

## Thursday, May 30, 2024 • Read 1John 4:12–20

Questions from the Scripture text: What has no one done (v12)? But of what connection to God can we be sure, in what way? What achieves its end (NKJ: is perfected) in believers' loving one another? In Whom do believers who love one another abide (v13)? Who abides in them? What gift has produced both the love and the mutual abiding? What had the apostles seen (v14)? What did they do with what they saw? Who sent Whom as what? What else does the Spirit produce—what do those who have been given of His Spirit confess (v15)? Even though we have not seen God (v12), what have we known and believed (v16)? How does this relate to Who God is? Why has love achieved its end in believers (v17)? In whose conduct, where, is the character of God reflected? Of what is there none in love (v18)? What does love that has achieved its end cast out? What does fear involve? What hasn't happened in the one who is tormented with fear? But if love has achieved its end in us, what do we do (v19)? How has this come about? What might someone say (v20)? But what if he hates his brother? What is the logic of this verse?

**What can we see, that will give us boldness for the judgment?** 1John 4:12–20 prepares us for the second serial reading in public worship on the Lord's Day. In these nine verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **we can see one another, and the perfecting of God's own love in our loving one another, which is the work of His Spirit, Whom He has given with His Son.**

The idea of "seeing" ties this passage together from v12 to v20.

What we haven't seen, v12–13. Love is of God (v7), so even though we haven't seen God (v12, cf. Jn 1:18), we have seen that which can come only from God. This is why loving one another in a biblical way assures of this amazing reality: God Himself abides in us. He has given us of His Spirit (v13), by Whom God's own love has achieved its end ("been perfected," NKJ) in us. Loving one another is a window into a glorious, unseen reality!

What the apostles had seen, v14–16. The "we" in v14 is the apostles (cf. 1:1–3; Jn 1:14). They had seen God the Son in human form. They testified to Him Who is the great display of the love in which God sent Him to be the Savior of the world. The same Spirit Who makes us to love one another (v13) makes us to confess that Jesus is the Son of God.

Having the Spirit, confessing the divinity of Christ, loving one another, and a mutual abiding in God... all four of these go together. Either you have all of them, or you have none of them. There's no in between. Thanks be to God, we have both the testimony of the Holy Spirit in our heart, and a reliable, eye-witness account in our hands and in our hearing.

What we have seen, v17–20. We have seen our brother (v20)! This gives us something tangible to embolden us, as we look forward to the day of judgment (v17). The God before Whom we will stand is the God Who is love. So, if in this world, with our brother whom we can see, we are loving, then we have boldness. His love makes us to love Him (v19), which makes us to love our brother. Someone who is participating in this wonderful cycle of love does not fear the judgment.

Do you fear the judgment, dear reader? Then you must continue to grow in knowing God's love for you, which will in turn foster your love for Him and your love for your brothers. But if you hate your brother, then you can be sure that what you have "seen" is that you don't actually love God, no matter what you say (v20).

How is it evident to you that you love the brethren? When you think about your love for the brethren, what does it show (or not show—be honest) about you? If you lack love, from where can it come? How do you feel about the day of judgment? Why?

*Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us for how much our love lacks! We thank You for sending Your Son and giving Your Spirit. Grant to us the continued ministry of Your Spirit, so that Your love will achieve its goal in us. Grant that this love would cast out all of our fear, so that we will have boldness in the day of judgment, we ask through Christ, AMEN!*

Suggested songs: ARP197 "Christian Unity" or TPH409 "Blest Be the Tie That Binds"

**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))**

First John 4 verses 12 through 20. These are God's words. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us and his love has been perfected in. By this, we know that we abide in him and he and us.

Because he has given us of his Spir. And we have seen and testify. That the father has sent the son as the savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the son of God. Thor abides in him and he and God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us.

God is love. He who abides in God? 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. Because as he is. So are we in this world? There is no fear in love, but perfect.

