

12/8/19 - Advent of Love (Dwelling)

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Preacher: Brad Weber

[0 : 0 0] Jesus, thank you so much. Please. So Brad, you can come up and bring the word and the message today. Thank you, ladies.

Good morning, everyone. Hi, Debbie. Sorry, I knew as soon as you were here I was going to specifically say hi to you. Not that anybody else is, but you know, Debbie's here.

So this morning we'll be in 1 John chapter 4. We will look at verse 7 through 21. We will be talking about the idea of love dwelling.

And let me just begin by making a confession since I am a pastor and making full transparency. I finished this sermon 10 hours ago.

Not because I waited specifically. Normally, you know, we have a pretty good idea of what we're doing many weeks out.

[1 : 0 2] And so typically whoever is preaching, we start early in the week and then we just dwell on the text all week long. And we do our final prep maybe Saturday night and just kind of run through the text and everything.

So what I did this week, I started like I normally do. What I do with prep work is I simply just read the text over and over and over and over and over again to get an idea of what the text actually says before I bring in any outside resources.

Mark the text up. I have like a color code system for my notes and my Bibles. And I make highlights and I get an idea of the text. And so all week long as I was prepping, the prep work and the studies and everything, it just felt dry.

And it felt like all I was doing was putting information down on paper. And if you've ever prepared something to teach, that is something that is common. It can become very easy.

And Lex, I'm sure, would understand this very clearly. It can become very easy to just turn the text into some sort of informational lecture. And to not have any aspect of what is actually happening in the text.

[2 : 0 9] And so with this topic of love, I realized that it's a very important topic. Not that I was unaware of that before. But I sort of was not grasping the full idea of what it means that God is love.

We only understand love because God is love. The idea that there is love in the world today is just because God says that he is love.

So yesterday, I decided that I was going to put the finishing touches on my sermon. And as I sat down, again, it just felt not right.

So I said, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to stop. I'm going to turn everything off. And I am just going to take some time and pray and worship and listen to some worship music.

And as I did that, I was overwhelmed by just this fact of what's going on in this text. And I was listening to a hymn, and I'll read the lyrics here in a moment to kind of get us into the mood of this text.

- [3 : 16] I was just simply like overwhelmed by my own pure, like the lacking of pure worship for God. Again, I'm always trying to do something.
- Every hour of the week, I have something going on. I'm doing something, whether it be studying for an exam or writing a paper or outlining a podcast, prepping for a sermon, whatever it might be.
- Reading 200 pages for a class. There's always something that I'm doing. And I can kind of get clouded with my view of my relationship with Christ because I'm doing something all the time.
- And as I was just reflecting on this, I was thinking about God's love for us, like from a personal aspect. It caused me to, you know, reflect upon my own journey to the faith.
- Many of you know my background, and I won't go into all the details, but I wasn't raised in the church. I was not somebody who knew about Christ at a young age. I, in fact, I came to faith much later.
- [4 : 27] And sometimes, you know, I don't forget about those experiences, but I forget about that experience. And what I mean by that is it can become, I've told my story on stages, and the news came once, and I got to talk to the news.
- There's been all of these platforms that I've had to share what God has done in my life. And that can just become sort of routine and normal for me. And what I actually miss out upon is the actual, like, the love that God had for me in that situation.
- And I forget what happened in all of that. And I would be willing to bet that some of us also struggle with this, that we forget that God called us out of darkness and redeemed us and changed us.
- That we did not do that, okay? That we did not take our heart of stone out and then put a new heart in. We did not do that. God did that.
- We forget the power that is involved with that. And in the midst of doing all of these things for God, I have forgotten just simply to be in awe. When was the last time we were in awe of what God has done in our lives?
- [5 : 37] I forget to have pure worship for God. Let me read this hymn as we begin. And it's very familiar.
- Oh, Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder, consider all the worlds thy hands have made. I see the stars. I hear the rolling thunder. Thy power throughout the universe displayed.
- Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee. How great thou art. How great thou art. Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee. How great thou art.
- How great thou art. And when I think of God, his son not sparing, sent him to die, I scarce can take it in, that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing.
- And that term gladly is very important. He bled and died to take away my sin. And I'll jump down to the last. When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation and lead me home, what joy shall fill my heart.
- [6 : 35] Then I shall bow with humble adoration and then proclaim, my God, how great thou art. Now, I put that in there because that hymn just sort of sets the picture of this love that God has for us.
- Like, there's a lot that goes on in that. But as I was listening to that, I just was moved with, like, awe and wonder of God. That, again, in the midst of doing so much, it's real easy to not have that awe and to have that wonder of what God has done in your life.
- So keep that in mind as we begin. Let me, let me, let's read 1 John 4. And we're going to be here till, like, tomorrow. Just to let you guys, to let you guys know.

