

**SERMON: Walking with Jesus is Living in Love & Living in God****GOOD Morning OIC & Welcome to Father's House**

Today, we continue verse by verse, to exegete or bring out the meaning of the First Letter of John the Apostle. As is the whole Bible, it was inspired by Holy Spirit. In my previous messages from the First Letter by the Apostle John, I have attempted to bring out the meaning of John's instructions to Christians. This was to help them to do the will of God, by **Walking Close with Jesus.**

**SUCH LOVE, SUCH WONDROUS LOVE**

Last week's Message was titled **Walking with Love for Christians because God Loved Us.**

I ended it with **“Consistent love truly requires supernatural love. That only comes from God. Christians have that infinite source of Love, God Himself!”**

And, Next (1 John 4.11) *Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. To bring out the meaning of “since God loved us that much” I then gave a realistic spiritual view of planet earth: “Imagine the world as seen from Heaven. It is a round globe of sin. God hates sin with an intensity that makes the earth and heavens shake. But, it is a little more than 2,000 years ago. He plans to send an object into the midst of it. You would expect an Angel of Judgment like a spiritual rocket ship with an atomic warhead to destroy all this evil mass of hate and filth in one massive explosion. But God...He sent his only Son, Jesus, to save it! Can you believe it? !!! .... This is real love.”* Even more, this phrase of words, **since God loved us that much**, says that God sent His Son to save the world by His execution as a common criminal, a cruel death on a Cross stained by His Blood (1 John 4.10) *This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.* “A sacrifice” in the Greek New Testament is an *hilasmos, a blood sacrifice to appease God's anger.* We Christians know how we deserved nothing but condemnation, but we received God's Gift of Jesus, and our never ending Life of receiving God's Love.

**GOD REVEALED TO MAN**

(1 John 4.12) *No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.*

Jesus was God in the flesh as John wrote in **(1 John 1.1-2)** *1 We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life. 2 This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him. And now we testify and proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us.*

So, you may ask, Pastor Bruce, how can John say in **(1 John 4.12)** *No one has ever seen God?*

We see the answer as the Apostle Paul explains what Jesus did when He left Heaven to be born as a baby on earth. In **(Philippians 2.6-7/NASB1995)** *6 who, although He {Jesus} existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.* Thus Jesus gave up, or , **emptied Himself**, of “the form of God.” This was His “**outward expression of divine equality and His rightful dignity.**” from **(Philippians 2.6/AMP-notes)**. This would be both the physical Glory of God, and rightful demand of Worship by all living things, shared by Him with The Father. The Third Person of the Trinity, Holy Spirit, also has the rightful demand for worship. He possesses Glory, but must not display it, but bring men's attention to Jesus. His mission is to move among men like an invisible wind to bring the gift of spiritual rebirth. As Jesus told Nicodemus in the Gospel of John **(3.5-8)** *5 Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. 6 Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. 7 So don't be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit.”* Therefore, *No one has ever seen God* in **(1 John 3.12)** means *No one has ever seen God* with His visual Glory.

John had touched Jesus. He is God in the flesh, the Son of God.. And in **(1 John 1.2)** *He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us.* Here I have attempted to describe the attributes of God who is Trinity, Three Persons in One. It is a Biblical Truth that must be accepted by Faith. But as Christians mature, God desires that they sense the Presence of all Three in their life, and communications from each Person as well. The next verse fits this teaching.

#### GIFT OF HOLY SPIRIT

We read in **(1 John 4.13)** *And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us.* When a sinner believes in Jesus, the Spirit takes residence to live in him, causing re-birth, a sinner into a holy saint. The Spirit is Christ within us the hope of Glory. Because God as Three Persons are still One, we have fellowship with the Father God by the same Spirit. We live in Jesus, thus we live in God, *and he in us.*

**His Spirit --- as proof that we live in him:** Everything from the sense of a new heart after spiritual re-birth; **somehow** you did not give in to a powerful temptation to sin; knowing that you are being kept by the power of God and not your own power; Bible reading becoming an exciting adventure; or that still small quiet voice....These are a few *proofs that we live in Him and He in us*. We first believe it because the Bible says it. Walking with Jesus will have it happen in each of our lives in many personal ways...these are foretastes of the Glory which God has prepared for Christians when we see Jesus.

