

AM 1 John 4:13-21

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Date: 16 May 2021

Preacher: Rev Robert Dale

[0 : 00] A very warm welcome to you all. Our evening service is at 6 o'clock tonight when I shall be preaching again.

We have our Bible study and prayer meeting on Wednesday at 7pm when Jonathan Kenyon will be speaking. Then next Lord's Day 11 o'clock and 6 o'clock our preacher is the Reverend Ronnie Christie.

Just to mention there are some magazines on the table to my right as you go out of the door here. From the Free Church at Govan planted 5 to 6 years ago which may be of interest to you.

And also to mention that First Base is now able to take contributions again. There are details about First Base on the table at the back of the hall there.

First Base Agency Bridge Project. There's a little leaflet about that. And there's details there of the non-perishable food items that they're able to take. If you want more information I'm told that William knows all about it.

[1 : 29] And also just to mention that the redecoration work is continuing. You probably noticed a little sign on the floor. Wet paint as you came in. Let's bow before God now and seek his blessing upon us.

Our gracious God and Father we thank you that you have promised to meet with your people. Where two or three are gathered together.

There the Lord Jesus Christ himself is in the midst. We pray that this may be our experience today. That we may know the presence of the living God.

And that we may know the blessing of God upon us all. Speak to us through your word. Inspire us as we hear the singing of hymns.

Grant to us Lord that we may be built up spiritually. Grant to us that we may be able in due course to go from this place. Saying it has been good for us to be in the house of the Lord.

[2 : 43] Forgive our many sins. And draw near to us now according to your promise. In Jesus name. Amen. Our opening praise this morning is Psalm 145.

From Sing Psalms on page 189. And we're going to hear verses 1 to 9.

Beginning, I will exalt you, O my God and King. Forever I will praise your holy name. I will extol your name forevermore.

Day after day your praise I will proclaim. I will extol your name forevermore. I will extol your name forevermore.

Day after day your praise I will proclaim. Day after day your praise I will proclaim. I will extol your name forevermore. Day after day your praise I will proclaim. I will extol your name forevermore. I will extol your name forevermore.

[3 : 50] I will extol your name forevermore. I will extol your name forevermore. Day after day your praise I will proclaim. Day after day your praise I will proclaim.

Day after day your praise. Day after day your praise I will proclaim. My praise I will extol your name forevermore. Day after day my praise I will ongoing. Day after day your praise I will proclaim. Say, Mon clearly, I will call or ■■■■ for life I will count as a conclusion, fire your praise I will■■■■■.

Day after day your praise I will count as an Thank you. All praise.

This greatness God can search our hope we end. Each generation will recount your deeds and to the next your mighty as all land.

They praise the splendor of your majesty the power of all the works that you have done.

I do will meditate upon your deeds and your majestic as I will ignore.

[5 : 17] We will rejoice in your benevolence and your abundant grace to celebrate the righteousness that you match or to them in praise and joyful song they will relate.

The Lord is gracious and compassionate aid. A and receive to all on earth and who How good it will be when again we can sing the praises of the Lord ourselves.

Now, children, as usual, I've got something to show you. There it is. Not very exciting.

It's a stick. And it's dead, isn't it? It's a dead branch from a tree.

We have a row of ash trees along the driveway by our house. And I don't know how old they are, but pretty much every day we get little branches like this falling off the trees and landing in the driveway.

[7 : 23] And I have to go and pick them up and throw them away. Now, this really is dead, isn't it? It's not the slightest sign of a bud or a leaf anywhere.

It's covered in this sort of green mould. And it's all cracking up. I have to be a bit careful with it or it will all fall to pieces.

And Sheila won't be very happy with me cleaning the church afterwards. Totally dead. Do you think it will come to life again?

Thomas is hopeful. Samuel's not. I'd like to think it would come to life again, but I don't really think it will.

Why is there no life in this branch? Why am I so sure that it will never produce any more buds? It will never produce any more leaves.

[8 : 32] Well, the problem is, it's no longer part of the tree. You see, it's the tree that gives life to the branches.

