

# Fear Casts Out

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Now the Psalms we've been singing had in the background a reference to judgment and the passage we're thinking about today in 1st John 4 verses 16 through to 19 has in its background the problem for the Christian believer of judgment to come and more particularly it has to do with fear the fear of that judgment and how they will fear and so our title is fear cast out and it's clear in the passage that John is thinking about that fear of judgment to come let's just read from verse 16 and we have known and believed the love that God has for us God is love and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him love has been perfected among us in this that we may have boldness in the day of judgment you see that's where judgment to the mind is is pendulating towards that because as he is so are we in this world and then verse 18 there is no fear in love but perfect love casts out fear because fear involves torment or punishment but he who fears has not been made perfect in love we love him because he first loved us now verses 16 to 19 of this passages in 1st John 4 is really quite an involved and involved and detailed passage and we are not going to pretend to accomplish all that might be accomplished in one sermon but so that we are not delayed and duly we are going to look at one aspect of the teaching and then look at it in relation to all the others fear cast out verse 18 there is no fear in love but perfect love casts out fear because fear involves torment or punishment but he who fears has not been made perfect in love now it's clear that John is thinking here on the terror associated with the judgment of the great day we read there in verse 17 that in his mind is that we may have boldness in the day of judgment that we have confidence and the scriptures have a great deal to say about this fear of the judgment to come this terror that is associated with this sense of alarm in view of the judgment to come and I grant that it may not be immediately obvious what the fear of judgment to come has to do with true Christian love that I'll concede that's why it's an intricate passage and we have to look at it carefully we can't see immediately what the fear of judgment to come has to do with true Christian love until we notice that love perfect love the love that is distinctly Christian cast out that fear and as we approach fear cast out let's remind ourselves then that the living and true God the God of the Bible has placed in the first place he's placed eternity in the heart of man

and with that sense of eternity he has placed an inescapable sense of judgment to come I remind you that one of the classic passages that demonstrates this I mean you could go to Ecclesiastes but in the New Testament one of the classic passages on the subject is Paul in his dealings with the philosophers on Mars Hill you find it in Acts 17 and there in Acts 17 verse 31 he appeals to the judgment of God as something that even these philosophers will accept God has appointed a day in which he will judge all men by the man whom he has appointed whereof he has given proof of it in that he raised him from the dead and they didn't poo-hoo the judgment at all he could appeal to their innate their inherent sense of judgment to come as beings made like it or not admit it or not beings made in the image of God and the more a person is informed by Holy Scripture of these things the more acute the awareness of the unavoidable reality of judgment to come now it is true of course that people do a lot to suppress that people in all walks of life with varying degrees of knowledge of biblical truth they do a lot to suppress this it is true even in the church in the broad church people introduce things to to quell that

I remember years ago being involved in an open air in Barry in South Wales which was a regular thing and people who were then in their late 60s and 70s had been taught not to believe in hell anymore taught in the church I mean so that even the ministry has been proved unfaithful in many denominations in that it has ditched the doctrine of hell because it is too difficult to sell it to people and so you ditch it that is the way you suppress any fear of judgment to come others introduce religious helps into their system where they soften the blow or they show ways to get rounded

I was watching a program not so long ago on a Japanese professor and I was interested in how he had and I tell this because it is true of atheist scientists how he had resolved all the problems associated with any concept of life to come he had worked it all out in a rationalistic way and he had ditched any thought of a future life or of judgment to come people try to suppress or use religious means to get around it or use science to get away from any notion of judgment to come that's true these things are true but God has put that sense of judgment in man and man is attempting to get rid of that sense of judgment to come of the fear of having to face a judgment to come so I want us to think not about all these other folks but about ourselves today as this fear affects us fear cast out the fear itself first of all then love without fear and then how love casts out fear now in verse 18 you'll notice there are three nouns and one verb or one participle to do with fear and in the original the word is phobos there are three words in the new testament let me say that translate into the English fear one is always in the bad sense in the judgment sense the other one the third one is always in a good sense and the middle one phobos the one we're looking at actually is determined by the context if it is talking about godly fear fear that is wrought in the human heart by the spirit of God then it's in a good sense if it is associated with something bad then it is in a bad sense and in the context here

