

## Perfect Love Casts Out Fear- 1 John 4:17-18 – (21 Dec 14)

And so today we are in the book of first John. It's one of the last few books in the Bible and in particular, we looking at 1John chapter 4 and these two verses this morning. So let me read these two verses to you. It says,

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.  
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.

(1 John 4:17-18 ESV)

Rachel is about to get married and her friend Jane wanted to congratulate her and to encourage her using Scripture. And so she sent a SMS saying:

"Dear Rachel, congratulations, I wish you well for your marriage and I want to encourage you with a verse I've just read 1John four eighteen 4:18, and in particular, these words Perfect love casts out fear. So she began to text that message but instead of writing the whole thing, it is very long, she decided just to text 1John 4:18 but because she was texting too quickly she left out the one in front of the John, so it ended up as John 4:18

Usually, that wouldn't be a problem except John 4:18 reads: "For you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband." Now that is an absolute disaster. To wish your friend who is going to get married that she has that five husbands. Well, today the sermon title is not you have had five husbands alright. The sermon title today is derived from 1John 4:18 itself,

Perfect Love Casts out Fear.

If at the end of the sermon, you could only remember these few words, I would be happy. If you understand, remember and apply it to your life, that's all I would want to achieve today. So very simply, we seek to understand this phrase in the context of 1John chapter 4, Perfect Love Casts out Fear.

Obviously this text, deals with the subject of fear and it is not a guess; it is not hard to think so, because the word fear occurs four times in one verse. That's a lot, which is, that's a lot to say about this word in this short span of time.

But what kind of fear is this? It is very important to know. You see, there are many people today and I think there are many people today, who say that if you really know God, if you really know his love and if you really love God then you shall not fear God. Do you get I'm saying? There are people today who say, if you know of the love of God, you will not have the fear of God because they argue, perfect love casts out fear. And even people within our church in the past, have actually told us, yah when you love God, you don't have to have the fear of God. Now that is a very unfortunate understanding, superficial reading of the Bible because if you just look at the Bible from the beginning to the end, from Genesis all the way, to Revelation, the fear of God is a prominent teaching of Scripture. It's the fear of God that is the beginning of wisdom. We must perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, we must serve God with reverence and therefore from the beginning to the end, the Bible always tells us to have a healthy reverence for God and John is not here saying, when you know the love of God, you don't have to have the fear of God. That is the beginning of disaster.

Time stamp in audio 0:04:06.3.

So what kind of fear, is he talking about? Look at the context. He is not talking so much about the fear of God, but specifically it's about the fear on the day of judgment and if you look further on here, for fear has to do with punishment. It is about a kind of fear that you will stand before the holy Judge and that He will cast you into eternal damnation. So it's not a healthy

fear of God. It's the fear and trembling that I may not be saved, I may not be accepted by God and I'll be cast in hell. It's a very specific fear, fear of punishment, and fear of judgment.

This is a picture of my son, Matthias, the second one. He is so cute right, I mean, you could tell Matthias not just because of his face, but because of his T Rex. Matthias has cute puppy eyes, he looks so sweet, but he is quite a handful actually. There are many times, when we are outside, that he does something wrong and we would have to warn him, "Matthias, if you do this again, we will have to spank you, when we get home." Of course he doesn't quite believe us, because outside, and he thinks ah, daddy, mommy will forget it, so he continues to do what he wants to do. He is naughty and so I said, "Matthias, you will get it from daddy". Now when we get to the car, I will make sure I remind him, "Matthias, you will be spanked." You see, I want to drag this (Laughter in the congregation). Fear has to do with punishment, right? I want to drag this torment, this weight of this punishment on him for as long as I can. I mean, I don't over spank like hundreds of times but I want you to remember this lesson. Well so in a car, I make it a point to say "Matthias, I am going to spank you and when he realizes we are driving home, he starts to say, "I don't want, I don't want."

