

As He is so also are we

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[0 : 0 0] You know, there are times, in fact we might even say glorious times, when you pick up your Bible and you read a passage that you're convinced that you've read so often you know about, you know what the, that you're familiar with, only to be staggered again at the power of God's Word, the power of the message, the message of hope, the message of assurance, and the blessing that you receive anew from reading a particular part of God's Word. You get anew, I might even say a renewed insight into that part of God's Word that remains in your heart, that God blesses you with at a particular time, at the right time, that speaks to you, to meet you at the point of your need at that particular time, that right time in your life, in your walk with God. Just as in this passage here in 1 John chapter 4, especially these words that we read in verse 17, these words that at first reading might actually make you think and stop you and ask, what on earth are these words telling us?

It might even seem to be a puzzle, but when you look at them more closely, you realize the blessing that God's Word gives to you, the hope, the assurance of salvation, that you who are in Christ know who are in Christ, you who are in Christ, who become like Jesus, who have that glorious hope of eternal life in Christ, in the Lord Jesus, your Savior, because of your relationship with Him, with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And as we look again at these words, this divinely inspired Word of God, then let's see the wonder of the believer's status, you who know Jesus as Savior, look again at the wonder, the blessing of your status, your standing in Jesus, and what that means for your life now and eternally. And you know, we're living in a time of constant change, continuing, will continue challenge in our lives, our national lives, our personal lives, but in amongst all the challenges, in amidst all the real sorrows that are happening, you can still rejoice.

And it's in God's Word that you're lifted up, and lifted up by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. I read somewhere very recently that somehow 2020 has been saved by a particular dance show.

Well, that's what maybe the popular media might want us to think, but no, your ultimate consolation and hope aren't found in anything that the world offers. No, your joy, your hope, your assurance of salvation are sourced in the relationship that you have and can have in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's exactly what we're going to see in this section of God's Word. So this is a letter that was written almost 2,000 years ago, but it's got eternal relevance for everyone here this morning. Whether you're a Christian, whether you're still to come to the Lord Jesus, there's important truth that we find here in this part of God's Word. Because, well, this passage concerns love. It concerns the love of God for sinners.

[3 : 3 9] It concerns the love of sinners saved by grace. That love that's given to God and to one another.

So what more comforting passage, what more assuring subject to focus on this morning than the love of God and the consequences of that love for sinners such as ourselves?

And it's, of course, the love of God that gives you cause to worship Him this morning. Even just to think on that love and to practice that love, the love that God gives to you. That love that motivates you to obey Him.

And as you do so, in response to the love of God for you. So, let's look firstly at what we read here of abiding love.

Verses 13 to 16. By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given of us, or given us of His Spirit. I mean, John's whole point, the author here, John, and his whole point in this section of his letter, he's describing what it means to be a Christian.

[4 : 56] He's telling us of the privileges, the blessings, the security that being in Christ makes to a person. He's telling of the eternal difference that being a Christian has to anything else.

And even thinking on that status of a Christian, it should bring joy to the heart of anyone, any of you who confesses that Jesus is Lord.

Pray that that realization of your relationship with Him brings you joy and gratitude. Because the relationship that you have with the Lord Jesus, it's got present consequences and it's got eternal consequences.

It impacts your life now and it has the greatness of importance when Jesus returns. We're going to think of that more closely in a moment. But just think about the relationship that you have with Jesus, you who believe in Him.

That intimate relationship that you who love the Lord Jesus have with the Savior. That's what we see here in verses 13 to 16.

[6 : 11] And when we see the language that John uses here when he speaks of abiding in Christ, he's actually echoing words that Jesus spoke to him and to other disciples when Jesus was on earth before His crucifixion.

You go to John chapter 15 and you read there of Jesus speaking of Himself as the vine and His followers as the branches. Now John had heard these words.

He'd heard them at least four decades before he wrote this letter. At least 40 years before he wrote this letter. But these were words that John had never forgotten. Because that was the impact that Jesus had in John's life.

Jesus speaking of Himself as the vine, His followers as branches engrafted into the vine. Listen again to the words that Jesus said. Abide in me and I in you.

Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit. So John's heard Jesus speak these words. He's heard these words at first-hand hearing.

[7 : 17] And he's now broadcasting that truth to the wider church for the church's encouragement. And for your encouragement, as you are being led to think of what truly matters in life.

And what truly matters is a relationship, your relationship with the Lord Jesus. That relationship that's rooted in love. The love of God for an undeserving sinner such as me and such as you.

And that relationship with Jesus, as John tells us here, is emphasized in the way that, as John tells us, the way that you know. That you know you have that abiding relationship with the Savior.

How do you know? It's by the Holy Spirit within you. On another occasion, the Apostle Paul wrote of that in Romans 8 verse 16, when he said, The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we're children of God.

It's that wonderful truth that gives you that assurance and reassurance of your faith. And of the Spirit within that confirms your royal status.