Inside the tree, there's this substance called sap that carries all the food and the water up through the tree into the branches.

If it's broken off from the tree, there's no sap, no food, no water, no life. Dead. And it will never come back to life again, I'm afraid.

Now this reminds us of something very important about the Christian life. In a moment, we're going to read from the Bible, from John's Gospel, a very famous passage in which Jesus talks about abiding in him.

In other words, staying in him. He doesn't talk about ash trees. He talks about a vine. And he says, I am the vine.

[9 : 56] You are the branches. Abide in me. Stay in me. Keep connected to me.

Because that's the only way we can have life. That's the only way we can produce any spiritual fruit. Is if we're connected and we stay connected with Jesus.

By faith. Our spiritual life comes from Jesus. We have to trust in him constantly. Otherwise we become like this dead branch.

And my prayer for you is that you'll never be like this. But rather that you'll be full of spiritual life. Trusting in the Lord.

We're going to hear singing of the Psalms again now. Do feel free to join in quietly under your mask if you wish. We're going to hear from Psalm 1.

[11 : 04] Which speaks of believers as being like trees. Psalm 1. And it's on page 1.

And I assume it's the first version. Yes. Blessed is the one who turns away from where the wicked walk. Who does not stand in sinners paths.

Or sit with those who mock. Verse 3. Verse 3 begins. He prospers ever like a tree that's planted by a stream. Blessed is the one who turns away from where the wicked walk.

Blessed is the one who turns away from where the wicked walk.

Who does not stand in sinners paths. Who does not stand in sinners paths. Or sit with those who mock.

[12 : 08] Instead he finds God's holy love. Instead he finds God's holy love. His joy and great delight.

He makes the priests of the Lord. He makes the priests of the Lord. His sunny day and night.

He prospers ever like a tree that's planted by a stream.

And in your season yields its fruit. His feet are always free.

Not so the wicked. They are like a child that's flown away.

[13 : 25] They will not stand when judgment comes. In your season yields its fruit. In your season yields its fruit.

In your season yields its fruit. In your season yields its fruit. Lays are about to reveal from how the wicked walk. They will not stand in sinners. If the administrations of the righteous walk.

They are filling out un definitivier. Blessed is the one who juegos s■ow. The earth, the world before the untoé■ cannot be justified.

Which God will often sendmeán into the wicked. God will overthrow. Well, let's hear now from the Word of God.

And as I indicated just now, our first reading is from John chapter 15. I'm going to read the first 17 verses.

[14 : 49] Jesus says, I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away.

And every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

I am the vine. You are the branches. Whoever abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.

For apart from me, you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch, and withers.

[16 : 03] And the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you.

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you.

[17 : 16] No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father, I have made known to you.

You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask, the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

These things I command you, so that you will love one another. And we now turn over to our second reading, from 1 John, chapter 4, verses 13 to 21.

Over the course of the last six months or more, whenever I've been preaching, we've been going through 1 John, and we've got to this portion now, at the end of chapter 4, from verse 13.

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 testify, that the Father has sent his Son, to be the Saviour of the world.

[18 : 46] 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 the world. 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. 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.

[19 : 58] And this commandment we have from him, whoever loves God, must also love his brother. Let's come before God in prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for these portions of your word, that we have read. Thank you for those portions of the word, that we have heard sung. We desire to be fruitful trees, like trees planted by the rivers of water, bearing our fruit in due season.

And therefore we desire to abide in Christ. We thank you for him whom you sent, to be the saviour of the world.

We thank you for the love that you have shown through him, and particularly through him dying for us on the cross. We praise you that he is raised from the dead, we thank you that he lives now

forever, and holds out to us, the glorious prospect, of eternal life.

We thank you that he speaks to us, of fullness of joy. Lord, we pray that that might be our experience, and that you would teach us, to love one another.

[21 : 28] We pray for your church throughout the world. We ask you, Lord God, to be with your church here, with this little congregation, Dumfries Free Church.