Just now, he was still playing after I warned him. He still carried on to do what he wants to do but now he begins to realize the day or the time of reckoning is at hand. (Laughter in the congregation) And so he is, he he I don't want, I don't want and when he walks through the door of our house, goes into the house, he started to cry, I don't want, I don't want and he really is fearful because he knows is going to get it, and like I said, I really drag this out because I think the fear is of a great torment than the spank itself.

Time stamp in audio 0:06:34.5.

Now, we are not very different from Matthias, all of us. When we are in the prime of our lives, when we are healthy, we have money, we have all going on, we enjoy our sins, we enjoy our

rebellion, and even though God says, there will be a day of reckoning, we, we don't quite believe it, because we think it's still a long time to come. But as we draw nearer and nearer to the time of the death, as the doctor tells you, you are diagnosed with stage IV cancer, as you suffer a heart attack, this day of reckoning becomes more and more pressing and we begin to be like Matthias, you may cry, you may tear, you may be anxious, you maybe trembling, you fear. Because deep in the human heart, we know that dying is not an ushering into an everlasting sleep. Pastor Paul used to always tell us, if there is just about an eternal sleep, everybody would love to sleep, because everybody is short of sleep today. You have insomnia, you wish you could sleep, so if dying is just sleeping forever and ever. How enjoyable it will be but deep in our hearts we know it is not the case. There is a judgment that is to come. That is what the Bible tells us as well.

Time stamp in audio 0:07:50.8.

And just as it is appointed for man to die once,  
and after that comes judgment

(Hebrews 9:27 ESV)

This lingers and weighs over humanity and therefore there is a fear that comes upon the heart, a fear of judgment. On that day when God is going to judge us, the Bible tells us, Jesus will be the one to judge, the Son of Man, Jesus, the God who came to die for us on the cross, the Son of Man will come in His glory and He will be coming with all his angels, the first time He came two thousand years ago, He was alone as a baby in a manger, but the next time He comes in judgment, He comes in glory and splendor and He will sit on His glorious throne, and before Him will be gathered all the nations, it is going to be a huge sea of humanity, but they will begin a separation, not into different degrees of intelligence, or wealth or success, but a very simple two group classification. He will separate people from one another as a shepherd, separates the sheep from the goats. On the right side, He will place the sheep and on the left side,

the goats. The King, Jesus, He would then say to those on His right, the sheep, come you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. On that day and everybody would wish they are on the right side. They are blessed, they are rich, they will inherit the kingdom.

When the Son of Man comes in His glory,  
and all the angels with him,  
then he will sit on his glorious throne.  
Before him will be gathered all the nations,  
and he will separate people one from another as a  
shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

(Matthew 25:31-32 ESV)

And he will place the sheep on his right,  
but the goats on the left.  
Then the King will say to those on his right,  
'Come, you who are blessed by my Father,  
inherit the kingdom prepared for you  
from the foundation of the world.

(Matthew 25:33-34 ESV)

But that, whilst everybody wishes they are on the right side,  
there will be many who will go to the left side, because on the  
left side, He will say to those depart from me, you cursed, into  
the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

“Then he will say to those on his left,  
'Depart from me, you cursed,  
into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

(Matthew 25:41 ESV)

Time stamp in audio 0:10:06.0.

So, which group will you belong to? For the world today, who  
does not know the Bible, who do not read the Scriptures, it is

inevitable there will be a fear for dying. But for those who are God's children, it is His desire that you will not have such a fear. He doesn't want you to live in uncertainty, He doesn't want you to live in such a doubt, He doesn't want you to live such trembling lives. He wants you to live in full joy and assurance and confidence, and He says:

This is written so that I may cast out this fear, not the healthy fear of God, but the fear of judgment. There is a condition, that allows you to cast out, or to drive out this fear. Very simple, it says it is perfect love that cast out fear.

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.  
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.

(1 John 4:17-18 ESV)

The word perfect, really refers to something that is brought to completion. So often we think perfect means flawless, spotless, that's not primarily the meaning of the word perfect in the Greek. It is a word that means to reach its fullest intention, it's to complete it, to accomplish it, to arrive at what you wanted it to be in the first place, completed, that's the meaning. Complete what you say? What kind of love is this completion about? Well, one way to read the Bible of obviously, I've, I hope, already demonstrated, is that you need to read the context. This fear is not really the fear of God, but the fear of judgment, and if you want to understand perfect love read the context, look at the verses that precede this passage.