## TESTIFY AND DECLARE CHRIST

Now the Apostle John restates his personal witness of Jesus, God's Son, on Earth. We see this in **(1 John 4.14)** *Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.* John is stressing and emphasizing that “we” (Apostles and many others) have seen and personally testify of Jesus. Personal testimonies are powerful faith builders! I pray that you OIC Christians will encourage each other with things that God is doing in your life. When you get together, how about some of the time - “Let us talk about Jesus?” No thing is too small to build up the faith of each other. This is another way to *love one another*. Just last week I received such an encouraging love Email about sharing the Gospel from a faithful friend here at OIC.

**(1 John 4.15)** *All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God.* Here John is setting a test for true Christians, but also an invitation for all people of the world. The *Contemporary English Version* gives an excellent exegesis or true meaning for verses **(1 John 4.14-15)**. We read in **(1 John 4.15/CEV)** *14 God sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. We saw his Son and are now telling others about him. 15 God stays one with everyone who openly says Jesus is the Son of God. This is how we stay one with God.*”

I like this next quotation from *The Complete Biblical Library (TCBL)*: “Although verse #14 makes it clear that Christ provided salvation which is available to the world as a whole, it is not automatically applied to the whole population. So verse #15 follows with a statement that throws the doors wide open to any who will approach God in His terms --- acknowledging {declaring} that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” Thus the doors are open to enter the Family of God to anyone who *declares that Jesus is the Son of God, or openly says Jesus is the Son of God*. Showing that God lives in someone is not by casual statements about Jesus, as someone may speak of the latest movie, or Disney's fantasy stories. It is also not by only declaring in private *that Jesus is the Son of God*. The Apostle Peter taught Christians who were not called to be evangelists or preachers that their lifestyle of holy living will draw non-Christians to them. He said in **(1 Peter**

**3.14-16)** *14 But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. 15 Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. 16 But do this in a gentle and respectful way.*

**Next in (1 John 4.16a)** *We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love.*

When Christians remember the Cross of Jesus, and the Love of God that sent Jesus to it, they have a compelling and soul-moving reason to trust in God's Love. There are many times Christians face trials and tests in life. Sometimes they can't seem to find any particular reason, such as a sin they committed, for what they are experiencing or "going through." These are times when *knowing how much God loves them* is very important. As they put and keep their trust in His Love, they receive peace from the Father above to endure their trial or test.

**In (1 John 4.16b)** *God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.* I have titled this Message from this verse **16b. --- Walking with Jesus is Living in Love & Living in God.**

This verse captures the overriding or "BIG" Picture of God living inside us Christians.

*God is love* – John repeated this powerful but simple statement as in **(1 John 4.8)** *God is love.* As I preached last week, John then gives "The Definition of Love" in **(1 John 4.9)** *God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him.* LOVE is God's sending His Son, Jesus, to save a sin-filled world that opposes all that He is, all goodness. Sin actually fights against Love itself.

*God lives in them* – Born-again Christians received Christ, and God begins to live in them by the Holy Spirit. We believe this by faith, "The Bible tells me so!" Yet, as we mature and walk close to Jesus, we also begin to know it by personal experiences.

Quoting *The Complete Bible Library (TCBL)* : "Note that the inspired writer {John} did not say "love is God", for there is much which goes under that description which is not true love or the highest kind of love. Rather since God is the very essence of love, all that He does issues from that nature. And since in the new birth {Born-again} believers are caused to share the divine nature; love will be their chief trademark {or lifestyle characteristic}."

*all who live in love live in God* – This phrase of words in this same Bible verse, in **(1 John 4.16b)**, **has the same meaning** of what the (TCBL) editor wrote, as I quoted above: "believers are caused to share the divine nature; love will be their chief trademark {or lifestyle characteristic}."

**IN LIGHT OF ETERNITY**

Next, John looks forward from what is happening now to Christians. What is happening now will affect them in Eternity, on the *Day of Judgment*.

