*Series: The Composition of Confidence – 1 John*

**Confidence in the Day of Judgment – Love Perfected Among Us**

*1 John 4:7-5:5*

**Introduction**

1. John has talked about having confidence when Christ comes again – **3:28** – the desire to be identified with Him when He comes, to share in His glory rather than being ashamed.
2. When Christ comes it will be for judgment. We want to be right with Him when He comes. Rather than fearing judgment, we ought to be anticipating the coming of Christ with joy as God’s children.
3. The key to confidence in the day of judgment is in a word, ***“love.”*** However, love is not whatever we want it to be, and certainly not what the world says it is.
4. The love God seeks to perfect in us is of His very nature. If we want to be confident in the judgment, we must reciprocate God’s love and love each other as He loved us.
5. Knowing and Seeing God – His Nature of Love **(4:7-16)**
6. Knowing God Through Love **(vv. 7-11)**
   1. Love is Intrinsic to Fellowship with God **(vv. 7-8)**
      1. Third time focusing on the importance of love:
         1. **2:7-11** – love as a natural quality of the light you walk in **(vv. 8, 11; 1:5, 7).**
         2. **3:11-18** – love as a natural quality of God’s children, and those who have passed from death to life (**vv. 10, 14**).
         3. NOW – **4:7-5:5** – God’s very nature of love, and His activity in that regard toward us, and in us.
      2. Each mention of love grows upon the other until it reaches its height here – **“‘Here the epistle rises to the summit of all revelation’ (Law).”** (Stott, John R.W., Tyndale Commentaries)
      3. ***“born of God and knows God”*** – go hand in hand – FELLOWSHIP/RELATIONSHIP – not simply intelligence (like the Gnostic view).
      4. **Why is love so important?** – Not simply because it is a part of the light (revelation of God), not simply because it is substance and evidence of spiritual life, **BUT ESPECIALLY BECAUSE IT IS THE ESSENCE OF GOD’S PERSON**.
         1. **(v. 7)** – the command for children of God to love each other is INNEVITABLE because LOVE IS OF GOD.
            1. ***“love is of [ek, origin] God”***
            2. ***“born of [ek, origin] God”***
            3. ***“born of God”*** = practicing ***“love”***
         2. **(v. 8)** – God IS love – knowing (fellowship/relation) Him is being a practitioner of love.
            1. I.e. ***“love is OF God”*** is not to be understood as simply an attribute belonging to God…
            2. … but ***“God IS love”*** is showing that it is His very nature and being.
            3. True knowledge of love is derived from God because GOD HIMSELF IS LOVE.
      5. ***“God is love”*** – is not to suggest that God is not anything else but is to show that everything about God falls under the fact that He is love **– ALL GOD IS AND DOES IS A PART OF LOVE AS THE ESSENCE OF HIS BEING.**
         1. ***Giving of law, consequences, conditions of forgiveness, judgment of evil, allowance of adversity, etc.***
   2. Love is Manifested by God (**vv. 9-11)**
      1. **If *“God is love,”* then *“love is of [derived from] God,”* meaning He has to reveal it, manifest it, show it for us to know it.**
      2. **(v. 9)** – the incarnation of the Son of God reveals God, and therefore reveals love.
         1. **Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:30** – He became for us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, AND JOHN ADDS LOVE.
         2. Not simply saying God loved us so He sent His Son, but GOD SHOWED US LOVE IN THE PERSON OF HIS SON.
            1. ***“made manifest among us,” ESV; not “toward us,” NKJV***
            2. **Cf. John 1:14** – dwelt among us.
         3. Jesus’ life is the revelation and pattern of TRUE LOVE – **John 14:9** – ***“God is love”***
         4. ***True, not only in His healing, feeding, embracing, but also His teaching, exhorting, rebuking, correcting, warning, etc.***
         5. ***“that we might live through Him”*** – by imitation – **cf. John 13:15, 35**
      3. **(v. 10)** – God revealed love in Jesus, but also IN THE ACTION OF HIS SACRIFICE AS A SHOW OF LOVE TOWARD US.
         1. **John 3:16; 1 John 3:16** – the sending of Jesus as the sacrifice that we could not provide ourselves, and we did not deserve, is the greatest act of love.
         2. ***“not that we loved God”***
            1. While love may be reciprocal, it does not require an inciting action from its object. (**cf. Matthew 5:46** – loving those who love you…)
            2. **Our act of love toward God is not the origin of love, BUT A REACTION TO THE REVELATION AND GIFT OF LOVE FROM GOD.**
            3. **Love is not an intrinsic quality of ours, but of God!**