Yeah, let's read 1 John 4, chapter, or I'm sorry, verse 7 down. It says, Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God.

And whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this, the love of God was made manifest among us.

[7 : 46] That God sent his only son into the world so that we might live through him. 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.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us.

By this, we know that we abide in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his spirit. And we have seen and testified that the Father has sent his son to be the savior of the world.

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 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.

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. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.

[8 : 50] For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. 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. And this commandment we have from him, whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Join me in a moment of prayer as we begin. O Lord, our God, when we in awesome wonder, consider all the works thy hands have made.

Help us to focus on that today. Help us to focus on this text, that you may use it in a new way. And through the Holy Spirit, apply it to our hearts, so that we may leave here transformed, for the sake of making much of Jesus Christ.

And in his name we pray. Amen. So John here is sometimes referred to as the expert on love. I read that he uses the word love, which is agape.

[9 : 51] He uses it roughly 30 times, depending on your translation. The apostle Paul, he is known as the apostle of faith. Peter is the apostle of hope. James is often thought to be the apostle of good works.

And John, again, is the apostle of love. We know that John really identified with Jesus' love for him, even to the point of referring to himself as the apostle whom Jesus loved.

When he's writing, that's how he refers to himself. And just when you think you might arrive at this conclusion, how much more can I know about love, John gives us even more of an insight into this topic of the love of God.

Though we have heard, which this will not be new, we have heard this commandment to love one another. John is clarifying some things even further.

And he makes a case that we might not have seen yet. That we are to show God by our love. And that will be our main heading. We show God by our love.

[10 : 58] So we have two main points with a bunch of mini points. First, in verse 7 through 10, we will see we are to love others because God loves you.

God loves us. Second, we are to love others because God lives in you, lives in us. That's verse 11 through 21. So this is the command, which is simple enough.

Beloved, let us love one another because love itself is from God. Love one another is the command. Now it's not some sort of unknown principle. It's pretty straightforward to understand.

Love other people. You don't have to be a believer to understand that principle. But being a believer, there is a reason why we are to love others.

There is something behind that. The very essence of God is love itself. That means God can never stop loving you just as the sun could never stop shining.

[12 : 00] For the believer, God's chosen people, the idea is God could never stop loving you because he never started loving you.

And what that means is there was never a point where you can look at and say, well, this is finally when God started loving me because God has loved his people before time. That it was before we were even here.

Therefore, there's no way for him to stop because you can't look at a starting point. Love exists, again, because God exists. Therefore, if God has existed for all time, love has existed for all time.

This is not something that was invented in the 1900s. It's something that in the beginning was the word and the word was with God. He was in the beginning. There are actually three reasons given in verse 7 and 8 why we should love.

Love is from God. Love is the very character of God and it is going to come from him. Just like when you have fire, what is produced?

[13 : 05] Heat. When you have the sun, what is produced? Light. Love is part of God's nature. You can't separate that from his nature.

It's an attribute of God, but it is God. There's not a way to separate. Again, fire, when you light it, it produces what? Light. There's no way to make a fire without there being light.

What happens if you try to put the light out? The fire gets put out. Same thing with the heat. There's no way to not have heat from the fire. The only way to do that is to put it out. Therefore, it's not existing.

Second, love is evidence that a person is born of God. It makes sense if you have God dwelling in you and love is from God, then you should be loving.

