

## Bibles???

### The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to 1 John 4

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through 1 John.

This very short but personal letter that the Apostle John wrote to us about the reality of who God is, who Jesus is and the reality of what it means to be a Christian.

And we have been in the portion of the letter where John deals with “love” – a biblical love, a sacrificial love – not a selfish love

And John will point out in our text this morning how the believer who has this kind of love can walk in confidence and assurance of who they are in Christ.

Let's pray...

[1Jo 4:12-19 NKJV] **12 No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.**

Think about what we just read -

That phrase – no one has seen God at anytime – this is John's way of saying that no one has seen God in His full manifested glory.

**[Jhn 1:18 NKJV] 18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared [Him].**

No one has seen God in His essence.

No one has seen God in His fundamental being.

John is saying what everybody always knew –

The invisible, eternal God, is a Spirit

Paul in his letter to Timothy – write this down,

**[1Ti 6:15-16 NKJV] 15 which He will manifest in His own time, [He who is] the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom [be] honor and everlasting power. Amen.**

We are incapable of seeing a spirit being.

Now, we know that God revealed Himself in several manifestations in the Old Testament.

The cloud and the pillar of fire that led the Children of Israel through the wilderness –a manifestation of God.

The burning bush that Moses stumbled unto in the Old Testament –a manifestation of God.

The verse I read previously John 1:18 -

The significance of this verse is that Jesus became flesh to reveal God to us.

And so – we had the disciples who spent three years listening to, speaking to, eating and touching Jesus.

So even in the time when John wrote this letter, there would be people asking the question – “show me God”

And John would say, I can't because He can't be seen.

We can't see God – but you know what we can see –

we can see His love revealed in His Son.

But Jesus died for our sins.

He hung on a cross – He took our place – He was put into a tomb – He resurrected three days later and ascended to heaven, we can't even see Jesus.

So – we can't see God

We can't see Jesus – until He returns

So how is anyone going to be able to see God?

John says – that in order for God to be seen, He is going to have to be seen through you and through me.

He is going to have to be seen in our acts of kindness.

He is going to have to be seen through our encouragement of one another.

He is going to have to be seen in our acts of genuine love for each other.

You see loved ones, love is something that can be seen and love is something that must be seen.

And when believers love one another ( a biblical love ) the world sees evidences of God.

Turn to John 14

**[Jhn 14:7-9 NKJV] 7 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." 8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?**

Did Adam and Eve see God in the Garden of Eden?

Did Abraham see God?

Did Moses see God?

Did Isaiah see God?

Did Ezekiel see God?

According to the bible, they might have seen manifestations of God

But according to the bible, Jesus is the physical expression of the invisible God

It is Jesus who has made God known.

And then God sent Jesus to live inside us.

So we make God known –

That is our mission as believers –

**[Jhn 17:3 NKJV] 3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**

So keeping all of this in context –

There were people who were saying – “I love God”

But some of those individuals were not passing the moral test, the truth test, the love test.

John says that God can be seen in us by the God-like way we love.

This reveals our ultimate purpose and the important role our love for others has.

Further, John is proving that they really know God, that God abides in them and they do not need to doubt their relationship with God.

He is reassuring them in who they are in Christ.

I had you make note of the last portion on verse 12 –

**His love has been perfected in us.**

The key to the phrase is that word perfected.

Because the meaning of the word that is used here is a word that means to bring to an end, to finish.

God demonstrated his love to us and revealed his love to the world through Jesus.

And God's love is brought to its end in us - by us continuing to show the invisible God by the way we love one another and by the way we love the world.

**13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.**

In verse 12 – the proof that God dwells in us is if we love one another.

Here in verse 13 – the proof that we dwell or abide in God is the Holy Spirit living inside of us.

In verse 12, the proof is external (love)

In verse 13, the proof is internal and inward.