Time stamp in audio 0:11:47.8.

if we love one another,  
God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

(1 John 4:12 ESV)

For example, in verse twelve just five verses before verse seventeen, it would explain, it would tell us more about what perfect love is, or perfected love is, because it says, if we love one another God abides in us and His love is perfected in us. So perfect love, is when we love one another with the love God has given to us. If I may put it in another way,

Perfect Love = Love of God expressing itself in our love for one another

Perfect love is the love of God expressing itself in our love for one another. So when you see that you are able to love one another because you have received God's love into your life, it cast out fear. It drives out the fear of judgment on the day, you have confidence that God's love remains in you and that is confidence boosting. That's the point and this love will be seen in your life, it is expressed in your life.

I mentioned about one or two months ago, I was with my wife overseas, and we wanted to show our kids that we love them still and so we decided to buy presents back for them, of course. Shawn obviously wants a present from us. So we, we were looking for presents, I was looking specifically for the boys toys and I spent half a day looking for his ship. He wanted a ship and I looked up and down, it's not easy to find a ship that is nice, it's either too bulky, too expensive, too detailed and the cheapo me finally found a perfect gift, huh. It's a, it is something like this, very small, very cheap, 960 yen. Huh, you can see. It's a, it's a nano puzzle. It's a nano puzzle, you say, what is a nano puzzle, it's a metallic sheet, you can see at the back, these are metallic sheets, where it is cut by laser and when you get it home, you cut off the parts, and you sort of fold it and you and you twist and to whatever you need and it becomes like this. This is the Titanic, of course, he loves Titanic. So this is, this toy and uh, if you take out the contents, it looks something like this, alright.

Time stamp in audio 0:14:12.7.

I thought it's a perfect present because cheap ah, (Laughter in the congregation). Number one cheap, easy to bring back, not bulky at all and I wanted to do something with Shawn. I wanted to engage him, together with me and I wanted to show him that daddy loves him and I know love is more than talk. It has to be done and I want him to see that wah, this process, not easy lah, I do for you, Shawn, it's a token and symbol of daddy's love for you. I, I won't do this for Matthias yet because there is no appreciation, I am not going to waste my time, but I did this, I wanted to do this, my wife saw this one and say, aiyah you, are you sure you can do this or not? (Laughter in the congregation)

I mean, it's not easy alright and so she had my doubts. She had a doubt and, never mind, never mind, I will set to prove her wrong. And so here I go, I went back home, I started to cut the pieces out, put it together. Initially, it was quite okay, a little bit delicate because as you could appreciate, there are very fine parts and they can break, they can bend and it may not hold in place. I started to force the things in, I got many cuts on my fingers. It's metal and I didn't get the right tools. I mean, this is the first thing I have, just use hands lah, try lah and got cuts and everything and it got harder and harder and harder.

Ah, I mean, I really don't want give up, but I was starting to use superglue (Laughter in the congregation). Those are bad signs that things are not going well and superglue. I did that many times along again it says, Shawn, this is really difficult, I made sure he knows ah, really difficult, really difficult and it was, it came to a point, it was almost impossible. I mean, I don't know who designed this lah (Laughter in the congregation). Really difficult because the last part is you got this whole thing and you sort it straight you know and is not like paper when you bend and he stays in shape. You have got to keep it in shape and two sites got to be held together. I wish I had a hundred pairs of hands to to hold the different parts and fix it there. Now you could do it if you have the right tools, I didn't have it.