Love. Casts out, fear. Because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love him because he first loved us. If someone says I love God and hates his brother, He is a liar. For he who does not love his brother and he has seen How can he love God?

So, he has not seen. So far, the reading of gods inspired. In there and toward The reason that we Are stopping at the end of verse 20. Is the forms an inclusio? beginning in verse 12. No one has seen God at any time in verse 12 and then Verse 20.

comes to conclusion God, whom he has not seen. So, our passage before us, Is about how the Unseen God. Gives us to know him gives us. To know that we are his. Gives us to. That we shall be safe in the last day. And there are three things, especially the E gives us to C.

He gives us to see his Spirit, not by the visibility of the spirit. But by the fruit, the spirit causes And that's in verses 12-13. He gives us to see. His scriptures. Which are given by eyewitnesses of the Lord, Jesus who himself. Is a display of the father. The sun.

By becoming flesh. Is the display of the father is the Triune God. And although, we have not seen him himself, we have seen What eyewitnesses of the Lord Jesus. I have left behind, so Verses 12 through 14. Sorry, 12 and 13. We have seen the fruit of his Spirit verses 14-16.

We have seen the scriptures. And in verses 17 through 20, We have seen salvation, we have seen A love begun in us that has its origin in God and its conclusion. In safety at the Judgment. So, we have seen safety or we have seen salvation, So in the first place, we have seen the spirit or we have seen the fruit of the spirit.

Who says no one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God, abides in us. This is something that Stated or proven several times now. in the passage. Or in the book, rather. That there's not. Light from us, there's Darkness from us. But if there is any light, it comes from the Lord, if there is any genuine love.

That comes from the Lord. And so the only explanation for our genuinely loving one another Are having love in our hearts. That controls how we see. And think about one another and how we act towards one another. the only explanation for that love. As it God abides in us, it's his love.

That is achieving its end in so you must not look at his love has been perfected in. In verse 12. Or. Love has been perfected Among Us in verse 17. You mustn't, look at those and think. that there's some Imperfection or inadequacy. In God's love. The language is the language of achieving, its end finding its end.

This is how it has pleased God from all eternity to display his love. Is by redeeming those whom he thus comes to make. To love like he loves. and so when he talks about Islam being perfected enough, he's talking about his love achieving its purpose. Achieving its goal.

Its desire. in So that when we get to verse 18, Perfect love cast out fear. That's not saying, That the reason. Loving God makes, you know that you are loved by him and takes away your fear of the Judgment. It's not saying if your love is good enough, if your love is perfect.

Or even because his love is good enough. But because his love is what is producing here, love. You see the goal? The end that he has in mind. That you would be saved that. You would be a child of the father that you would be United to the son that you would be indwelt by the spirit.

the fact that you are loving displays to you, the only way that this could come come about if as if the Triune God in his love. Has made this his goal. Has made this. The way that he will display his love. And if that's the case, then he cannot fail.

He will not fail. It will Complete achieving, it's and his love will complete. Achieving its end. And you need not fear. The judgment. So when it says, God abides in us and his love has been perfected in us. He's saying that when we're loving one another, we are seeing The evidence that this is the goal of God's love.

To bring us into an abiding. In him. And he in Us by this, we know verse 13 that we abide in him, and he in us. That the Triune God has created All Creatures. In order that he might create these specific creatures. Men who would sin and then be redeemed from that sin through Union with the son.

So that the Living God comes. To abide in us and gives to us to abide in him. By this, we know that we abide in him and he and us. Because he has given us. Of his Spirit.

So what we're really seeing? When we see that, we have been brought. into Union with Christ by faith when we see the fruit of that Union with Christ and our loving one another they're seeing the work of the spirit. Remember what the Lord Jesus said. About the spirit in John chapter 3.

He said. That you cannot see the spirit, but you see the spirit the same way you see the wind. You don't see wind. You see the effect of the wind? You see what it is blowing. And the difference that that makes Well, the same when you see Believers, loving one another, it's like seeing wind That you're seeing the work of the spirit.

