

We Abide in Him and He in Us

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[0 : 00] Turn in your Bibles to 1 John. 1 John, I'll be reading chapter 4, verses 13 to 21.

1 John 4, starting at verse 13. We know that we live in him and he in us because he has given us of his spirit.

And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God and God in him.

In this way, love is made complete in us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment.

[1 : 09] The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, I love God, yet hates his brother, he is a liar.

For anyone who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command.

Whoever loves God must also love his brother. Let's hear the word preached. I too echo the words of Pastor John from this morning.

The Lord taught me much of my frailty and dependency upon him through sickness. And I am so thankful that he raised me back up to be back among you all.

Made it all the sweeter to be with you. In those two weeks that we were apart, Christmas came and went.

[2 : 10] Around this time of year, we start to see the evidence of that as Christmas trees find their way to the curb, to be disposed of, the lights are taken down, the decorations are rid of.

Many years ago, my own family was ready to pitch our Christmas tree in November. Not because we weren't feeling the holiday spirit.

Perhaps you don't feel that spirit. But we did. We enjoyed Christmas. But we were ready to pitch it because we had an uninvited guest in our Christmas tree. We cut the tree down. We brought it home.

And we had put it up. All of the lights and decorations, we enjoyed it that evening. We went to bed. And the next morning, when we woke up, there was a silky strand extending from the top of the tree to the ceiling.

And so what we did was we took down the tree, all of the ornaments, all of the lights. We shook it out outside. We left it out there overnight. The next morning, we brought it back in. We put all the decorations on, all of the lights on.

[3 : 17] We enjoyed it that evening as well. And we went to bed. The next morning, we woke up to find a silky strand extending from the top of the tree to the ceiling.

And it wasn't an ordinary spider web that you would go and kind of bat away and it would disintegrate when you hit it. No, it plucked like a violin string. And we knew what we had in our midst.

That is a defining feature of a very particular spider in California. If you know or have lived in California, black widows are very common.

It's a venomous spider. You don't want that spider taking up residence in your Christmas tree. But we knew that we had a black widow in our midst. We never saw it.

But we knew that was a defining feature. And we did the process one more time. And the spider wasn't there any longer. Perhaps it made its way into our house for all we knew. But it is gone.

[4 : 19] But you know, there is no mistaking it. The web of a black widow is strong, a defining feature. The underbelly of a black widow is also very defining.

The hourglass red underbelly of the black widow. You know that's the spider you're dealing with. So when you go to get logs for the fire at the wood pile.

Or you go into the garage to get your ladder. You know to watch for those webs. You know to watch for the black spider with that underbelly. The defining features of a black widow. The Christian has defining features as well.

We have certain markings. Certain characteristics that set us apart as well. And that's what our passage tonight shows us.

Our passage shows us four defining features of the Christian. Four defining features of those who live in God and God in them.

[5 : 20] That's the phrase that John loves to use in this passage this evening. Three different times we read something of those who live or abide in God and He in them.

Verse 13. We abide or we live in Him and He in us. Verse 15. God abides in Him and He in God.

Verse 16. Whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in Him. This is our relationship to God.

If you are a Christian, this is it right here. God abides in you and you abide in God. Or as one commentator has said, we have this inward, enduring, personal communion.

We have that with God. And this is a relationship that is modeled on the relationship of the Godhead. We've seen that also at the very beginning of 1 John.

[6 : 27] That we have fellowship with one another as we also then have fellowship with God. And so as the Father and the Son and the Spirit, they all know and love and have fellowship with one another.

They have an enduring, personal communion with one another. And so too do we who are Christians with God. The Bible says this is true.

We see this in our Lord's high priestly prayer. In John 17, beginning in verse 20, Jesus prays, I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through your word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

So the Son is in the Father. The Father is in the Son. And then Jesus prays that we too would be in the Father and the Son.