So I I really gave up for that day. It only a few days, this stupid little thing (Laughter in the congregation) took me a few days, I want to give up on it, but I thought I shouldn't give up because that would just teach my son to be a quitter. And so I decided to go for it and I went to the shop to get some pliers, stuff that would be helpful to this and that was where I lost my wallet and that was where I told Shawn, Shawn, I love you so much, I lose my wallet for you, huh, so I did all that and eventually, voila (displays picture of completed Titanic model)

(Loud wah in the congregation) (Laughter and applause in the congregation)

Hey, this one not from the Internet ah, this is the real one, I didn't cut and paste from the Internet photo, the previous Internet one ah huh. This one is a real product; now you can't see all the superglue, but it is there and the things are wavy because I've bent it like countless times just to keep it in shape. Stick this thing together and I mean when it was done, I was so glad and I say Shawn, this is my gift to you, as a symbol of my love for him. So yesterday I asked him, Shawn, do you remember the Titanic ship I made for you. He says, "yah". Shawn, what, what do you think about it. What does it remind you of?" And he told me, "Oh, the Titanic sank ah." (Loud laughter in the congregation) and then he went on and on and on and told me about Titanic and Britanic also sank and I say, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait let me be more direct with my question. Does this remind you of daddy's love for you? Yes, yes (Laughter in the congregation) and ah, he was reminded of the days, of hours that was put it into this little thing.

Time stamp in audio 0:17:59.7.

This is meant to be a token, because I realize for people, love is not just talk, it's got to be seen in actions and deeds and works. And that's exactly what John has been saying. John has been talking a lot about love. He's called the apostle of love, not a sentimental, sugary, sweet kind of emotional thing. But real

love is seen in real difference, and action and deeds. He says, this is how God loves us,

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us,  
and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.  
But if anyone has the world's goods  
and sees his brother in need,  
yet closes his heart against him,  
how does God's love abide in him?

(1 John 3:16-17 ESV)

By this we know love. not that he just talked about it, but that He lay down His life for us and if you say you love one another, if you say you love your brothers, then this is what you need to do, not just say, you ought to lay down your lives and John is not going to let us go by saying, love is just conceptually laying on your life, but practically meeting real needs on a daily and a small basis, even small things but you're willing to sacrifice, to give, to serve, to love.

Therefore he says,

let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.  
By this we shall know that we are of the truth

(1 John 3:18-19 ESV)

let us not love in word or talk, but in deed and in truth, by this we shall know that we are of the truth. How do you know you are Christian, how do you know that you are saved, how do you know that God lives in you, by this, because God is love and if the God of love lives in you, you should have acts of love. So when you just talk about love, but you have no acts of love, God is not in you but when you live out love, when you act out love, when you perform these deeds of love, you know you are of the truth because it's from God. And therefore,

if we love one another,  
God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

(1 John 4:12 ESV)

So when you love one another, it shows that it is God's love that is flowing through your life, expressed through serving others. You see God's full intention of His love, showered upon your life is not just so that you may enjoy this love for yourself. Yes, you will rejoice in it, but there is more to it, God's full intention for His love on your life is so, that your life may shine that love and flow that love to serve others also. It is not for your own selfish enjoyment, it is to flow through you and that's what it means to have perfect love, intention fulfilled to the maximum degree.

Time stamp in audio 0:20:42.4.

And when you have this love perfected in you, this perfect love will cast out fear, because now you know, I belong to God, the fruit of the Spirit is seen in me, the work of grace is shown in my life and it's not because I was able to do it, but because God abides in me and His love is seen through me, by this I know.

And you say, why, is it because that love makes you deserving of God's love, in other words, when you love others, it makes you deserving that God will now love you? No, no, no, you got the order wrong. He's saying here, because Jesus walked in love and now because He has saved you and you're also walking in love, you can have joy, because it's not you, but His work in you. Again emphasis in verse twelve is that this shows that God is in you.

if we love one another,  
God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

(1 John 4:12 ESV)

And that it's really His love in you and when you have that, it shows that you are following Jesus, when you're following Jesus, you have perfect love and when you have perfect love you have assurance and you need not fear. The basic assumption

here is that God will not judge or separate or cast you into the left side, destined for the eternal fire because His Spirit is already in you. Jesus has already paid for your sins, you have the mark of the new life, you are graced by God and He will not let you go, His love remains in you.

