

Perfect Love

John 4:15-21

Those of you who have been here since the beginning of our study of 1 John know that we have spent a lot of time talking about love. The reason for this is quite simple. We keep talking about love because the book of 1 John keeps talking about love. In the five chapters of this short book, the Apostle John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, uses the

word “love” or a form of the word no less than 42 times. How can we reflect on what God is telling us in 1 John without talking a whole lot about love?

Yes, much HAS been said about love. But in the passage we just read we are introduced to something called perfect love. This morning as we look at this passage together, we’re going to learn what perfect love is. And then, we’re going to talk about three things that

happen when followers of Jesus are filled with perfect love.

What is perfect love? Before we discuss what perfect love IS, let's talk about what it's not.

Some people believe that perfect love is a “second blessing” – something you must seek in prayer. These people maintain that sometime after you're saved (salvation is the first blessing) you can get a special second blessing from God IF you live right and pray hard enough. These

**people claim that once you receive this
“second blessing” you will love perfectly
all of the time.**

**I strongly believe that love should
dominate our lives as followers of Jesus.
But if we think we can reach a point here
on Earth where we will ALWAYS love
perfectly, we deceive ourselves. Do you
remember what it said in 1 John 1:8? Let
me refresh your memory. 1 John 1:8
says, “If we claim to be without sin [that’s
what we’d be doing if we’d say we’ve**

reached the point where we will always love perfectly], we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”

The truth is I want to love perfectly all of the time, but every now and then the “old man” gets in the way. I’m not talking about my age – I’m a year older, but I’m also a year wiser. When I talk about the “old man” I’m talking about the person I used to be before I accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord. I’m not the “old man” I used to be; I’m a “new man”

in Christ Jesus! My sinful nature no longer dominates my life, but every now and then it gets in the way – it rears its ugly head. Do you understand what I’m talking about? I’m sure you do, because the same thing happens to you.

I know that I’m born again and I know that I’m heaven bound, but I also know that I’m not perfect. I wish God would take away the sinful nature in me, so I could BE perfect. But I know that this blessing will NOT occur until I see Jesus

face to face (see 1 John 3:2 and 1 Cor. 13:9,10).

Listen carefully. Perfect love is NOT a once and done “second blessing” that somehow transforms us into Christians who love perfectly all of the time. I wish it worked that way, but it doesn’t. What, then, IS perfect love?

I could give you the definition of perfect love my theology professor gave me when I was in seminary, but I love you too much to do that. I want to keep it

**simple! So I'm going to give you the
Jesus definition of perfect love. To love
perfectly you and I need to do what it says
in Luke 10:27.**

**In Luke 10:27, Jesus says, "Love the
Lord your God with all your heart and
with all your soul and with all your
strength and with all your mind; and love
your neighbor as yourself!" Perfect love
is all-out love ... it's put everything
you've got into it love ...it's A to Z love
(for the teachers) ... it's hook, line, and**

**sinker love (for the fishermen) ... it's
whole hog love (for the farmers) ... it's
love to the nth degree (for the math and
science people) ... it's crazy love (for
people like me)! This is the way Jesus
wants us to love; this is what perfect love
is all about.**

**When you and I LOVE perfectly we
LIVE perfectly. How can we love and live
perfectly? By allowing the Holy Spirit to
control our lives. A life of perfect love is a
Spirit-filled life. A life of perfect love is a**

Christ-like life; it's living life the Jesus way.

This is the ideal. This is what Jesus wants from us. This is what you and I and all who claim to follow Christ must strive for. And when (not if, when) we fall short of this ideal we must repent and confess our sin, so that God can forgive us and restore the joy of our salvation.

In 1 John 4:17-21, we learn that three things will happen when our lives are **DOMINATED by perfect love.**

First, in v.17 of this passage, we're told that we will have confidence on judgment day. 1 John 4:17 says, "Love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him." If we live a Christ-like life here on Earth, if we live a life dominated by perfect love, we will have confidence when we stand before Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 5:10, the Apostle Paul says, "For we [followers of Jesus] must all

appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done in the body, whether good or bad.” One day you and I and all who follow Jesus will stand before him and be judged. This judgment will have nothing to do with our eternal destiny. Those who stand before the judgment seat of Christ will spend eternity in his presence (see 1 Thess. 4:17). The purpose of this judgment will be to examine our works – what we did

and didn't do AS BELIEVERS here on Earth. At least two things will happen when we stand before Jesus.