The natural result is that you are loving to others. God has, again, regenerated your heart. He has taken that dead heart out of you and made you alive.

[14 : 04] He did that. The natural response from those of us that are born-again believers is to love others. Not to love others so we can get something out of it because then that defeats the purpose.

And we know that has happened in our lives. We know others that do that. But as a born-again believer, we love because God loves us.

We love enemies. We love friends. We love family. We love people who look different than us. People who act different than us. We are called to love them.

The ESV study Bible says love is presented here as a consequence of, not a precondition for being born again. So again, you don't love first and then that causes you to be born again.

You are born again and then out of that is love. We understand that, the difference there? Because if it's a requirement to be born again, then what is that? That is us doing something to earn being born again.

[15 : 11] But out of being born again flows and it's important to understand. Because even unsaved people can reflect. I always think about Bill Gates, okay? Because I like computers.

Bill Gates is the person that just pops into my head. If you know anything about Bill Gates, he's given billions of dollars. Literally billions of dollars. He does good. I don't know Bill.

I'm sure he's a nice guy. He seems like a nice guy. I'm sure he loves other people, right? We would all agree with that. He gives away, I mean, he could hang on to all of his money and say, no, I'm not giving a dime to anybody.

It's mine. I earned it. But he gives it away. Because he loves that cause. He loves other people. Bill Gates is not a believer. He has made that clear.

He does not believe in Jesus Christ. But he can act lovingly. Do you understand? Like he has the ability to love other people.

[16 : 08] But a person does not understand love to the degree that they would, when they experience this change of God, they don't understand what that actually means.

They're not able to understand the truth behind love. What happens, though? Reflect upon your life before you were a Christian.

Now, we all have different times that we became followers of Christ. But regardless, there was a period where you were not a believer.

Whether it was you were one years old or 80 years old. There was a period where you were not a believer. What was your view of other people? I'm willing to bet that we've all had a change of our view of other people.

Maybe it's a little bit. Maybe it's very extreme. But we have changed our view of other people because we love those people because of what God has done in our lives.

[17 : 19] We look upon an unbeliever and we love that person because we want that person to be a believer. Right? Withholding the gospel from an unbeliever is the most unloving thing that you can do.

Withholding the gospel from somebody who is a sinner is the most unloving thing that you can do. The Penn and Teller, are you guys familiar with Penn and Teller? I believe it was Penn.

I don't even know the difference. The taller guy. Whoever the taller guy is. He once said that if you are a true believer, and I'm paraphrasing here. If you are a true believer and you withhold the gospel from an unbeliever, you hate that person.

That's the most hateful thing that you can do. And he's not a believer. Like he's just viewing this from an intellectual standpoint. That if you believe that a sinner is going to be apart from Christ forever.

If you withhold the information that gets them to heaven with Christ, that's the most hateful thing that you can do. Therefore, when you become a Christian, your view of that person is changed.

[18 : 25] You might look upon a person and care for them. But your love for them has now changed. Because love demonstrates that you know God. Whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

Love takes it beyond just knowing about God. Right? Like you can know about God and not be a believer. There's been many people that are very smart.

Who know a lot more about God than a lot of believers. But when you have been born again, you know him. Right? You understand that power like Paul talks about.

The power of the resurrection from the dead. That you would share in suffering with Christ. Now notice this. The verse says anyone who does not love does not know God.

You can't be a Christian and not demonstrate love to others. Like those two things don't work together. It's that simple. Loving others shows that we are truly born again believers.

[19 : 31] You will know them by their fruit. And what is fruit of the spirit? What's the first one? Love. Look down at verse 9. We get an explanation of how God demonstrated his love toward us.

Now pay attention to these words in verse 9. In this the love of God was made manifest. Now your translation might be a little bit different.

But what really is happening here is John is saying that in this the love of God was shining. Or it was made clear. That's a beautiful word.

This is the first of the two verses in which the author spells out what he means by saying that love comes from God. Or God is love. He does so here by recounting how God has revealed his love to mankind.

This is how God showed his love among us. This is Christmas. Okay. This is the whole message right here. He sent his one and only son into the world that we might live through him. That's the Christmas message.

