**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Blessings. . . Let Us Love One Another**

**1 John 4:7**

*Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl*

October 1st In the Year of Our Lord 2023

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted.)

We continue our series and count ourselves blessed to be reading our Lord’s proclamations through the Apostle John. . . who was a person that actually walked with Jesus before and after the Cross. And from the Cross, Jesus entrusted His mother to John. John was bodily present when Jesus commissioned him and the other disciples (John 20:20ff, Matthew 28). We also read, in 1 John 1:3-5, John’s eyewitness to the life and ministry of Jesus.

3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed, our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. 5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

Testifying to John’s historical importance… historians note the church father Polycarp, (2ndc. 69 – 155 A.D.; Bishop of Smyrna) was a student of John. Polycarp was martyred for his witness. Smyrna was one of the seven churches John addressed in the letter of Revelation (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea).

Remember, historical Christianity has attributed five (5) of the twenty-seven (27) New Testament books to John. One of those five letters (books) is titled 1 John, which was penned, like all of the five letters, within the last ten years of John’s life. Today’s scholars recognize that John could have lived past the year one hundred (100 AD). John most likely wrote 1 John from Ephesus where his home-base is known to have been.

Today, our focus verse is **1 John 4:7**, but we receive God’s witness today starting with the **1 John 4:1.** We are blessed, because we receive the truth in how to manage life.

**1** Beloved, 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** By this you know the Spirit of God:

every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;

**3** and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God;

this is the spirit of the antichrist,

of which you have heard that it is coming,

and now it is already in the world.

**1 John 4:1-3** highlights the Lord’s concern for all Believers to be aware of false teachers who are possessed by a false spirit. You know, those wolves in sheep’s clothing. In verse 2, we are given a test question to assist us in determining the truth. This basic truth assists us in managing our lives and our family. Parents have the primary role of protecting their children. So, we need to be diligent and guard our families and our children from destructive and antichrist messages and teachings. John states the question this way. . . Does the teacher confess that God incarnated Himself to be a human being known as Jesus Christ?

Believers receive a basic and common-sense question. This one question sheds light on a whole series of observations about our witness and worldview. Here are nine observations to start. The observations are centered around miracles and events that the materialistic/naturalistic worldview denies exists. The overall riding realization and acceptance of a spiritual dimension in our lives is displayed in all of these observations.

1. Test the spirit of the teacher before you believe their teaching.
2. There are false prophets/teachers in the world. There is Truth not relativism.
3. It is possible for Believers to know the Spirit of God. The eternal God exists.
4. Yes, it is possible to determine the validity of a teacher. Judgement exists.
5. God incarnated Himself in the flesh as Jesus, The Christ/Messiah.
6. Confessing God’s incarnation is a mandatory proof in becoming a Christian.
7. Yes, there is an antichrist that is active now in this temporal world.
8. As a work of Satan. . . antichrists in this world deny the incarnation.
9. The antichrist has a spiritual dimension that influences fallen humanity. This is who the false teachers are.

Through these verses, God supplies Believers more detail about His plan for our lives, and the people/person He has planned for us to be. God plans for us to be “*overcomers*”. Meaning that He equips us to *overcome* the schemes of the Devil. This includes possessing an understanding of who God is and how God’s enemies (antichrist/s) function in this fallen world.

The next part of God’s message (verses 4-6) should be made clear to all people. Why be a Christian? The common response is. . . “when you die – you get to go to heaven”. Sounds like a life insurance policy to me! Part of our witness, as Believers, is to share and fulfill God’s triumphant life now. . . in this life! Believers have surrendered to God and have invited His Holy Spirit to indwell our hearts to empower us to overcome the tests constantly challenging our lives. God’s spiritual power operating in our hearts and minds separates us. . . protects us. . . and guides our families.

**Continue in verse 4. . .**

 **4** You are from God, **little children,**

and have overcome them;

because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

 **5** They are from the world;

therefore, they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them.

 **6** We are from God;

he who knows God listens to us;

he who is not from God does not listen to us.

By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Notice how the Apostle John addresses his audience as “***little children and beloved”.*** John is in his advanced years when he wrote for God, who is the Author of every letter in the Bible. John’s love as their “overseer” comes through. And now our focus verse for this sermon:

 **7** **Beloved**,

let us love one another, for love is from God;

 and everyone **who loves is born of God** and knows God.

 **8** The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

 **9** By this the love of God was manifested in us,

that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world (John 3:16)

so that we might live through Him.

 Being “born again” of Spirit (born of God) is the witness Jesus gave to Nicodemus. John wrote those words too. We also see the direct eternal relevance to being created by God in His image. God purposely designed our soul. . . our heart. . . our mind and whole being to contain His Holy Spirit. Now here is a real theological term you need to remember. . . without God’s created *love-design* built in us, we would be a biological blob. We might as well have been originated from a random undirected meaningless purposeless process.

 Within these verses. . . we do not want to miss John’s consistent witness he learned from Jesus. Jesus’ response to the question from the lawyer about “which is the great commandment in the Law?” is revealed here.

**Matthew 22:35-40**

35 One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him,

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

37 And He said to him,

"'YOU SHALL **LOVE** THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'

(Deuteronomy 6:5)

38 "This is the great and foremost commandment.

39 "The second is like it,

'YOU SHALL **LOVE** YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' (Leviticus 19:18)

40 "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

 Jesus’ words, that John teaches, are a duplication from God’s inherent Word found in the Old Testament book of Joshua and Deuteronomy written about fourteen hundred years prior to the Incarnation.

**Joshua 22:5** "Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God and walk in all His ways and keep His commandments and hold fast to Him and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul."

