

DIVINE LOVE – PART 2

1 John 4:13-21

INTRODUCTION

George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) was an Irish playwright, critic and polemicist whose influence on Western theatre, culture and politics extended from the 1880s to his death and beyond. He wrote more than sixty plays incorporating both contemporary satire and historical allegory. He became the leading dramatist of his generation. He was the first person to be awarded both a Nobel Prize and an Academy Award.

Shaw was on a radio program in the early 20th century as an expert on the English language. During the course of his talk, he happened to say in passing that there were only two words in the English language that begin with the sound ‘Shh’, but without the letters SH. A few days after his broadcast, he received a letter from a listener: “Dear Mr. Shaw, You are quite wrong. There is only one word that begins with the sound SH, but without the letters SH – sugar.”

Shaw sent a short reply on a postcard: “Madam, Are you sure?”

Beloved, I open with this story because it addresses the topic we encounter again and again in the first epistle of John.

Are you sure you are in Christ? Are you sure God abides in you? What are the evidences? If you understand this passage, you should not leave today saying ... “I don’t know.”

Simply stated, the evidence of God abiding in you is not your power. It is not your piety. It is your passion.

4:1-6 → John focused on the aspect of **Truth**

4:7-21 → The focus is on **Love**

(1) **2:7-11,15** Love in relation to **Light**

(2) **3:10-18** Love in relation to **Life**

(3) **4:7-21** Love in relation to **Lord**

Last week:

4:7-12 → **3 Truths** at the Heart of Divine Love:

1. The **Source** of Divine Love **4:7-8**
2. The **Sacrifice** of Divine Love **4:9-10**
3. The **Showing** of Divine Love **4:11-12**

Today:

Proposition: 3 More Truths at the Heart of Divine Love

- I. The **Spirit** of Divine Love **4:13-16a**
- II. The **Sureness** of Divine Love **4:16b-18**
- III. The **Sovereignty** of Divine Love **4:19-21**

So That: We would measure ourselves against the evidence John provides in our text.

So That: Beloved, I don't want you to take hold of these truths this morning. I want these truths to take hold of you.

The **4th Truth** at the Heart of Divine Love, ...

I. The Spirit of Love **1 John 4:13-16a**

Point – The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to create and enable that which He commands → God grants what He commands.

Proof – “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 beheld and bear witness that the Father has sent the 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.** ^{16a}**And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us.**”

“^{13a}**by this we know that we abide in Him and He in us**” –

2:3 – “by this we know that we have come to know Him”

2:5 – “By this we know that we are in Him”

3:10 – “By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious”

3:16 – “We know love by this”

3:19 – “We shall know by this that we are of the truth”

3:24 – “we know by this that He abides in us”

4:2 – “By this you know the Spirit of God”

4:6 – “By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error”

4:9 – “By this the love of God was manifested in us”

4:13 – “By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us”

4:17 – “By this, love is perfected with us”

5:2 – “By this we know that we love the children of God”

Why Lord?? → “^{13b}**because He has given us of His Spirit**” –

- 3:24 – grammatically relating to the aorist tense – past one-time event (in this context)
- 4:13 – grammar here is perfect tense – completed act in the past but with continuing ramifications and consequences → related to Love.

The Holy Spirit is not given in installments. You don’t get a little bit when you are saved and then ... a second blessing, a second zap, at another point on your journey.

The Holy Spirit is the third Member of the Trinity. He is a person and He is an indivisible unity.

Remember, you can never have more or less of the Holy Spirit. But He most certainly can have more or less of you.

There will be times in our lives when we receive fresh endowments of power.

The evidence will testify with an inward conviction and an outward confession.

“^{14a}**And we have beheld and bear witness**” –

“**beheld**”– gazed intently, see with understanding

John 1:14a – “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory”

“**bear witness**” – marture,w – John uses the word witness more than all the other Bible writers put together

- *to bear witness, give evidence, testimony*

Bear witness to what?? → “^{14b}**that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.**”

vv. 13-14 – we see the Trinity → “**Spirit ... Father ... Son**”

Steve Lawson – “*The unity of the Trinity is the ‘ace of spades’ argument for particular atonement.*”

“**the Savior of the world**” → all peoples: land, tongue, tribe, nation

Point – At the cross, Jesus received all that He paid for.