Be pleased, Lord, to pour out blessing upon us, and to use us, in your service, in this locality. We pray that in other churches around, southwest Scotland, wherever, the gospel of Christ is preached. We pray that your blessing may be there. We pray for the whole land. Lord, we have fallen upon such, dark times, when so many people, have turned their backs upon God.

Lord, we plead with you, for days of revival, and that your spirit, would again, visit our land. The people may recognize, their need, and may see, the beauty, of Christ, our Savior.

And we pray, for the spread of the gospel, throughout the whole earth. Thank you for those lands, where the church is strong, and flourishing. Raise up servants, to preach the gospel, in every place, and to teach, those who are coming to faith.

[22 : 57] We pray for those, who are persecuted, for their faith at this time. Comfort and strengthen them, and help them to remain, close to Christ, who himself, suffered, persecution, and death.

Lord, we would pray, for this world around us, we especially, pray at this time, for the situation, in Israel, and Gaza. Lord, we plead with you, that a way, may speedily be found, where this violence, can cease.

we pray, we pray, that you would, restrain, the hands, of those, who would, wantonly, kill others, for whatever cause, Lord, how can it be, that, this is in accord, with the God of love, that lives, on both sides, should be killed.

Lord, we do pray, that your peace, may come to that land, we pray, that, you would open, the eyes, of both Jews, and Palestinians, to the true gospel, to the Messiah, we pray, heavenly father, for churches there, and we thank you, that there are churches, who have both Jews, and Palestinian Arabs, within their congregation, joined together, in the recognition, of the Messiah.

Lord, we pray for our own land, for our government, we thank you for those, who are recently elected, to office, we pray Lord, for them, for wisdom, we pray Lord, for all parts of the UK, in this respect, we think of the new leader, of the, DUP, we understand him, to be a Christian, we pray Lord, that you would keep him, from corruption, and help him, to be a godly influence, Lord God, we ask you, to draw close, to each of us now, in our own individual needs, some of our number, are suffering, with colds, at the moment, we pray, that you'll speedily, raise them up again, we pray, for others, who have more, serious illnesses, to contend with, we pray Lord, for us all, in all the pressures, of life, knowing that, our saviour, and master, the Lord Jesus Christ, is well able, to carry us through, every difficulty, we may face,

[25 : 45] Lord, draw near to us, also now, as we look, into the word of God, and make it, to speak to us all, afresh, hear us, in all these prayers, for we ask, in the name, of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

Well, before we, come to, that portion, of the word of God, let's, hear another, psalm, Psalm 103, this time, from the Scottish Psalter, page, 369, and we're going, to hear, the first five verses, O thou my soul, bless God the Lord, that all that in me is, be stirred up, his holy name, to magnify, and bless.

O thou my soul, O thou my soul, blessed God the Lord, and all that in me is, he said of his holy name, to magnify, to magnify, and blessed, bless, O my soul, the Lord, thy Lord, and not forget, he, what why his holy name, He, and of all his gracious, traditions, benefits, he hath bestowed Hmm, and if thou thou, hath, and he hath understand,

He hath restored Good, He hath by all his gracious success, Thanks a lot. If you see his glory, he hath, And push, And he hath■, Thank you.

Thank you.

[29 : 00] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Well let me ask you to turn please to 1 John chapter 4. I'm going to look at that last portion of the chapter from verse 13 to the end.

I'll read again verse 13. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us because he has given us of his spirit.

On Radio 4 there is a game show called Just a Minute in which contestants have to speak for one minute on a given subject without hesitation, deviation or repetition. It sounds easy doesn't it? But it's actually very hard and contestants very rarely manage more than about 15 seconds.

[31 : 08] Well the Apostle John would be hopeless at it because he's always repeating himself.

But this is not needless repetition. Each time he explores his subject in a little more depth or from a different angle.

John is not like Paul. Paul's thinking could be described as linear logic.

Straight through from beginning to end. John's thinking could be described as spiral logic. He circles round his subject looking at it from this way and that like an artist surveying his canvas from every direction.

