



SERMON NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

Knowing and Believing the Love of God

Why Doing Flows from Believing

You will never muster up enough love for God to earn His approval. When you come to know and to believe the love God has for you, His love is perfected with you, gives you confidence, and starts to flow out of you to other people.

PREACHED BY

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SERIES

Our Father, Week 3 of 4

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Sermon Transcript

All right, you can join me in your Bibles this morning in 1 John chapter 4, 1 John chapter 4. 1 John 4. We've, we've-- are in a series, a long-lasting series on the Lord's Prayer, and we're in micro series throughout the extended series, and right now we're talking about the Our Father portion of the Lord's Prayer. And so every week what we've been doing is we've been saying the Lord's Prayer together. I'd like to do that again today. We're just trying to get it down into our spirit so we have it. So if I can have the Lord's Prayer. Here we go. Everybody say this with me.

MATTHEW 6:9-13 ESV

⁹ Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread, ¹² and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen. Come on, somebody give the Lord a praise right there I don't know what they do in other denominations when they get done saying it, but here we give the Lord a praise when we're done. Amen. 'Cause we're a openly spirit-filled church.

Hallelujah. Well, in the first week of this series, we talked about how insight and revelation into the grace of God is going to determine what level of physical manifestation of grace you're gonna experience in your life. To get a physical manifestation of the grace of God, you're gonna have to have revelation and insight. And then last week we talked about how obedience to the Law of Moses does not produce. It does not produce, but we are beholding as in a mirror the glory of the finished work of Jesus Christ, and with unveiled faces, we are being transformed into his image.

Can I get a good amen in the house? Have you enjoyed just walking through the Bible- in services? Hasn't that been good? I know it's a novel idea that we come and we just look at what the Bible says. But I will tell you, a lot of this series, once we get out of this initial portion, we're gonna be jumping around quite a bit. But I've been enjoying this so much that here, once we're done with this series, I may come back to it and just open up the Bible in Matthew 1 and just see what happens Praise the Lord. Well, this week we're gonna, we're gonna talk about this.

You can- if you need a title for the message you could call this, Doing Flows from Believing. Doing Flows from Believing. I also wanna say this today, if you take your phone and tap it on the seat back in front of you, we do have sermon notes that you can follow along with, just in case we're getting too involved and you wanna follow along, so you can do that there. And if you're watching online, you gotta come to church. I don't know what's on the seat back in front of you right now. I can't speak to that. We're limited to this scope here. So 1 John chapter 4, we're gonna jump in at verse 7.

I do wanna just say, I'm one of these guys, I feel weird when I skip over something. I feel strange about it. So let me just address the first couple of verses here before we get started. John, the last two weeks we've been reading from Paul,

but this week we're reading from the apostle John. And John is starting it right where we're about to start reading, kind of the same place that Paul was starting last week in 2 Corinthians, in that he's making a defense of his ministry. He's, he's essentially saying, "You guys need to listen to what I'm telling you because we've seen some stuff."

I've been a- I happen to know somebody." John knew somebody, that even Paul had not met in person, had a close personal relationship. And so John is starting there just by saying, "Hey, you need to listen to what I'm telling you, and this is like, I have some authority here." Then he jumps into verse 7 in this chapter and... Like, we're getting going pretty quick if you can't tell. I feel like I just came out and just went driving really fast, like I went 85 out of the driveway. I apologize. I'll try to work in more funny stories for you guys in the future.

1 John 4:7. I wanna start here, and then we're gonna jump down to the end, and I want you to see this. There is a bookmark ki- or not bookmark, but bookends on this passage we're gonna look at today, and I want you to see what the bookends are really quick.

1 JOHN 4:7-8 ESV

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

So verse 7 of 1 John chapter 4 says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." Now, let me just slam the 2026 brakes on this really quick Everybody in here has a paradigm for what love is.

And I just need you to hear me. Love is what the Bible says love is. Love isn't you and your sweetie. Love isn't you and your kids. Love isn't you and your mamaw. That's not what lo- love I know this is gonna throw some of y'all, but love isn't you and your football team. Even though I see Kimberly Miller came in here trying to pick a fight this morning in her LSU gear. Uh-oh. She's, oof. I'm sorry. Leave when I get towards the altar call, Kimberly. I wanna make sure you get home safe. Amen. And so love is what the Bible says it is. It is not what- whatever your paradigm is for it.

It's not ever what the world's paradigm is for it. Now I want you to jump down to verse 20. That was just an aside.

1 JOHN 4:20-21 ESV

²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Verse 20 says, "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." Verse 21, "And this commandment I have from Him: Whoever loves God must also love his brother." These bookends of what we're gonna read right here, and you'll actually find this throughout 1 John. These bookends are what I'm calling the should do of the text. This is the instruction.

This is what you ought to do. This is how you ought to behave. As you go through the beginning of 1 John, you find out that there's quite a few moments where John says, "Hey, if you don't love other people, you don't love God." And to be honest with you, it sounds a lot like the law when I hear that. If you don't do this, you're not okay with God. Well, that

puts me in a position where I'm trying to figure out what exactly is going on in the text 'cause it sounds like it's driving in another direction from the last several weeks that we've been talking, the last several weeks of, of things that we've been discussing, where we've said openly that the things you do are not what matters.

It's what Jesus has done on your behalf that matters. Can I get a good amen in the house? Okay. And so from there, now we gotta investigate the text a little bit. Well, these bookends happen to be bookends on the section of 1 John that's gonna tell you exactly how that love flows out of you And I wanna say this, what Paul calls grace, John often calls love. Okay? So the, we're, we're gonna see the way John talks about love is the way that Paul talks about grace. So here's what we're gonna do. We're gonna jump in right at verse nine, and we're gonna start to look at what's inside of these bookends.

Okay? And I want you to remember that doing flows from believing. Doing flows from believing. Keep that in your mind this morning as I teach.

1 JOHN 4:9-10 ESV

⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Verse nine, "In this is love..." I'm sorry, "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world so that we might live through Him." Let me pause right there. When we were looking a moment ago, it said, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."