**Deuteronomy 30:6** "Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.

 1 John 4:10 identifies that God extended His love to us which is the catalyst for the Incarnation leading to the sacrificial Cross payment for all of fallen humanity’s sin. In this same letter, John witnessed that God loved us first (4:19) which affords all of us the opportunity to respond back to God’s love with love.

 **10** In this is love, not that we loved God,

but that He loved us

and sent His Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins.

(Romans 3:25, Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:2)

 **Verse 11** reiterates the second part of the two greatest commands.

 **11** Beloved,

if God so loved us,

we also ought to love one another.

**Verse 12** is explained that due to God’s brilliant glorified Being. . . our temporal human physical bodies cannot withstand his actual presence. This verse is a good one to study in order to understand God’s presence.

 **12** No one has seen God at any time;

[For an explanation . . . see online source *If Moses met face to face with God, why, later, was he not allowed to see God’s face?* <https://www.gotquestions.org/God-Moses-face-to-face.html> ]

if we love one another,

God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

**Verse 13** restates a main component of God’s incarnational mission. . . which was to demonstrate that His Holy Spirit can dwell within a human being that He created in His image.

 **13** By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us,

because He has given us of His Spirit.

Again, John’s witness is consistent with his letter chronicling Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus in John 3. To be clear. . . there is only one kind of Christian. . . that is to be “born again” to even see or enter the kingdom of God. This is the same prophetic message spoke by God through His prophet Ezekiel.

**Ezekiel 36:26-27,37** 26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

 27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes,

and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. . . . 37 'Thus says the Lord GOD,

 "This also I will let the house of Israel ask Me to do for them:

Being spiritually reborn is salvation. But do not confuse this with those that teach a name-it-claim-it, health and wealth gospel. The *reborn of spirit* Jesus teaches Nicodemus is not claimed like a lottery ticket but received by the surrendering of our heart to God. It is not a road to wealth or health. . . it is a road to peace with God and our neighbor. In fact, all the Apostles were without wealth and were martyred except for John, who was left to die on the island of Patmos. At least that was what the Roman authorities hoped. Historians now know that John survived and lived past the year 100 A.D.

 **In verses 14ff**, John is repetitive in declaring the Incarnation and the identification of who are the Believers.

 **14** We have seen and testify

that the Father, has sent the Son

to be the Savior of the world.

 **15** Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God,

God abides in him, and he in God.

 **16** We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us.

God is love,

and the one who abides in love

abides in God, and God abides in him.

 **17** By this, love is perfected with us,

so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment;

because as He is, so also are we in this world.

**I find verse 18** to be most appealing. The word “fear” (Greek: Phobos) is used throughout the New Testament. Depending on the context, it can mean *reverence* or to actually be *afraid*.

**18** There is no fear in love;

but perfect love casts out fear,

because fear involves punishment,

and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

In Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, He concludes His six corrections of the Jewish

misunderstanding and misapplication of Law with "Therefore you are to be perfect, (Greek: teleios) as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48). John uses the same Greek word (teleios) that Jesus does in describing the Believer’s perfect life goal. “Perfect” in our scientific culture denotes a different meaning (totally without error). God knows the intentions of the Believer’s heart. And He knows we are going to make mistakes and has planned for Believers to come to Him with confession (1 John 1: 1-10). So, then we have a complete, mature, fulfilled and perfected relationship with God our Father.

Perfect: Strong’s 5046 τέλειος teleios

Meaning: having reached its end, i.e. complete, by ext. perfect

 Usage: complete (2), mature (4), more perfect (1), perfect (12).

Notes: Leviticus 19:2; Deuteronomy 18:13; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 3:12-15

With the Believer’s maturing relationship with God. . . Jesus tells us His expectations. But His expectations come with the assistance of the Holy Spirit. . . the “Helper”.

**John. 14:15-23**

15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

16 "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;

17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

19 "After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also.

20 "In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?"

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

Additionally, God speaks through Paul clarifying His intentions about *fear.* Believers are as adopted children who are loved.

**Romans 8:15** For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

God desires for us to live our lives under His spiritual protection to alleviate our fears from the fallen world. Remember that nothing can separate us from the love of the Lord (Romans 8:35ff).

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for fear is יִרְאָה yirah. But oftentimes the contextual use of the word means “awesome or reverence” as in Psalms 111:10

 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.

**Fear**: Strong’s 03374 יִרְאָה yirah; Meaning: a fear;

Usage: awesome (1), extremely (1), fear (35), fearing (1), reverence (5).

Job 28:28, Proverbs 1:7, 9:10, 15:33; Isaiah 11:2, 33:6; Micah 6:9

I find great comfort in perfecting my relationship with God. . . knowing that the closer I draw to Him the less fear I have. To be clear, the Lord does not want us to fear Him. God does want us to be afraid of what sin will do to us. Sin brings judgement.

The last verses in 1 John 4 make a summation of the entire teaching. Obviously, we have too much hate in this fallen world. People choose to hate. But this statement needs to be explained. Without surrendering to God’s Holy Spirit and His Spirit dwelling/residing in a person. . .they are subject to having the schemes of the Devil rule their life. . .their emotions. . . and all relationships. *One who plans to do evil, Men will call a schemer* (Proverbs 24:8).

John writes a clear and distinct message before he closes his letter. In what we chronicle as1 John 5:19-20, he writes, *“We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.*

We close with John’s words:

 19 We love, because He first loved us.

 20 If someone says,

"I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar;

for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen,

cannot love God whom he has not seen.

 21 And this commandment we have from Him,

that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

**AMEN**