With each twist of the spiral he seems to go that little bit higher. With Paul we could say we're marching to Zion.

[32 : 16] With John we're walking around Zion. Counting her towers. Now for the preacher going through 1 John as I have been over these recent months that does present a problem.

Because it can seem as if I'm saying the same thing over and over again. But I hope it isn't wearisome.

It's like a kaleidoscope. I don't know if any of you ever had a kaleidoscope when you were a child. A kaleidoscope is a tube with little coloured pieces of glass in it.

Which catch the light. And you shake the tube and it makes a beautiful pattern of little glass beads. You shake it again and it makes another beautiful pattern.

Different pattern but it's actually the same glass beads. That's 1 John. The connecting theme in these verses is abiding in him.

[33 : 34] And that is one of those beautiful glass beads. It occurs 3 times just in these verses alone. Verse 13, verse 15 and verse 16.

But we have actually seen it several times before. Chapter 2, verse 5. It was linked with the Christian life.

By this we may know that we are in him. Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. Then in chapter 2, verse 4.

It was linked with Christian truth. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you. Then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father.

It goes on to speak there of the anointing which we have received. The Holy Spirit who teaches us this truth. Thus completing the Trinity.

[34 : 36] Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then he adds in verse 28. How if we abide in him. We will have confidence at his coming.

That's another theme that comes up here isn't it? Down in verse 17. We may have confidence for the day of judgment. You see the same little glass beads being shaken up. And appearing in all these different ways.

Chapter 3, verse 6. He is back to the moral theme. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning. Then in chapter 3, verse 24. He is back to the Spirit again.

By this we know that he, that is God, abides in us by the Spirit whom he has given us. Now verse 13 is virtually a repeat of that verse at the end of chapter 3.

With just this difference. That this time he puts it both ways. We abide in him and he abides in us. The underlying thought is obviously that saying of our Lord in John 15.

[35 : 49] At the Last Supper which I mentioned in the children's talk. Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine.

Neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine. You are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him. He it is that bears much fruit. For without me you can do nothing.

We have seen repeatedly in 1 John. How he is always looking back to the Last Supper. The whole letter is virtually a meditation on themes from the Last Supper.

Well here he links that abiding with the Holy Spirit. As indeed the Lord Jesus does at the Last Supper. John 14, 15.

If you love me you will keep my commandments and I will ask the Father. And he will give you another helper to be with you forever. In other words to abide with you.

[36 : 55] Even the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive. Because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him. For he dwells with you and will be in you.

The Spirit is quite simply God dwelling in us. To link all this with the overall theme of this letter. Real Christianity. Real Christians abide in Christ. And this is evident by the Holy Spirit dwelling in them.

But that begs the question. How do we know if we have the Spirit? Well consider who the Spirit is. He is the Spirit of Truth. And he is the Spirit of Love. If we have the Spirit. He will lead us into both truth and love.

[38 : 02] Those were the two themes that he explored last time he mentioned the Spirit. After chapter 3 verse 24 he goes on in the beginning of chapter 4 to speak of truth.

Verses 1 to 6. And then of love. Verses 7 to 12. Those are the two themes that he takes up again here. Glass beads being shaken around.

Our kaleidoscope being viewed in all kinds of different ways. We'll look then at those two themes again this morning.

Shaking the kaleidoscope. And hopefully seeing some fresh beauty in them. First truth.

Verses 14 and 15. We have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God.

[39 : 08] God abides in him. And he in God. Now the apostles had literally seen and testified to these things.

They had seen with their own eyes the Son of God. They had heard God say twice with an audible voice. This is my beloved Son.

They were there at the cross when Jesus died for our sins. And they had seen him and touched him and talked with him after he rose from the dead.

And they had faithfully testified to these things. 1 John begins. That which was from the beginning which we have heard. Which we have seen with our eyes.

Which we have looked upon and touched with our hands. We proclaim to you. But all true Christians.

[40 : 11] Can also say that we have seen and testify to these things. Spiritually. The Holy Spirit has opened our eyes and shown us.