Now, what does it define as God being love and God loving us? In verse nine it says that this is the love of God, this is how it was manifest, that God sent His only Son so that we might live through Him. What is the love of God? The love of God is that He sent Jesus Christ for you and for me. Come on. Hey, hallelujah. Verse 10 says, "In this is love. In this is love, not that we have loved God." I want you to get that in your spirit. "In this is love, not that we have loved God." We talk about loving God all the time. In fact, if you go to most churches, their mission statement is love God and love people.

And I could give you a whole treatment on that, but I only have one more week to preach on this stuff, amen, and then I gotta move on. If you go to most places, it's love God, love people. Well, it says right here, it says, "In this is love, not that you have loved God. Not that you have loved God, but that He has loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." And that word propitiation there is just, it's, it's really a pagan term that, that the author borrows basically to say that everything that God needs to be satisfied with you, He's got.

He doesn't need anything else If you are in Jesus Christ, God is fully satisfied with you. God loves you, He receives you, He accepts you, and He's working on you in His own time in Jesus' mighty name. God loves you. It's not that we've loved God, but that He has loved us and given us, us His Son as propitiation for our sins. He's fully satisfied. And this is what I want you to hear. You will never muster up enough of a godly walk to be godly enough to get God's approval. You're never gonna do it. You're never gonna love God enough. That's right. You're never gonna love people enough.

You're never gonna do good enough. You're never gonna be the... If we judge everybody in the room based on the standard, none of us are nailing it. None of us are even close. This is why we have to really understand the idea of grace.

We're talking about our Father, grace upon grace. The reason you need grace is not because you almost got it and you just need to get over the line. The reason you need grace is 'cause you didn't even close to get it. You aren't even near getting it. You are some messed up people. I hate to tell you that this morning. Y'all do some crazy stuff.

Then I know sometimes y'all do stuff. This is how I know you're crazy, okay? This is how I know, 'cause sometimes y'all do stuff and then y'all sit at home and go, "Why did I do that?" You don't even know what you're doing. You're not even in the driver's seat most of the time. Hallelujah. But you're not gonna be able to muster up enough. But we need grace. We need grace, not because we gotta just get over the line of make up the little bit we didn't get. No, because we need someone to make up for the whole thing that we didn't get right. We need grace to cover the whole thing.

So it's not about us loving God, it's about God loving us. We have to focus on God's love for us. Several years ago, man, this would've been in the late 2000s, I was in a church service leading worship. The worship pastor was gone, the senior pastor was gone. It was a Wednesday night. You might remember this service. This was in San Antonio. And we got in the worship service, and I don't even know why I did it. I had never done it before. I really never did it since, but we got into a worship flow and I told the whole room, I said, "Point your finger towards heaven and say, 'God, you love me.'"

Buddy, I'm gonna tell you, these people did that, and you'd have thought somebody set firecrackers off in the room. The glory broke out. The power of God started to move. It's probably one of the single-handed most powerful moments in worship I have ever experienced, all because we got our attention on the love of God for us. I didn't even have a revelation any of this stuff back then, but it's something about hitting the brakes, putting your attention on God's love for you, and something begins to happen. Something begins to change. Something begins to flow.

And I want you to know this, that God's love is love. Your love is meh But God's love is love. It's the full definition of love. It defines love. Let's keep going.

1 JOHN 4:11-12 ESV

¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

1 John 4:11 says, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us." I wanna bring this back. This brings us back to the bookends that says as you experience the love of God, there ought to be some flow of love for other people. You ought to experience some love for other people.

Something ought to be flowing out of you that is loving other people. But I want you to hear the word ought. You ought to. You ought to. You ought to come to church every Sunday You ought to give 10% of your income to the Lord. You ought to drive the speed limit You ought to let football have a little less of a hold on you You ought, there's a lot of oughts. You ought to do a lot of stuff. I think you ought to bring me some lasagna A lot of, there's a lot of oughts. I can't do the lasagna? You're saying no? Ashleigh said salmon patties will do. Hallelujah.

No, y- there's a lot of stuff we ought to do. We ought to do it. That's something that we should see. It doesn't mean that it's something that you will see, but it draws back to the bookends of you ought to be loving people. You need to be loving people. Love people. Love people. But remember, you're incapable of doing a lot of stuff. Because doing flows from believing. You... It's hard to muster up strength. That's why we have to work on our belief system around the Gospel.

1 JOHN 4:13-15 ESV

¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

Verse 13, “By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us His Spirit and we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.

Whoever confesses Je- that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.” I wanna take a minute here, and I wanna talk through this little section. It opens up with a by this, by this. This by this is looking forward. So you always wanna be mindful of what the text is doing and what the text is saying. This by this is looking forward. It’s about to tell you some things. This by this is telling you how you know that you abide in the Lord. That’s what this is telling us. By this you know that you are in God, you are in God’s approval, that God has accepted you.

This is how you know it, and then it breaks a few things down. Now, verse 14, I just wanna draw your attention to, there’s just some technical stuff in the text. Verse 14 is just John establishing his authority. Both John and Peter do this, not all the time, but on occasion throughout their writings, where they bring attention back to the fact that they, like, knew Jesus. They know Him now, but the way you know Him and the way they know Him ain’t the same knowing Him. They know how He eats. They’ve, they’ve seen at what pace he physically puts food in his mouth.

You don’t know that stuff. They’ve seen what his hair looks like at 6:00 AM in the morning. You don’t know that. They know him. So he’s just establishing his authority that he’s an eyewitness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now verse 15 tells us how we’re saved. Right there it said that whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. If you confess that Jesus is the Son of God, you are saved.

ROMANS 10:9 ESV

⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

This harkens back to Romans 10:9 which says, “Because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

There’s been some attack on this idea over the last 20, 30 years or so about the salvation prayer. And I’ll say the salvation prayer as a prayer, that prayer we pray at the end of the service, it is relatively new in the way that we do that, the way that we actually close a service and have people respond to an invitation and pray what we call the sinner’s prayer. And so there’s been some controversy over that amongst preachers over the last few decades because they go, “That ain’t in the Bible. That’s a, that’s not a prayer that’s in the Bible. There nowhere in the Bible does it say to do the sinner’s prayer.”