You're seeing the moving, the, the way that the spirit moves in because that love doesn't come. Any other way. And so, he's describing to us here. How the Triune God? The invisible God makes himself visible. And part of how he makes himself visible. Is by showing our Union with Christ if that has been caused by the spirit, In our loving one, another So no one has seen God at any time, but he makes us to see the spirit or more precisely the effects of the spirit in the second place.

He makes us to see the scripture. When he says, we have seen and testify. That the father has sent the son as savior of the world. He is speaking as an apostle and in reference to the writings of the Apostles, the eyewitnesses of his majesty. as Peter. Would say is speaking in the way that he began the letter when he says, That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon our hands have handled.

And the amazing thing is that all of these are that, which was from the beginning, the word of life, Was manifested and we have seen and bear witness. He says, in verse 1, sorry, verse 2 of chapter one. So again, he says we have seen and testify or bear witness.

That the father has sent the son as savior of the world. Now notice he doesn't say God sent Jesus or God sent Christ. He very specifically says, the father has sent the son. This is closely related to how the Lord Jesus answers Philip. And John chapter 14 when he asks to see the father You can't see the father.

No one has seen God at any time. That he says, here in verse 12, he said the same in John chapter 1 but in John chapter 1, when he said that, he says that the only begotten son who is in the bosom of the father. He has fully revealed him in John chapter 14, Jesus says how can you?

Show us the father, anyone who has seen me. Has seen the father. Jesus says, have you been with me so long and you still do not know me? So when the Apostle here, in verse 14 says, we have seen and testify that the father has sent the son as savior of the world.

He is saying that the Is all that we will ever see of God visibly. But that God has especially Displayed himself, not just in his son as condemner, not just in his son as judge. Jesus did not need to become man in order to do those things. Jesus became, man, Jesus became flesh.

Jesus became visible in order to save In the great display of God's love for us. God demonstrating his love And that while we were still sinners. Christ died for us. But we have not physically seen Jesus. We have however, physically seen Bibles physically, seen scripture. This is one of the reasons that God commits his word to writing, literally causes it to be inscribed engraved upon the page.

You know, we use the word scripture which comes from the word inscription you can hear grafe Is the Bible word for scripture is the the coin, a Greek New Testament, Greek. Word for scripture, you can hear the word engraved there. The Lord has given you something visible. Something tangible that actually comes from eyewitnesses.

This is how we got our Bibles. God made men to see God. The son in the flesh. And the spirit who had carried along. Who had carried along prophets. From the beginning of the world. The spirit then carried along those to whom Christ sent him the spirit. He is unto us now, especially we know him as the spirit of the son who she has always been.

First Peter 1 talks about the spirit, By whom the prophet spoke as the spirit of Christ. But it was, his will. That the apostles and Prophets and evangelists. Would commit. Their Spirit inspired testimony to writing. So that we would have scriptures that had come to us. By the entering into, Creation entering into time and space.

Of God, the son. By the Incarnation. Of God, the son, God, the word In order to be our savior. and so this is the second who abides in whom does God abide and he abides in him, the one who confesses that the second person Of the godhead.

The Who became visible in order to save us so that his name is Jesus. And that. God has revealed. Therefore the Triune God has revealed himself in his son. So whoever confesses verse 15, whoever confesses that Jesus is the son of God. God abides in him. And he and God.

And we have known and believed. The love that God has for us note those two things together That it's not just doctrinally. That you believe. That Jesus is God, the son?

And that. God has chosen to demonstrate his love especially in sending his son to save. Those are things that you believe.

intellectually doctrinally, the language of no is experientially. Almost relationally. In fact, the word is used that way of people. And this. The shade of meaning. That makes known different than believed, and we have known. The love that God has for us. That you have known. That your creator against whom you had sinned from whom you deserved.