In (1 John 4.17) *And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.* As your pastor often reminds you, yes, repeating this again, maturing Christians are in the constant process of learning to live in the “light” of Eternity. This may make you feel like God does not want you “to ever enjoy” the Blessings of Today. But you need not feel this way! The more a Christian has confidence in His Home in Heaven, the more He can enjoy whatever God sends to him here on Earth. God sends blessings according to His wisdom, as well as according to our heart felt desires! Living in the Light of Eternity also is a tremendous open door for Holy Spirit to enhance, or make clear with power, a Christian's glorious future. Then we will truly *not be afraid on the day of judgment (1 John 4.17)*. This is declared in the first verse of the hymn, “When I Can Read My Title Clear”: In the former OIC hymnal (TH), #538, it says:

**“When I can read my title clear, To mansions in the skies,  
I'll bid farewell to every fear, And wipe my weeping eyes.”**

Someone may say: “But, how can you say these things for it is *the day of judgment*? “ Because *as we live in God, our love grows more perfect.* As we experience that our love has grown more perfect over the years, we gain *confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.* Fearing *the day of judgment* is actually and really doubting deep inside of us that we are **Really A Born-again Christian at all.** Don't be a Christian who accepts living with this doubt. It is your enemy within! You must slaughter it and kill it with your will to be a Christian, and with the Sword of the Spirit - the Word of God, and with prayer to God for the banishment of doubt inside of you for as long as you live! Doubt keeps Christians living in the low feelings of depression and fear. Faith and Confidence in Jesus raises our feelings up, out of those low feelings, even through hard times, and “tears.”

If you know you are truly a Born-again Christian, you also know Jesus promised that *the day of judgment* will be for rewards, and not for condemnation. Jesus said in (John 5.24) “*I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.* **Note: When Jesus, who is the Truth, says “*I tell you the truth*” you can underline and post this truth in the computer memory of your mind, and in the depths of your heart. For all He ever said was Truth.**

This phrase from (1 John 4.17), *Because we live like Jesus here in this world*, means that our Lord is a wonderful example to aim at. We must never stop devoting our lives to that goal or target. But, we will not be able to live exactly like Jesus until we see Him “face to face.” Yes, and that

will be when we are no longer *in this world* as (1 John 4.17) tells us. **It is the direction we are moving in...we are, at times, racing to it! or..well, at least we keep moving to living like Jesus here in this world.**

Many of us English speakers love to sing in Hymn #387 (TH) .”**Oh to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer. This is my constant longing prayer..**” Dear OIC Christians, don't let the slowness to mature keep doubt alive in you. As I look back at my early years as a Born-again Believer, I can say: “Today I may not be all that I should be, but I am so happy that I am not what I was then as a new Christian!” As we experience God's love over the years of walking with Jesus, God causes us to be confident in His love.

About 40 years ago I felt ashamed and sad in my small confidence in His love. I decided to write a prayer-song to Him. I titled the song, *Make Me Confident in Jesus*. Ever since that day, God has not ceased to answer my prayer-song. He did it for me, and He will do it for you. “Divine love will enable a Believer to stand before God with confidence on the Day of Judgment.” from (TCBL/ 1John 4.17).

#### FEARFUL FUTURE?

The Apostle John has declared that Jesus, the Word become flesh, created the universe. Imagine that Jesus' fingers molded the sun and all the stars. The Sun releases energy at the mass–energy conversion rate of 8 nuclear bombs every second. Thus, there are scientific facts to support the Bible in (Hebrews 10.31) *It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

How can a sinful man stand before such a God of Righteous Holy Power? Without Christ...fear and trembling! With Christ...He is our God and our Friend! Such does John now say to us Christians in (1 John 4.18): *Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.* The love that sent Jesus to the Cross for us Believers, is perfect love. It is God's nature itself, for God is love. It erases and expels all fear.

