

Abiding Love
1 John 4: 13 – 21
The Laurel Center
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Main Idea: Our relationship with God begins and ends with love that commits to one another and casts out fear.

Introduction

John is one of the best New Testament writers to talk about community and loving one another. John is very relational in his approach to God and people. The way that he does doctrines and theology is fundamentally different from a person like Paul who proclaims principles and explains things well. Every writer has a different style and a different approach. I believe that God put each one into his word to show us the many facets of the gospel.

As we open up today and continue to talk about loving God and loving people, John is going to summarize for us what we have been discussing already throughout his letter. He will focus on these two major themes and develop them in a slightly different way.

Text – 1 John 4:13–21

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.

I. Loving God means confessing Jesus (vv. 13 – 16).

A God gave us the Holy Spirit in Jesus.

- 1 Although subtle, John uses the Trinitarian method to summarize his thoughts on abiding in God and loving as God loves. We will see the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit in this text within a verse or two of each other.

- 2 John's full point in using this method is to show that we abide in God and God abides in us. It cannot be stressed the importance of this word, "abide."
- 3 Abiding is one of the central words of all of John's theology and writings. Its meanings include "to live," "to remain," "to stay." Each of these words highlights the word abide and helps us to understand its full meaning in English.
- 4 Abide refers to the relationship that we have especially with God. Although it includes abiding with one another and fellowship, it is most importantly used in primarily use of our relationship with God as disciples.
- 5 This is the idea of remaining in constant connection with God. The remaining with God is to go through whatever life throws at us and still be just as connected with God as we were in the beginning.
- 6 We live with God through everything, stay with him in the midst of trials, and remain in intimate connection with him. We continue to learn more about him through our relationship as he shows us in revelation.
- 7 Through thick and thin God is our support and our help. We never let them go the matter how hard the road gets. And God always gets us through because he walks with us through every trial.
- 8 So many people think that our relationship with God is only celebrated during the victory is and high points of our relationship but it is most important that no circumstance separates us from God because he will never separate himself from us.
- 9 And so we see the father who gives us the Holy Spirit and sends Jesus as our teacher and sacrifice. We see all three members of the Trinity in this passage.
- 10 Similar to Paul's idea of the Holy Spirit sealing us for salvation and being a down payment of our eternal life in God, John points to the same in particular the Holy Spirit indwelling in us as the foretaste of what eternity with him in heaven will be like.
- 11 Along with this assurance of the Holy Spirit in us, the father continued to show his love for us by sending Jesus so that we could know him on an intimate level. It is because Jesus became our mediator and our sacrifice that we can know God on any level.

B God's love is demonstrated in his gifts.

- 1 Jesus and the Holy Spirit are God's gifts to us. They are both concrete witnesses of his forethought and care. And because these are such precious

gifts to us, it is most important that those who have relationship with God confess that Jesus is God's son.

- 2 This is especially important because we once again see the effect of false teachers in John's day, the Gnostic teachers who claimed secret knowledge about God and Jesus.
- 3 Greek philosophy held that God cannot have a son who is just as much God as he is. The sons of God in Greek mythology and the Roman mythology are always demigods were half gods.
- 4 The Gnostics tended to mix Greek philosophy and mythology with Christianity. This in pure mixture misconstrued Christian doctrines such as Jesus' divinity.
- 5 Anyone who questions Jesus' divinity is not a Christian. This is a essential and nonnegotiable doctrine. The Gospels and the rest of Scripture have been so clear and obvious concerning this principle.
- 6 Because this great truth has been so important and is important now, those who do not accept it and study it do not abide in God. To reject the divinity of Jesus is the same as to stomp on the gifts that God has given to us.
- 7 John reiterates that God is love. It is important not to mix this up with love is God. This is not one of those statements that can be moved around or said the other way.
- 8 People who worship 12 and call it God misunderstand the nature of our God. Love is not God because it does not direct every single thing in our lives as God does. However, God exemplifies love and it is basic to his character.
- 9 Love is so important to the very nature of God that it is how he has acted towards humanity since the very beginning. With every step that he is taken in his revelation of himself he has demonstrated a loving attitude toward us.
- 10 Remaining and demonstrating God's true love unconditionally to one another and toward him gives great evidence to the fact that we belong in him and he belongs in us. Love confirms our relationship with God and with one another.
- 11 Love is the modus operandi of the kingdom of God. It is the engine that makes everything the way it is. God is a God of relationship and he relates to us in love and we relate to him in love.