         3. ***“In this is love”*** – i.e. THIS IS THE QUINTESSENTIAL ACTION WHICH DEFINES LOVE FOR US – the standard. We don’t define it.
         4. ***“propitiation”*** – the atoning sacrifice of Christ.
      4. **(v. 11)** – ***“so”*** – *houtōs* – in this way (referring to what precedes or follows) (STRONG)
         1. Not simply saying a proper response to God loving us is love for each other.
         2. **Rather, IF GOD LOVED US IN THIS WAY, WE ALSO OUGHT TO LOVE EACH OTHER IN THE SAME WAY. (cf. John 13 – washing feet.) (cf. 1 John 3:16-17)**
         3. GOD IS THE STANDARD – cannot take or leave anything, but the whole – ALL THAT GOD DOES IS LOVE, THE SACRIFICE OF HIS SON IS THE SUMMIT.
7. Seeing God Through Love **(vv. 12-16)**
   1. We See God in Each Other Through Love **(v. 12)**
      1. Talk about knowing God and having fellowship with God begs the question, “how can you know someone you have never seen?” (**cf. John 1:18; 1 John 4:9**)
      2. God is spirit (**cf. John 4:24),** not subject to space and matter.
      3. SEEING GOD is reserved for the end **– 3:2**
      4. **SEEING GOD NOW is in the context of life in a mortal body** – **2 Corinthians 5:6-7** – absent from Lord, walk by faith not sight.
      5. **Spiritual activity of love is THE AVENUE THROUGH WHICH GOD ABIDES IN US – and thus we see Him among each other** – **(v. 20)** – ***“his brother [child of God] whom he has seen”***
         1. We are His image bearers (**cf. Genesis 1:26).**
         2. Must be true practically – ultimately.
      6. **Perfected –** i.e. completed/matured as we respond to His love He has shown by reciprocating toward Him, and extending to each other.
   2. God Abides in Us Through Love Revealed by the Spirit **(vv. 13-16)**
      1. Mutual abiding **(v. 13)** through active love **(v. 12)** – by having received of the Spirit **(v. 13).**
         1. ***“of His Spirit”*** – explains the concept of being given THE SPIRIT (**cf. 3:24).**
         2. **What He has given is OF the Spirit – grants knowledge of fellowship through love BY SHOWING US LOVE.**
      2. Knowledge of fellowship with God by our love due to the Spirit’s revelation of love – **(v. 14) – cf. Romans 5:5-11** – love poured in our hearts by the Spirit.
         1. ***“we”*** – **1:1-4** – the eyewitnesses.
      3. Confession of Jesus as Son results in fellowship with God – **(v. 15)**
      4. The confession is one of action of life, not merely mouth – **(v. 16)** – **3:18-19** – in deed and truth!
         1. **Cf. Titus 1:16** – profess to know, but in works deny.
         2. **If God is revealed in His Son, and God is love, then to confess the Son is to love as He loved!**
8. Boldness in the Day of Judgment – His Nature of Love in Us **(4:17-19)**
9. Maturation of Love Emboldens Us for Judgment **(v. 17)**
   1. The theme of the reality of judgment, and our need to be ready for it is heavy in scripture – **Matthew 24:42-44** (watch, be ready); **Acts 17:30-31** (repent, judgment in righteousness); **Acts 24:25** (requires self-control); **2 Peter 3:14** (diligence to be at peace with God, blameless)
   2. God can and will make you ready for judgment – **1 Thessalonians 5:23-24**
   3. His plan for doing so is predestined in Christ and involves love – **Ephesians 1:3-4** – the holiness and blamelessness is in the sphere of love (John’s explanation of the comprehensive nature of love in regard to God’s person shows why – **1 Peter 1:15-16, 22** – even holiness according to God involves love.)
   4. Through the word, God is seeking to form Christ in us – **cf. Galatians 4:19**; such is our hope – **Colossians 1:27**
      1. John shows that such is synonymous with love being formed in us – **1 John 4:8-9**
      2. Peter shows the same – **2 Peter 1:2, 4, 7-8** – knowledge of Jesus, partake of divine nature, summit of love, fruitful in knowledge of Jesus.
   5. **Perfected** – *teleioō* – complete, not lacking, speaks to maturity.
      1. EX: **Matthew 5:43-48** – ***“perfect”*** (**v. 48**) does not refer to flawless, but complete/mature as it pertains to acting in love toward even enemies.
      2. **The maturation of love is in the imitation of Christ, which effects the abiding of God in us.**
   6. The reason all of God’s revelation in Christ is aiming toward the perfection of love in us is to give us ***“boldness”*** (confidence) in judgment – i.e. that we are right with Him, and have no reason to fear punishment.
      1. ***“because as He is, so are we in this world”*** – fellowship with Him, faithful, etc.
      2. He sees us imitating Christ, and is well pleased – **cf. Matthew 17:5; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10**
10. Fear of Judgment Indicates Lacking Love **(vv. 18-19)**
    1. John asserts these truths in the negative.