No, you’re right, but both John and Paul are in agreement that if you confess that Jesus is Lord, you’re in God. You will be saved. If you confess Jesus is Lord, and you believe it, if you confess it with your mouth and you, like, have faith, you actually believe it, then you’re saved. And I don’t really care if it comes through a whisper while you’re laying in the bed

at night, while you're laying in a hospital bed on, with your last few breaths, or whether it happens through a sinner's prayer in a Billy S-, a Billy Graham style altar call. I really don't care.

If you confess that Jesus is Lord, God abides in you, and you abide in him Now, the reason that I say that that way is because we have to understand why John is writing what he's writing here. John is a great Bible author 'cause he really tells you why he does things. John gives you some insight to why he writes the stuff he writes. In the Gospel of John, John says that he writes these things so that you will believe.

JOHN 20:31 ESV

³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

In fact, we've got it, John 20:31 here. It says, John 20:31, "But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, that by believing you may have life in his name."

When John writes the Gospel of John, he writes it to a bunch of people who need to get saved. John is an evangelistic book. That's why years ago, I don't know if y'all remember, they had the Gospel of John that they would just publish and send it out. It was going all over the place. I think they made a movie called The Gospel of John, and they were sending the videotapes everywhere, and you could order a free videotape, and they were getting John ev- Well, why were they using John? Why didn't they use Matthew? Why didn't they use Mark? Why didn't they use Luke?

They used John because John is written for the express purpose that you may believe and be saved. That's why John is written. 1 John is written for a different purpose. 1 John is written for the people who responded to the Gospel of John. So John is written so that you would become a Christian. 1 John is written so that you would have confidence in your salvation.

1 JOHN 5:13 ESV

¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

1 John 5:13 says, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know you have eternal life." He's writing it so you'll know. So there won't be any doubt. He already told you how to be a Christian.

Now he wants to make sure that you don't think that it's slipping away on you. Come on. He wants to make sure you know that you're, you're safe. John wants the readers to know that they are in fact born again. There's, there's no change in status for the person who's put their faith in Jesus Christ. In the Pentecostal church, and I think in the early church, it's, it's weird because the Pentecostal church has a lot of similarities to the early church. Can I get an amen in this spirit-filled church? Hallelujah. But the Pentecostal church, we have a tendency to live in this, He loves me, He loves me not.

He loves me. I went to church. He loves me. I cussed my neighbor out. He loves me not I gave in the offering, he loves me. I had a thought about someone that probably was inappropriate, he loves me not. And you hope... You- the way we teach it is we're hoping that we don't land on a he's- loves me not right before we die or right before the rapture

happens. And so you get these silly little theologies going around where people are asking this question. This is a real question. This isn't something I'm making up or some preacheritis that I've got. This is a real question.

It's a disease, Pastor John, preacheritis. Do you know about that? That's where the preachers say a bunch of stuff that doesn't mean anything to you because they don't live a normal life. Hallelujah. And but this isn't me just... This is real stuff. People ask questions. If I say a cuss word if I'm in a car wreck Will I go to heaven or will I go to hell? He loves me, he loves me not. And we're, we're worried that, well, what if I'm... Some real stuff here. What if I'm, what if I'm cheating on my spouse and the rapture happens? He l- he loves me, he loves me not.

That's good. He... What, where am I... If I'm, if I, if I happen to be on the wrong side of behavior when eternity calls, where am I gonna be? What's gonna happen with me? What's gonna... How's it gonna go down? Well, right here, John writes this to say, "You are saved. You abide in God, and He abides in you. You are saved." There's no change in status. These people haven't sinned their way out. They haven't selfish-ed their way out. They haven't stumbled accidentally their way out. In verse 13, a- again, it's assuring the reader that they can know that they are saved for one really direct reason.

It's that you've got the Holy Spirit. So somebody say, "You've got the Holy Ghost." I've got the Holy Ghost. So yeah, yeah. Say, say it like you mean it. Say, "I've got the Holy Ghost." I've got the Holy Ghost. You've got the Holy Spirit. If you've got the Holy Spirit, you should know that you're saved.

EPHESIANS 1:13 ESV

¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

Ephesians 1 says this, that, "In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, at that moment you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit." You may not be Spirit led. You may not be Spirit filled. You may not be tongue-talking, devil casting out.

You may not be healing the sick. You may not even be bold. But the moment that you made a confession that Jesus is Lord and you put your faith in Him, there was a seal that went on you, an invisible stamp. It's a blacklight stamp. You gotta have the blacklight of the Lord, and He sees that stamp on you. It says, "Holy Spirit guaranteed." Hallelujah.

EPHESIANS 1:14 ESV

¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

You've got the seal of the Holy Ghost on you. The moment you were saved, you were sealed. In fact, if you've ever read the gospel, this is, this is in the Apocrypha, but if you've ever read the gospel of Stevie Wonder It says, "Your sign sealed delivered."

Come on, somebody give the Lord a praise right there. Amen. Somebody's gonna yell at me. They're like, "Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, who is this devil worshiper in here preaching today? My God."

1 JOHN 4:16 ESV

¹⁶ So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

First John chapter 4 verse 16, we're gonna continue moving on. "So we have come to know and to believe the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." I wanna spend a little time on this section right here this morning. We could probably spend the whole morning here, but I was reading a book this week, and it made the statement in there which I thought was clever.

It just said, "People are not spreadsheets." And what it meant by that is it doesn't matter what information a person holds. There is more involved with how people make decisions and how people behave. It's not just y- The data is not enough for most people. your relationship with information, knowledge, truth, frankly, it is, it is very biased depending on what you have experienced and believe. And in fact, when it comes to experiences, most of your experiences do not shape your belief, but most of your beliefs shape your experiences. In other words, whatever you believe, you will ultimately find.