Time stamp in audio 0:22:38.9.

So it is very interesting, when you see all this, and then now, you start to read back Matthew 25

When the Son of Man comes in His glory,  
and all the angels with him,  
then he will sit on his glorious throne.  
Before him will be gathered all the nations,  
and he will separate people one from another as a  
shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

(Matthew 25:31-32 ESV)

Just now, I show you Matthew 25, with some verses omitted, just to see the two categories, but look at how the Son of Man is going to judge on the last day. He's going to judge those going to the left or the right, by a very simple criteria. Sometimes we think people who go to the left side and the right side are distinguished by whether they go to church, whether they have Christian names, whether they have read the Bible but Jesus is going to judge them on a very simple criteria and let's look at what it is. You have already looked at these verses. How Jesus congratulates in a sense those on the right and in a sense, gives a damning pronouncement, pronouncement on those on the left and He asked, He says this,

And he will place the sheep on his right,  
but the goats on the left.  
Then the King will say to those on his right,  
'Come, you who are blessed by my Father,  
inherit the kingdom prepared for you  
from the foundation of the world.

(Matthew 25:33-34 ESV)

Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world, why?

For I was hungry and you gave me food,  
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,  
I was a stranger and you welcomed me,  
I was naked and you clothed me,  
I was sick and you visited me,  
I was in prison and you came to me.

(Matthew 25:35-36 ESV)

Because I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to Me, you did all these deeds of love to Me.

And then the people would ask,

Then the righteous will answer him, saying,  
'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you,  
or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a  
stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?  
And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?'

(Matthew 25:37-39 ESV)

But Lord, when did we ever see You hungry and feed You, when did we give You drink, when did we welcome You, when did we clothed you, when did we visit You. We have never seen with our eyes, so how could we have done these things to You?

And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

(Matthew 25:40 ESV)

And Jesus said "I say to you as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to Me. When you love one another by practical deeds, feeding, giving drinks, clothing, welcoming, visiting, very simple things, but that's about laying down your life for your brethren. That's what it means to love one another, and because you love one another, that shows that God's grace is in your life and so on the day of judgment, Jesus says to you who have manifested this before in your life, not just talk, not just imagine, not just boast that you do it, but you have actually done it, He says, you come and inherit the everlasting kingdom.

Then he will say to those on his left,  
'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

(Matthew 25:41 ESV)

But for those on His left, He says to them, depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Why?

For I was hungry and you gave me no food,  
I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,  
I was a stranger and you did not welcome me,  
naked and you did not clothe me,  
sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

(Matthew 25:42-43 ESV)

Because I was hungry and you did not give Me food, I was thirsty and you did not give Me drink, you did not welcome Me, you did not clothed Me, you did not visit Me.

Then they also will answer, saying,  
'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?'

(Matthew 25:44 ESV)

And then the wicked will say, but Lord, we did never saw You, I mean, how could we do these things to You or for You,

Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’

(Matthew 25:45 ESV)

Jesus taught them, you don't see Me, just when I physically appear, but you should see Me in My people. So as you did not do it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did not do it to Me.

So, Jesus here is affirming what John has already shared all you see what John is sharing, is affirming what Jesus has Himself taught in Matthew 25 and He goes on to say,

And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

(Matthew 25:46 ESV)

these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life.

Well, I've taken may be some twenty minutes, thirty minutes but Piper is going to share all that is three sentences okay. The whole sermon is summarized in these words, I find it so appropriate I'll share it with you.

“When you love each other with love that is more than just talk, when the love of God reaches its practical goal of action in your life, (Added by Pastor: perfect love) you will experience a deep and unshakable confidence before God.”

John Piper

Do you have confidence before God? It's as important for us as I draw to a conclusion to examine our faith, isn't it. Are you healthy today? I'm talking physical. Are you physically healthy today? Most of us, yah, I think I'm pretty healthy but you know what would help you if you want to know more, if you're healthy or not. Go for a checkup, go for a simple examination, let the doctor listen to your heart, your lungs, maybe if you need to, do a urine test, a blood test, an x-ray, a CT scan, because, deep in our hearts, we may, we may always have that suspicion, maybe there is a little cancerous growth there, there may be no symptoms, I may feel great, I'm not coughing, there is no blood, but, there may be small little tumors there and maybe, you need the x-ray, a CT scan to show it. And if you have done your CT and your X-ray and it says all clear, that's where you have that assurance isn't it?