[8 : 28] That you're a child of God. by faith in the Lord Jesus. So, you who abide in the Lord Jesus, you have that evidence within you that you're a Christian, that you're in Christ.

The faith that you have, that's real faith, true faith, gifted faith. John could speak of that of himself. He says in verse 14 that he and others had seen the Lord Jesus, seen the Savior.

God's one and only Son. He said, We saw him, the one who was sent into the world to be the Savior of the world. But of course, seeing, physical seeing of Jesus isn't an exclusive claim to know Jesus as Savior.

Because John tells us in verse 15 when he says, Whoever, whoever, any one of you, whoever is gifted faith to exercise to believe, who confesses that Jesus is Lord, you, abide in him, in the one who's Lord and Savior.

Now, John witnessed Jesus. John believed in Jesus as the Son of God sent into the world. You who have seen Jesus by faith, you who know him, who trust in him, you believe in Jesus as the one who was sent into the world to save you.

[9 : 50] And isn't that the wonderful mystery of salvation? God in you and you in him. It's that relationship that can never be broken.

It's that secure relationship that's grounded in the love of God for you. And that love that you're going to show by a life, a lifestyle that indicates that you are in Christ and Christ in you.

Point surely this. The relationship that you have with Jesus, it's sourced in God's eternal love for you. It's that love that saves you, that keeps saving you.

It's that love that abides in you. And you who know the Lord Jesus as Savior, you show that love. you seek to live a life of self-giving love.

You're confessing Jesus, yes, but that confession isn't just a statement of words. It's a living under his rule. It's living under the rule of Christ's love.

[11 : 00] And it's going to be shown in your love for God and for one another. And that's a challenge. That's a challenge to you who follow the Lord Jesus.

because abiding in love, it means you're having a constant walk with the Lord Jesus. And it means having a totally different ethos to the world because that love means that you're going to love the unlovely.

It's going to mean that you're patterning your life on what Jesus commands you, how Jesus tells you to live as Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount.

That you're going to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. So the love of the Lord Jesus for you, that's got a present significance. You who deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Jesus.

So, there's a present importance in showing your love for the Lord Jesus. The abiding love of Jesus in you and you in him.

[12 : 07] But there's also a future importance regarding that abiding in the love of God. You see that in verses 17 to 19. What we, what is described here as perfected love.

Why, 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 this world. I was reading this passage just a few weeks ago and it was as if the passage just jumped out of the page.

It intrigued me and it made me want to look more fully at what God is saying in this particular part of God's word. And I pray that what we're going to see here particularly is an encouragement if you've got weak faith, fragile faith, that your faith actually strengthened as you read again these words.

Because what's John doing here? He's encouraging. He's encouraging the church, He's encouraging you, encouraging me to see the wonder of God's love, to see the wonder of that love in the fact that He loves us and that His love remains with us.

And it's that relationship, as we said, that's secure eternally because God's love is such that it can never let you go. But we said there's an eternal aspect to this love.

[13 : 41] What does that mean? How does God's love impact you? How will that love impact you when Jesus returns on that day of judgment? Well obviously when John was writing to the church there in the first century there were obviously fears in the church fears about their confidence to stand before the Lord when the Lord Jesus returns.

how could they be sure if they were to be amongst the sheep, the flock of Jesus when Jesus passes judgment in the world? How can we be sure that we're not going to be punished for our sins when Jesus returns?

I know it's a question that so many people ask particularly in relation to their assurance of salvation. what ifs? What if I've committed the unforgivable sin?

What if I'm not saved? What if my sins are going to be punished on the day of judgment? And John's writing here to allay these fears in the church and he's telling them as he's telling us today that you have every confidence to stand before the Lord Jesus when Jesus returns as judge?

That you who are in Christ you've got every confidence not of course through your own efforts but because of God's love for you and for all who are his. You who know that you abide in the Lord Jesus you've got that inner testimony of the Holy Spirit and you've got that external testimony of your love for others all because of God's abiding love in you and it's that love that's as John tells us that's perfected or completed in you in the sense of you're becoming like Jesus.

[15 : 33] That's the evidence of saving grace. You're conforming to the image of Christ in your life being truly human as God's formed you in Christ bearing his image as you live a life of self-denying love living living for the glory of God living by that Christ-like love.

That's why John mentions here the consequence of that love in our lives. He's saying that we may have confidence in that day of judgment because as he is so also are we in this world.

Let's just break this down. As he is as Christ is the living Lord Jesus as he is in his perfection in his righteousness in his love that abides in you.

So are you. You're clothed with his righteousness. You're declared right with God because of the finished work of Jesus on the cross. And it's through his love that by faith enables you to be like Christ even in this world.

Even before the coming of the Lord Jesus as judge. John tells us you're like Christ. And if you're like Christ then as John goes on to tell us there's no reason there's no cause to be afraid when Jesus returns.

[17 : 02] Because you have that knowledge that God loves you. That you love God. That he abides in you as you abide in him. So the fears even that you might have now are banished concerning that day of judgment.

