

Lesson 32- The Manifested Love of God

We are continuing our study of 1 John, and today we will be looking at, **1 John 4:7-16**. And verse 7 starts a large section that spans from 4:7 – 5:5, with the focus being centered on our perfect Fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, rooted in His Divine Agape Love. And this section even reaches back into the first 6 verses of chapter 4, with the test to know those who are of God and our being overcomers in Jesus Christ, **1 John 4:4; 5:4-5**.

In chapter 4, John continues to circle around some familiar topics, and in doing so, he elaborates on things he said earlier in this letter, but now, as he does, goes a little deeper and a little wider, giving us more clarity.

R.C.H Lenski is commentator that I enjoy reading, and he describes John's writing style as a weaver and he says, "it is like a weaver repeating a color in his design and it is enriched by the weaving in anew of other pertinent facts. More glorious light is shed on the whole and on every detail. The whole pattern, woven as a unit, nears completion, grows richer and more beautiful as so much of it is unrolled."¹

I think this is such a beautiful way to describe John's writing style as he circles around these familiar ideas. And now the new, glorious Light of Love is shed on these same familiar topics. These Truths that we have been learning for the last 30 weeks are now enriched in chapter 4 by God's Divine Agape Love. God's Love is what fuels and makes our Fellowship with Him possible and because His love has been deposited and perfected in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, Rom 5:5, we now have the capacity to abide in Him and love one another. For the next 20 verses, the emphasis is on God's Love. In fact, John mentions the word "Love", *ἀγάπη*, 32 times as he continues to describe those who are "of God".

So lets begin with verse 7...

<p>7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.</p>	<p><i>⁷ Ἀγαπητοί, ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους· ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὶ, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν, ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ γεγέννηται, καὶ γινώσκει τὸν Θεόν.</i></p>
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It is fitting that John would begin this next section of love with the word, "**Beloved**"- Agapetoi, *Ἀγαπητοί*, those who are loved of God. These verbs in verse 7 are all in the present tense because this is a continual, habitual manner of life..."**let us continually love one another**, *ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους*...**for love is out from God**, *ἡ ἀγάπη ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὶ*, ...**and every person who continues loving, is born out from God**, *ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ γεγέννηται*...

Notice in this verse, John says the phrase, "out from God", *ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, twice. And in the previous 6 verses he said it 6 more times. This has been a common expression of John since he introduced our sonship in chapter 3, giving us the sense of being rooted in and abiding in God. He says, Love comes out from God, therefore everyone who comes out from God just like Love, must be bearing the fruit of Love in their life with each other. John is simply showing us what a true Christian should look like. Christians bear fruit because we are attached to the Vine. John 15:5- "*I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*" The branch is going to bear the same fruit as the vine it is attached to. A branch attached to a grape vine is going to bear grapes. Right? A branch on an apple tree will bear apples. So likewise, a branch attached to a Love Vine is going to bear Love. The one abiding in the Vine has Fellowship with God and John says this one is **born out from God and knows God**.

This word "**know**" in verse 7 is ginosko, *γινώσκω*, "...every person who continues loving is born of God **and knows God**... we ginosko, *γινώσκω*, Him. We know Him intimately through experience because He laid His life down for us, **1 John 3:16**. And we also know Him because we keep His commandments and hold fast His Word as precious, **1 John 2:3-5**. So, you can see how John continually is circling around these ideas so that we can understand our Fellowship we have with God.

¹ Lenski, R. C. H. The interpretation of the epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude

Let's continue into verse 8...

8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁸ ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν, οὐκ ἔγνω τὸν Θεόν· ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν.

Here John gives us the contrast and he very simply says, ... if you don't have a continual heart of love for the Brethren, then you don't know God and you are not of Him because... God is love. And if you are truly of Him, if you were truly abiding in the Vine, then you would be bearing the fruit of Love.

I want to take a minute to discuss this phrase, **God is love**, ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν. The way John wrote this is so simple, but also very precise, because any other way it could be misconstrued. Notice the article in front of ὁ Θεός. This is "The God" or we could say, "The Father". And the Father is Love. But notice there is no article in front of ἀγάπη. If there were an article, it could be translated inversely that Love is God, which is not accurate because John just said in verse 7 that Love is "out from" God, ἡ ἀγάπη ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστι. Love comes out from the Father, it is an attribute of the Father, not that Love is God.