So over and over again in John's letter, he's been drawing us back to this vibrant, life-giving relationship that we have to God.

[7 : 45] One that permeates and that affects all of life. The Christian life is not meant to be a compartmentalized life. We don't abide with God at some time and then choose to go on with the duties of life.

No, in all, the Christian abides. The Christian lives in God and he in the Christian. And that's the relationship with God that we as Christians enjoy.

Then in our verses this evening, we're given the defining features of that relationship. Here's what it looks like to abide in God and he in us.

Here are some marks of that relationship, some characteristics of that relationship. And let's see the first one together in verse 13. We have his spirit.

Verse 13 and just that verse. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us because he has given us of his spirit.

[8 : 47] So we have the Holy Spirit. That is the spirit that John speaks of here in verse 13. The Holy Spirit. The third person of the Godhead.

He's been given to us. He's been poured out upon us. Poured out upon God's people. The same evening that Jesus prayed those words that we read from John 17.

He also said some very difficult, some very troubling words to his disciples. He said things like, A servant is not greater than his master.

If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. Or he said, They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.

And then Jesus wraps up these hard words by saying this. I did not say these things to you from the beginning because I was with you.

[9 : 52] But now I am going to him who sent me. And none of you asks, Where are you going? But because I have said these things to you, Sorrow has filled your heart.

So Jesus lays out for the disciples the path that lies ahead. A path of persecution and hardship. A path of affliction and suffering that awaits the disciples.

And Jesus in so many words says, And now I'm leaving you. Here is this trouble that awaits you. And I'm not going to go through that with you by your side.

And the disciples' hearts were filled with sorrow. That's what Jesus says. Your hearts are filled with sorrow. They're scared. And now as they hear those words, They're also feeling very alone.

And here is how our Lord comforts them. He says, Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away.

[11 : 02] And you're thinking, What? How is it to our advantage that you leave? We need you now more than ever. We have this trouble, This persecution that awaits us.

Some of us are going to be killed. And now you're saying, You're leaving. And you're saying that it's beneficial to us. That this is good that you're leaving.

How is that good? How is that helpful? We need you now more than ever. Can you please not leave us? Can you please stay with us?

That's the most natural way of thinking. You're our Savior. You're our Lord. You're our God. Please stay. But Jesus has said, It's to your advantage that I go away.

And so now we, along with the disciples, Need to let him finish. We need to hear him out to the end. And in verse 7 he continues, For if I do not go away, The Helper will not come to you.

[12 : 12] But if I go, I will send him to you. Now that is the comfort that we have. Jesus must go so the Spirit can come.

We would not have the Holy Spirit. He would not be given to us, As 1 John 4.13 says, If the Son doesn't leave. The Son must go so the Spirit can come.

The Son must go so that the Father and the Son can send the Spirit to dwell in us. To reside in us. And so it's true. It is to our advantage that the Son would go so he can send the Spirit. It's even better that we have not just the Son by our side, But we have the Spirit residing in us.

That is to our advantage. And his presence in us, It marks us out. It sets us apart as God's people.

[13 : 19] It's a defining feature of the Christian to have the Spirit. Because only Christians possess the Spirit of God. Romans 8.9 makes this clear.

It reads, You, however, are not in the flesh, But in the Spirit. If, in fact, the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ Does not belong to Him.

So, clearly, only Christians possess the Spirit. You can't live the Christian life without the Spirit. Because without the Spirit, you are not a Christian.

But if you are a Christian, He resides in you. He lives in you. The Spirit comforts us. The Spirit reassures us that we are God's people.

The Spirit teaches us. The Spirit gives us understanding of God and His Word. What a gift the Spirit is to us. What a work the Spirit does in us. What a transformation.

[14 : 24] What a new life that the Spirit produces in us. And we see that transformation on display In verses 14 and 15. We see how the Spirit changes us In the way that we live.