[20 : 35] He sent his one and only son into the world that we might live through him. And that has echoes of what? John 3.16. The showing of God's love was a public affair.

The text says among us. So John has in mind a group. It's not just one person but it's a corporate. So as to be seen by them and appreciated by them.

The love of God was shown to humans when God sent his one and only son into the world. That's uniqueness. Right? One and only describes the uniqueness of Christ.

No one comes to the father except through what? Him. I am the way, the truth, and the life. The uniqueness of Christ. God had one son. One.

He sent him into the world because of his love for the world. Not because of our earning. In spite of that actually. The purpose of sending his son was that we might live through him.

[21 : 45] The we in this context refers to the whole believing community. Those who respond positively. Confessionally. To the demonstration of God's love by believing in the son.

The demonstration of God's love was not a mere sending of his one and only son into the world. Right? So he didn't just send Jesus to exist. There was a reason why he sent Jesus.

It was so that we might live through him. That we might believe in Christ. The verb here, to live, it is only used in this right here.

That's the only time this verb is used. Zayo is how it's pronounced. Elsewhere, he uses expressions of life and eternal life. But the life, anytime it's mentioned, is always identified with Jesus.

It's said to be found in Jesus. So true life, I am the way, the truth, and the what? The life. Again, the true life is found in Jesus. In the fourth gospel, it says this is eternal life.

[22 : 47] That you may know the one true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. So again, there is a reason that Jesus was sent.

Because there was numerous people. And as we talked about with the Sermon on the Mount closing, there were numerous people that heard or knew about Jesus. Right? Because the Sermon on the Mount, it begins with seeing the crowds.

He went up upon the mountain. And so as Pastor Brenton said, there is more than the disciples there. There was people that were in earshot of what Jesus was saying. We know by the accounts of the gospels that not everyone that saw Jesus believed in Jesus.

We know by the gospels that everybody that heard Jesus did not believe in Jesus. So the true life involves knowing personally or having Jesus himself.

Life is all tied up in him. Can't separate those two. The author's statement that God's purpose in sending his one and only son into the world was so that we might live through him.

- [23 : 54] Not live through ourselves, but live through him. However, the possibility that people might live through him by knowing or having Jesus depended on much more than a revelation of God's love in sending his son.

A far greater demonstration was needed as verse 10 says. Verse 10 says, In this is love, not...

Okay, so the negative is here now. Not that we have loved God. Again, we didn't love God first, which caused Christ to come. He loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Now, if you know... I'm going to lean in. If you know me, you know I love theology. Like, I love it. Like, it's just in... I just love it. Propitiation is...

I know. I don't. I'm kidding. Propitiation is my... I just love it. Like, it just jumps off the page. Like, that's the message of what, like, Christ did.

- [25 : 07] Like, propitiation. Like, there's this payment. There's this standing in... And as Pastor... Like, this is perfect. Like... I'm the amps.

I don't know why. Like, I got like four hours of sleep. And I had a lot of caffeine this morning. I think that's what it is. But we're clothed in righteousness because of the propitiation.

Like, we didn't earn righteousness. Like, we're declared. And we're... He caused us to be righteous. The author begins, again, negatively.

He says that our love is... Or love itself is not to be understood in the terms of our love for God. Again, this is love not that we have loved God.

He states positively, next, this is love. Not... That's not love, but this is love. That he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice.

- [26 : 10] That's what propitiation means. Standing in place of. Sacrificing himself on behalf of. The combined effect of verse 9 and 10 is the expression, God is love.

Not to be understood as an ontological statement about God's essential being. But in terms of that love being expressed historically in the sending of his one and only son.

As an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Because again, Jesus could have come to earth and just been a guy. Right? Like, he was born.

He put on a body. He could have just done that. And then died. What effect would that have had? Nothing.

Because he had to be the atoning sacrifice. That's love dwelling. Like, that's why love dwells right now. Because of that.

- [27 : 16] The word here for atoning sacrifice, this specific term that John uses is found only in two places in the New Testament.