That perfected love that gives you that assurance that God's love for you is perfect love. It's complete love. It lacks nothing.

And you have then that assurance that the punishment that you deserve, that I deserve for your sins, my sins, the punishment punishment. Yes, the punishment was faced not by you but by the Lord Jesus when he died on the cross for you.

As Paul tells us in Romans 8 verse 1, there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Now do you believe that with all your heart? Do you believe that the Lord Jesus died for your sins, that in him your sins, all your sins are forgiven?

salvation, that Jesus paid the price for your salvation. He paid that price for your redemption through the currency, the currency of his blood, the blood that covers all your sins, the sins of you who love God because he first loved you.

[18 : 30] Or is there still an agging doubt in your heart about your standing before Jesus when Jesus returns? Well if that's the case, then just focus your heart on this word.

You who believe in the Lord Jesus, that he died for your sins, you know that you're his, that he's yours because of the witness of the Holy Spirit within you. Have that assurance of your eternal safety because of the love of God in your heart.

The love that keeps you, that has kept you and keeps you for all eternity. That love that drives you to love one another, to show the evidence of Christ's abiding love in your heart.

As we said, that love that has an eternal consequence but it's got a present reality as well as we see in verse 20 and 21. If it's abiding love and perfected love, it has to be practiced love.

Verse 20, if anyone says I love God and hates his brother, he's a liar. For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

[19 : 38] And this commandment we have from him, whoever loves God must also love his brother. What's John saying here? He's already written of that abiding love that the believer has in Christ.

You're blessed with the love of God in you. That love that's perfected in your Christ-like love for others. love. That love, the love of God in you that guarantees your salvation when Jesus returns.

But there's got to be an expression of that love, particularly within the church, within the blood-bought community of God's people. And the evidence of saving faith then is that love, the love of God in action.

It's the works of love, the love that's demonstrated within a community of God's people where the expression of God's love is seen and evident. It's that love, love for one another that comes from the God of love and shown by your love for him as you show it one to another.

Because that love then is relational. It concerns your relationship with God in Christ. It concerns your relationship one with another. And any denial of that love, any denial of love for a fellow Christian is actually a denial of God's love for you.

[21 : 07] And John makes this absolutely clear. If there's no brotherly love, there can't be love for God. Love for God and love for one's brother and sister in Christ, they're inseparable.

In fact, as we see here, it's a command of God to show forth that love one to another. And so, as we seek to continue to be a fellowship that practices that love one for another, we're doing it.

We're doing it in response to God's love for us. God's love for everyone who confesses that Jesus is Lord. And there'll be so many different aspects of that love that's seen one to another.

It'll be love that will talk well of another, whether you're talking about that person face to face or behind his back. It'll be that love that rejoices with those who rejoice and weeps with those who weep.

It's that love that goes the second mile to help another and to come alongside another in need. It's that love that will pray one for another.

[22 : 19] It's that love that will think of others better than oneself. It's that love that will forgive when one is wronged by another.

It's that love that will overlook an offense. It's that love that will speak the truth of love one to another. It's that love that will reveal the abiding presence of Jesus in your very heart.

It's a challenge, yes. But it's a command that we live in the light of God's love. love that you grow in love for God and for one another.

So be as Christ and your love one for another. You're living in his presence now and you're awaiting that day when he returns.

And you have confidence, but not confidence in yourself, but confidence in the Lord Jesus. Because his love, his grace is sufficient for you.

[23 : 21] So sufficient that on that day that when Jesus returns, you will be declared not guilty before the judge of the world. But what if any of you are still outside of Christ?

For whom there's no as yet abiding love, perfected love, no love for God, no love for others? Where's your confidence?

Where's your confidence on that day of judgment? Because there's no confidence without the love of the Lord Jesus in your heart. I pray even now that you'll turn to the Lord Jesus, that you'll receive his love, and you'll know that blessing, the eternal blessing, the eternal blessings of being found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because being found in him is the safest place in all the earth, both now and for all eternity. Trust in the one who came in love, who gave his love and showed his love for you on the cross, our Savior, our Lord.

Amen. And let us pray. Lord, we give you praise and thanks for your love towards us, that love that abides in the hearts of everyone who confesses that Jesus is Lord.

[24 : 49] May each and every one who so confesses show forth the love of the Lord Jesus in that perfected love, that completed love. And may we seek to practice that love as we show forth the love of the Lord Jesus, as we show forth that love one to another.

So go before us, Lord, we pray. Forgive us our sins, they are many, but forgive us them in and through the Lord Jesus. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Now we're going to close in Psalm 25. Psalm 25, the Sing Sam's version, from verse 4 to 11.

These words that we'll sing in the heart, O Lord, reveal to me your ways and all your paths. Help me to know. Direct and guide me in your truth. Instruct me in the way to go.

4 to 11, Psalm 25. To God's praise. Thanks.