

January 21, 2018 -

I John 4:12-21

- Perfect Love Liberates Fear.

Introduction:

All week we heard of fears of a government shut-down, now it is upon us. Have you noticed that fear is something that is marketed in the news almost every-day. We live in a fearful world. The media plays its part well in feeding our needs of bad news that has been filtered to persuade us to think in terms of fear and anxiety. They cause us to react in fear of losing our jobs our homes. When it comes to money we really hype up the fear factor. We live in a fearful time according to most. There are times in our life that we all face fear, but fear is not something that should be easily accepted in the Christian Life. To possess fear would mean that we do not have faith or “perfect love.” **There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. I John 4:18**

I believe that we all want to feel as though we have a good handle on life and few things shakes us, but in reality we are very fearful people. Some people fear growing old, some fear animals, some fear water, many people fear failure, others fear what the stock market is doing, and closely related to this is the fear of what the future holds.

The Greek word used in the NT for “fear” is “Phobos” from which we get our word “phobia,” a term we use to describe all kinds of fear. “Hydrophobia” is the fear of water; “tachophobia” is the fear of speed; and “claustrophobia” is the fear of tight places. There are more than 1,000 different kinds of human fears. All of us, even the best of Christians, have fears.

Fear cripples our faith in a hurry. Fear is the result of trusting in ourselves instead of trusting in God. We read today...there is no fear in love. We are ...

I The Channels of His Love Vv. 12-17

1. The clearest proof of God’s love is the cross, and that’s why we have a cross standing upon the property of our church. That cross says to our community, “This is how much God loves you.” Not only is God the God of love, but also the God of holiness and justice who cannot tolerate sin or allow it to go unpunished

Therefore, John writes: Beloved if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another (4:11). This means we have an inescapable obligation to love others because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us (4:12). Verse 12 tells us ‘no man seen God at any time. John relates a basic principle about God the Father – that no one has seen God at any time. God is a Spirit, He is invisible. Jesus revealed God’s love, but He is no longer with us in flesh and blood, so God chose our physical bodies through which to show His love to the world, yours physical bodies and mine.

2. When we let God’s love flow through us, his love is perfected in us. This means God’s love has achieved its ultimate goal because God never intended that we be the final destination of His love. He wants us to be channels through which His love is passed to others. --- *interstate*

"It just came in my heart and my mind that we need more of God's love right now... the main purpose of the commercial is to inform people and remind people that God's love is available for us and he wants to help us live a life where we love one another. -- Norm Miller, Chairman, Interstate Batteries

3. Real Love is an action not a feeling. It produces selfless, sacrificial love for Christ and the church. Therefore our Church too is a binding relationship. To break this bond is to displease God. Clearly, he does not intend this to be optional. Many Christians today break fellowship over petty issues and divorce their church. Are you a member of the church and are you saved?

It is a special position to be a part of the family. In verses 13-16 John repeats and emphasizes what he has already written. God intends for His children to be edifying and caring agents.

We should be available to one another, and respond in love when needed. We should do our ministry unto God as Paul instructs with humility, longsuffering and forbearance, not with fear. Fear is the result of trusting in ourselves. We read ... **Ephesians 4:2**

II There is no fear in love. Vv18-19

1. It has been said there are about 365 “fear not’s,” or its equivalent in the Bible. That is one for each day of the year because God doesn’t want us to fear any day. But, neither does He want us to fear when we stand before Him. Therefore, John writes: **Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world (4:17).** The phrase made perfect means fully developed or mature. The word “fear” is mentioned here four times. The Greek word for “fear” in this verse is phobos, which is where we obtain our English word “phobia.” This information helps us to understand a little better the message that is being presented here.

2. A phobia is defined as, “an irrational persistent fear or dread,” and “some mental health professionals would add that a phobia is a fear that interferes in a person’s life.” The fear that is being talked about here is one that causes someone to react in ways that can disrupt his or her life in a dangerous way. Perfect, mature, love will give us boldness in the day of judgment. Boldness means having confidence and is the opposite of fear. This perfect love releases one from the fear of hell and condemnation. Growing in Christ and His love develops our confidence about the day of judgment. We need this confidence because according to 2 Corinthians 5:10 we must give account of our lives ...

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things [done] in [his] body, according to that he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad.

3. The judgment seat of Christ is where all Christians will be judged to determine their eternal rewards. The Great White Throne Judgment described in Revelation 20 is where all lost people will appear to determine the degree of their eternal punishment.

At the judgment seat of Christ, we won’t be judged by how well we know the Bible, how generous we have been, or even how much faith we had. We will be judged for our works.

Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. - 1 Corinthians 3:13

4. Therefore, John explains: **There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out, fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love (4:18). to complete**

What do you fear right now? Losing your job, aging, declining health, rejection, not being able to pay your bills? Someone once wrote,” Fear is False Evidence Appearing Real. We are born

with only two fears: the fear of falling and the fear of loud noises. All other fears are learned, so they can be unlearned.

III. We love because He loved us. Vv. 20-21

1. John tells us: We love him, because he first loved us (4:19). Have you ever tried to start a fire with wet kindling? That's what it is like trying to love without God. The secret to alleviating our fears is found in a great Bible verse- 2 Timothy 1:7. **For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.**

From this verse we find God, through the Holy Spirit, supplies us with three things to alleviate our fears. God supplies us with His power. Without God's power we will constantly be victimized by fear. He sets our hearts on fire with His love, and we become contagious. Therefore, **if a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar (4:20a)**. Why, according to the rest of that verse?

Such a person is a liar, a hypocrite, because love for God and love for others cannot be separated. That's like saying, "I love swimming, but I hate water." According to the Bible, loving God and loving others are inseparable. If we don't love people, we need to work on our love for God and then loving people will be automatic.

2. John continues: And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also (4:21). Jesus said the greatest of all the commandments is to love God with all our hearts, souls, and minds (Mt 22:38). Then, in the next verse, He say is the second greatest commandment is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

3. Jesus said: On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Mt. 22:40). That means those two commandments sum up the entire Bible. God gave us the Bible so we can know His command to love our neighbors and can grow, or mature, in that love so we will have no fear in Judgment.

Conclusion:

Many years ago a man gazed at the cliffs of South Dakota's Black Hills. He envisioned what no one else could-the sculpted faces of US presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt. His name was Gutzon Borglum. He and his crew were suspended on ropes 500 feet above the valley floor. They used everything from chisels to dynamite to create the 5-story-high visages. It took 14 years to complete the project.

Borglum knew what was in the rock because he saw with his artist's eye what he could create out of the raw material with which he had to work. And so it is with God. With His artistic eye, He sees the potential in every person and every church. With His loving hands, He begins to make of us a monument to His genius and grace.