



Love & Truth

Authentic Christianity in 1, 2, and 3 John

SESSION 8

Love, love, love...

1 John 4:13-5:5

1. INTRODUCING THIS SECTION

Authenticating the Spirits in truth and love.

2. NOTES ON 4:13-16a

¹³We know that we live 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 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

- 4:13, "given us his Spirit": God is always first on spiritual matters. Only by the sending of the Holy Spirit have our eyes been opened to Him
- 4:14, "Father has sent his Son to be Savior of the world": Central to Christian faith. Also, directly against the Gnostic heresy. Important confession of faith (believing and love)
- 4:14, John use of terms:
 - "seen and testify": eyewitness account related to the people
 - "Savior": admission of lost world in need of saving (John 4:42 – NT 24X)
 - "world": of men and women in rebellion to God
 - "sent": God sent his Son into the world with a specific mission (Savior)
- 4:16a, "the love God has for us": This was God's motivation in sending His Son as atonement for the world. This is also where we find comfort and confidence to "know and rely" on Him.

3. NOTES ON 4:16b-18

^{16b}God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. ¹⁷ In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

- 4:16b, "God is love": the love of vss. 7-12 is now said to be the most solemn duty and the most striking evidence of the Spirit's activity. If God dwells in us then there is love in us.
- 4:13-17, John is dealing with these verses to make the argument that God dwells in us. This indwelling of God is directly opposed to the Gnostic thought. (Spiritual=Good/material=bad) How can good dwell in what is bad?
- 4:17, "confidence" (Greek, *parresia*): John uses this term four times in this epistle. One other place it deals with confidence (joyousness) in final judgment (2:28). (Confidence in prayer, 3:21; 5:14).
- 4:18, "Day of Judgment": This day will come at a time that we do not know about, but we should not fear (Greek, *phobio*) it. Christ has paid the price for us! (cf. Rom 8:31-39)

4. NOTES ON 4:19-21

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. ²¹ And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

- 4:20, "...yet hates his brother...": To believe in Christ and to love your brothers and sisters are not conditions in which God may dwell in us. Rather, believing in Christ and loving your brother and sister are evidences of the fact that God has already taken possession of our lives to make this possible.
- 4:20, "cannot love God whom he has not seen": John's possible levels of love needed before we can experience love for God
 - Need to love what God created before we can love the creator
 - Need to experience philia-love (brotherly) before we can express agape-love (divine) for God
 - Need to love what is seen before we can love God, whom we cannot see
 - Need to experience self-sacrificing love of another before we can experience or comprehend the love of the One whom sacrificed Himself for us. (How can we experience the depth of love we have not yet experienced?)
- 4:21, "given us this command": All the commands Jesus wrapped up into two commands. (cf. Matt 22:37-40) (NB: God always draws us together in love, Satan always disrupts.)

5. NOTES ON 5:1-5

^{5:1} Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. ² This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. ³ This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, ⁴ for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

- 5:1, "loves his child": Who are we to love? (cf. Luke 10:25-37)
 - "believes" (present tense): The present tense in the Greek is focused on an action that is currently in a state of taking place (continued activity).
 - "born" (perfect tense): The focus on the perfect tense in Greek is not the activity that happened in the past (born). The focus is on the *result* of that activity that carries through to now and into the future (believes, love).
- 5:2, "This is how we know"
 - "loving God": This is a fixed point of reference that we can use to judge whether we love our brothers
 - 1) Everyone who loves the parents loves the child, 2) every Christian is a child of God, 3) therefore, when we love God we love our brothers and sisters
 - "carrying out his commands": Love that is divorced from obedience to the command is not love.
- 5:3 "commands are not burdensome": The minute commands of the scribes were burdensome; Christ made them easy. (Cf. Matt 11:30, Gal 5:1) Love of God in them makes His command easy.
- "overcomes the world": What a great Law/Gospel statement. Does it need to be any easier than this?

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

1. "Faith active in love" summarizes the authentic Christian life.
2. To love is to truly live (in Christ); to hate is death.
3. Christians should expect to be hated by the world.
4. Words, actions, and integrity of motivation are the languages of authentic love.
5. We need to experience sacrificial love on some level to understand His love.
6. The Holy Spirit testifies to the reality of Christ abiding within us.