Time stamp in audio 0:28:04.6.

I say to you today, you got to X-ray your spiritual life; examine yourself. How do you examine, how do you see it, what is the test, is the test attendance in church? No. Is the test a Christian name? No. Is the test your Christian heritage, in that your grandparents and your parents are Christians? No.

What's the test? John the apostle of love, boils it down very simply, do you love one another? So many times today, so many Christians, so many churches almost pitch a Gospel that says if you could just say the sinner's prayer, if you just prayed before, if you just believe Jesus is Savior in your life, it doesn't matter in your life, you can do whatever you want and you are a Christian, no.

The fact that you do not love one another, may show that you never really believed properly in the first place. You may have believed in a different Jesus, a Jesus of your own imagination, but not the Jesus of Revelation. It may be that you have believed Jesus for the wrong reasons, so that He may give you



health and wealth, but not deliverance from sin. So it is vital that you would be able to see if there are fruits of love in your life, whether there is the fruit of the Spirit, not just because you came to church. Jesus never said to the nations, those who come to church, come to my right side, those who don't go to church, go to the left side, did He, did He do that? He says, those who loved Me and loved my people, inherit the blessings. Those who don't, you may go to church, you may even stand as a preacher, you maybe even called a pastor, doesn't matter, no fruit of love, no evidence of salvation, left side, that's where you go.

Time stamp in audio 0:30:09.8.

It's scary when people don't really believe this. You know, I've been preaching this because 1John has been talking about is, over and over again, isn't it? I mean John is a little bit in my mind like a old father lah. He keeps going back to the same thing, going back to the same thing, he is not like Paul like I mentioned, Paul is very systematic, once he's dealt with this problem, he moved to the next one, but John is circular, he goes round and round and round, why? Because I think it takes a lot to get it into our system and I think, he has to go round and round and over and over again because it's really, really important.

Time stamp in audio 0:30:53.2.

This week, I was in a youth camp and in a youth, I, I asked about the camp and, and I was told that there are many young people who go to youth camp. They are able to share about their own spiritual journey and there are several, if not many of them, who grew up in your families, grew up in Christian homes, but they will openly and honestly say to the leaders, I am not saved, I don't really believe in Jesus and I know it. I'm thankful that they're honest about it. You know, the worst thing, is that they know they are not saved, but they want to tell you they are saved, be grateful, they know they are not.

But what is even more sad, of course, our goal, our desire, our prayers, is that they will really come to faith in Jesus Christ, that their hearts will be changed, that they will be born again, that's all. But what is sad, is that when their parents, may be alerted to the possibility, that their children may not be saved, yet the apparent say no, this can't be, I remember they were baptized, they have been in Sunday school, they come to church, they do Bible their reading every night because we tell them to. And the parents as it were, literally, these other words, given to me there was a wall in front of the parents. No matter what you say, they wouldn't hear you, they wouldn't believe what you say, even though there is no fruit, but they hang on, they hang on to that hope that because they said a prayer, they raised their hands in Sunday schools, they even have a baptism cert, they are fine.

Now, don't do this to yourself. Don't do this to yourself and don't do this to your kids. I mean, this is such an important thing. I mean everything else, almost fades in secondary importance isn't it, just think about it seriously, everything fades into secondary importance as to whether you are genuinely saved or not. Punggol building is irrelevant, your business, your career becomes irrelevant because this is a matter of eternal life and eternal damnation. John, the loving pastor, labors it over and over again, so that we will not miss it. So start afresh, don't come with presuppositions and think to yourself, I must be saved. I ask you today, take away the baptisms certs, take away the time you raised your hands, take away the fact that you have a Christian name, take away the fact that you come and you maybe even in service, asked yourself, is their real love in your life?