I want you to remember, in our country, there are a group of people who have come to find out that Republicans are true patriots and Democrats operate under a demon-possessed ideology. Coincidentally, shockingly, there are a group of people who believe that Republicans are fascist, immigrant-hating, racist, and that Democrats are the ones that hold the standard of how you should treat people and welcome people and build a great nation. Two people coming to decisions that if we were to put all of it out on the table, none of that makes sense. None of that seems, if we really look at it, none of that seems true, and yet it's our beliefs that get us there.

You wanna know why most of y'all are conservative? It's 'cause you believed you should be conservative. It's really not the positions. It- it's not... Let's be honest. How many of us have sat down and gone, "Let me read seven or eight books and come to a decision on how I'm gonna vote"? You grew up in a house that did it a certain way, that's how you do it. You- It's just, that's how things go. Well, that's your belief determining your experiences rather than your experience determining your belief. And what you believe's gonna play a bigger role in what you have access to, not because of what's available to you, but because of what you believe is available to you.

For instance, those of you who wanna find a job, if you believe that there's no jobs available, you probably never gonna find a job. Why? Well, 'cause you believe there's none available. Are there jobs available? Do you understand that that's all the news would talk about if all the jobs had been filled? If all the jobs were full in America, that's every day on the news. Guys, the jobs, they're done. We're good. The economy, it's great. It's like 1,000% what it was. No. So yeah, jobs are... But if you believe there's no jobs available, you're not gonna go for it.

Let me give you an example. In 1927, a man named Julius Wagner-Jauregg, who is an Austrian, or he was an Austrian psychiatrist. He was the first man who ever won the Nobel Prize for Medicine, and he was... Or not the first man, the first psychiatrist, I'm sorry, that won the Nobel Prize for Medicine. And he was, like I said, he was a psychiatrist, and he was working with patients who were suffering from neurosyphilis, which is exactly what you think it is. It is syphilis, but it's a n- a neurological version. It's, it's when the syphilis infection, which is an STD, the syphilis infection would get into the brain stem or into the brain fluid, and it'd get in there, and then it would, it... What it would do is it would resemble dementia or schizophrenia.

And so people would suffer from hallucinations and memory loss, and that's why they were coming to a psychiatrist. So people would think it was a psychiatric thing before they realized it was a medical thing. Well, because Wagner was working with these people, he started to do some research to see what doctors had found about the syphilis disease to see if he could, he could cure it, and he found out that syphilis has a hard time surviving when it, there's a the person has a fever. So fever would kill the syphilis. By the way, if you're looking for a little more modern, it's very similar to meningitis.

Okay? I learn all this during the week. I don't just walk around with this wealth of information. Like, "This guy knows a lot about syphilis As I'm saying it, I realize I sound like I'm an expert in syphilis. But we're gonna cut that, put that clip on the internet right there, amen. And but so he realized that syphilis couldn't survive when there was a fever. Well, and sometimes it could, but there was dramatic improvements. And so what he did is he started to inject his patients with malaria, and the thought process was that he could, he, they could cure the malaria with a little bit of quarantine, but they couldn't cure the syphilis, the neurosyphilis.

That was gonna keep going. It had gotten deep. It was in the brain stem. And so they just found that the fever was healing. You know what's funny about that? Is we know, we know that a fever actually helps us heal from certain infections and for certain sicknesses. We know that. This is John Hopkins' website I think says that you can run a fever up to about 104 degrees for three days, and it's gonna, it's just clearing out the infection. However, as much as we know that, the minute you get a fever, you're knocking back Tylenol like you got a problem. You know what I'm saying?

You're trying to get that fever under control because it's one thing to know that the fever can help. It's another thing to try to reconcile that knowledge with the experience of I've got chills, and I'm shivering, and I'm hot, and I'm cold, and I'm sore, and I'm aching, and I don't feel good. So you wanna relieve the symptoms. You know that the fever helps, and yet you're trying to fight the fever because you don't believe the fever helps. It is one thing to know the love of God. We can talk about it. We can look to it. We can point to it.

JOHN 3:16 ESV

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Most famous verse in the world, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that whoever believes in Him would have eternal life."

But do you believe that God loves you? And those are two different experiences. Do you believe it? And the reality is if you know that God loves you, but you think that every time you misbehave, you take a misstep, you make a mistake, that suddenly you're outside of God's pleasure, you're outside of your own salvation. He loves me, he loves me not. It's hard to believe that God really loves you. When he'll be done with you as soon as you mess up, it's hard to believe. Imagine the dysfunction in my home if Ashleigh believed that every time she irritated me, I'm calling the divorce attorney Do you think she's gonna operate in her life like she has a loving husband?

That may not even be true, but if she believes it's true, things are gonna o- it's gonna be a dysfunction that we have to deal with. And because I love her the way that I do, if she thinks I'm always running off to the divorce attorney, I'm gonna wonder why she acts the way she acts. Why are you, why do you get weird all the time? Why do you act this...

Why are you acting bizarre every time something happens? Because she doesn't believe the love that I have for her. I can tell her all day long, but if she doesn't believe that I love her, our house is gonna be a mess.

In the same way, if we look towards God and we think, "I just gotta keep Him happy. I just gotta keep Him satisfied." When I read that word earlier, propitiation, a good word that goes along with that is satisfaction. It satisfies the Lord. You don't have to keep God satisfied. He's plenty satisfied in His only begotten Son. And just so happens that when He sees you, He sees Him, and He sees the seal of the Holy Ghost And the reality is you may struggle to believe that God loves you, but when we go back to 1 John 4:10, it says just that, "And this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He has given His son as the propitiation for our sins."

1 JOHN 4:10 ESV

¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

How do we kn- how do we believe that God loves us? Look to Jesus. Amen. Look to Jesus. Look to Jesus. Look to Je- You know what I call knowing and believing? 'Cause it's one thing to know, it's another thing to believe, but when you put them together, you know what I ca- I call that a revelation of grace. That's what we've been talking about these last several weeks. A, it's a revelation of grace. The more you get a revelation of His grace, the more love you realize that God has towards you, something begins to happen. Something begins to happen. We're gonna see that in 1 John 4:17.