The world will have proof that God abides in us by the affection we show one another

The believer will have the proof that we abide in God by the assurance of God's Holy Spirit residing in us –

**[Rom 8:16 NKJV] 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,**

Paul says that those who are God's children, born again by the Spirit of God, know their status because the Holy Spirit testifies to our spirit that this is so.

So again, we have assurance of who we are in Christ.

We don't have to wonder where we are going to spend eternity

We know the moment we place our faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

God is love – we learned that last week

But what does it explain?

Love explains why God created people

Love explains the reason why you and I are the object of His affection

Love explains why God cares for us

Love explains why God gave us free will

Because love, according to the bible requires a voluntary response.

Love explains why Jesus died for us

Love explains why people need eternal life and receive eternal life, because God's love is eternal.

And in order for God's love to express itself in the most powerful way – we have to be eternal.

**14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son [as] Savior of the world.**

For the skeptic who read this letter and say, "How do you know that any of this is true?"

I had you make a note of the phrase, we have seen and testify –

John is referencing himself along with the other apostles – those who have seen and testify to the fact that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

By the way – the phrase "the savior of the world"

This is one of two places in the entire New Testament where we find it.

The other place – in John's gospel 4 – when the Samaritans who responded to the testimony of another eyewitness who saw and spoke to Jesus – the Samaritan woman at the well.

And they went and heard Jesus and said – "we know that this is indeed the Christ,[fn] the Savior of the world"

John is making the statement that, he himself is an eyewitness.



He is reiterating what he wrote at the beginning of the letter –

**[1Jo 1:1-2 NKJV] 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us--**

I was there

I saw Jesus

I held Jesus

I ate with Jesus

I experienced Jesus

So when we are sharing the good news to someone who doesn't have a relationship with Jesus Christ

A coworker, a loved one and they tell us about how broken they are – and we tell them, God loves you –

And they respond back, “How do you know?”

John gives us two lines of evidence

John says that the eyewitness testimony of people who heard and participated in the ministry of Jesus, who new Him and loved Him and walked with Him and talked with Him – this is evidence #1

The second line of evidence – is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

Turn to John 3 -

**[Jhn 3:5-8 NKJV] 5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."**

Jesus says – we can't see the wind – it is invisible, but we see the effects of the wind.

We see wind pushing against the trees.

We hear the winds blowing.

How do we have assurance that we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit if the Holy Spirit is invisible – we see the effects, we see fruit, we feel His conviction, we experience His power.

**15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.**

Be careful here—any unbeliever (including the devil and his demons), including false teachers can ‘mouth the words’, “Jesus is the Son of God” and still not be saved.

John is not saying that all one has to do is say those words

He writes, whoever confesses

This is something that is done once for all

We don't confess one week that Jesus is the Savior of the World and then the next week confess that He may not be the Savior of the World and then the week after confess that He is

What John is talking about is the individual who finally and forever is convinced that Jesus is everything that God has said concerning His Son.

That is what the word confession means – in agreement, of one mind, to speak the same.

That means that we are confessing that Jesus is God's one and only Son – who came in the flesh and died on Calvary for sin, who rose from the dead never to die, who ascended into heaven and that He will one day return.

All of this is encapsulated in the phrase, Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God.

And whoever makes this proclamation – God abides in him and him in God

**[Jhn 17:2-3 NKJV] 2 “as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. 3 “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**

John is affirming the words that Jesus spoke in His prayer - that both God the Father and God the Son are pleased to come into our heart and into our life and dwell with us and that we may experience a special privilege reserved only for believers.

**16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.**

I had you make a note that John makes the point that we have known and believed the love that God has for us.

You see, it is possible for someone to come to know something and not believe it.

We can know something and not believe it – not truly embrace it in our heart.

That is why John says we have known and believed

There are many believers who know the love of God as an intellectual reality but they have not come to believe it from a personal living standpoint.

In other words, if you gave them a piece of paper and have them answer this question

–

Does God love? They would answer, yes.

And their answer would be correct because intellectually they know it.