Are you still harboring bitterness and hatred and animosity against your brothers and sisters here, in this church and for that matter any church? Have you ever sacrificially serve others, or is your Christian life one of consumerism. It's all about me, I go to this care group, because the group serves me, I'm in this ministry because it helps me in this way, everything

is about you. All to you see the life of God in you where you're willing to lay down your life and give and serve because you see the love of God for you.

Time stamp in audio 0:34:40.0.

Do you have that reality, that's the chop, that's the mark and that's why you need to examine. Friends, I say to you, not only do you need to examine it for yourself, I say, for all who are believers, today work out your salvation. Now sometimes when you read a passage like this, we, we, we know that love is the fruit of the Spirit, isn't it? Love is not what I produce love, love is the work of God in and through my life, but at the very same time, don't become passive and say, Oh God, You just got to make me more loving, no, love is commanded in the Bible, you go to it. The Bible also tells us, yes you are saved, it's God's work but you got to work out your salvation. In other words, show the various evidences of salvation, prove it, what it out, apply yourself, obey God in these things.

But, let me swing it back into balance again that when you choose to obey and when you actually obey, never think to yourself, is because I was good that I really could love, because, right at the back. Philippians 2 reminds us,

Philippians 2:12-13 (ESV)

12 ....work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

it is actually, God who works in you both to will and to do, both the choice and the doing, not because you are kiang (colloquial for smart) not because you're great, but because God enabled you to that. So, my attitude as a Christian today, if I know God's love is, I want to, I want to work out this salvation, I want to love because God commands me to love, because Jesus is love and if I sacrifice, I serve, I'm willing to put aside my own conveniences and my whims and desires, for the sake of others,

it encourages me that this is the mark of grace, but I will not be proud about it, because it is God who first worked in me, but you got, you got to be put into that balance and I pray, Gospellighters, we will not be passive, but we will all be saying, let's be a people of love, let me be a follower of Jesus Christ, evidenced by love.

Then I will look at the people around me, I will welcome those who are new, I would, even though it is awkward for me, I will reach out to someone, I will help someone, I will serve where there is need, I will give to where there are necessities, I would ask God to cure me of bitterness. That's all part of obedience and that obedience is a mark of a changed life, the mark of God working in you.

So, as a church, prove it, work it out, and obey. It's not legalistic, it's not fleshly, if you do it in Spirit dependence, in God dependence and in God's humility. But let us return to this source of love. You can't talk about love without talking about the cross of Jesus Christ. John had already said, this is how you know God loves you, that He laid down His life for you. If you are struggling today with love, I say it's because you have not kept your eyes and your soul on the cross of Jesus Christ.

Time stamp in audio 0:38:05.0.

In verse nineteen, which I've no time to go through, John actually says, we love because He first loved us and this morning, as a church, I just want to encourage all of us to turn our gaze upwards to Jesus Christ, to the cross that as we see God's love in the Scripture and as we pray, God make this love so real to my heart like in Ephesians 3 and as we gather in our small groups, in our communities, we provoke one another to love and to good works, as we apply ourselves to these avenues of grace, God would let His love go deep and strong within our souls.

I pray this for this church, Gospel Light Christian Church, let this be a church of light of love, soaking in, the love that flows Calvary's cross.

If you're here today for the first time. Christianity is not about you loving God, so that He may love you in return, wrong order. Christianity is God so loved you, He gave it gave you His Son, that when you receive His love, He enables you to love Him and to love others. This morning I ask you who are friends, guests, we thank God for your presence here but this is the message of the Bible, love begins at the cross, turn from your sin and believe in Jesus, you can have that everlasting life.

Allow me to close with the story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a man whose life demonstrated amazing assurance in the face of death. Who is this guy, you say? He is a German pastor, theologian, writer. He escaped from Germany during the Nazi's reign. He was in America but his conscience, gave him no peace, he was led to return to Germany, to be with his people and to preach Christ and to stand for Christ.