1 JOHN 4:17 ESV

¹⁷ By 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.

"By this", okay, earlier we talked about a by this that was looking forward. This by this is looking backward. This by this is looking in the other direction. By this. Well, what is the by this? By this is that, we've come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. We've come b- by this. By what? By knowing and believing. I w- wanna make sure you get this, 'cause this is like the key to the whole message here. By this. By what? Knowing and believing the love that God has for us. Not just knowing, but believing. And let me tell you, I feel the inspiration of the Holy Ghost right now.

Not only do you need to know it and believe it... See, I deal with people who know it but don't believe it because I'm in a church. 'Cause you hear about it, so you know it, but you might struggle to believe it. Let me also say this. You don't just need to believe it, you need to know it. Like I said earlier, you can walk around your whole life just believing, "Well, God is just happy with me because God is just cool with everybody." No, God's not just cool with everybody. God's real cool with His Son. And if you don't line that thing up right and get your faith in line with Jesus Christ, you can believe God loves you all day long.

You can... When I was a little kid, Teddy Ruxpin was big. Anybody remember Teddy Ruxpin? Okay. Teddy, there was, they made one little movie with him, and there was the ba- there was a bad guy, and the bad guy, he was green and he had a purple robe. Okay? Well, when I was a little kid, that's what I believed God looked like. Me believing it don't make it true. But when we get to heaven and he's green with a purple robe, y'all can all bring your offering. No, I'm, but that

doesn't, just because I believe it doesn't make it true. We walk around with all kinds of beliefs, so you gotta know and believe.

By this, by this, knowing and believing the love that God has for us, love is perfected with us. Amen. Love is perfected with us. And I just wanna say this, it's not perfected in us. Multiple times in John, he talks about the love of God being perfected in us. But I need you to know, it's not just gonna get right inside of you. You need external help to get the love of God perfected with you. If you're not holding on to Jesus Christ, if you're not holding on to the Holy Ghost, if you're not holding on to His Word, if you're not holding on to preaching that points towards the finished work of Jesus, you need help.

The love of God is perfected with us when we know and believe the love that God has for us. Now, continuing on in verse 17, I want you to see this. "By this, love is perfected with us, so that," everybody say, "So that." So that. "So that we may have confidence on the day of judgment." Don't want you standing in line for the pearly gates. He loves me, he loves me not "Gosh, I can't remember what happened right before I got here." I got a feeling we are actually gonna feel that when we get there. I don't remember what I was doing right before I got here.

I'm pretty sure I was making a grilled cheese. I hope my family caught that. Turn that off He loves me, he loves me not. No, no, no, no, no. You can have, this is why John writes this so that you would know. You can have confidence in the day of judgment. Why? Because you've known and believed the love that God has for you. When you believe the love that God has for you're gonna have confidence. Confidence in what? Confidence that you belong to him. Confidence that God is pleased with you. Confidence that you're blessed in the finished work of J- You're gonna have confidence Talking about having confidence But in this is love, not that we've loved God, but that He loved us.

Not looking at our own love for God, not look- but by, by being Enamored with God's love for us by keeping our and knowing and believing the love that God has for us. This is exactly what 2 Corinthians told us last week See, 1 John chapter 4 says this, that we're gonna, we're gonna focus on the love that God has for us and we're gonna have confidence in the day of judgment, and it tells us a reason why. Because as He is, so also are we in this world. See, the moment you put your faith in Jesus Christ, you got the same status that He has. You got the same access that He has.

Ephesians says that you've been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

EPHESIANS 1:3 ESV

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

Who's in the heavenly places? Jesus Christ is in the heavenly places, seated at the right hand of God. But Ephesians goes on to say that in fact you have been seated in heavenly places.

EPHESIANS 2:6 ESV

⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Because as He is, so also are we in this world. So we're focusing on the love that God has for us that cast out all fear, that cast out, gets, gives us confidence that as He is, blessed, healed, whole, sanctified, righteous, holy, accepted, with

access. As He is, so also are we in this world.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 ESV

¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians said it this way last week in verse, chapter 3 verse 18. It said, “And we all with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord,” remember that word *katoptrizō*, beholding, beholding, looking, “as in a mirror are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.” We’re, we’re, we’re looking in the mirror and we’re seeing the finished work of God in and on our life, the finished work of Christ in and on our life. As He is, so also are we in this world. When I look in the mirror, I don’t see Jason Mayfield, I see the righteousness of God in Christ And I can’t explain the, how this power works other than the fact that I’ve just seen it work We were in the hospital.

for those of y’all that don’t know, our youngest daughter was born exceptionally premature. She was born at four months. and so she was, what, 24 weeks? Six months? So she was 24 weeks and she was born. She was in the hospital for three months. It was crazy. We didn’t think she was gonna make it. The day she was born, once Ashleigh had kinda gotten through the trauma of ... Just leading into that was crazy, but just once her body had kinda recovered enough to get into a wheelchair and let me wheel her over, we wheeled over there and there’s Ali s- in this little box they’ve got her in.

And we’re looking at her, and I don’t know where it came from, but I just told Ashleigh, I said, “We are the righteousness of God in Christ Look, you’re gonna go through stuff. You’re gonna... It is just as easy for you to stand in a hospital looking at whatever your situation is and to think, ‘What did I do?’ for God to do this to me he created you and you were born. You’re gonna go through stuff. Stuff’s gonna happen. Stuff’s gonna happen. Where’s your confidence gonna be the day it happens? Is your confidence gonna be, “Hey, I’ve done enough. I think God’ll I had a lady come up to me.

She came to the church to meet with me one day ‘cause she was going to have brain surgery It’s, it’s funny ‘cause these are the type of people who believe their works are gonna do something for them. She comes up, she’s gonna have brain surgery, and she says, she says, “I I don’t know why God would do this. I go to church all the time.” And I said, “Where?” And she goes, “Here Well, I’ve been here since August. It’s December. I’ve only seen you one time imagine having that much confidence in what you bring to the table to a holy God No, you have nothing to offer.

