

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – July 21, 2020

If the Lord be with you.

Hey, I have a question for you. What are your thoughts about one day standing before God? Is it a thought that frightens you or does it thrill you, excite you to think about seeing your savior?

Now, people who don't believe in God, people who are not believers, they are excused from this question because I know they don't give any thought to when they stand before for God. We will let them take up this question with God later. But all of you who do love God, who are followers of Jesus, I have the most wonderful news for you about one day standing before God. I am looking at First John Chapter four. This is not the Gospel of John, but it's the first little letter by the Apostle John, that's towards the end of your Bible. First John Chapter 4, Verses 16 through 18. I think you're gonna like what you hear, I read...

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abide in them. Love has been perfected among us in this... That we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, as Christ is, so 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 reached perfection in love.

Notice how John begins here, God is love, love is God's nature. Love is God's essence, it is His very being, and that means that God can no more stop loving you than he can, well, then he can stop being God. That then leads John to say in the next verse, love has been perfected among us, the Greek word here, translated perfected is the word teleios. It has to do with reaching a goal, it means to finish something, to complete something, to bring it to perfection, and this might help, it's a same verb that Jesus uses on the cross, when he cries out in victory, it is finished. It is completed. It is accomplished, God's redemption, love.

So we see in this verse that God's love has been perfected among us, that is God's love for you and me, it has reached, its goal. It has been completed among us in this, in what he says, that we may have boldness on the day of judgment. Not that we shrink back and shame on the day of judgment, not that we hang our heads in fear, but that we may have boldness on the day of judgment. And that is why Jesus came, why he lived, died, was raised, ascended, that we might stand before God fully forgiven, accepted. So God's love, it has reached its intended goal in your life and mine, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because it says... Because as he is, as Jesus is, so are we in this world. And that really is what salvation is about, that God the Father looks at the believer as he looks at Jesus. He sees him, he sees her as righteous, holy, blameless.

Notice here that John is not exhorting us to do something, rather he is affirming what we are. He says that as Jesus is, so are we in this world, as Jesus is a son of God, so are we. Sons and daughters of God by faith in Him. What Jesus is by nature, we are by grace. We are loved by the Father as Jesus is loved by the Father, and that means that we can have confidence on that day, that we stand before God, because as Christ is, so are we in this world.

Our text continues, there is no fear in love, but perfect love. Again, love that has reached its goal. There was no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment. Here

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is fear not of snakes, not of heights, it is fear that has to do with punishment by God. In the early days of my walk with Jesus, I still had a hold over a fear, a fear of punishment, although I believe I knew that Jesus had taken my punishment on the cross, I still had this fear of punishment, so we could say that God's love had not yet been perfected in me. It had not reached the gold that God had intended for me. There was no fear in love, it says, but perfect love casts out fear. It cast out the fear of punishment, when God's love really comes into us... Fear goes right out the door. Fear has no place in God's love for us.

Now, there is, there is what the Bible calls the fear of the Lord. That is the beginning of wisdom. But to fear the Lord, there it means, to revere the Lord, to honor Him, to worship Him with the fear of the Lord, it is not being afraid of him. There was this great scene in the first chapter of the Book of Revelation with the same Apostle John, where he's caught up into heaven and he sees the ascended glorified Jesus as he is now. And it says, John fell at Jesus feet as though dead. This is the same Apostle with The Last Supper, it says that he leaned on Jesus breast, but now is he sees Jesus in his glorified state. He falls at His feet as the dead, and then it says, it says, But Jesus placed his right hand on me saying, Do not be afraid.

I wonder if sometimes if the first word that you and I, that we hear from Jesus when we see Him in His glory, that He will say to us, don't be afraid. God's perfect love for you. God's love that has reached its intended goal for you in cast out fear, it casts out fear of judgment. Yes, there will be a judgment for our rewards, for our crowns, but not a final judgment of our sins that was judged on the cross. I wanna speak to you as believers in Jesus, you need to have no fear about your past, however bad it was. You need have no fear about your past, God has erased, you need have no fear of the present. COVID-19 and all that is going on in a country. God loves you and is watching over you. He will not allow anything to happen to you that will not be for your eternal good.

You need not fear the days to come, Jesus has promised to be with you to the end of the world, and you need not fear for eternity, because Jesus has taken care of your eternity, Jesus is gone to prepare a place for you, that where he is, there you will be also. Close to the Father's heart, you are forgiven your sin, you're loved in your weakness, you're saved by His grace, you are destined for everlasting life with the Father.

If I never see you here, I do look forward to seeing you there.

I'm Tim Smith a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way.

Thanks for listening until next time.

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