But if you make the question more personal and ask –

Does God love you unconditionally? – many believers would struggle with that question –

Because they may believe that God has been unfair, unkind or inconsistent with them.

We are called to take the love and grace God gives, to know it by experience and to believe it – by faith.

This is what fellowship with God is all about.

God wants us to respond by knowing (by experience) and believing the love God has for us.

And for those that are struggling in truly believing that God loves you – ask Him to help you with that.

Lord, help me to not simply know Your love, but to believe it on a personal level.

**17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.**

Here we see the word perfected again.

Love has come to fruition

Love has come to completion

In what way?

As believers, we have grown in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus.

And as we have grown in grace and the knowledge of Jesus - we have grown in love toward God and toward one another.

And because of this love that had been perfected in us - we may have boldness or confidence on the day of judgment.

We may have boldness because we know we love God and God loves us

We may have boldness because we know that our sins are forgiven

We have boldness because we know and believe that God's grace and mercy had covered our past and our present and our future.

That we are saved by grace through faith

And John therefore invites us to walk in this boldness –

By the way – this boldness or confidence had nothing to do with what we do – it has everything to do with what Jesus did.

Are we confident in what He did was enough?

Yes, I am confident that what Jesus did is enough – in this, love was perfected.

**18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.**

Verse 18 and 17 are connected here.

This is John's argument.

Love has been perfected in us – we walk in boldness/confidence.

We have experienced His love and we have the presence of love in our lives

We know that He abides in us and we in Him

And because we have experienced His love and abide in Him, we love each other.

And the fact that we have the presence of love in our lives and the fact that we love each other is proof that we are accepted and loved and justified.

So - we have nothing to fear.

Now – I had you make a note of the word torment

The word torment here doesn't mean rotting away in hell

This means punishment.

Fear involves punishment.

Now – consider this

God loves us

God sent His Son

Jesus has already received our punishment

**[Rom 8:15 NKJV] 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."**

So to express this fear or lack of boldness means that a person has not been perfected in love.

So John poses the question – what are we afraid of?

Death, judgment, our past, the future???

The common denominator of everything we fear can be summed up in one word – loss.

I can lose my life

I can lose my health



I can lose my loved one

I can lose my source of employment

I can lose

I can lose

I can lose

That is what fear is – loss

You know what biblical love is?

Voluntary loss

**[Jhn 15:13 NKJV] 13 “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.**

Love is the willingness to sacrifice yourself for someone you care about

Fear in involuntary loss

Love is – “I have already made the decision to, that I am going to do without, in order for you to have.”

That’s the difference.

So the opposite of love is not hate.



CALVARY  
Santa Cruz

The opposite of love is fear.

Fear causes us to run away from our problems

But love does exactly the opposite

How do we make the fear go away?

The only way we make fear go away is to believe God's revelation about His love for us in Christ.

**19 We love Him because He first loved us.**

This verse tells us where our love for Jesus comes from.

It comes from Him.

Our love for God is always in response to His love for us;

He initiates, and we respond.

We never have to draw God to us; instead, He draws us to Himself.

I want to end with this –

In the Old Testament –

God put a requirement in the law that the people of God would love the Lord their God with all their heart, with all their soul and with all their mind –

But the law couldn't do anything to produce that kind of love

Because the only thing that law did was to reveal God's righteousness and how far we fall short.

God solved that little issue by sending His Son – the manifestation of His love

And when we begin to grasp just how much He loved us – that He would be willing to suffer to save us

We begin to get an idea of His love for us and our hearts begin to well up with gratitude and a love toward Him.

He gave us everything – how then, can we not give Him everything.

We love because He first loved us.

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

One of the most profound comments made regarding the early church came from the lips of a man named Aristides – he was an Athenian, sent by the Roman Emperor to spy out that strange sect - known as "Christians."

And so he went, Aristides returned with a mixed report.

But his immortal words to the emperor have echoed down through history:

The one thing that stood out –

"Behold! How they love one another."

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