John is using phobos the word fear the word not in the sense of reverent or godly fear but he's using it in the sense of terror of alarm of impending danger and that that is true is obvious from the context but I'm just letting a little bit of light in on this because the word itself sits in a neutral position until you put a context around it we might say that it is most frequently used for piety for true piety but it is sometimes used with a negative connotation as it is here it's in this latter sense this sense of terror or alarm of impending danger that John uses it and the context shows it verse 17 love has been perfected among us in this in this regard that we may in order that we may have boldness in the day of judgment or confidence see he's thinking about the problem of the fear in the sense of alarm about facing the judgment and he's not talking about the world out there he's talking about those who profess the Christian religion and therefore he's thinking about the judgment day when in the body believers and unbelievers alike will face the final judgment of God before yon great white throne as John calls it himself in Revelation 20 verse 11 he's thinking about that and as we've already noticed in the introduction the greater our knowledge of the biblical evidence on this on the final judgment and the deeper our conviction as to the reality of these things the more susceptible we are to having a real fear of that judgment after all we know that our

[12:05] Lord Jesus Christ said more than once to the Jewish leaders who were supposed to be teaching the people on these things how shall you escape the wrath to come you will receive the greater condemnation how shall you escape the damnation of hell he said to the Pharisees and the doctors of the law Matthew 23 is full of it Paul wrote in Romans 2 although he's writing to Gentiles you can't miss the fact he's writing to Jews as well and he says to the Jews who make their boast in the law religious Jews don't you realize you're sparing the goodness of God and you're treasuring up for yourselves wrath and to the day of wrath writing to the Hebrews to Hebrew

Christians who were on the turn almost wanting to go back because it would be easier and in Hebrews 2 at the beginning verse 1 he says how shall we escape escape what escape the judgment of the great day if we neglect so great a salvation and that same writer to the Hebrews in chapter 12 tells us that it is a fearful thing a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God to be judged by him to be found out as separated from Christ these are only a few references just to underscore the point as to the serious nature and the reality of judgment to come and how it is so easy to be in fear and trembling about that day and about how it will be for ourselves at last in that day now I don't believe for a moment that

I'm speaking to anyone who has not had a little bit of a sense of that perhaps some of you have had more than a little bit of it now I said in the introduction and I'm come back to it deliberately some Christian denominations have used this fear and not that they've expunged it by ditching the doctrine of hell but they've actually used the doctrine of judgment to come and the fear associated with it to actually work against the people to manipulate them we have to be very careful about how we preach on judgment on damnation it was Mary McChain wasn't it who said to the man who was boasting the preacher who was boasting about preaching hell did you preach it with tears she said that's it

I'm not sure that even in the free church in the past certainly that that was the case it was thundered out because it was true and it was thundered out perhaps in a way that was terrifying we're to help

people not use that fear against them some systems as you know we don't need to name names but some systems within the broad church have used this to extort many out of people to promise them that it will be well for those who have gone already if they put money in the kitty and that's true for themselves too they say that's manipulating the doctrine of hell of judgment to come and have been cast away and it's true therefore to say that in all the world there are many in the church even in the 21st century who without doubt fear the judgment of God at last and the eternal punishment that follows it's there in verse 18 you see there is no fear and love will come to that but perfect love casts out fear because fear that kind of fear the fear of judgment to come involves torment now the authorised version here in the

New King James is so weavily wide of the mark by translating it torment it's punishment literally punishment yeah the punishment may involve torment I agree but the word itself is punishment fear that kind of fear that alarm as to the judgment to come involves punishment and the thought in the avi is and that involves torment but people need to know that there's balm for that there's healing in the gospel the gospel is a gospel that brings healing a gospel is a message it's good news it's news about the healing power of God about the rescuing power of God about his capacity to give peace that no one can take away to give certainty as regards the judgment to remove that fear and so then having considered at least in a fashion anyway and up to a point the fear itself we want to move on secondly to look at love without fear you see what he says verse 18 going back now to the beginning of verse 18 there is no fear that is fear of the judgment to come and being cast away as a result of fearing that judgment there is no fear of that kind in love and what