He was not gypped. He was not defrauded.

Proof – In case anyone might misinterpret v. 14 with some kind of universalism, John immediately qualifies who is saved by “**the Savior of the world**”

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

What does it mean to **confess Christ**?

To **confess Christ** is to declare Him publicly as Lord ... AND ... to declare agreement with all that He says.

Jesus (Luke 12:8), **Paul** (Rom 10:9), and **John** are not referring to mere verbalization of a phrase.

“^{16a}**And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us.**” – we have and continue to know and believe.

Illustration – A husband and wife didn’t really love each other. The man was very demanding, so much so that he prepared a list of rules and regulations for his wife to follow. He insisted that she read them over every day and obey them to

the letter. Among other things, his “do’s and don’ts” indicated such details as what time she had to get up in the morning, when his breakfast should be served, and how the housework should be done.

After several long years, the husband died. As time passed, the woman fell in love with another man, one who dearly loved her. Soon they were married. This husband did everything he could to make his new wife happy, continually showering her with tokens of his appreciation.

One day as he was cleaning house, she found tucked away in a drawer the list of commands her first husband had drawn up for her. As she looked it over, it dawned on her that even though her present husband hadn’t given her any kind of list, she was doing everything her first husband’s list required anyway. She realized she was so devoted to this second man that her deepest desire was to please him out of love, not obligation.

Application – In the same way, as the divine love of God is poured through Christ and given to us through the Holy Spirit, we love the way God the Father eternally loved God the Son - out of delight and joy, rather than out of mere duty and obligation.

The **5th Truth** at the Heart of Divine Love, ...

II. The Sureness of Divine Love **1 John 4:16b-18**

Point – assurance, certainty, confidence, boldness, fearlessness

Proof – “^{16b}**God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.** ¹⁷**By this, love is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in 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, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.”**

Point – Deep longings: **Love, Confidence, Fearlessness**

Deep Longing #1: Love

“^{16b}**God is love**” – Love finds its origin in God. Love **emanates from God** and love is part of the very essence of God.

This is an explanation of Providence.

If God was the Deist’s watchmaker, simply mind, order, and law, He might have created the universe, wound it up, started it going, and left. But that is not the God of the Bible.

“^{16c}**and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.**”

God does not wind things up and then let them loose to run by themselves. → Not the universe, and not you as a new creation in Christ Jesus.

Because God is love, His <u>creating act</u> is followed by his <u>constant care</u> .
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“^{17a}**By this, love is perfected with us**”

“**perfected**” here does not mean flawless

→ in the Greek language here it means completed, matured

Deep Longing #2: Confidence

“^{17b}**that we may have confidence in the day of judgment**”

A heart that is brave with conviction in the face of danger

→ “**boldness**” in **Phil 1:20** and **Acts 4:31**.

We have confidence in the day of judgment.

Matt 10:15 – “it will be more tolerable for *the* land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Matt 11:22 – “it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in *the* day of judgment, than for you”

Matt 12:36 – “every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment.”

Rom 2:5 – “because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God”

2 Pet 3:7 – “the present heavens and earth ... are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.”

Why do we have this confidence??

→ “^{17c}**because as He is, so also are we in this world.**”

The Father treats us the way He treats the Son. As the Son is in the eyes of the Father, so also are we who live in this world. The Father deals with us as He deals with His own beloved Son.
→ How, then, can we ever be afraid?

Deep Longing #3: Fearlessness

“¹⁸**There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.**”

As faith and doubt cannot coexist, so also love and fear. When “**fear**” seeks to grip the heart, “**perfect love**” casts it out. Where this “**love**” is shed abroad in your heart, there is no “**fear**”.

→ Define in context → Fear of anything else other than God
The second line of the hymn *Amazing Grace* – “Twas grace that taught my heart to fear. And grace, my fears relieved.”

