in people at all, but He was always full of love. Love was the constant, greatest evidence of the presence and work of God in Jesus Christ.

- David Guzik, I John 4:12

And yes, no one has seen God the Father, He is Spirit, except the Son, but the evidence of who He is, His nature, is seen in our love towards others!

And when John says that, “**... His love has been perfected in us**” he uses the Greek word TELEIOO for “**perfected**” and it carries with it the idea of maturity.

You see, His love needs to grow in us, mature in us so that it can flow through us.

Remember, they will know we are Christians by our love!

### VERSES 13-15

When John opens up these verses with “**By this we know ...**” he is connecting the thought of what he is writing here to the previous verse. In other words, we can know by experience that we live in God!

But how?

If His love has been perfected in us.

How can we know if His love has been perfected in us?

We know that His love has been perfected in us if we love one another.

Again, love is seen in our action towards others!

There are many people in the world that know about Jesus, they know He is God, He is the Savior, but that doesn't mean they are saved.

Hear me out on this.

John says that you must “**confess**” these things, that Jesus is God, that He is the Savior and that word “**confess**” doesn't mean you just speak it but that you are in agreement with it.

The idea of course is that you are in agreement with God and His Word regarding these things.

Boice sums it up like this. *“To believe in Christ and to love the brethren are not conditions by which we may dwell in God but rather evidences of the fact that God has already taken possession of our lives to make this possible.”*

#### VERSE 16

Remember what John wrote in I John 3:16, **“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”**

John is reminding us that God not only has told us that He loves us, which is important. But He also demonstrated His love for us by sending His Son to die on the cross of Calvary for our sins! (Romans 5:8)

And then John tells us, once again, I guess he is trying to drive home this point, that we are to have that kind of love for the people of this world!

It is not a natural love, it is a supernatural love, a love that can only come from God and that love flows in us and through us and it touches the lives of others.

One writer put it like this. He wrote,

*“The world will not believe that God loves sinners until they see His love at work in His children’s lives.”*

Absolutely, and then he went on to relate this to this true story. He wrote,

*“A Salvation Army worker found a derelict woman alone on the street and invited her to come into the chapel for help, but the woman refused to move. The worker assured her: ‘We love you and want to help you. God loves you. Jesus died for you.’ But the woman did not budge.*

*As if on divine impulse, the Army lassie leaned over and kissed the woman on the cheek, taking her into her arms. The woman began to sob, and like a child was led into the chapel, where she ultimately trusted Christ.*

*‘You told me that God loved me,’ she said later, ‘but it wasn’t till you showed me that God loved me that I wanted to be saved.’”*

- Source Unknown

You see, Jesus did not simply preach the love of God; He proved it by giving His life on the cross.

Thus, He expects His followers to do likewise.

If we abide in Christ, we will abide in His love. If we abide in His love, we must share this love with others. Whenever we share this love, it is proof in our own hearts that we are abiding in Christ. In other words, there is no separation between a Christian’s inner life and his outer life.

#### VERSES 17-18

Why don’t we have to fear the judgment of God?

Because Jesus already took what was due us and because of that we won’t face God’s judgment if we are in Christ.

Yes, we deserve it, but we won’t face it.

You see, God’s love for us was so great that He paid in full the penalty for our sins.

Thus, there is no need to fear. Jesus said this in John 5:24, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”**

Yes, we will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ or the Bema Seat of Christ, not for judgment, but for rewards.

In II Corinthians 5:10 we are told of this, **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”**

And then in I Corinthians 3:12-15 Paul tells us, **“Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”**

You see, if the motive of your heart in serving the Lord was wrong, if you did not serve the Lord faithfully, you will lose your reward but not your salvation!

Now, for those who are not in Christ, they will appear before the Lord at the Great White Throne Judgment.

They are going to be going into the Lake of Fire for eternity, but here, in this judgment the degree of punishment will be set forth based on their works. They are going to the Lake of Fire for rejecting Christ, and their works will then be judged and folks, any degree of punishment is going to be bad. And you can read of this in Revelation 20:11-15.



Thus, there is fear here, and hopefully a fear before they die that they would then turn to Jesus and receive Him as their Lord and Savior!

#### VERSE 19

We talked about this already, but our love for God is born out of His love for us. If you are losing sight of His love for you, then you need to spend some time with Him because there is no such thing as a fire without heat just as there is no such thing as God loving us without us loving Him in return if we are saved!

How can we not love God when we see all that He has done for us? And I guess there are times when we don't love God like we should, but God's love for us never changes. I guess I should have said that there is no such thing as God not loving us but there are truly times in our lives that we don't have that love for God. May we fall in love with Jesus over and over and over again!

#### VERSES 20-21

Our love for others doesn't save us, Jesus does.

Then what is John's point here that he is making?

He is saying if you don't manifest the love of God towards others, if you hate them, then maybe the love of God really never touched your life!

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 5:23-24, **“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”**

God wants us to heal relationships before we serve Him, why?

Because the love He has shown us needs to be extended to others and if we can't, then we are in no position to serve!

As I close this evening, please understand that God is not suggesting we love others, He is commanding us!

Now you might be thinking, ***“That’s not fair! Look at what they did to me. Look at how they treated me!”***

Listen carefully again to what John has told us this evening, **“In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we 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.”** I John 4:9-11.

May we love others with the love that God has given to us, the love with which He loves us with, for by this all will know we are disciples of Christ, by His love flowing through our lives!