[19:05] John is saying effectively is where that special love of God that love that is divine we've been looking at this the love that is the fruit of the spirit in the heart of those who are born again that love ought to boot out the fear of judgment because you see that love is divine in nature it is a product of the spirit of God's work and where it dwells there should be no room for this kind of dread of judgment to come notice the point this love is opposite to that dread it doesn't have room for it and therefore it shouldn't be there that dread shouldn't be there and if it is there there's a practical reason why it's there and we want to see what that is and be rid of it secondly then we're looking at love without fear there is no fear fear of judgment in that love that is of God but you see the interesting thing here is you remember

I said earlier on that this word phobos for fear can also mean a reverent fear a humble sensitive reverence for God that's the other way it can be used and the love that John is talking about has room for that kind of fear because that kind of fear is actually born out of the love that is from God into the heart of the believer on Jesus that kind of godly fear springs from love itself but John is here dealing with the love that is without fear there is no fear of that kind that we've looked at fear of judgment to come there is no fear in that love and so it follows from what we've said that we must ensure that we make room for the love that is from God that we are at home with it and it is at home in us think about what I'm saying it is to dwell in us by faith the believer in the

Lord Jesus Christ can say this God has poured forth his love into our hearts by his spirit whom he has given to us that's a wonderful thing we may not always feel it but we're to believe it's there by his grace because that's part of what believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is about he that dwells in love dwells in God we'll look at that in a moment he says there is no fear in love but perfect love casts out fear because fear involves judgment punishment torment and so he who fears has not been made perfect in love now some commentators indeed a lot of them have seen a problem here with this love and they've looked at the precise meaning of this love of God that dwells of which it can be said there is no fear in that love is it love to God from the believer is it love from God to the believer is it the love in the believer that enables him to love his brothers and sisters in

Christ and I can assure you that much has been written on the subject as to the precise nature of the thing but I'm bold to say and I know that others in the past have said it and I'm bold to say that's really clouding the issue it's bogging us down in academic minutiae isn't it better to say the love he's talking about has reference to God loving us us loving God and us loving our fellows it is all inclusive all the three are expressions of Christian love love that is to be engaged in we are to be at home with by habit in our lives and it seems to me that the more the Christian contemplates the reality of the love that God has for us the easier it is to dwell in that love and to push fear the fear of judgment out the door to me the main thing in this whilst I accept that we look at the whole picture the broad picture

God loving us us loving God and us loving our brothers and sisters in Christ and beyond it is all encompassing whilst that's true and seems to me to do justice to all the questions that arise I still think that it's important for us to contemplate the surpassingly wonderful love of God the unconditional love of God the lavish love of God as Principal MacLeod said the extravagant love of God to us as sinners we're to contemplate that we're to get into that and realize what we have in God so loved me that he sent his son to die for me oh wonderful love we're to focus on that we're to recognize that the hell deserving have been rescued rescued by the love of God taken out from that fear of judgment to come why because

[ 26 : 06 ] Christ has dealt with it Rabbi Duncan said he took damnation lovingly that's love fear of and the more we contemplate that love for us the easier it will be to realize that he has put that kind of love in us to love with to love him to love one another to love even our enemies where that love dwells there should be no room for that kind of fear that that carping that gnawing fear of judgment to come that doesn't mean we ought never to have a thought about it I didn't say that but it ought not to dwell as I'm afraid it so often does the love of God

God's love to us and our response to him poor thought maybe is to push out this fear it is love without fear and the more room the love of God has in our hearts so to speak the less room will be allowed for the dread of judgment to come and it seems to me that we ought therefore to make our daily delight meditating on the love of God in Christ to us when we read our Bibles we're reminding ourselves of that love ok we may be in the Proverbs we may be in Ecclesiastes we may be in Kings but we should be finding lines there to the love of God in Christ because where that love dwells as at home is in every room in our soul there'll be less yea even no room for the fear of judgment to come one last point let's think about in conclusion how love casts out fear well of course we've anticipated a little