That Christ is the Son of God. The Saviour of the world. And we proclaim that to the world. Now that statement.

The Father has sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Is a wonderfully concise summary of the Gospel.

I like the authorised version rendering of it. It's only one word different. But it gives a nice rhythm.

The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

That's the kind of thing you can teach to your children. And they remember it, isn't it? You have there in that statement first. The divine initiative.

[41 : 17] The Father sent the Son. Every other religion has man seeking and trying to earn his own salvation.

In Christianity, salvation is God's idea. It's planned in heaven before the foundation of the world. It's carried out on earth at the time appointed by God.

Jesus saw himself as sent by God. In the synagogue of Nazareth in Luke 4. He announced his ministry. By quoting from Isaiah.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me. To proclaim liberty to the captives.

Recovering of sight to the blind. To set at liberty those who are oppressed. To proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. Repeatedly in John's Gospel.

[42 : 20] He says that the Father has sent him. John 5.24 for example. Truly, truly, whoever hears my word. And believes in him who sent me.

Has eternal life. John 6.38. For I have come down from heaven. Not to do my own will. But the will of him who sent me.

And this is the will of him who sent me. That I should lose nothing of all that he has given me. But raise it up at the last day. And so on.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was a man with a mission. Sent into this world. By the Father above. You have secondly here.

The divine plan. Why did the Father send him? To be the saviour of the world. He was not sent merely to be our teacher.

[43 : 23] He was not sent merely to be our example. He was not sent merely to heal the sick. He was not sent merely to reveal the love of God to us.

Though he does all of those things wonderfully. He was sent above all. To be our saviour. That's what we needed.

A saviour. Mankind is lost in sin. Separated from God and under the judgement of God.

Mere teaching wouldn't have solved the problem. Any number of miracles wouldn't have solved it. We needed a saviour.

And that is why Jesus came. You shall call his name Jesus. For he shall save his people. From their sins. And he did that of course by dying for us.

[44 : 30] Bearing our sins on the cross. Suffering in our place. The just for the unjust. That he might bring us to God. And he did that notice not for the Jews only.

But for the world. How grateful we should be. As Gentiles. That the Jewish Messiah.

Died for us also. Through his blood. Multitudes are saved. Of every kindred tribe. And tongue.

Including Jews.

Including Palestinians. And including Scots and English. Here in Scotland today. We find ourselves Christians.

Because. The father sent the son. To be the saviour of the world. Now this faith. John says. Is the test.

[45 : 33] Of whether we are. Abiding in him. In other words. It's the test. Of whether. We belong. To the Lord.

The test. Of whether we. Have the spirit of God. The test. Of whether we're saved. The test. Of whether we're his. Whoever.

Confesses. That Jesus is the son of God. That son of God. Who was sent. To be our saviour.

Whoever confesses that. Abides in him.

And he. In God. This is the basic truth. Which every Christian. Knows. And believes. If you don't believe this.

Then you are not. A Christian. Imagine if someone. Told you. That they were friends. With Prince Charles.

[46 : 33] But when you began. To talk. To them. About Charles. Being the heir. To the throne. They expressed surprise. Oh I never knew that. Well they obviously.

Don't know. Prince Charles. Or worse still. Suppose they were to say. Yes. I know. People say. He's the heir. To the throne.

He's said it himself. But I don't believe that. Well that person. Is certainly no friend. To Prince Charles. He's. And likewise.

If someone says. I'm a Christian. I'm a follower. Of Jesus. But I don't believe. All that about him. Being the son of God. Well.

Quite honestly. That person's faith. Is a complete illusion. They don't know. The Lord at all. They're certainly not.

[47 : 29] Abiding in him. They're not. Even. Saved. Truth. The truth about Christ. And the truth of the gospel.

That's the first sign. That the spirit. Is in us. And that we are abiding. In Christ. Christ. The second sign.

Is love. Verses 16 to 21. 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. That little word. So. In the ESV.

Helpfully. Links it. With the previous verses. God. Sending his son. To be the saviour. Of the world. Was the supreme expression.