Wrath has loved, you has given his son for you has saved. You is saving. You has made you to love. Him, has made you to love your brother has given his Spirit to you in order to do these things in you. And so, you see, The scripture. In which you see the In whom you see.

The father and the Triune God and the love of the Triune God for you specifically. So that you don't just believe. The love that God has for us. You know, the love that God has for us. It is the overarching ever present. Everything. Penetrating reality of your life. God has loved you.

He gave his son for you. In that love. And he has given eyewitnesses to write down. What they saw when they saw the sun? And he has caused us eyewitnesses to leave for you even that which you can see You are inscribed engraved, written Bible. You believe the love that God has for you.

And you know, the love that God has for you. So that's the second thing that we see. Wonderful thing that we see is the scripture in which we see the the Son and the love of God. So we see the spirit, we see the scripture. In the last place, we see our safety.

Or our Salvation. says uses this language again that we mentioned earlier. Verse 17 love has been perfected among us as achieved its end It is a accomplished, its goal. In this so that we may have boldness. In the day of judgment. Now, be sure that Christians will stand.

In the day of judgment, they're going to be there. I had this. Mistaken idea for much of my young Christian Life, things are just not. Maybe they were taught clearly and I just didn't grasp them, I just didn't grasp things clearly, I guess. Where I thought Christians wouldn't be at the Judgment because we'd been forgiven but we will be at the Judgment only, we will have boldness.

And the reason we know that we will have boldness, Is because God has already begun. Making us different Than we were in ourselves. Because as he is, so are we in this world? Now, he's not saying that we love as well as he does. What he's saying is we love it.

All we Who are in this world. And who are from this world. Have come now. To see Jesus as the son of God. To see Jesus as as as the second person of the godhead in whom the Triune God has revealed himself, we who live in this world and are from this world.

Have come to love our brother from the heart. And to view him with all of the affection that we have for God himself for Christ himself, because we see our brother as being a part of Christ to us a member of Christ's body. How could we who are in this world and from this world Have come to do any of that?

Well, So, the answer must begin in God from all eternity in his good. Pleasure in his loving us, And so as has love has begun to achieve, its aims, as it has begun to be perfected. to use the way our English version has translated that word as our love as his love has begun to achieve.

Its aims and make us to know who Jesus is and why he has come and make us to love our brother as well. We become convinced. About ourselves. And we start to become bold, even in thinking about the day of judgment. On which day we know that we will have full boldness.

Because then the aim of God's love in our lives. Will have been fully achieved. And this is why he says, there is no fear and love. But perfect, love, love that. It's is achieving its end in Love that will finish achieving its end in us. Casts out fear because fear involves torment.

Right. There's a proper fear of God. That increases as we love him. But it has no torment in it. It's all amazement and increased love, and adoration, and service and devotion and delight and Zeal. And even jealousy on his behalf and indignation at what remains in us that that doesn't honor him like we should and indignation at what remains in the world that doesn't honor him like we should.

And so there's there are all these good aspects of the proper fear of God. But he makes clear what kind of fear he's talking about here. That it's the servile unbelieving. Despising fear. that is afraid of what God will do to it. Freer, that involves torment. And so, he who fears this way says has not been made perfect in love.

So to whatever extent. We are still afraid of torment. Not only has. God's love not finished achieving its end in It's a reminder that our love therefore. Has not been perfected, has not been completed. And so, one of the things we want if we want To be freed from the last vest, vestiges, the last little leftover bits.

Of fear of punishment fear of Torment. Is to increase some love to God and our brother. So verse 19 deals with our love for God. And verse 20, our love for our brother. We love him because he first loved us. Verse 19 summarizing. What we have seen so far in the passage But then also love for our brother is always a part of loving him.

No one ever gets to say. I love God. It's just his church that I can't stand. If someone says I love God and hates his brother, he is a liar. There's a very strong statement in the Bible. Because no one under the inspiration of the Holy Has this hellish doctrine of the righteous lie.