I know but let's consider in closing more specifically for practical purposes how this love casts out fear and it seems to me that John gives us some teaching here albeit deepish teaching but he gives us some clues and we've travelled through some of it already for example in verse 16 he says and we have known and believed the love that God has for us see that think about that for a moment we have known we've come to know and we've come to believe the love God has for us surely that is talking about the core doctrines of the gospel wind back a wee bit and you'll see what I'm saying in verse 10 we read and this is love not that we loved

God but that he loved us and sent his son to be the chalmos concerning our sins the propitiation the wrath exhausting justice satisfying sacrifice for our sin wonderful news the core beliefs of the gospel are to dwell in us and then we see how there is a very close link between dwelling in God verse 16 and dwelling in love we receive the love of God by receiving the core gospel the teachings the great teachings about the eternal son of God becoming man and suffering in a room instead and taking his life again that we might have acceptance in heaven we take these and we can say with

John we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us and this is key to dwelling in God and dwelling in the love that is of God I hope you see this is clear and you see the true Christian he abides in God and in love because he abides in the truth we thought about that last Sabbath he abides in the truth He has seen, verse 14, we have seen and testify, we bear witness that the Father sent the Son as the Saviour of the world and I'm in there. He came to save me.

[ 31 : 46 ] You see, we believe the testimony of the Spirit in the Word. That God has promised us salvation His way and has accomplished it and we simply receive the deal with empty hands.

And it is as we get a grip with that and a grip of that, that fear is cast out. There's no other way. It's a deception if there's any other way. The poor people who put money in a box to get their departed loved ones into heaven eventually is a great deception.

And any other method to rid ourselves of the fear of judgment to come is a deception. God has given us the perfect way.

The love that is of God into the heart because we receive the truth in Jesus casts out or is to cast out fear of judgment to come.

[ 33 : 08 ] And therefore we, you see, are to receive, simply receive and rest upon Jesus the Son of God and His saving work. And we remind ourselves, we ought to remind ourselves daily that we come to Him with nothing but a load of sin and guilt and shame.

We come to Him with nothing but a load of sin and guilt and shame.

Without one plea but that thy blood was shed for me and that thou biddest me to come. O Lamb of God, I come.

And you see, getting a grip of the truth that way and appreciating the love of God into our hearts with that truth casts out, casts out, casts out or ought to cast out, increasingly casts out, the fear of judgment to come.

And the consequences of not being in Christ. We are to capitalize on the love of God to us in Jesus. [ 34 : 43 ] And what love it is that brings us into His fellowship and gives us His own love to live with and to be filling out hearts.

And the way forward, therefore, you see, is to make the most of what He gives us in Jesus. And to understand more of the meaning of the love that is without fear.

Because fear, that kind of dread of the judgment to come, involves punishment and torment too. And if we are to be made perfect in love, that is to say, if the love we receive in receiving Jesus and His work is in us, then it is perfected in us as we lean on what God has done and on what God has promised.

We can say to that fear, be gone, O fear, my Saviour is near. Who was it that said, no condemnation, now I fear.

[ 36 : 05 ] Jesus is on, and He is mine. No condemnation, now I fear. I am His, and He is mine.

You see what He says at the end there, verse 19. And we love Him, actually, because He first loved us. He loved me ere I knew Him.

And with the cords of His own love, this, He bound me to Him. And round entwined this heart of mine are cords that naught can serve.

For I am His, and He is mine. Forever and forever. Oh, let us learn from this.

That that love that is of God to us in Jesus, into our hearts by faith, and in the work of the Spirit of God, casts out that fear.

[ 37 : 14 ] That involves punishment, that carries in its belly torment. The love that casts out fear.

There is no fear in that love. But that perfect love casts out fear. Because fear involves torment, involves punishment.

But he who fears in that way, has not been made perfect in love. Ah, but wonder of wonders, He loved us.

Ere we knew Him, we love Him only because He first loved us. Amen.