And that's the second defining feature in verses 14 and 15. We confess the Son of God. Beginning in verse 14, back in 1 John 4.

And we have seen and testify That the Father has sent His Son To be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in Him, And He in God.

So the Christian possesses the Spirit. The Christian has the Spirit. And what does the Spirit do in us? What does the Spirit produce in us?

He causes us to receive And to embrace John's testimony. And to confess with our mouth What we believe and embrace in our heart.

[15 : 35] Here in these verses, We're reminded yet again of what John has witnessed. What he uniquely has witnessed as an apostle. And so he now has seen, And he now testifies to us Of what he has seen.

His words to us, They carry credibility. They carry authority. Remember how he opens his letter.

That which was from the beginning, Which we have heard, Which we have seen with our eyes, Which we looked upon, And have touched with our hands, Concerning the word of life.

The word was made manifest. And we have seen it, And testified to it, And proclaimed to you The eternal life, Which was with the Father, And was made manifest to us.

So that's how John Had opened his letter to us, And now he's circling back On the same theme again. He has seen, And he's testified To this good news of salvation.

The Father has sent the Son. He has sent the Son To be the Savior of the world. The single most important truth That we can know, And believe, And receive by faith.

[16:45] And because of the Spirit's work in us In regeneration, He has made us to see. And to believe that this news Really is good news.

He's given us ears to hear, And to gladly receive this news. Then John tells us in verse 15, Those who have received this news, This is what they do.

They will confess what they believe. Perhaps your translation says, They will acknowledge the Son. They will gladly and publicly acknowledge Their Savior.

This is impossible Apart from the transforming work of God In our hearts. It's impossible. Without the Spirit. Only those born again by the Spirit Will do this.

Only those born again by the Spirit Will joyfully confess Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is the Savior sent into the world. Jesus is my Savior.

[17:48] Maybe this brings to mind What Jesus himself said in Luke 12, Everyone who acknowledges me before men, The Son of Man also will acknowledge Before the angels of God.

But the one who denies me before men Will be denied before the angels of God. The mark of a Christian Is that he or she acknowledges The Son before men.

We say with Paul, I am not ashamed of the gospel For it is the power of God for salvation To everyone who believes. The Apostle Peter is an example to us At Jesus' trial, What did Peter do? He cowered in fear. He denied Christ. But after receiving the Spirit, What did Peter do? He boldly confessed Christ.

He preached Christ. He acknowledged Him gladly before men. We will say with our words What we believe in our heart.

[19:01] Jesus is the Son. Jesus is my Savior. We will say it with our lips. We will say it with conviction. And we will confess what is true About the Savior.

About our Savior. Now some will twist this idea of confession. Or they will misunderstand This idea of confession.

Some may think That you can be a Christian. That you can abide with God Simply by stating what is true.

You just give mental assent To these truth claims. Perhaps you even just verbally agree With what John says here about Christ. And we do.

We need to verbally agree. We need to affirm and confess With our mouths the truth. Our confession though Must be rooted in a heart of belief.

[19:59] You are not saved by simply saying The right words. Even the demons believe True things about God. The demons confessed In Jesus' earthly ministry.

They confessed that Jesus is the Son of God. The demons got it right More often than human beings did. They got it right Who Jesus is. And yet of course They remained the sworn enemies Of Christ.

So what we confess with our mouths We also believe in our hearts. Isn't that what Romans 10 teaches us? 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.

For with the heart One believes and is justified. And with the mouth One confesses And is saved. So there's this mind And heart connection That's going on here.

John's emphasis in his letter Is on the confession component. He is emphasizing That we confess Christ. Because remember the circumstances. There were false teachers That had infiltrated the church And they were not Confessing the truth About Christ.

[21:14] And so John is saying You must say what is true about him. You must say He is the son of God. You must say that. A Christian says what is true.

A Christian is marked By sound doctrine. But the whole counsel of God Teaches us That simply saying the truth About Jesus Is not the end.