Now the Apostle John, shows why your pastor keeps emphasizing to ask God for personal experiences, or “Experiential Christianity.” It is in our lovely worship song “Knowing You Jesus, Knowing You. There is no Greater Thing.” **Don't just sing it if you are not satisfied with your close relation with Him. Pray that He cause it to happen more inside you---minute by minute, day by day, year by year, until you see His Glorious Face.**

**As John says next:** *If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.* **Don't for a moment or a second ...or ever think, that you have to be perfect to experience God's perfect love for you, dear Christian. Jesus died on the**

**Cross so that we might never have any *fear of punishment.*** I have listed just a few Bible verses to show God's plan to cast out all fear from His Children:

#### JUST A FEW BIBLE VERSES SETTING CHRISTIANS FREE FROM FEAR

- Jesus promised no “Judgment” regarding condemnation for Christians. Jesus said in **(John 5.24)** *“I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.*
- John the Apostle told us as he wrote this letter in **(1 John 3.1)** *See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are!*
- Jesus' promise about our Heavenly Father in **(Luke 11.13)** *So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.*
- **(1 Thessalonians 5.9)** *For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us.*

**We read it in the Bible. We believe it in our mind. But we also may need personal experiences to cause God's *perfect love to expel all fear.* Do not be ashamed of that need. Holy Spirit had John write this “Just For You!”**

When Christians are free from fear, they are also more able to allow God within them to empower them to love. Here, the New Living Translation misses a very important instruction to Christians. The original Greek says: ***We love because he first loved us (1 John 4.19/NTG), and not, We love each other because he loved us first.(1 John 4.19/NLT).*** Yes, we love other Christians because God first loved us. But, the New Testament makes it clear that Jesus never intended His followers' love to be pointed only inward, to the church, only towards other Christians. The Church is not to be a private party, like a social club. Since He loved not only us, but the whole world of people, first, we must love everybody with a love like His. **(1 John 4.17)** told us that *“we live like Jesus here in this world.”* Jesus loved the world even as the Father who sent Him, giving Himself as a blood sacrifice for the worst of sinners. The original Greek simply says: ***“We love because he first loved us (1 John 4.19/NTG).”***

**In the next verse, John does point to the priority or the more important object of our love, our fellow Christians.** We read in **(1 John 4.20-21)** **20** *If someone says, “I love God,” but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? 21* *And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.*

Of course, John has made this not only a priority, but also, the test for truly being a Christian at all. We read earlier in this letter in **(1 John 3.15)** *Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don't have eternal life within them.* The original Greek clearly shows the action verb, *hates*, is the Aorist tense. Thus it should be translated *Anyone who **continually** hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart.* I also tried to bring out that meaning with the responsibility for all Christians to pay attention when Holy Spirit shows even a lightning quick strike of hate in our heart to anyone, especially a Christian. John has written many verses to show the *Amazing Grace* that God gave us in Christ. We have read that God actually lives inside us Christians, who were His enemies before we accepted His Son Jesus.

Now, in **(1 John 4.20)** *If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?* Again the Greek Aorist tense should be applied to **verse #20** : *If someone says, "I **am continually loving** God," but **continually hates** a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't **continually love** people we can see, how can we **continually love** God, whom we cannot see? **Continually – means a lifestyle or habits of living that show constantly who we are, Christians.***

And I will close this message with **(1 John 4.21)** *And he has given us this command: Those who **continually** love God must also **continually** love their fellow believers.*

God would not ask us to do such an impossible deed, *continually love*, if He were not willing to give us the power of Holy Spirit to cause it to happen, to the Glory and Praise of the Father & the Son. That Hymn #387 (TH), **."Oh to be like Thee"** that I mentioned earlier in today's Message says it correctly and truly. Let us all make the Refrain from this Biblical song our prayer:

**Oh to be like Thee! Oh to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art!  
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness--- Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart..**

*Let Us Pray,....*

## REFERENCES

AMP – The **Amplified Bible**, Copyright © 2015 by The Lockman Foundation, La Habra, CA 90631

CEV- **Contemporary English Version**, Copyright © 1995 by American Bible Society



**NLT** - *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

**NTG** – Novum Testamentum Graece/Nestle-Aland, Printed in Germany 1898 & 1979

**TCBL** – **The Complete Biblical Library**, The New Testament Study Bible, Empowered Life Academic, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74145 USA

**TH** – **The Hymnal for Worship & Celebration**, WORD Music, Waco, Texas USA

**NOTE**- Pastor Bruce puts {...} around words not in the exact text, but either the Greek or more clarity make this needed in his opinion.