This is very important to understand because people in this world, even so-called "Christians", will put God in a box and say that because God is Love, He must tolerate sin. But this is twisting these words around to make love their God. This is saying that love is God instead of God is Love. They elevate the idea of love higher than God, especially a love for themselves. And they do this so that they can continue living in their sin. And then they force God to get into this tiny one-dimensional box of Love when in fact Love is just one of many attributes of God. In this epistle alone, in addition to the fact that God is Love, John also says that God is Light, 1 Jn 1:5; and He is Righteous, 1 Jn 2:29; and Holy and Pure, 1 Jn 3:3. God is all these things at the same time, and everything He does, He does in Love and Righteousness, and Holiness. So how did God, who is Love and Holy, and Righteous deal with this issue of sin? Did He just look the other way and ignore our sin? I think that's what a lot of people think forgiveness of sins means. No, our Righteous and Holy and Loving God sent His only begotten Son in Love to die as Propitiation in our place to appease His Righteous wrath toward sin.

Love does not tolerate sin, but rather, His Love rescued us out from sin. This is what John says in the next two verses...

9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. ⁹ ἐν τούτῳ ἐφανερώθη ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ Θεὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον, ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ.

10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹⁰ ἐν τούτῳ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐχ ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠγαπήσαμεν τὸν Θεόν, ἀλλ' ὅτι αὐτὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἀπέστειλε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἱλασμὸν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν.

John says something very similar and even uses some of the same words in 1 John 3:8, "...For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, ἐφανερώθη, that He might destroy the works of the devil." 1 John 4:9 "In this the love of God was manifested, ἐφανερώθη, toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

God, who is love, manifested His Love by sending His Son to pay the debt of sin and destroy the works of the devil that held us in bondage to sin so that we might live through Him.

Notice this word "might" in verse 9... **God has sent His only begotten Son into the world... so that we might live through Him**; "might live", zesomen, ζήσωμεν is in the subjunctive mood. It tells us there is a choice. Our Eternal Life is contingent on our free will choice to accept Jesus' sacrifice, allowing us to be set free from the bondage of sin.

Jesus' work is done. Tetelestai, paid in full, even for the whole world, 1 John 2:2. But in order to apprehend this freedom, we have to surrender ourselves to Him and connect ourselves to the Vine, John 1:12. And we do this by repenting of our sin and believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God who came in the flesh to rescue us out from the bondage of sin through His work on the cross.

John continues this thought in verse 10, **In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.** God loved us first and sent His Son. Now we just have to receive the gift of His Son to have everlasting life. Jesus is our Propitiation, hilasmos, ἱλασμός. The Propitiation is the satisfying sacrifice that appeased God's Righteous wrath toward our sin. And Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was the only acceptable sacrifice that could do this. We talked about the Propitiation back when we studied 1 John 2:2 in lesson 9, and we learned from that study that the Propitiation brings us into Fellowship with God through His Mercy. Mercy can now be granted to the sinner, because God's wrath was propitiated, appeased, by a substitutionary sacrifice. And Jesus was that qualifying, substitutionary sacrifice that paid the debt for our sins, thus appeasing God's Righteous wrath toward us. Therefore, all who confess Jesus Christ as their Savior can be brought into Fellowship with the Father and abide in Him through the precious blood of Jesus.

This sets the stage for the next 6 verses because the premise of verses 11 – 16 is our reconciliation, our Fellowship with the Father through the Son in Love. So as we go through **4:11-16**, we need to be looking at them as one thought. Lets start with verses 11 and 12 keeping in mind the whole thought of reconciliation and our Fellowship with God.