→ **There is nothing to fear, but God Himself.**

Here is a way to help you understand these different fears:

The Unbeliever fears what God might do to him.

The Believer fears what he might do to God.

Spurgeon – “*If a man ... loves his fellowmen for God’s sake, what has he to fear? He becomes the bravest of the brave ... When a man loves with a perfect love, he escapes from bondage.*”

Result?? → We can approach God with the same confidence Jesus has in His presence because we are covered with His righteousness.

When God looks at you or me, He sees the perfect obedient life of His Son.

→ We do not **fear** the **punishment** of the **day of judgment**.

Only other New Testament appearance

– **Matt 25:46** – “And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

vv.17-18 - Divine Love works negatively by casting out fear

vv. 19-21 - Divine Love works positively by fostering love

His **Spirit** is given. His **Son** is confessed. And His **Love** is displayed.

The **6th Truth** at the Heart of Divine Love, ...

III. The Sovereignty of Divine Love 1 John 4:19-21

Point – Divine Love flows from the being of God into the brotherhood of the Church.

God loves us. God lives in us. God lights us.

Proof – “¹⁹We love, because He first loved us. ²⁰If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”

“¹⁹We love, because He first loved us.”

This is not merely motive. This is divine enablement.

Illustration– God’s Divine love is not a slowly dripping faucet or a well we must dig for ourselves. It is a rushing stream that flows from His very Being into our hearts and into our new self, our new being.

Illustration– The story is told about a girl who became hopelessly lost in a dark and dense forest. She called and

screamed, but was hopelessly lost. Her parents and a group of volunteers searched frantically for her all night. When darkness fell, the terror set in.

Early the next morning the girl's father was searching the forest and saw her fast asleep on a rock. He called her name and ran toward her. Startled awake, she threw her arms out to him. As he picked her up and hugged her, she repeated over and over, "Daddy, I found you!" From her little mind it might seem like that but we know who found whom.

Remember when Mary Magdalene searched for the body of Jesus in John 20? When she "found Jesus," she did not immediately realize the person she had found was the One who was risen ... and that He had come looking for her.

“²⁰If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.”

This is the seventh time we see this phrase in 1 John, “**If someone says**” and every time he gives a warning to half-converted people who are really not converted at all.

John Stott – *“Every claim to love God is a delusion if it is not accompanied by unselfish and practical love for our brethren.”*

If you do not love the visible sample, it is folly to say you love the invisible whole.

Illustration– One preacher put it this way: There is an aroma about God that can't be concealed. It's the aroma of love. When God comes into your life, the aroma comes into your life. The aroma is the sign of God's saving presence. If you smell it, you know He is there. You have assurance. If you don't smell it, either you are a believer and you lose assurance ... or your profession is false and you are not a true believer.

“²¹And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”

Point – When you are part of a church, everybody in that church, everybody who comes to join that church becomes the proving ground of your discipleship. You learn how to love them, and how to get along with them, and how to be patient with them, and how to deal with offenses from them, and how to encourage them even though you’re different from them.

There is no stopping at the First Commandment of Jesus – you must go on to keep the Second → Love is fulfillment of the Law

It is impossible to have a good vertical relationship if you have bad horizontal relationships.

You love God only as much as you love the person (fellow believer in your local church is the context) you love the least.

Illustration – If the light and fire of heaven burn in one heart, every other heart within its range is touched by the glow, the radiance of the indwelling Lord.

Application – The love that was eternally resident in God and historically revealed in Jesus is now visibly displayed in you.

Beloved ... Divine Love sweetens the bitter heart, melts the hardened heart, and multiplies the loving heart.

CONCLUSION

I want to go back to the question with which we began ...
Madam? Sir? Are you sure?

Spurgeon – *“Never let it be thought that any sinner is beyond the reach of divine mercy so long as he is in the land of the living. I stand here to preach unlimited love, unbounded grace, to the vilest of the vile, to those who have nothing in them that*

can deserve consideration from God, men who ought to be swept into the bottomless pit at once if justice gave them their just deserts.”