

# The Fruit of God's Love

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**Bible Text:** 1 John 4:14-21  
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Amazing question. How can it be?

Let's take our Bibles and look together in 1 John 4 and my text is in verses 14-21. 1 John 4:14-21 and here I want to speak with you on "The Fruit of God's Love." All the way down through this portion in this epistle that John writes, he comes back again and again to the theme of love, not in a superficial or sentimental way, but love founded upon the work of the LORD Jesus Christ and the connection between the love of God for sinners and his love for his own Son. It's an amazing thing when you consider that to honor his Son as the Savior, God gave him sinners to save, chose them out even before he created the world, and the very love of God is manifest through his Son. Even Christ said that when he was on the earth, that no man takes his life; he would lay it down of himself and he would take it up again. This is the commandment that he said, "I have received of my Father," and he also said, "Wherefore my Father loveth me." That one who would come and work out a perfect righteousness and an obedience acceptable to God the Father himself, that he might be a loving and a just God but here we see the fruit of it in 1 John 4, beginning with verse 14,

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 17 Herein is our love made perfect [perfected, mature], that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is [as Christ is], so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19 We love him, because he first loved us. 20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

So we can see from this portion, first of all, that the fruit of God's love that has been manifest in his children is that there is a love for the Father and the Son. The two are one. We talk about the three are one, Father, Son, and Spirit, but here, as the Spirit is pleased to reveal Christ, and the Spirit is mentioned in verse 13, "he hath given us of his Spirit," the end result is, John says, that "we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." And so, the fruit of God's love always is to manifest the Son. The fruit of the work of the Spirit is always to draw sinners to Christ.

It's interesting in going through the scriptures that the Father never speaks of himself except that he speaks of his Son. The few times that he caused his voice to be heard when Christ was on earth, it was, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear him. Hear him." When Christ spoke of the Spirit being sent into the world upon completion of that work at Calvary, and he would ascend on high and send his Spirit that those that he has redeemed might not be orphans, Christ himself said that the Spirit would not speak of himself but he would testify of him.

And so, the fruit of God's love toward a sinner is to reveal Christ to that sinner and that's how we know that a sinner is loved of God, when the Spirit reveals Christ in him. The Spirit's not out in the world just trying to get anybody and everybody saved if they just will. That's modern day heresy. The Spirit is directed to those in God's time that Christ has redeemed and that God has justified upon completion of his work at the cross. And just like John says here, "And we have seen and do testify." If you've seen something, you do testify of it. How many times have you sat in a conversation and someone mentions some far out little place and you're surprised, you know, "How on earth do you know where that place is?" I recently listened to a conversation of two people talking like that and they were amazed because not only was the place that they were talking about little known, but there was a special way of pronouncing the name of the place, and the only people that would know how that name would be pronounced were people that had been there or heard.

And that's what John is saying here, we've seen, and I don't believe he's speaking merely physically seen, although they did. The apostles saw God in the flesh with their eyes. They saw the face, hands and feet of God's grace in that person, and yet, so did a number of Pharisees that never did believe on him. So when he says here, "we have seen and do testify," he's talking about having seen more than just physically, but like the thief on the cross who along with the other thief railed against Christ until at one moment in time, his heart was changed and now he saw Christ for who he was and he said, "LORD, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." That's an astounding statement when you consider what he was looking at. He was looking as far as physically at a man that was dying like any other transgressor would die and yet his eyes were open to see Christ as the King, Christ as the substitute, Christ as the anointed one. How was that possible? Through the Spirit of God.

And that's the fruit of God's love to see Christ, to be taught of him and therefore to testify and notice of what one testifies who is the object of God's love, "that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." The focus here is upon Christ and him crucified. The Savior, not just his miracles. There again, there were many that followed Christ for the miracles that he did and professed to believe on him but as it says over in John 2 and verse 21, Christ did not commend himself to them. He knew them. He knew who it was that they were and he knew that it was just following a man because of the miracles that he did and not because they were truly his. Such people will sooner or later lose interest. They'll sooner or later fall away. Take away the miracles, there's no more reason to follow. Take away the bread that they sought, no more reason to follow.