Both of them in this letter. It's used numerous times in the Old Testament. Because the Old Testament sacrificial system did what? As we just talked about, it pointed us forward.

To the greater, the coming love. Every case that it is used, it refers to the removal of guilt because of sin.

And in most places, it relates to the removal of sin through sacrifice. Then, if it's the same word here that John uses, as it's used in the Old Testament, there can be no doubt that God sent Christ to be the atoning sacrifice to remove the guilt we had incurred because of our sins so that we might have eternal life.

That's the greatest expression of God's love. And on the basis of that, John can say, God is love. That was point one.

- [28 : 28] Now we talk about the reason, the why behind our love for others. Because God lives in us. Verse 11 through 21. Very simply, again, as the title of this point says, we are to love others because God lives in us.

That's pretty simple, again, to understand. We understand that Christ dwells in us through the Holy Spirit. Like Paul says in Galatians 2.20, what? I have been crucified with Christ.

It is not we who live, to make it corporate, but it is Christ who lives in us. The very reason for our obedience or living out the Christian life by faith is because Christ lives in us.

Our lives are not ours. Therefore, we submit to what the Word of God tells us to do. And in this section, it tells us to love others because God lives in you.

I love the wording of verse 11. Look down to verse 11. John says here, Beloved, if God so loved us.

- [29 : 41] As I thought about that and I was sort of studying it, I really think the verse can be translated as, if God so loved us in spite of us. Meaning, if God so loved us, even though we didn't love him.

Even though we are wicked, sinful creatures. If God so loved us, then our response is to what? Love other people. Paul reminds the church at Galatia.

He says what? And such were some of you. Like that's the whole message. Like you used to be this way, but now you're this way. Because of the work of Christ.

And in the message here again, we ought to love others. The recipients of such love have no choice to their response. We have no choice here.

Their sins have been taken away by the gracious act of God. Again, to go back to as we began, there is this adoring wonder at the magnitude of the sacrificial giving of Christ.

- [30 : 45] We cannot do anything else but show love to one another. Moralists, okay, again, people that aren't Christians, they have long puzzled over the problem of how a command can be generated out of this statement.

Because again, as we talked about, you can be an unbeliever and love others. And that's what an atheist will say. They'll say, well, your basis for good and bad is this, you can do that.

You can have that basis. There's, the phrase is, by what standard? By what, what do you believe in? Why do you believe in? What's your standard for believing? How can we ought to love one another be logically based upon God loved us?

John was no doubt unconscious of this problem. And it was sufficient for him to claim that the recipients of divine love must demonstrate the same love.

He could not understand how a person could experience divine love and remain unmoved by the obligation to love others. In the same way as God had loved him.

- [31 : 55] The connection is not so much through the logic of this moral philosophy. It is, it is more through this experience of what happens to you when you become a Christian.

It is significant that John does not say that the experience of God's love should constrain us to love him in return. Rather, he speaks of our obligation to love others.

The fact that he starts from a statement of God's love for sinners strongly suggests that his vision here is not constrained just to the church but to what? The world.

Having stated in verse 11 that we ought to love one another, he goes on to say that if we fulfill this command, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

But before he gets to that point, he has this interesting statement here. He says, nobody has ever seen God. Now that kind of seems out of place. In this context here, we're talking about loving others because God lives in us.

[33 : 04] God is love. That's, again, straightforward. But he says here in verse 12, no one has ever seen God. Seems out of place, right?

Now, this is a familiar thought in the Old Testament and John quotes in chapter 1 of John. He says there is this invisibility of God and the fact of his revelation in his incarnate son, Jesus Christ.

Here, the contrast is with the way in which God is made known to us in the context of mutual love. This statement is thought to have been taken out of context, but it actually anticipates the point in verse 20.

Verse 20 says, 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.

So it anticipates that point. Again, the message there is you see your brother or sister, you can love that person, but if you don't love that person, how are you to love God whom you have not seen?

[34 : 29] John insists that God is not to be known in this kind of way at all. Some sort of far off experience, let's say. It remains true that God cannot be seen.