All of you. That’s what it sounds like when you try to e- get acceptance. It sounds like, “Well, I go to church all the time.” Well, when’s the last time you went? 2014? This is my church. The amount of people I meet in the area that are like, “Hey, that’s... I’m a member there,” who I just need... If I ain’t ever seen you here, you ain’t a member here. I hate to break that to you, but You’re not We think we’ve offered s- That’s how silly. Even if you I- Go, “Well, God, I pray every day. I read my Bible every day. Me and my kids act right, and I...” You can actually have a good case, and it still ain’t nothing.

It’s not... But I have confidence in the day of judgment because as He is, so also are we in this world It goes on to say that perfect love casts out fear Which we don’t have to be afraid.

1 JOHN 4:18 ESV

¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

We don't have to be afraid.

1 JOHN 4:19 ESV

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us.

And then it ends in verse 19 by just saying this. It says, "We love, we love, we love, we love." When- whenever it happens, whenever it comes about... Listen, I'll get attacked for this by somebody because the idea that you might not be perfect and a preacher acknowledge that is just so offensive to people But when you stumble into it and you get it right, 'cause let's be honest, that's really what it's like most of the time And you may be sitting there going, "I don't know, preacher.

I do pretty good." No, you know the stuff you wouldn't tell me about You know the stuff you're not gonna bring up. When you stumble in to getting it right, when you finally, and you kinda like love people, something bubbles up in you and you love, and it happens. It's not you. It's not because of how good you are. It's not because you mustered up the strength to do it. It's because He first loved us He first loved us by beholding By beholding the finished work of Jesus Christ, there is something that begins to flow out of us in an almost effortless coming forth of behaviors that we really don't know where they came from, except that God is good, and somehow I'm changing.

Not by forcing myself to, not by saying not to do it, not by... Somehow I'm changing because I've looked and seen His glory and his love for me. Our doing flows from our knowing and believing That his great grace towards us is sufficient and it is enough. Next week, we're gonna take this idea of what we've been talking about. I've kinda just preached to you for the last three weeks. It's been good, but I know y'all walked outta here and gone, "Awesome. What do I do with it?" And next week we're gonna put handlebars on the grace of God, and what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna teach you ... If you'll be back next week, call your friends, your family.

If you get spam calls, tell them we're here. Just tell everybody. Be here because what I'm gonna do next week is I'm gonna teach you how to take your rope and get a lasso around the grace of God and get it to work for you in your life. I'm gonna teach you how to actually get your hands on it and get that thing flowing in Jesus' mighty name. If you've appreciated the gospel this morning, why don't you give the Lord a great big hand clap? Hallelujah.

Preaching Notes

Before You Preach

This is the third message in a four-week series inside the larger series on the Lord's Prayer, focused on "Our Father." Week 1 taught that insight and revelation into the grace of God determine the physical manifestation of grace we experience. Week 2 taught that obedience to the Law does not produce; we are beholding, as in a mirror, the glory of the finished work of Christ with unveiled faces. This week: **doing flows from believing**. Next week puts practical handles on all three.

Open by praying the Lord's Prayer together, as the series does every week.

The passage is preached in sections, out of order on purpose. Read the bookends first (verses 7-8 and 20-21), then work through the middle (verses 9-19), which tells you where that love comes from. Keep coming back to one line: **doing flows from believing**.

One reading key carries the whole message: what Paul calls grace, John often calls love.

Introduction

Recite the Lord's Prayer together (Matthew 6:9-13).

Recap the series. In the first week we saw that revelation of grace brings physical manifestation. Last week we saw that obedience to the Law does not produce, but as we behold the finished work of Jesus, we are being transformed into His image.

Title: **Doing Flows from Believing**.

A word on the verses we skip. 1 John 4:1-6 opens much the way 2 Corinthians 3 opened last week, with a defense of the ministry. John is saying, in effect, "You need to listen to what I'm telling you. I knew Jesus personally." Then he moves into the section we will study.

1. The Bookends: What We Ought to Do

1 JOHN 4:7-8 ESV

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Stop right here. Everybody in the room has a paradigm for what love is. But love is what the Bible says love is. Love isn't you and your sweetie, you and your kids, you and your mamaw, or you and your football team. It is never what the world's paradigm says it is.

Now jump to the other end of the passage.

1 JOHN 4:20-21 ESV

²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

These two passages are the bookends of what we are about to read, and you will find this pattern throughout 1 John. This is the **should do** of the text: the godly behavior we ought to see in our lives as followers of Christ.

Be honest: it sounds a lot like the Law. "If you don't love other people, you don't love God." That seems to drive in a different direction from what we have said for weeks, that it is not what you do that matters, but what Jesus has done on your behalf.

So investigate the text. These bookends wrap the section of 1 John that tells you exactly where that love comes from. And remember the reading key: **what Paul calls grace, John often calls love.**

2. The Love of God Is That He Sent His Son

1 JOHN 4:9-10 ESV

⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

What is the love of God? Verse 9 defines it: God sent His only Son into the world so that we might live through Him. **The love of God is that He sent Jesus Christ for you and for me.**

Verse 10: "not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). We talk about loving God all the time. Many churches have the mission statement "Love God, love people." But this verse says love is not that we have loved God.

Propitiation means satisfaction. Everything God needs in order to be satisfied with you, He already has in His Son. He doesn't need anything else. If you are in Jesus Christ, God is fully satisfied with you. He loves you, He receives you, He accepts you, and He is working on you in His own time.

You will never muster up enough. You will never muster up a godly enough walk to get God's approval. You will never love God enough, love people enough, or do good enough. If we judged everyone in the room by the standard, none of us would be close.

That is why we need grace. You don't need grace because you almost made it and need help getting over the line. You need grace because you weren't even close. We need someone to make up for the whole thing we didn't get right.

So it is not about our love for God. It is about God's love for us.