[48 : 26] Of God's love. Salvation. Was. Motivated. By love. And it's through salvation. That we have come. To know. And to believe.

God's love. John. Repeats here. That. Glorious statement. That he made. Before. Back in verse 9. God.

Is love. Using again. That Greek word. Agape. Meaning. A sacrificial. Self-giving love. Though he doesn't.

Mention it. Again. Here. Let me remind you. That that love. Is shown. In the cross. The infinite God.

God. Loved us. Mere creatures. So much. That he sent his son. To die for us. The holy God. Loved us.

[49 : 25] Sinful rebels. So much. That he sent his son. To die for us. That is love. Love. And the very thought of it.

Should overwhelm us. Now this provides John. With his second test. Of whether we are. Abiding in God. The first test was faith. Believing that Jesus is.

The son of God. The saviour of the world. The second is that we. Abide. In his love. Now that means. Firstly. That we rely.

On his love. On the cross. To save us. But it also means. That we. Reflect. His love. In our lives. Love is the. Preeminent. Fruit of the spirit. It's the proof. That God is in us. And we are in God. Go back to that branch.

[50 : 25] That I showed. To the children. How do I know. If it's dead. No buds. No leaves. How would I know. If it was alive. There would be.

Buds. And leaves. And. If it were a fruit tree. Well. Eventually. Fruit. Love. Is the proof. Of life. In the remaining verses. John reflects. On that love. Love. First. How love. Love. Love. Gives us confidence.

Verses 17 and 18. By this love. Is perfected. With us. So that we may have confidence. For the day of judgment. Because as he is. So also are we. In the world.

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. God's love.

[51 : 23] For us. Is the. Ultimate source. Of our confidence. If God. Loves us. And Christ died for us. Then what fear.

Can we possibly have. About the day of judgment. Or indeed. About anything. Paul says in Romans 8. Whatever troubles may come. We are more than conquerors.

Through him. Who loved us. But don't underestimate. The importance. Of God's love. In us. God's love.

In us. Reassures us. That we are his. We bear the family. Likeness. As he is. So are we. In the world. We belong to the family.

And therefore we know. God is our father. And our father. Will never abandon us. Love casts out fear.

[52 : 20] Even in human relationships. Doesn't it. It creates. An atmosphere. Of trust. In which relationships. Can flourish. Much more so.

In our relationship. With God. How we should. Long to be. Perfected. In love. Love. Secondly. How love. Begets love. Verse 19. We love. Because he first loved us. The authorised version. Translates it. We love him. Because he first loved us. And that is certainly true. How could we not love the God.

Who loved us. And sent his son. To die for us. The world. If they believe in God at all. Have many mixed emotions.

[53 : 18] About him. They may be afraid of him. And not without reason. Because they are under his judgment. They may hate him. Blaming him for everything.

That goes wrong. Though strangely. They still expect him to help them. But they certainly don't love him. Whereas Christians.

Having begun. To understand. And experience. The love of God. We love God. In return.

And the more we know. Of his love to us. The more we love him. And the more. It seems only reasonable. To us. That command.

To love the Lord your God. With all your heart. And all your soul. And all your mind. And all your strength. But the ESV.

[54 : 15] Is actually correct. To translate it more generally. We love. Not just God. But other people as well. God.

And especially. Our brothers and sisters. In Christ. God's love. Is reproduced. In us. By the Holy Spirit.

Who dwells in us. Either way though. Notice the order. We love. Because he loves. Not the other way around.

People sometimes imagine. It's the other way around. That God loves those. Who love him. Or that God loves those. Who are loving. Towards other people. Well I'm sure he does.

But if he had to wait. For us. To show that love. First. He'd wait forever. Because by nature. Our hearts. Are as cold as stone.

[55 : 12] True love. Emanates. From God. It's his love. That creates love. In us. Finally.

How love must be shown. In verses. 20 and 21. 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. This again.

Is a theme. That John. Keeps coming back to. The danger. Of hypocrisy. The gap. Between what we say. And what we do.