Nor does John go on to say that those who love one another will be granted some sort of special, there's not like, you don't get a reward. What does happen is that if we fulfill the command to love one another, then we experience the presence of God in ourselves.

At the same time, God's love is made complete in us. It is only when a person loves his fellow Christians on a very practical level, which is in chapter 3, that you and I fully experience the love of God.

This does not mean, though, that Christian duty is summed up with just loving one another. John's point is that loving one another is indispensable. Now, the thrust of Christianity is to know God.

Now, we will know on, that knowing will look different. Like, if you come to our basement, my knowing looks like you would go, like it's crazy down here, like how do you even get into your basement?

[35 : 51] Like, it's just nuts down there. The pursuit, though, of knowing is for everyone. It is not reserved just for the pastors and for the elders and for the teachers.

The pursuit of knowing God is an everlasting thing. That's what is, that's what's unique about Christianity.

There's numerous things that are unique, but this call from throughout the Bible, okay, it's not just a New Testament principle. Throughout the Bible, people are called to know God.

Like what Paul says in the book of Philippians. He says what? Not that I've already obtained this or I'm already made perfect, but I do what? I press on because I want to know Christ.

And as he's writing that, he knows Christ, right? But he says what? I want to press on to know more of Christ. I think we're not going to achieve Apostle Paul level of knowledge.

[36 : 53] But if he says press on to know Christ, how much more do we press on to know Christ? Because we demonstrate the love of God in our lives. I want to move down to verse 17 and 18.

These verses contain the third and fourth references to the completeness of love found in 1 John. The first is found in chapter 2, verse 5, where completeness of love for God is said to be expressed in obedience to his word.

Again, not legalism, but obedience. Okay? That is just what we're called to do. That's not like being a legalist.

I'm sure a lot of us are familiar with that. Legalism says, well, you can't do this on Sundays and you can't wear this type of clothing and you can't listen to rock and roll music and that's legalism.

Obedience to his word is not legalism. That shows our, that demonstrates our love for God. The second is found in chapter 4, verse 12, where God's love is said to be made complete in believers when they love one another.

[38 : 04] And here in verse 17 and 18, love is said to have completed its work in believers when they can face the day of judgment without fear. We've probably heard verse 18, perfect love casts out fear.

Now this is one of those, I call them bumper sticker verses. They'll just yank something out of context and they'll put it on a Christmas card or they'll put it on a sticker or they'll put it on a t-shirt.

And this is one of those. We've heard perfect love casts out fear. But really what is going on here is the love of God is perfected completely in us.

The fear of the day of judgment is removed. That's what's going on here. Like perfect love casts out fear. We won't have perfect love now but when we face the day of judgment, that's perfect love, what's going to happen?

Cast out fear. Why? Because when God looks at us, he looks at who? Christ. Because of why? We're clothed in his righteousness. In chapter 2, verse 28, And now, dear children, continue in him so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before his coming.

[39 : 26] How do we have that confidence? Again, obedience to his word. we are being unashamed on the day of judgment.

The author then explains further why believers will have confidence on that day because as he is, so also are we in this world. Why, again, does love produce this confidence?

Because there is no fear in love. Like, again, the very being of God is love. So the attribute there, you can't separate, you can't have a little bit, like 50% love, 50% fear.

It's 100% love. There is no fear because perfect love casts out fear. God's love for believers cannot be separated from their love for God, though.

Again, like, Paul says what? Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. That's our responsibility. But what does he continue to say? For it is God who works in you. So these two things are mutually together.

[40 : 35] Like, you can't just, you can't teach that God loves you, therefore, go do whatever you want to. Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? What does Paul say? No.

Absolutely not. By no means. So there is this, there's this obligation from us that we are to love God because he loves us, not because of legalism, not because some sort of forced obedience, but because of why?

Because we love him because he first loved us. Their fear, our fear of God is driven out. Not the fear of trembling and scaredness because that's, that's what we would, that's what is cast out because we have no reason to fear.

We have a fear of the, just like, like a, like a good fear, like a, like an aweness, again, to use that term. Love of God and fear of God, again, cannot co-exist.