    2. Why does love perfected in us give us boldness in judgment? – ***“THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE”*** – which (fear) is the opposite of boldness.
    3. ***“because fear involves punishment” (NASB); “fear has to do with punishment” (ESV)***
       1. **I.e. fear in the context of judgment IS IN ANTICIPATION OF PUNISHMENT.**
       2. Literally – ***“fear [has] punishment”*** – i.e. living in anticipation of eternal punishment because you are not right with God IS PUNISHMENT ITSELF. (**cf. Hebrews 10:27** – fearful expectation of judgment)
    4. **Implication of present fear regarding judgment – you are not made perfect in love!**
       1. Current fear of God’s punishment is God telling you to repent!
       2. **Cf. Luke 13:1-5** – repent! Start doing right! Start walking in love!
    5. (**v. 19)** – implication of the demanded reciprocation of God’s love – to fail to respond in love is to only promote fear. (**Also, being a good steward of His love, and loving others** 🡪)
11. Victory Over the World – Faith Working Through Love **(4:20-5:5)**
12. Love for God Requires Love for Brethren **(4:20-5:1)**
    1. What we know:
       1. God is love (**4:8).**
       2. God requires those born of Him to love each other in the same manner in which He loved them **(4:7, 11).**
    2. Therefore – **4:20** – “If how a person behaves contradicts what he says, he is a liar.” (Stott, John R.W., Tyndale Commentaries) (**cf. 1:6, 8, 10; 2:3, etc**.)
       1. **Brother** – **5:1** – one who has the same active faith in Jesus, and therefore the same relation to God as a child.
       2. **YOU CANNOT LOVE THE BEGETTER WHILE HATING THE BEGOTTEN BECAUSE THEY ARE OF THE SAME NATURE.**
          1. This is true of Jesus – **cf. John 8:39-42**
          2. This is true of those who are children of God through imitating Jesus – **1 John 3:29**
          3. **(v. 20b) – You cannot see God (4:12), but if you hate the one you see (brother) that God is abiding in then you cannot possibly love God!**
    3. **4:21 – 3:23 – cf. John 14:15** – to love God is to obey God, and to obey God is to love all His children.
       1. This is because God is love **(4:8),** and the greatest act in revealing such was God’s giving of His Son, not only for you, but for your brethren **(4:10).**
13. Love for Brethren is Directed by God’s Commandments **(5:2-3a)**
    1. If God requires that I love my brethren, then I want to know how to do that so I can have confidence I’m pleasing to Him (**4:17).**
    2. The commandments of God given through His Son are directives of love – **4:9; Matthew 22:37-40**
    3. Love must abound in the knowledge and discernment of Christ – **Philippians 1:9-11**
    4. **The commandments of God are not lifeless, empty, insignificant “because I said so” statements. THEY ARE EXPRESSIONS AND REVELATIONS OF HIS VERY NATURE HE IS CALLING US TO PARTICIPATE IN.**
       1. To refuse His commandments is to fail in love, not only for brethren, but for God Himself.
14. Faith Working in Love Leads to Victory Over the World (**5:3b-5)**
    1. **(v. 3b)** – not burdensome – understood considering what they direct us in – love – and what that produces in us – **4:17** – boldness in the day of judgment.
    2. **(v. 4a)** – the familial connection with God stemming from our participation in love is what makes us overcome the world (**4:4) – 2:17**
       1. **Our commitment to the things of God as His children – namely, love and His commandments – helps us break free from the appeal of the world which would lead to our bondage.**
    3. **(vv. 4b-5)** – it is faith in Jesus that produces this obedience of love.
       1. Belief in Him as the Son of God = **4:9-11** – knowing love as He revealed it, and as God showed it through Him, and imitating it.
       2. ***“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.” (Galatians 5:6)***
       3. **Faith – Love – Obedience: These are inseparable**.
          1. *If I believe in Jesus as God in the flesh, I can come to God through Him.*
          2. *This occurs by acting on that faith in doing as He says and imitating His ways (since He is the fulness of God bodily).*
          3. *This results in an active life of love.*
          4. This leads to a separation from those things in the world that are not of the Father (**2:15-17**) – overcome the world.

**Conclusion**

1. What will eliminate fear of judgment is a right relationship with God.
2. In the coming of Jesus, God revealed Himself because Jesus exhibited love, and ***“God is love.”***
3. As we confess and imitate Jesus, we have love perfected in us. This produces boldness for the judgment, and leads to the victory of faith in overcoming the world.