You must believe What you say. We must know And confess the truth And we must believe The truth That we confess. So often though Our faith falters.

We wrestle with assurance. We need letters like 1 John Because we wrestle with the question But do I actually believe The good news of the gospel?

Has God in his grace Made me his own? Or have I deceived myself Into believing That I am someone That I'm not?

[22 : 19] During Jesus' earthly ministry A father brought his Demon-possessed son To Jesus And the father says to Jesus If you can Do anything Have compassion on us And help us And Jesus replies If you can All things are possible For one who believes And then the father cries out I believe Help my unbelief How often is that The cry of our hearts?

I believe Help my unbelief So brothers and sisters Continue to persevere Knowing the one Who preserves you Knowing that he Who saved you In his grace Promises to keep you In his grace How often are the words That we sing So very true When I fear My faith will fail He will hold me fast So continue to ask God To uphold you That you might Lift your drooping hands And strengthen your weak knees As the writer of Hebrews says And in all of this Continue to confess With your mouth Jesus is Lord Jesus is King Jesus is the Son of God The Savior of the world He's my Savior I was utterly lost in my sin Until he found me And he made me his own

Keep coming back To that simple Yet profound truth Of the gospel My only hope Is Jesus Christ Even when our faith Grows weak We cling To our confession We do what Hebrews 10 23 says Let us hold fast The confession Of our hope Without wavering For he Who promised Is faithful Do you see that there?

There's the command There's the exhortation Hold fast To your confession Without wavering And then there's The comfort And the assurance That God is sovereign God is faithful God will keep you He will uphold you So Christian Continue to hold fast To your confession That's the second Defining feature Of a Christian That we see in our text Here's the third Defining feature We fear no punishment We fear no punishment Beginning in verse 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 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 For fear has to do With punishment And whoever fears Has not been Perfected in love We love Because he first Loved us Kids Can you think of something That you are afraid of Maybe it's spiders Like the spider That was in my Christmas tree Maybe it's snakes Maybe it's climbing Way up on the slide And then looking down And thinking I don't know If I can go down This same slide Maybe it's getting Into a really tight space And feeling trapped In that space But kids Do you know What we need not fear If we are a Christian If we are a Christian We need not fear Standing before God's throne One day All of us Will do it Whether Jesus

[26 : 18] Comes back When we die And go before the Lord One day We will all Stand before God's throne And it is not the beauty That as a Christian We need not fear In fact God's word tells us Here in 1 John That we stand We look to that day When we will stand With confidence With certainty We don't need to be afraid On that day On that future day When every single one of us Young and old Great and small Will stand before the throne This is a defining feature Of a believer We have no fear On that future day And John teaches us here That we have no fear Because we know That we will not be punished Fear has to do With punishment And here is the punishment

For sin Against an infinitely Holy God Punishment for sin Is an eternity In hell It is a place Where God's word Says the worm Never dies The fire Is never quenched Meaning there is Unending suffering And misery It is a place Where there is Weeping And gnashing Of teeth And it is a place Where the greatest Fear imaginable Is realized The presence of God In all his righteous Just wrath We often think of hell As separation From God It is separation From God's goodness And his mercy And his loving kindness It is separation From all of his blessing But you are not Separated From the presence Of his fury Against sin To be separated From his presence In that kind of way

Would be a relief But you are not If you are outside Of Christ Revelation 14 10 says That you will be Tormented with fire And sulfur In the presence Of the holy angels And in the presence Of the Lamb The Lamb The Lamb being The Son Jesus Christ Hell is this place Of unimaginable anguish It is a place Of despair Because God Is there As a consuming fire That is the punishment That should invoke Great fear If you are not in Christ That punishment Awaits one day But the good news Is that you can Be in Christ This very day Come to him tonight And don't come to him Hoping that maybe He will save you What did we hear This morning?