Illustration: “God, You love me.” In the late 2000s, at a church in San Antonio, I was leading worship on a Wednesday night with the worship pastor and the senior pastor both away. In the middle of worship I told the room, “Point your finger toward heaven and say, ‘God, You love me.’” I had never done it before and haven't done it since. When the people said it, it was like firecrackers went off. The glory broke out and the power of God began to move. It was one of the most powerful moments in worship I have ever experienced, and all we did was put our attention on God's love for us.

God's love is LOVE. Your love is meh. But God's love is LOVE. It defines love.

3. There Are a Lot of Oughts

1 JOHN 4:11-12 ESV

¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

This brings us back to the bookends. As you experience the love of God, love for other people ought to flow out of you.

But hear the word **ought**. You ought to come to church every Sunday. You ought to give ten percent of your income to the Lord. You ought to drive the speed limit. You ought to let football have a little less hold on you. There are a lot of oughts. (Optional, as preached: “I think you ought to bring me some lasagna.”)

“Ought” is something we should see. It doesn't mean it is something you will see. Remember, you are incapable of doing a lot of it on your own, because **doing flows from believing**. It is hard to muster up strength. That is why we have to work on our belief system around the gospel.

4. By This We Know: Confession and the Seal

1 JOHN 4:13-15 ESV

¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

“By this” looks forward. Always be mindful of what the text is doing. This “by this” is about to tell you how you know you abide in God, that you are in His approval, that He has accepted you.

Verse 14: John the eyewitness. John is establishing his authority. Both John and Peter do this at times: they bring attention back to the fact that they knew Jesus. You know Him, but they knew how He ate and what His hair looked like at six in the morning.

Verse 15: how to be saved. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God. This mirrors Paul.

ROMANS 10:9 ESV

⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Over the last few decades some have attacked the salvation prayer, saying, “The sinner’s prayer isn’t in the Bible.” The way we close a service with an invitation is relatively new. But John and Paul agree: if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe it in your heart, you will be saved. Whether that happens in a whisper in your bed at night, in a hospital bed with your last few breaths, or at a Billy Graham style altar call, if you confess that Jesus is Lord, God abides in you and you abide in Him.

WHY JOHN WRITES

John tells you why he writes. Why he wrote the Gospel of John:

JOHN 20:31 ESV

³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of John is evangelistic. That is why it has been printed and handed out, and even made into a film, more than Matthew, Mark or Luke: it was written so that you may believe and be saved.

Why he wrote 1 John:

1 JOHN 5:13 ESV

¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

1 John was written to people who already responded to the gospel, so they would have confidence in their salvation. He already told you how to become a Christian. Now he wants to make sure you don’t think it is slipping away from you.

NO CHANGE IN STATUS

John wants his readers to know they are born again. There has been **no change in status**. They haven't sinned their way out. They haven't selfish-ed their way out. They haven't stumbled their way out.

Pentecostal churches have often lived in “He loves me, He loves me not.” I went to church: He loves me. I cussed my neighbor out: He loves me not. I gave in the offering: He loves me. And we hope we don't land on “He loves me not” right before we die or right before the rapture. People really ask: “If I say a cuss word and then I'm in a car wreck, will I go to heaven or hell?” John writes to say: you are saved. You abide in God, and He abides in you.

YOU'VE GOT THE HOLY SPIRIT

Back to verse 13. You can know you are saved for one direct reason: He has given you His Spirit. Have the congregation say, “I've got the Holy Ghost.”

EPHESIANS 1:13 ESV

¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

You may not be Spirit-led yet. You may not be Spirit-filled, healing the sick, or even bold. But the moment you confessed Jesus as Lord and put your faith in Him, a seal went on you.

Illustration: the blacklight stamp. It's an invisible stamp, like the one you get at the door that only shows under a blacklight. God sees it on you, and it reads, “Holy Spirit guaranteed.” Paul calls the Spirit “the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it” (Ephesians 1:14).

The moment you were saved, you were sealed. As the “gospel according to Stevie Wonder” puts it: signed, sealed, delivered.

5. Knowing It and Believing It

1 JOHN 4:16 ESV

¹⁶ So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

“So we have come to **know** and to **believe** the love that God has for us.” Those are two different experiences.

Illustration: “People aren't spreadsheets.” I read a book this week that made that statement. You can have all the data in the world, but your life is not built on knowledge. It is built on belief. Your relationship with information, knowledge and truth is biased by what you have experienced and already believe. We like to think we come to believe what we know, but often we come to know what we already believe. **Your beliefs shape your experiences more than your experiences shape your beliefs.** Whatever you believe, you will ultimately find.

As preached, two quick examples:

- **Politics.** One group of Americans has come to find that one party is patriotic and the other is dangerous, and another group has found the exact opposite. Most of us didn't read seven or eight books before deciding how to vote. We grew up in a house that did it a certain way. That is belief shaping experience.
- **Jobs.** If you believe no jobs are available, you probably won't find one, not because there are none, but because you won't go after them.

What you believe will play a bigger role in what you have access to than what is actually available to you.

Illustration: the fever. In 1927, the Austrian psychiatrist Julius Wagner-Jauregg became the first psychiatrist to win the Nobel Prize in Medicine. He worked with patients suffering from neurosyphilis, syphilis that has spread to the brain, where it can resemble dementia or psychiatric illness. He learned that the infection struggled to survive when a patient ran a high fever, so he deliberately infected his patients with malaria. The malaria could then be treated with quinine, and many patients improved dramatically.

We have known for a long time that a fever is one of the ways the body fights infection. We even say, "Let the fever run its course." Yet the minute we get a fever, we start knocking back Tylenol. Why? Because it is one thing to **know** the fever is helping. It is another to **believe** it when you are shivering, hot, cold and sore. You know the fever helps, yet you fight the fever because you don't believe it helps.

It is one thing to know the love of God. Everyone knows the most famous verse in the world:

JOHN 3:16 ESV

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

But do you **believe** that God loves you? If you know God loves you, but you think every misstep puts you outside of His pleasure until you come back to the altar and cry, "Lord, have mercy!", it is hard to believe that He loves you.