II. Loving God means casting out fear (vv. 17 – 21).

A God's perfect love casts out fear.

- 1 John then makes the connection of how love will not only be the glue that holds the kingdom of God together through relationships but will also be the glue that holds us together through the end of the world.
- 2 Unlike unbelievers and the world that have no plan for the end of the world, Christians have a piece about the end of the world because we have a relationship with their great judge.
- 3 Our love for God and his love for us keep us from becoming objects of his wrath. As his children demonstrating the image of Christ, God has no quarrel with us. His fight is with wickedness and wickedness must be judged and avenge because God is a God of justice and righteousness.
- 4 As Christians remain persecuted in this world, just as Jesus was persecuted, the bond that binds us together and gives us an inner peace about the things that will happen in the end times, we need not fear because God is not going to judge us.
- 5 While the world lives in fear of the end, we are not afraid at all because we are loved by God and we love him. This intimate relationship protects us from his judgment of the wicked.
- 6 One of the most popular verses in all of first John comes from the idea that perfect love casts out fear. God's love for us keeps us from being afraid of what is to happen in the end.
- 7 While many claim to know exactly how things are to go down in the end, our confidence and inner joy does not come from knowing what is to happen exactly but from knowing the one who will be acting in his full justice.
- 8 As Paul has put it, where no longer objects of wrath because God is a God of love for those who love him and live by his commandments. This makes the separation between us and the world.
- 9 John tells us that we do not need to fear the end of the world for one reason. The end of the world concerns God's judgment of wickedness. Not only will the judge wickedness but he will also punishment.
- 10 We do not have to worry about a punishment because we are not like. We work to be conformed to the image of Jesus. The Holy Spirit indwelling in us is working that work in us every day.

B God's love teaches us to love our brother.

- 1 As John is mentioned before and continues to summarize here, the only reason we really know anything about unconditional and true love is because God has demonstrated it to us.
- 2 With every action and every revelation of his character through his works and his interaction with humanity, God has shown us only love.

Everything that he has done, even the judgment, was aimed at our ultimate good.

- 3 He demonstrated love in his final act of sacrificing himself for each of us. But he has always been a God of set purpose. He made the first sacrifice in the garden to cover adamantly with animal skins.
- 4 He made covenants with Abraham and Israel because he is a God of love. His judgments have only been because we have refused to live in righteousness on our own.
- 5 Like a parasite or cancer, sin had to be removed from his perfect creation. The only way to do that is to sacrifice because we would not choose him on our own.
- 6 God knows that when he judges sin and punishes for it that the only way he could show his love is to make a way for us to get out of it so that we could know him in love instead of judgment and punishment.
- 7 Therefore, only those who react with God in a relationship of love can truly understand this character and nature as he must judge and punish the sin in this world. We will seek him as he is instead of being angry at him for his judgment.
- 8 That cosmic or larger must be demonstrated between brothers and sisters in Christ. This is why hate must never be among us as part of the Fellowship of those who share Christ in common.
- 9 Brotherly love is exceeding picture of God's nature. If we cannot love those we can see, how can we prove that we loved God whom we cannot see at this moment?
- 10 John raises the issue that love must be concrete between those who can see one another in the Fellowship of the brotherhood of Christ. Failure to love one another brings into question our love for God.
- 11 John finishes his summary of God and humanity in the relationship glued together by love by restating the command that God has given us to love one another.
- 12 **Application:** Brotherly love is foundational to everything. It holds together our relationship with God and with one another. Without brotherly love and unconditional love, we have nothing and the whole faith can be called into question. The demonstration of love for brothers and sisters in Christ proves the love that we have for God and shows that God loves us. The fact that we understand how this love works prove that we are no longer ruled by sin and wickedness. When we love one another, we show that God's kingdom is exactly what he proclaimed through Jesus.

Conclusion

love is the key elements that makes the Fellowship we have with each other and with God possible. It also gives evidence that the kingdom of God is not some idea made up by Jesus 2000 years ago. It proves that heaven is for real and this foretaste of it on earth is not some pipe dream. When we show that we abide with one another and in God it is always through an act of love. Let us love one another because it demonstrates godly character in us, blesses our brothers and sisters in Christ, and shows God that we have resolved to love his creation.