He is willing Come to him Believing exactly What he says In his word Matthew 11 28 says Come to me All who labor And are heavy laden And I will Give you rest Not I might Give you rest He says I will Or how about John 6 40 For this is the will Of my father That everyone Who looks on the son And believes in him Should have eternal life And I will raise him up On the last day Jesus doesn't say here Everyone who looks On the son And believes in him Maybe Will have eternal life And maybe I will raise him up On the last day He says You will have eternal life And you will Be raised up On the last day And you think I'm too wretched A sinner God delights To save wretched sinners Who come to him You think I'm too young God delights To save young people Who come to him You think I'm not learned Enough You think I don't know Enough Do you know That you're a sinner Who needs a savior And Christ Is that savior That you need God delights To save those Who know very little And come to him Are you grieved By your sin Are you grieved By it Do you see Christ In all his beauty And his majesty As your only hope Of salvation Come to him Run to him Tonight For salvation He turns No one away He rejects None Who come to him And when you Come to him You will find That he is A good shepherd Who has sought You out Joyfully In his love Like a shepherd

[31 : 17] Who left His ninety-nine Sheep To find That one Lost sheep And when he Found it He put that Little lost Sheep Upon his shoulders And Luke 15 Says That shepherd Rejoiced You come to Christ And you will find That he sought You out Joyfully Not begrudgingly Not dragging His feet Saying I suppose I'll have to go And find that sheep He sought you out And he found you With joy You can come To this good shepherd Tonight You can come to him Cry out for mercy Ask him to save you From the punishment For your sin God will never Reject a sinner Who cries out to him For salvation And if you are In Christ Tonight You have no need To fear punishment Because you have Come to know The love

That God has For you The love That he expressed In sending his son To die In your place For your sins That love That love is yours And it is the same love That the father Has for the son His righteous Unblemished Son That's what John Is driving at In verse 17 When he says this 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 That last phrase there By that he means The son Is righteous And so we Are presented Righteous Before the father And as the son Is beloved By the father So too Are we Beloved By the father In this world Jesus was Rejected

In this world Jesus was Hated We should expect No different Though we seek To live at peace With everyone As Jesus himself Said If the world Hates you Know that it has Hated me Before it hated You So as he is So also Are we In this world We should expect To be hated In this world As the son Is hated In this world But at the same time We should expect To be loved By the father As the son Is loved By the father Has not the father Answered the prayer Of his son Jesus prayed In John 17 That the love With which The father Has loved the son May be In us And so we Are beloved By God As the son Is We are loved With the same Perfect love

As the son Is And so here's The point John is driving Home That perfect Love Doesn't mix With the fear Of punishment They don't live Together in harmony They repel Each other They are not Compatible Together Now there is A proper fear Of God That the Christian Should possess A reverent awe A humbling Of ourselves Submitting ourselves To God Recognizing his Greatness His majesty We are the creatures He is the creator Fear But that is not The kind of fear That is in view Here We should fear God But we should not Fear punishment For sin For a Christian To fear the punishment Of God For sin Is to say That the father Has rejected The work of his son Upon the cross Or that the work Of his son Was incomplete

Or it was not enough Because we are saying The punishment Still remains For sin And to fear The punishment Of God For sin Is to forget It is to deny The love That the father Has for the son And it is to forget It is to deny The love That the father Then has For us Who are in The son The same love With which he loves His son He loves His people That he has bought With the precious blood Of his son That love of God Has saved you From the punishment That you deserved For sin And so if you have Come to know And to believe The love That God has for you As verse 16 says Here is that Wonderful effect That love Casts out fear That perfect love Casts out fear It removes All fear Of punishment From us You will not

[36 : 20] Be punished So you don't Need to be Afraid Of the punishment This is the love That now abides In us This is the love That is perfected In us Or made complete In us It is brought To maturity Not that we Perfectly grasp The depths Of this perfect love Not that we Perfectly love As