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| <p>11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.</p> <p>12 No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.</p> | <p>¹¹ ἀγαπητοί, εἰ οὕτως ὁ Θεὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφειλομεν ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν.</p> <p>¹² Θεὸν οὐδεὶς πώποτε τεθέαται· ἐὰν ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν μένει, καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ, τετελειωμένη ἐστὶν ἐν ἡμῖν.</p> |
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Our love for one another is the evidence of our Fellowship with God, 1 John 1:3. It is the proof that God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. The selfless sacrifice of love that was shown to us through Jesus is now the example for us to lay our lives down for the Brethren, **1 John 3:16**.

In verse 12, John says that “**no one has seen God at any time**”, But he continues by saying that we can see the effects of His perfected Love in us because we love one another. Verse 12- “...**If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.**”

John continues this thought into verses 13 and 14...

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| <p>13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given to us out from His Spirit.</p> <p>14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.</p> | <p>¹³ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος αὐτοῦ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν.</p> <p>¹⁴ καὶ ἡμεῖς τεθεάμεθα καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ ἀπέσταλκε τὸν υἱὸν σωτήρα τοῦ κόσμου.</p> |
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John is making the point that even though no one has seen God the Father at any time, we know He is living in all who are born out from Him, because we are born out from His Spirit, **John 3:5-6**. By this we know that we abide in Him by the Spirit whom He has given us, 1 John 3:24. We don't need to see the Father to know He abides in us. We know He abides in us out from His Spirit.

Look at verses 12 and 14 together to see John's logic...

4:12 *No one has **seen**, theaomai, θεάομαι, God at any time...*

But then in verse 14 he says...

4:14 *And we have **seen** (same word) theaomai, θεάομαι and continually testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.*

Therefore, we know the Father through His Son that He sent to us because God who is invisible has manifested Himself to us in His Son through love. Jesus says in Jn 14:9- “*if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father.*” Paul says in Hebrews 1:3- *Jesus is the express image of the Father.* And Colossians 1:15 says, “*He is the image of the invisible God.*”

And that's exactly what John says in verse 14, "**we have seen and continually testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.**" This "we" John is referring to are all Christians, children of God. And this is different than the "we" at the beginning of the letter, 1 John 1:1. So, how can we, who have never physically seen God or Jesus for that matter, how can we behold Him? We can know and theaomai, *θεάομαι*, we can behold Jesus through His Word because His Spirit is living and abiding in us.

The Spirit is the witness to us of Jesus Christ...This is how we, 2,000 years later, can behold Jesus: through His Word and the Spirit testifying of His Word. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, Romans 8:16. The Spirit of Truth leads us and guides us into all Truth, John 16:13. This is what John says in chapter 5. Look at **5:6, 10**.

Now "we", children of God, we who have the witness in us, are called to be a continual witness of Jesus Christ. This is being an ambassador for Christ, 2 Cor 5:20. And the best way we can bear witness of Jesus is to be Christ-like and bear the image of Christ in our life, **2 Corinthians 3:18**; 1 Cor 15:49. Notice how we bear the image of Christ, through the Spirit abiding in us. And then, as we grow in Christ-likeness, this becomes a witness to the world. We can display God's love and His invisible attributes are clearly seen through us as we love one another. It is through our outward display of love, led by the Spirit within us, that we, as Christians, testify to the world that God, who is Love, sent His Son as Savior of the world, **John 13:35; 17:21**.

15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

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.

¹⁵ ὃς ἂν ὁμολογήσῃ ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ Θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ μένει, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ Θεῷ.

¹⁶ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐγνώκαμεν καὶ πεπιστεύκαμεν τὴν ἀγάπην ἣν ἔχει ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν. Ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστὶ, καὶ ὁ μένων ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ ἐν τῷ Θεῷ μένει καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.

Our confession is the means by which we have Fellowship with God. In verse 15, John says whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God. This is our reconciliation with the Father because in 1 John 2:23 he says, "*...he who confesses the Son has the Father also.*" And in 4:2, John said that *whoever confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God*, *ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*.

As children of God, we know and believe the Love that God has for us, because we confess and know and believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God who came in the flesh as the Propitiation for our sins. And it by this we know that we have Eternal Fellowship with Him; He abides in us and we abide in Him. And it is this idea, that all through the epistle, John is giving us the assurance so that we know that we know that we have Fellowship with God and that we know that we have Eternal Life in Him.