Illustration: the divorce attorney. Imagine the dysfunction in my home if Ashleigh believed that every time she irritated me I was calling a divorce attorney. It isn't true, but if she believed it, she wouldn't live like she has a loving husband. I could tell her all day long, but if she doesn't believe I love her, our house will be a mess. In the same way, if you think, "I just have to keep God happy, I have to keep Him satisfied," remember propitiation. You don't have to keep God satisfied. He is fully satisfied in His Son, and when He sees you, He sees Jesus and the seal of the Holy Spirit.

How do you believe that God loves you? **Look to Jesus.**

1 JOHN 4:10 ESV

¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Knowing plus believing is a revelation of grace. The more revelation of His grace you get, the more of His love toward you you realize, and something begins to happen.

You need both. In church, many people know it but struggle to believe it. Others believe without knowing: “God is just cool with everybody.” No. God is cool with His Son. If your faith isn’t lined up with Jesus Christ, you can believe God loves you all day long.

Illustration: Teddy Ruxpin. When I was a kid, the bad guy in the Teddy Ruxpin movie was green with a purple robe, and that is what I believed God looked like. Believing it didn’t make it true. You have to know **and** believe.

6. Love Perfected With Us

1 JOHN 4:17 ESV

¹⁷ By 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.

This “by this” looks backward. Earlier, “by this” looked forward. Now it points back. By what? By knowing and believing the love that God has for us. This is the key to the whole message.

Notice: love is perfected **with** us, not just **in** us. You need external help to get the love of God perfected with you: hold on to Jesus Christ, to the Holy Spirit, to His Word, and to preaching that points to the finished work of Jesus.

So that we may have confidence for the day of judgment. I don’t want you standing in line at the pearly gates thinking, “He loves me, He loves me not.” John writes so that you would know. You can have confidence that you belong to Him, that God is pleased with you, and that you are blessed in the finished work of Jesus.

Because as He is, so also are we in this world. The moment you put your faith in Jesus, you got His status and His access. God “has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:3). Who is in the heavenly places? Jesus, seated at the right hand of God. And God “raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6). As He is (blessed, healed, whole, sanctified, righteous, holy, accepted, with access), so also are we in this world.

Remember last week:

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 ESV

¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

When I look in the mirror to focus on my love for God, it produces doubt. When I look in the mirror and see God’s love for me, it gives me confidence. **When I look in the mirror, I don’t see Jason Mayfield. I see the righteousness of God in Christ.**

Illustration: the hospital. Our youngest daughter was born at 24 weeks and spent three months in the hospital. We didn't think she was going to make it. The day she was born, once Ashleigh had recovered enough to get into a wheelchair, I wheeled her over to the little box they had our daughter in. I don't know where it came from, but I told Ashleigh, "We are the righteousness of God in Christ." You are going to go through things. It is just as easy to stand in a hospital and think, "What did I do for God to do this to me?" Where will your confidence be the day it happens?

Illustration: "I go to church all the time." A woman once came to meet with me before her brain surgery. She said, "I don't know why God would do this. I go to church all the time." I asked where. She said, "Here." I had been there since August; it was December, and I had seen her once. Imagine bringing that kind of confidence in your own record to a holy God. Even if you can make a good case ("I pray every day, I read my Bible every day, my kids act right"), it still isn't anything. Our confidence on the day of judgment is this: as He is, so also are we in this world.

7. Perfect Love Casts Out Fear

1 JOHN 4:18 ESV

¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

We know and believe the love God has for us, it produces confidence, and it drives out our fear. This has massive implications for living in every benefit God has provided in Christ.

People often say the opposite of fear is faith. But you can't fight fear with your own self-effort. **You fight fear with God's love for you.**

Conclusion

1 JOHN 4:19 ESV

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us.

Our love flows from His love for us. When you stumble into getting it right, when something bubbles up in you and you actually love people, it isn't you. It isn't because you mustered up the strength. It is because He first loved us.

By beholding the finished work of Jesus Christ, something begins to flow out of us, an almost effortless coming forth of behavior we can't explain except that God is good and somehow we are changing. Not by forcing ourselves, but because we have looked and seen His glory and His love for us.

Our doing flows from our knowing and believing that His great grace toward us is sufficient. You can try to force yourself to change for God, or you can let God love you right into effortless change.

Next week: practical handles. How to get a lasso around the grace of God and get it working in your life. Invite your friends and family.

Close in praise: if you are grateful for the gospel of the finished work of a living Savior, give God a big praise.

Scripture List

Every passage read, cited or alluded to in the message, in the order it comes up.

Read

Read aloud in the message.

1 JOHN 4:7-21

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. ¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ¹⁷ By 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. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

ROMANS 10:9

⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

JOHN 20:31

³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

1 JOHN 5:13

¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

EPHESIANS 1:13

¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

JOHN 3:16

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

2 CORINTHIANS
3:18

¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Cited

Named or quoted along the way.

MATTHEW 6:9-13

⁹ Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread, ¹² and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

EPHESIANS 1:3

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

EPHESIANS 2:6

⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Alluded to

Drawn on without naming the reference.

EPHESIANS 1:14

¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

ABOUT THE PREACHER



Pastor Jason Mayfield

SENIOR PASTOR, CITYLIGHT CHURCH

Pastor Jason Mayfield is the Senior Pastor of Citylight Church in Saraland, Alabama, where he and his wife, Ashleigh, lead a church devoted to Building Lives on Jesus. His preaching is rooted in the Bible, full of hope, and grounded in one conviction: an incredible life is built on the finished work of Jesus Christ.

For more than 20 years, Pastor Jason has given his life to the local church. He has been credentialed with the Assemblies of God for 21 years and ordained for 14, and he has led revitalization in churches that went on to rank among the Top 100 Fastest-Growing Churches in America. He carries a deep conviction that the church can be both excellent and supernatural, and a passion for revival.

He is an author and the creator of Tear Up Your Bible and POWER 27, a daily rhythm of Bible reading, prayer and worship. His resources have helped more than 100,000 people go deeper in the Scriptures. Above every title, his greatest joy is seeing people meet Jesus, be filled with the Spirit, and grow into everything God has called them to be.

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