In the Bible God cannot lie. The devil is the liar. He speaks from himself when he lies, he's the father of it and whoever lies is of the devil. And so, when the Apostle says, if someone says I love God and hates his brother, he is a liar. He's saying.

If someone says he's part of the family. He loves the father. Because he has seen the sun and knows the sun. And has seen the love of the Triune God. The love of the father and the son. In the fathers, sending the son to save us. If someone says I'm a part of the family, I love God.

But he hates his brother, who is also. A part of the family. Who was also an Evidence of the love of God. That God loved this one and saved this one by the son. And is working in this one by his Spirit. If someone says, I'm part of the family but hates his brother.

He's a liar. He's from the devil's family. He's not from God's family. He's from the world. He should be afraid at the Judgment. He is going to be tormented with the devil and his angels. You see how significant a thing? In Christian Life, in the knowledge of God. In Assurance of our being in a state of grace, To see how significant a thing our loving our brother must be.

Because we've been given to see the spirit. We've been given to see the scripture. We've been given to see our safety. But if we don't love our brother whom we do see Then we're not really engaging with God. We're not engaging with God according to reality. There is an actual true and living God before whom each one of us will stand at the last day.

And he has actually sent his son into the world who men saw. Men by whom he has actually given us the scriptures. And he has actually given his Who brings us to Faith

by those scriptures and brings us to love God, who first loved us and brings us to love our brother.

Who was genuinely actually in reality being saved in the same way. And so, the person who says, I love God, But then he's not responding to his brother by loving him. As someone whom God, gave his son for and is working in by his His engagement with reality is different than what he's saying with his mouth.

And so whatever. Love he claims to have for God. Is a lie. It's a figment of his imagination, but even worse than that. Is a false statement that shows what family he is really from.

If someone says I love God and hates his brother, he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen. How can he love God? Whom he has not seen. How does he know? The the one he claims to love is the actual Living God, and not a fabrication of his imagination.

There is a true God with a true salvation and we can see true things from him. Christianity is not mind games. But the person who says, I love, God, but hates his brother, his Christianity is just a mind game. And the illusion will be blown up destroyed. Like popping a balloon or blowing away up a puff of smoke.

And he will stand before. God naked and Afraid.

So praise God in his Mercy. He has given us to see. Not to lay eyes on him. God is invisible. We will one day, lay eyes on the sun in his human nature. But he has given us to see. His Spirit by the effects that his Spirit produces in our lives.

He has given us to see his scriptures. By which, for now we see his son. Scriptures having been given as eyewitness. testimony. And he has given us to. Our safety. That what has brought us to love our brother? What has brought us? To know Jesus as God the son Is the intention of his love from all eternity.

To make us stand at the Judgment to be safe to be saved. At the judgment and not be cast into torment. So the Lord give us not just to love our brother, praise God. Yes, may the Lord give us to love our brother. But may the Lord give us to see all of the evidence he has given us.

Of himself. And of his salvation. So that we may increase in love. And decrease in fear of torment. Let's pray.

Our gracious God in our heavenly Father, we thank you. For this portion of your word. We thank you for all of your word. Thank you for causing it to be inscribed engraved. thank you for Giving us to. evidence. That we may be sure. Help us to be sure.

Take away our doubting. Unbelieving Hearts. Continue to give us. From the new life that you have given us in Christ by your spirit. Help us to love you because you first loved us, help us to love. Our brother whom we have seen. Help us to see, even our brothers and sisters.

Ongoing evidence. Of your reality, and of your salvation's reality. Help us to think much of the last day, and Not just to push it out of our mind, but help us to do so without fear of Torment, but increasing confidence, that is from you. Help us to be real with you.

God, Help us to be real about your salvation. Overcome all of. The anxiety isn't slouching into earthless fleshliness. Keep rising out of our former nature. Give us to know you. The one true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. Which we ask in his name, amen.