But one who has been taught of the Spirit as to who Christ is as the Savior of the world, and there it's not speaking of everybody's Savior. The word "world" as we've already seen in studying the scriptures is John's way of saying not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles. Just like the Samaritan woman, as the LORD revealed himself in her, she went and told the villagers, "Come see the Savior of the world." She was a Samaritan. To that point, all she knew and understood was for the Jews, unless you became a Jew through certain ceremonies and requirements and obligations that they had, that you couldn't be saved. But as Christ revealed himself in her, she came to see that this one that was speaking to her was none other than the Savior of the world, the Savior of sinners from every tribe and nation and tongue that he came to save. He is the Redeemer without distinction of nation, or of sex, or of age, or of state, or of condition. He is the Redeemer. He is the justifier. He came to save sinners from every tribe, nation and tongue from the power of Satan and from the bondage and curse of the law, from that wrath which is to come. He is the Savior of sinners and therein is the evidence of love. The fruit of that love is to see him just as he is and to be brought low at his feet as a sinner.

Where there is a Savior, there is a sinner, and where there is a sinner, there is a Savior. That is the simple message of scripture, that those whom Christ came to save were sinners and God took their sin and put it to Christ's account and so completely did Christ fulfill every requirement of God's law and justice that every one for whom he died, God has upon completion of Christ's work, declared them absolutely righteous. Just as John writes about in verse 17 that we are going to get to in a little bit, as he is, so are we in this work. How complete was the work of the LORD Jesus Christ? So complete that as he is, so are we. That is how God looks upon those sinners for whom Christ paid the debt. Just as holy and pure and just and righteous as his own Son. That is not something that we work out.

And so the fruit of God's love for the sinner is to know the Son, and as we see in verse 15, it is a heart faith. Not just an intellectual knowledge. John says, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God." And again, it is not just saying he is the Son of God. There are a lot of people that know him to be the Son of God that are not the LORD's. Do you know that if you believe that Jesus Christ is eternal and you believe that

he came into this world to save sinners, and you believe that he died and rose again and ascended on high, and every one of those statements you can say yes to, that you don't believe any more than Satan himself. Satan knows these things. Satan knows him to be the Son of God.

So when John is writing here in verse 15, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, " the Son of God who came and actually put away the sin of his people to be their Savior, and this not just intellectually but as we see in the last part of verse 15, "God dwelleth in him and he in God." There is an indwelling of that word. God sends his Son, if you will, to the heart in time of everyone that he has redeemed through his word and by his Spirit God dwells in him and he in God. So this is the fruit of God's love to be united in a very vital experiential way to God in Christ. The Father has put all things pertaining to life eternal in the Son, the LORD Jesus Christ.

If you look at 1 John 5, which is the next chapter we are going to look at, in verse 11, you can see how this is put, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." It's just as simple as that. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that," to believe savingly, to believe to have this interest in Christ for salvation, it is that the Son has been given to you, that life has already been given to you. That is why you believe.

And it says, "that ye may know that ye have eternal life." That order is important. The way it is put is important. It doesn't say that you shall have but these things that are written unto you that believe that you may know that you have eternal life. Eternal life is a person. It is the LORD Jesus Christ himself. Heaven is not a place. Natural men speak of it as a place. It is a person. When Christ said to that malefactor, "Today you shall be with me in Paradise," it's to have life in the Son, to dwell in the Son and him in us.

"And that ye may believe," or continue to believe, "on the name of the Son of God." That's the difference between a preference and a persuasion. If you are the object of God's love, the Spirit of God reveals the LORD Jesus Christ in your heart, this is heart faith and you not only believe when that revelation is given, but you continue to believe. Nothing or no one will ever be able to turn you away from him as the object of faith.

So that's the fruit of God's love. Secondly, coming back here to 1 John 4 and verse 16, the fruit of love is the joining of knowledge and faith. As you can read there in verse 16, "we have known," and that word means known experientially, "and believed." You could read it, "And we have known, even believed." It's not an intellectual knowledge that is the fruit of God's love, but experiential knowledge. I can find out some things by Googling on the internet or picking up an encyclopedia and reading about it but I can't say that I know it experientially just because I've read it or have some facts about it.