Unfortunately, he was also part of an unsuccessful assassination plot of Hitler and so he was eventually thrown into prison. If you watch a movie, there is a movie about Dietrich Bonhoeffer, it's called, Bonhoeffer, an agent of grace. In this movie, there was a scene whereby he was in the prison, but he still gave hope to those around, he still gave the Gospel to those around. And so there was one night, across the prison cell, he heard a man weeping and so he said to that man, sir, I am a minister, I'm a pastor, can I pray for you, would you raise your hands and touch the walls as you could maybe hear my hands on the other side of the wall, place our hands there, let me pray for you. The man says, in his sobbing, I don't believe in God, I don't need your prayers. The prison warden on the outside saw what was happening and said to Bonhoeffer, he says, this is no use, he's going to be executed tomorrow, so don't bother. But Bonhoeffer decided still to persist and invited him and eventually prayed for the man.

The movie scene cut across to the dawn of time as in to the next morning, to dawn and there was a crack of the rifle and the next scene was the prison warden, opening the door of Bonhoeffer and saying to him, Bonhoeffer, I just like to let you know, the young man, you spoke with yesterday, the young man you prayed for yesterday, he was very calm, this morning. He surprised everyone. He was executed this morning. This young man, who was trembling and weeping in fear, was especially calm, the very next day. He has a confidence before the day of judgment.

What about Dietrich Bonhoeffer himself? Well, not long later, he was also sent for execution, for highest treason and he had a friend, a student who saw him go up to the gallows and this is what the man wrote,

"I saw Pastor Bonhoeffer... kneeling on the floor praying fervently to God. I was most deeply moved by the way this lovable man prayed, so devout and so certain that God heard his prayer.

At the place of execution, he again said a short prayer and then climbed the few steps to the gallows, brave and composed. His death ensued after a few seconds. In the almost fifty years that I worked as a doctor, I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God."

The Christian life is not an intellectual one alone, yes it does require understanding, it requires truth. But the Christian faith is a real life changing faith, that casts out fear. Are you ready for the day of judgment? As they say, ready or not, here I come, and let us be sure, we are on the right side. Let us be sure we are the sheep, who will hear the voice of our Master.

Let's bow for a word of prayer together. Would you at this point of time ponder and meditate upon these words "perfect love casts out fear." There is a judgment, there will be a damnation and yet, there is also a salvation, but salvation is given to those who have repented of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ,

those who have by faith, received, this new birth, this new life, this new love and when they have received this love, when they obediently expressed it in loving others, they see for themselves, this is the mark of a changed life, they know for themselves grace has arrived within their hearts and now because they know that they are of God, there is that assurance and confidence before the throne. It drives out fear. Do you have fear, do you see love, have you been obeying and living and applying love in your life?

Oh, my friends look at Jesus. He loves you and He gave Himself for you. This morning, would you pray that His love was so fill your hearts that you will be the channel, really channel of love that God's love will flow through you, this channel into many more lives. Would you pray that this morning, would you ask God to make that, so real and so evident to you. Sinner, I was a sinner, I still am a sinner. But sinners, you will be judged for your sin, you will be damned for your sins, God is holy and He must judge. But let me tell you the good news, God is love and He is willing and He has judged His Son for your sins, your sins are judged on Jesus Christ, that if you today believe in Him, it is paid, it is done, it is finished and you can have this eternal life. The question for you this morning is, will you repent and believe in Jesus Christ? would you ask God today to work in your heart? Father, we thank You this morning for Your Word that is so clear in the world of confusion and uncertainty. Lord, we have come with so many presumptions that are actually not in line with Scripture. I pray today by the teaching of Your Word, there will be a renewing of our minds, that there will be a careful examination of our lives, that henceforth we will be diligent in working out our salvation, in humble dependence upon You. And I pray this morning, it will be a day of salvation of friends who are gathered here. Lord, this Christmas, we are reminded of Jesus, and we need so we should be everyday. Thank You for Your gift, amazing, astounding, unspeakable gift. Oh God may Jesus be born in hearts today, We Thank You and we pray all this now in Jesus Name.

