

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on August 25, 2019:**

**"Transformed by Love Series (Letters of John):
3 Aspects of Love – Evidence of Faith (1 John 4:1-16)
(Part 8)"**

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows us through John's letter how God's love is transforming believers so they can share God's love and reconciliation with others.]

Notes

Introduction:

- Pastor Craig told us that he found a new U-Tube pastime – watching near death experiences – people who have experiences heaven as well as hades.
- This is truly amazing thing as people talk about how they felt God's love.
- When these people were told that it wasn't there time to be in heaven yet and that they were going back, they said, "I don't want to go back. I want to stay."

- Now, have you ever thought in the past, "If I make it into heaven?"
- Has anyone ever questioned their salvation? Lots of Christians do – one time or another.
- There are the traditional Christian beliefs that many people will be going to hell and then there is the belief called universal reconciliation.
- Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians and in Colossians and in Romans that what Jesus did on the cross was sufficient for all.
- Paul tells us that "When one died, all died." (2 Cor. 5:14)

- This means that all of humanity has been restored into a relationship with God, whether they understand it and respond to it and put their trust and faith in Jesus.
- Now, our denomination doesn't believe in universal salvation but universal reconciliation, which is quite a difference.
- Even though all humanity is included in God's love, not all are yet in communion with God.
- We are hopeful that most if not all of humanity will take this opportunity to come into a relationship with God.

- So, today John is going to walk us through so we can understand what it means to believe in Jesus and help us answer the question, "Am I going to make it?"

Recap of 1 John 3:11-24:

1. Believers are to love one another, a message from the beginning.
2. Not-yet-believers (the world) don't show this love and thus abide in death. [It takes trust in Jesus to cross over into eternal life.]

3. Hating a brother is the same as murder.
4. Murderers don't have eternal life abiding in them. [Murderers are those living outside of the love of God, is what John is talking about.]
5. Jesus showed his love by dying for us.
6. Our love must be expressed by action, not just words.
7. Believers love with action, and this confirms in their hearts they believe.
8. God knows our hearts and sees through any doubts we might have.
9. Believers can have confidence that the fruit of obedience is pleasing to God, strengthening our prayers.
10. God's command is that we believe in Jesus, and love one another.
11. Keeping his command is a reflection and outcome of abiding in him and his abiding in us through his spirit.

In Preview of today's message (1 John 4:1-16) – pastor Craig's rhyming verses:

*All spirits are not from God, so we must Test,
Those claiming Jesus is wherein we Rest.
We have overcome, His Spirit resides in Us,
When the world doesn't listen, don't make a Fuss.*

*Love is and comes from God, the sum of our Worth,
In loving others, we evidence our Birth.
God loved us by sending his Son,
Our sins forgiven, in him we've Won.*

*He loved us first, while we were in Sin,
Our loving others shows we are In.
Available for all, and no hard Test,
Just believe in Jesus, he does the Rest.*

The false teachers denied the truth of the Incarnation (4:1-6):

1 John 4:1 (NIV), Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2) This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

- True prophets and teachers do proclaim that Jesus came in the flesh.
- So the false teachers don't yet know who they are in their relationship with Jesus.

3) but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

- While this is a situational thing, it doesn't mean that there aren't spiritual principles we can apply today.

4) You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

- So, whatever people may say about Satan or demons, we don't need to fear that because Jesus overcame the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

5) They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. 6) We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

- John shows how we know if the gospel message from others is on track.
- Now, John is going to point out three aspects of God's love.

1-Love is What God Is (4:7-8):

1 John 4:7 (NIV), Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8) Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

- John answers the questions, "How do I know if I'm saved? How do I know if I'm good enough?"
- He does this by showing that it's very simple to answer – we need to have the love of God flowing out of our hearts.
- Now this may not happen to us every moment of our lives, but when we see someone in need, because of the love of God in us, we can't help but reach out and fulfill that need.
- As we maintain that loving relationship with God through prayer, study and meditation and worship and coming together to fellowship in church and in small groups, God's Spirit flows through us.
- This is a supernatural thing – so we need to get ourselves out of God's way of expressing His love.
- The more and more we are in tune in that relationship with God, then his love becomes more evident in our lives.

2-Love is What God Did in the Past (4:9-11):

1 John 4:9 (NIV), This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10) This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

- This shows that while we were in sin, God loved us and reconciled us.
- There is nothing we could have done to influence God to do this for us.
- While our relationship with God can ebb and flow, our reconciliation with God cannot.

- It's because through Jesus, He undid what Adam did to humanity through original sin.
- Now all of humanity is included in God's reconciliation even though most don't have a clue.
- So, our role as part of the ministry of reconciliation that Paul talks about is to make that evident to others.
- And we do that through God's love to others.
- From verse 10, we can see that our salvation is not based on anything that we do ourselves because we can't earn it but rather it's based on God's tremendous love for us.
- God puts his love out to humanity.

11) Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

- Notice John doesn't tell us to love ourselves, but our response to God's love is to love others.
- This is our Christian life – "Loving God and loving others without fear, shame, guilt or doubt."
- This is what we were destined to do as a church.
- As believers, we have a role to play in God's plan and that is to be a part in God's reconciliation of all humanity.

3-Love is What God Is Doing Now (4:12-16):

1 John 4:12 (NIV), No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. 13) This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit.

- John isn't telling us to do this on our own and to fall back on our human resources, because it doesn't work.
- Rather, this is a supernatural experience and so we do it through the Spirit.
- This transformation and love for others is an outcome from our input of prayer, study, meditation, worship and fellowship.
- We must be sure to place the horse of faith before the cart of love, peace and works.
- Now when a river flows into a pond and there's not an outlet, what happens? The pond stagnates. There has to be a flow.
- And when the Holy Spirit flows into us, it also flows out.

14) And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

- We're back to universal reconciliation – Jesus is the Savior of the whole world.
- Jesus came and undid what Adam did.
- Does it make any sense at all, that the created human being Adam and his sin had more power than the Son of God has when He came to this earth to replace what Adam did?

- Paul tells us that Jesus undid the works of Adam. When He (Jesus) died, all died.
- Jesus is not just the Savior of believers, but rather He is the Savior of the whole world.
- Unfortunately, the most of the world does know or doesn't care at this time.

15) If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. 16) 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 them.

- This reminded pastor Craig of the Cher song, "Believe" where the main lyric says, "Do you believe in life after love?"
- In reality, God's love just continues.
- And we are called to reflect God's love to others.
- This isn't our work – this is Jesus' work!
- And Jesus invites us to participate with Him.
- And when we participate with Jesus, things begin to get crazy – crazy in a good way.
- We have such an amazing God that loved us first before we even had a clue and then invited us into a relationship that is going to change the world in an amazing way.
- And we are a part of what God is doing right now – it's just so amazing.

In Summary of 1 John 4:1-16 (Let's say this together):

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Those claiming Jesus is wherein we Rest.
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*Love is and comes from God, the sum of our Worth,
In loving others, we evidence our Birth.
God loved us by sending his Son,
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Amen!

Closing prayer