



# Pilgrim Home Baptist Church

NT 2022 Q4 • NO FEAR IN LOVE • 1 JOHN 4:15-18 • 10/23/2022

## MAIN POINT

The love of God calms our fears and helps us focus on eternity.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What are some common fears people have? Why do you think people have these particular fears? What is the root behind these fears?**

**Ask those who feel comfortable to share about a time they were afraid. What would have helped them in that moment?**

**Can you think of an attitude or emotion that is the opposite of fear?**

Fear is all too common place in our lives, and it often surfaces when we have a hard time trusting God or feel out of control of our lives. Scripture calls us as individuals and as a church to actively choose to trust God. The Bible points us to numerous reasons why God is worthy of this trust, one of which is His love. When we understand God's love for us, we have confidence in who He is and what He promises to do. This confidence calms our fears and helps us live for Him.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**What are some of the instances in the Bible you can remember when the people of God are encouraged to not fear?**

**Why do you think the Bible, in so many places, urges the people of God to "fear not"?**

Fear is a barometer of our faith. When we are afraid, it is often because we are failing to believe something to be true that God says about Himself. The main point of John's first letter was encouragement for Christians to feel confident in their salvation and understand the truth of the gospel amid false teachings that were circulating in the early church. It's not surprising, then, that John talks at length about the reality of God's love for us and the implications His love has on our lives. Love casts our fear and creates a confident faith in Jesus' followers.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 JOHN 4:15-16.

**According to verse 15, what changes in a person's life when he or she acknowledges faith in Jesus?**

**John wrote that God is love, which means God and love can never be separated. How does this truth impact your understanding of who God is and how you relate to Him?**

In verses 15-16, John made the point that those who confess Jesus is God's Son know God's love for them is enduring and thus live confidently and express love without fear. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God develops great confidence in life. This confident trust connects the believer with God so that God remains in him and he in God. We have come to know and to believe the love God has for us only by confessing faith in Christ. We take the step of trust and experience confidence. John pointed out that God is love, which means people do not understand God apart from love. Love is not one aspect of God; it is His nature. We are to remain in love and thus remain in God, and through love God remains in us.

**How does fear hinder your relationship with God and your efforts to love other people?**

**What are some examples of the way love is able to override fear?**

God's love in a person's life has the ability to cast out fear. The kind of fear that John referred to is a sense of dread or terror, the opposite of bold confidence. Although there are many fears that we may face daily, resting in the love of God helps us remember that this world is not our home, so we can confidently face whatever comes our way.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 JOHN 4:17-18.

**According to verse 17, how does the love of God in your life remove any fears you might have about the day of judgment?**

**What specifically has God done on our behalf to show His love for us and insure our right standing with Him on this day of judgment?**

One of the specific fears John mentioned is the fear of death and final judgment. The day of judgment refers to that final eternal judgment at the end of history when all people will give account of themselves to God. One's relationship with Christ determines one's eternal destiny. While we cannot know the specifics of this time, Scripture makes clear that no one will escape the day of judgment. That is why it's such good news that in Christ we can have confidence, or boldness, when that day comes. Such boldness results from the reality that we are God's children. The perfect love that produces confidence also casts out fear.

**What kinds of things does the Bible tell us about God that would serve to combat our fear if we truly believed them?**

**Read Psalm 56:3-4. How is overcoming fear related to knowing and believing the revelation of who God is in His Word?**

These verse aren't promises of an easy, pain-free life. They are instead promises of a God who is still in control and loving when difficult circumstances happen. Hardship and struggles are all but guarantees for the disciple of Christ. But when those times come, we may rest assured that God has not abandoned us. Instead of turning to fear and despair, we can turn again to the Word of God to refresh our memories of what we know to be true. During those moments of fear, God is calling us to make an active choice of faith

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**If you are living in fear, what does your fear reveal you believe or don't believe to be true about God?**

**How can we as a group stand together to encourage each other to trust God and claim the promises that come with His love?**

**What is one practical way you can remind yourself of the love of God when you feel afraid?**

## PRAYER

Thank God for the confidence available to you through the Holy Spirit. Pray that God's voice would be louder than the fears you face today. Also pray that these fears would be a reminder

that a better future awaits.

## COMMENTARY

### | 1 JOHN 4:15-18

4:14-16. John's readers probably never saw Jesus in the flesh. False teachers, however, claimed to have made heavenly journeys during which they saw God in heaven. This is impossible. God cannot be seen. How do you deny the claims of these teachers and still say, we have seen? How, if your readers have never seen Jesus, can they testify that God sent his Son to be our Savior? First, John and his fellow apostles saw Jesus in the flesh, but the majority of those who saw Jesus did not join in the testimony. They cried for his crucifixion.

Second, such testimony is based on more than eyewitness. It comes through eyes of faith. Only after the resurrection did this testimony become real for the apostles. They testified to the church. Then the church accepted and repeated their testimony. We do the same.

Third, you do not have to see the earthly Jesus to testify about what God has done through him. You need only hear and believe in the testimony to him from Scripture and from faithful followers. Such testimony is both verbal testimony and God's love exercised through our lives. The impact God has made in other Christians—this is what we have seen. Based on the manifestation of Jesus in the lives of Christians, those who have witnessed it can testify that the Father sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world. That is, God sent Jesus to the cross to pay for our sins so we do not have to suffer the wages sin pays, namely, death.

Testimony about Jesus tells more than what Jesus did—save from sin. It also tells who he is—the Son of God. Again, all this goes against false teachers. They apparently claimed Jesus could not be human, thus could not die on the cross. On the other hand, Scripture claims that anyone who acknowledges this Savior they have seen is a true Christian, living in union with God.

This section concludes by repeating an affirmation made earlier—that God is love and that the person who lives in love lives in God, and God in him. This is the test of true Christianity in the letters of John. We must recognize the basic character of God, rooted in love. We must experience that love in our own relationship with God. Others must experience this God kind of love in their relationships with us. That's why God sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sins.

4:17-18. The judgment seat of Christ received brief mention in 2:28 and now reappears briefly to assure us we can face Christ on that day with confidence. Such confidence comes because we live in love toward God and one another. The person who does not live in love toward his brother

may experience shame (2:28). However, if we live in love toward our brothers, we will have confidence when we face Jesus because in this world we are like him. No one who was like Jesus in this world can fear approaching Jesus' judgment seat. Fear expects punishment. One who loves expects to receive love.

Why? Because mature love has no fear. A Christian who fears the judgment seat of Christ shows that God's love has not yet reached maturity (been made perfect) in him. A person who lives in love toward God has nothing to fear on the day of judgment.