God loves But this perfect love We have come to know And to believe Is ours And we're growing up Into it God has demonstrated This love to us He's shown it to us And he has imparted it To us He has put that love In us We now abide In that love We're given His perfect love We have it God's love Abides in us And John says

We abide In this love And so it's with That understanding That we now Live out this love We now demonstrate This love And that leads us To the fourth Defining feature Of the Christian We love one another A theme that John Loves to come back to We love one another Verses 20 and 21 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 And this commandment We have from him Whoever loves God Must also love his brother So this is where The rubber meets the road As you might say We've talked about The great love That God has shown to us The love that That we now abide in This is a wonderful Theological truth Our hearts should sing As we consider The love that God

Has for us Now what are we going To do with the love That he's given to us Are we living out This love Those who know Those who know the love Those who abide In that love They then love Their brothers And sisters in Christ They express That love This is similar To what we read of In James 2 Faith without works Is dead Love of God Without love For your brother Is dead too You're a liar John says He puts it in The harshest terms You are a liar Do you remember When Jesus Healed the paralytic The man who was Dropped down Through the roof Initially Jesus simply said Son Your sins are forgiven And the scribes Who were sitting there

They took offense At this And they questioned In their hearts Saying Why does this man Speak like this He is blaspheming Who can forgive sins But God alone And then Jesus says Beginning in Mark 2 8 Why do you question These things In your hearts Which is easier To say to the paralytic Your sins are forgiven Or to say Rise Take up your bed And walk But that you may know That the son of God The son of man Has authority on earth To forgive sins He said to the paralytic I say to you Rise Pick up your bed And go home And he rose And immediately Picked up his bed And went out Before them all We can ask The same question here Can't we Which is easier To say I love God Or To demonstrate To show That you love God By loving your brothers

And sisters In Christ We can say All kinds of things We can make All kinds of Proclamations Anyone can say They love God But what do our Actions reveal?

[40 : 39] The one who Truly loves God Will then love His brother Because God Has commanded it And the Christian Loves to obey The commands Of the one That he loves John probably Had the words Of Jesus Christ On his mind here When our Lord Said this In John 13 34 A new command I give to you That you love One another Just as I Have loved you You also Are to love One another So we love To obey The one That we love And so If we fail To obey His commandments If we disregard His commandments What we are Really saying Is I don't Love you God I love To say That I do Maybe I love To think That I do Maybe I love That others Think that I do But the fact Of the matter Is I don't Love you If I did

I would obey What you command Like so many Other times In 1 John Here is a test For our hearts How we live How we behave Reveals the true Substance Of the heart And if you have Really come to know And believe The love That God has For you Will it not Overflow with love For fellow Christians Look at how God Has first loved us How can I be Stingy With my love When God Has been so Generous With his love Toward me Only the Christian Can love In this way So this is The defining feature Of those who live In God And God In them So we love One another Because God Has loved us We have the spirit And by the spirit We confess Jesus is The son Of God And we have

No fear Of punishment What heights Of love What depths Of peace When fears Are stilled When strivings Cease My comforter My all in all Here in the love Of Christ I stand Indeed What a glorious Truth it is Lord That you have Shown us In your word We have no fear Of death No fear For the Christian Because we will Stand before Your throne One day Clothed in the Righteousness Of your son Treated as Your son Is Beloved by you Father help us To remember this To live In light of it To live Joyfully Boldly Before others Confessing Indeed That Jesus Is our Savior Because you have Given us Your spirit We do that We pray Lord That you would Help us To cling To these Truths To live Them out In the grace

And in the Strength that you Provide We pray this All in Jesus Name Amen Jude verse 24 Now to him Who is able To keep you From stumbling And to present You blameless Before the presence

Of his glory With great joy To the only God Our Savior Through Jesus Christ our Lord Be glory
Majesty Dominion In authority Before all time And now And forever Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen
Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Try Amen Amen
Amen
Amen