Chapter 1. Verse 6. He warned. If we say. We have fellowship with him. But walk in darkness. We lie. And do not practice the truth. Chapter 2.

[56 : 09] Verse 4. Whoever says. I know him. But does not keep his commandments. Is a liar.

Chapter 3. Verse 17. If anyone closes his heart.

Against a brother in need. How does God's love. Abide in him. So likewise here. If you say. You love God.

And yet you hate your brother. It's just empty words. Love for God. Necessarily. Means loving one another.

Because that is his command. If you love him. You will keep his commands. Indeed loving your brother. Is the easy part.

Because at least you can see your brother. Loving the invisible God. Is far more challenging. Think about it. When two people love each other.

[57 : 05] And are separated for a while. They will often keep a photograph. In front of them. As a reminder. To keep their love alive. Because otherwise.

It's easy to forget. Out of sight. Out of mind. People think it's easy. To love God. Because they imagine.

That all it involves. Is a nice feeling about God. But to love God. Is to be 100% committed to him. And that's very hard.

When you can't see him. Now we don't have a photograph. Of God to help us. Indeed God has forbidden us. To make any image of him.

But we do have. The supreme image of God. In Christ. His son. And we do have the image of God. In our brothers and sisters.

[58 : 05] Made in his image. And recreated. In Christ's likeness. In Christ's likeness. If you can't love them. You won't love him.

If you fail the easy test. You won't pass the hard test. If you were to fail. The Scottish higher exams. Then you're not likely. To get an MA. At university. If you can't.

Even. Love your brother. If you fail that test. You certainly. Won't be able to love. The invisible God. If you truly love God.

You will love. One another. Father. And that is the proof. That you abide. In him. So as we draw to a close now.

[59 : 09] Let me ask you. Are you. Abiding. In Christ. For some. The challenge might be. The basic one. Of trusting in Christ. Christ. If that is your problem.

Then. Just pause. And think about Christ. Think about. The savior. Of the world. Think about God. Sending him. In love. Sending him. To the cross. For us. And trust in him.

For yourself. As your savior. And your Lord. What a difference. That will make to you. When you know. That your sins are forgiven.

When you know. That you're reconciled. With God. It will be a fresh. Start for you. A whole. New life. But for most of us.

[60 : 11] The challenge is. Rather. To love God. As we ought. To love him. And to love one another. As we. Ought. To love each other.

How much hatred. There has been. Over. The centuries. Amongst those. Who have called. Themselves. Christians. How many. Needless.

Arguments. How many. Unnecessary. Divisions. How much. Hard heartedness. How much. Criticism. How much. Bitterness. We need to come back. Again. And again. And again. To the cross. To renew. Our vision. Of the love. Of God. And to respond. To that love. With love. In return. And to reflect.

[61 : 09] That love. In our own lives. Failure to do so. Is costly. Remember. What Jesus says. That we can. Only bear fruit.

If we abide. In him. And the unfruitful. Branches. The dead branches. Will be cut off. Love. We must.

Abide in him. And that means. Both. Holding to the truth. And walking. In love. That perhaps. Is why John. Comes back.

To these themes. Again. And again. And again. Because they're. So important. May the Lord. Write them both. On our hearts.

This day. Amen. We're going to close. Our service now. With. A hymn.

[62 : 06] And it's the hymn. May the mind. Of Christ. My saviour. Live in me. From day to day. By his love. And power. Controlling.

All I do. And say. Amen. May the mind. Of Christ.

My saviour. Live in me. From day to day. By his love.

And power. Controlling. God. I do. And say. May the word.

Of God. Well. Wish me. In my heart. Come unto earth. Soon.

[63 : 00] That all may see. I triumph. For me. Through his love.

May the peace.

Of God. If. In her soul. May the love of Jesus still be As the waters fill the sea In exotant self-abasing This is the victory We are one of the ways before me So now bring to peace to come Only, only, and to Jesus As I want to come

Now may grace, mercy, and peace From God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit Be with you all evermore Amen Thank you