First, Jesus will discuss any and all sin that was NOT confessed here on Earth.

In Matthew 12:36, Jesus tells us that

“men [and women] will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.”

[Unbelievers will be dealt with at the

great white throne judgment (see Rev.

20:11-15). Believers will be dealt with at

judgment seat of Christ (see 2 Cor. 5:10 and Rom. 14:10).] Listen carefully. You and I will answer to Jesus for every “careless” (wrongful, sinful, etc.) word AND deed when we stand before him.

This does NOT mean that CONFESSED sin will be rehashed when we stand before Christ. When we repent and confess our sin (with a sincere heart), God forgives and forgets our sin. Listen to the Word of the Lord in Isaiah 43:25: “I, even I, am he who blots out your

transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.” 1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

CONFESSED sin is forgiven AND forgotten. Praise God! But UNCONFESSED sin – verbal and non-verbal alike – is NOT forgotten, and will be dealt with when we stand before Jesus.

After Jesus deals with our unconfessed sin (hopefully he won't have to spend a lot of time on this), he will recognize and reward our faithful service. Everything we have done for HIS honor and glory will be rewarded. According to the Bible these faithful service awards will be in the form of crowns (see 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Thess. 2:19; James 1:12; and 1 Pet. 5:2-4 for examples of these crowns).

As I said earlier, if we live a life dominated by perfect love, we will have

confidence (a humble confidence) when we stand before Christ. If we live a Christ-like life here and now, we can be certain that our reward will be great there and then.

A second thing will happen if we live a life dominated by perfect love. 1 John 4:18 tells us that if we love perfectly we will live fearlessly. 1 John 4:18 says, “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The man [and woman]

who fears is not made perfect in love.”

This verse tells us why people fear AND it gives us a sure cure for fear.

Why do people fear? Because they believe their action will result in some type of penalty or injury.

We need to understand that not all fear is bad. When we see the sign at the zoo that says **KEEP YOUR HANDS AWAY FROM THE LIONS’ CAGE we obey the sign because we’re afraid the lions will have a finger lickin’ good feast!**

Fear like this is okay; it's good fear. But there are also times when people are filled with unnecessary fear. In 1 John 4:18 we're told that the way to get rid of this unnecessary fear is to love perfectly.

As we grow in our love for God, as we love him more and more, something neat happens in our lives. We begin to understand what the Apostle Paul talks about in Romans 8:28. He says, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have

been called according to his purpose.”

When we finally realize that we are loved and cared for by the creator and sustainer of the universe, the King of kings and Lord of lords, unnecessary fear will be expelled from our lives. Perfect love drives out fear!

Yes, there will be times when we find ourselves in situations that don't look too promising. But we can be certain that God is with us AND that he is working for

our good. With THIS kind of confidence we can face ANY situation without fear!

A third thing will happen if we live a life dominated by perfect love. In 1 John 4:19-21, we're told that perfect love will manifest itself in our relationships with people. Listen to John's Spirit-inspired words. "We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not

seen. And he has given us this command:

**Whoever loves God must also love his
brother.”**

**In these three verses of Scripture we
learn about the source of perfect love
AND the true test of perfect love.**

**The source of perfect love is God. We
can love perfectly because he loves us
perfectly. God has demonstrated his
perfect love by sending his Son to die for
us and sending his Spirit to live in us.**

Through the power of the indwelling Holy

**Spirit, you and I and all who follow Jesus
can love like God wants us to love.**

**God is the source of perfect love. He
enables us to love like he loves, and when
we love like he loves, it will be evident to
everyone in our lives. Our perfect love
will manifest itself in the way we act
toward others.**

**No one can love God and hate people.
I'm talking about a continuous hatred
with no desire or intent to repent (see
comments on 1 John 2:9). 1 John 4:21**

says, “Whoever loves God must also love his brother.” Listen carefully. The key to loving people is loving God. When we love God the way we should, we will love people the way we should.

As followers of Jesus we are commanded to love perfectly. This is the ideal. Will we love perfectly all of the time? No. But we better love perfectly MOST of the time. This is the true test of perfect love. This is the true test of your relationship with Jesus Christ.

In John 13:34,35, Jesus says this.

“Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are disciples [that you are truly following me] if you love one another.”

I want to encourage you to live a life of perfect love – to put everything you’ve got into loving God and people. If you do this, your life will be filled with blessing after blessing!