



Around the Word BIBLE STUDY

Trinity, 2016

1 John 4:13–21

On Charity:

"I know not whether charity could be more magnificently commended to us, than that it should be said, "Charity is God." Brief praise, yet mighty praise: brief in utterance, mighty in meaning! How soon is it said, "Love is God!" This also is short: if thou count it, it is one: if thou weigh it, how great is it! "Love is God, and he that dwelleth," saith he, "in love, dwelleth in God and God dwelleth in him." Let God be thy house, and be thou an house of God; dwell in God and let God dwell in thee. God dwelleth in thee that he may hold thee: thou dwellest in God, that thou mayest not fall; for thus saith the apostle of this same charity, "Charity never falleth." How should he fall whom God holdeth?"

— St. Augustine (Homily on the Gospel of St. John and His First Epistle)

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Introduction: In this section of 1 John, the evangelist turns his attention to what it means to love our neighbor. The source of the love that we have for one another is founded on the love that God has shown us at the cross, but John takes it even further showing us that because we have this love, we have nothing to fear on the day of Jesus' return.

Opening: Psalm 16

¹Preserve me, | O God,*

for in you I take | refuge.

²**I say to the LORD, "You | are my Lord;*
I have no good a- | part from you."**

³As for the saints | in the land,*
they are the excellent ones,
in whom is all | my delight.

⁴**The sorrows of those who run after another
god shall | multiply;*
their drink offerings of blood I will not
pour out or take their names | on my lips.**

⁵The LORD is my chosen portion | and my cup,*
you | hold my lot.

⁶**The lines have fallen for me in pleasant |
places;*
indeed, I have a beautiful in- | heritance.**

⁷I bless the LORD who gives me | counsel;*
in the night also my heart in- | structs me.

⁸**I have set the LORD always be- | fore me;*
because he is at my right hand, I shall not
be | shaken.**

⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being
re- | joices;*
my flesh also | dwells secure.

¹⁰**For you will not abandon my soul | to
Sheol,*
or let your holy one see cor- | ruption.**

¹¹You make known to me the | path of life;*
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures for- | ever
more.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

¹³**By this we know that we abide in him and
he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.**
Read Acts 2:38. Can you be sure that you have
the Holy Spirit? How did you receive the Holy
Spirit?

According to Titus 3:4-7, is the renewal of the
Holy Spirit that we receive by washing (i.e. bap-
tism) something that we have to earn?

Does the Holy Spirit give us unity? Look at 1
Corinthians 12:13.

¹⁴**And we have seen and testify that the Fa-
ther has sent his Son to be the Savior of the
world.**

Has John been fulfilling what Jesus said he
would do? Read Acts 1:8.

Does John here echo what Jesus said in John
3:17? The purpose of Jesus' coming was not to
start a revolution, change the world, or to teach
us the truth. He came to be our savior by dying
for us on the cross.

Read 1 Timothy 2:3-6. What does the Father
desire of humanity now that he has sent his
Son?

Between verses 13 and 14 of 1 John 4, we see
the whole Trinity represented and also get a
taste of what each person does.

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

Read Matthew 10:32-33. Does Jesus take our
confession of faith in him seriously? Should we
then take it seriously?

Does Jesus have anything to say to the church in
Pergamum about holding fast to their confes-
sion in Revelation 2:13?

According to 1 Corinthians 12:3, can we confess
Christ apart from the Holy Spirit?

God gives us the Holy Spirit in baptism, who
creates the faith in us for the confession that

God requires of us. God abides in us through the person of the Spirit and because of that, we abide 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.

Read John 6:68-69. How had the disciples come to believe in Christ? How did you come to believe in Christ?

In this verse, we see John again reinforcing his teaching that he presents in verse 8 and presents again in verse 12. By saying it three times, he is showing the importance of love as a virtue of the Christian life.

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.

Look back to 1 John 2:28. What does John say is the source of our confidence on the Day of Judgment there?

Refer back to 1 John 2:5. Is this perfection of God's love spoken of in chapter 2 and here something that we must accomplish for ourselves?

In 2 Corinthians 5:21, what are we in this world that we have received from Christ? Is this something that is immediately evident to everyone around us?

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.

Read Romans 8:14-17. What does the Spirit give us so that we have no fear before the Father?

Read John 3:18. Do we who believe have anything to fear on the Last Day when Jesus returns?

What does Jesus say the Father wants to do for us in Luke 12:32?

How does John react when he sees the glorified Christ in Revelation 1:17-18? How does Jesus respond to John's reaction?

Because we are still struggling with sin in our lives, are we going

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to always perfectly love God so that there is no fear of him? Does that lead God to condemn us?

19 We love because he first loved us.

Does this reflect what John said in 4:10 of this book?

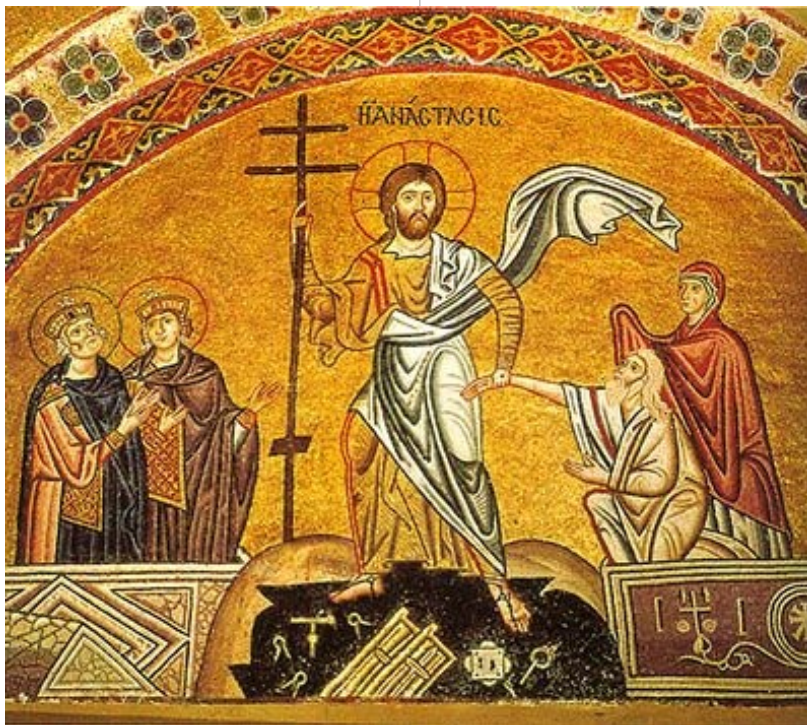
What is the source of the love that we have?

Does love begin with us or by us making a decision for Jesus?

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.

What is the evidence of the love that we claim to have for God? This is where we see the place of good works in our lives. We live out our faith by what we do. This is what James is talking about in James 2:14-18.

Read 1 Peter 1:8-9. What is the result of knowing God



without seeing him?

Read John 20:29. What does Jesus say about those who have not seen God but believe?

21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

What teaching of Jesus might John be drawing this commandment from? Read John 13:34.

Is Paul's writing in Galatians 6:2 in keeping with this command of Christ and John's interpretation of it?

Closing Hymn: Herald, Sound the Note of Judgment (LSB, 511)

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