The type of fear here is meant for punishment. That's, that's what the unrighteous have, is punishment. Fear of this punishment that is driven out by love.

- [41 : 50] When people fear God's punishment, it is a sign that they have not yet been perfected in love. The one who fears is not made perfect in love, what the text says. Perfection in love involves a love for God which is based upon our sense of God's love for us.

And this love relationship, again, these two things working together, is what removes our fear as we face the day of judgment. In chapter 3, verse 1, he wrote, John, how great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God and that is what we are.

Down in verse 16, he says, this is how we know what love is. Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. Chapter 4, again, verse 16, and so we know and rely on the love of God that he has for us.

God is love. As we come to a conclusion here, we arrive at probably my favorite verse in this section, verse 19.

Everybody look at verse 19. Verse 19 says, we love because what? Everybody read it. He first loved us. That's important.

- [43 : 07] I want to stop. I know we've, it's noon, we still have, we're going to be done in a moment. But I really, I really want us to think about that verse for a moment.

Because again, we have to like, we have to get something. We're not just hearing like something and then leaving and then, we have to get something. It has to be, it has to penetrate. Our love for God, our ability to love God is based upon God's prior love for us.

Okay? Our ability to love God, our response, it is based upon God's loving us first. Out of that then is what?

Gratitude. How do we know about the love of God? How do we respond in gratitude towards this love that first loved us?

we read the Bible. Okay? We renew our knowledge of God through the reading of the Bible. Through the worship of the church, corporate late church.

- [44 : 22] As we consider, again, think about it, whatever it looks like in your life. Think about the last time that you just kind of blocked everything out and thought about how your whole entire life has been molded by experiences of God's love and care for you.

God, again, He first loved us. He loved us when we were ungodly to make us godly. He loved us when we were unrighteous to make us righteous.

He loved us when we were sick to make us whole. Right? What does Jesus say? I didn't come to save those that are well. Those that are well have no need of a physician, but I came to do what?

Heal the sick. And our response to this amazing love is to love one another. Because you can't say that you love God and hate your brother.

That's what this verse is saying. John actually goes as far to call us liars if you say you love God and you don't love your brother or sister. John says, even one step further, you cannot love God if you do not love your brother.

- [45 : 41] For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen can not love God whom he has not seen. If you can't carry out the lesser requirement, which is to love fellow believers whom we have seen, then you really cannot carry out the greater requirement, which is to love God whom we have not seen.

The nature of true experience of God is such that it cannot exist without manifesting itself in love for other people. John reminds us that in verse 20, I'm sorry, verse 21, in this commandment we have from him, whoever loves God must also love his brother.

It's a summary. So we start with that, we end with that, and then in the middle is the instructions. It's not an option, it's not John's opinion, it's not a suggestion, it's not my opinion or suggestion.

He says this is a commandment, this commandment that we have from him. John picks up a major theme from the last supper discourse where Jesus stresses that his disciples' love for him must express itself in the obedience to his command, and that command is that they should love one another.

A new command, I give you love one another as I have loved you, so you also must love one another. If you love me, you will obey what I command.

[47 : 15] If, then you will. My command is this, love each other as I have loved you. This is my command, love each other.

So as we close, again, think about the implications of that in your own life. we all would say we love other people.

I think we could blanket statement that, that we would all, that we love other people, all types, anything. But, is your love for those other people that are unbelievers being expressed in the sharing of Christ's work on the cross?

Because think about it. Let's say there's five unbelievers in here today. and, I don't love them enough to say that, listen, if you are apart from Christ, here is the repercussions of that.

But guess what? There's good news that God sent his only son into the world to be a propitiation for your sins. That regardless of your past, not based upon your good deeds, not based upon your good works, but based upon the love of Christ, he died on behalf of you.

[48 : 33] And when you are raised one day, you will stand before God clothed in the righteousness. Withholding that is the most hateful thing you could do.

And, honestly, love, the opposite of love is often thought to be what? Hate. But the reality, the opposite of love, is selfishness.

because when we withhold that information, what are we doing? We're thinking about that person's response to us more than we're thinking about the love of God in our lives that is expressed towards that person.