But John says, "we have known and believed the love that God hath to us." I don't know about yourself, but when the LORD first began to do a work in my heart and cause me to see that I was lost, the uppermost question that came to my mind is like what we just sang in that hymn, "How can it be? How can it be that God should love such a one as I?" I believe that's an evidence of God's love. It's a fruit of God's love when the LORD himself gives that confidence.

"We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." How can God love sinners? Only through his Son. Everything in us, everything about us, everything about our nature is contrary to his justice, contrary to his law. We deserve nothing but condemnation. And as the Spirit teaches you, you begin to question, "How could God love me?" Where is the love of God? Well, it's in his Son and exclusively in his Son,

if you go back to Romans 8, look at verse 37 to begin with, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our LORD." How are we going to know the love of God? It is in Christ Jesus our LORD.

I remember after 9-11, they had that ecumenical meeting at the National Cathedral there in Washington and President Bush at the time quoted this portion of scripture somehow to try to encourage the Americans that were there that all would be well. He pulled the verse completely out of context. He should have stuck to being a President and not try to be a preacher. But the thing that stunned me was where he stopped because he had the Jewish community there, who in mentioning the LORD Jesus Christ would have been offended, they had a part in that service. He had the Muslim community there who would have been offended at any mention of the name of Jesus Christ. And so he stopped. At the end, he put a period at the end of "love of God." He didn't even continue to quote "which is in Christ Jesus our LORD." But God's record is, you want to know something about the love of God? It is in Christ Jesus the LORD. Apart from him, apart from Christ having borne your sin, you will know nothing but the wrath of God. Such is the distinctiveness of God's love.

So the fruit of God's love is to have that knowledge, and not only knowledge but faith where John says, "And we have known and believed," notice, "the love that God hath to us." Very specific. He's not talking about some general love of God to everybody but his love to us, and he's already described who the "us" is by the terms, for example, in verse 1 of chapter 4, beloved. Those beloved of God the Father, Christ died for, and the Spirit reveals Christ then in his time. But it's what causes sinners to look outside themselves to God. He's a holy God and apart from Christ, we would do nothing but quake or fear. But when God is pleased to reveal Christ to a sinner's heart, then all they see is a God of love. How great is that love? What manner of love that we should be called the children of

God? In this was manifest the love of God, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

And so that's the fruit of his love and again, the only way that this can be known is as it says in verse 16, "and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." One who dwells in that love of God. You know, if we're the LORD's, that will be the subject of our conversation. Not fear and wrath. You know, you'd better watch it because, you know, God, he's watching you and if you slip up or mess up, then, you know, you're going to get it. There are a lot of people that live under that kind of preaching. I don't believe any one of God's true children, ones that the LORD has been pleased to draw to himself, could endure under such preaching, to present God in that way as being austere. And in spite of Christ's death having dealt with our sin and put it away, still somehow they make it a condition. They make God's love conditional, that you'd better watch it or else.

No, as John says here, "we have known and believed the love that God hath to us." I believe it and so when I sin, and I do, I don't try to pacify the Father in any way but to look to his Son. We don't come in any other way through some kind of ceremony or, you know, get down on your knees and, you know, well, it's my repentance that he'll receive. None of that. It just simply says, "we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love," because of Christ and because of his shed blood, and because of what he, the Son, has accomplished.

And that's what our faith does, that faith that God gives, it grows in that love because, as it says there in verse 16, God dwells in us, and we know him to be faithful. If we confess our sin, confess that we are sinful, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, continue to. If one sin remained unaccounted for, for which we had to do something for or about, we would be lost. Such is the love of God that every sin of every one of his children that he loved from eternity and sent his Son to pay the debt, he loves and that love is not changing. God's love isn't changing from day to day depending on how you live. It's constant in his Son.

Thirdly, down in verse 17, how is the love of God manifest? What is the fruit of it? Well, as it says here in verse 17, that love is made perfect. So, it's language of a child, you know, that initially that child does things and acts a certain way because he's a child but you expect with age and experience and teaching that child to mature. That's what this word perfect is.

"Herein is our love." This love of God with us, this love of God for us because of his Son, the LORD Jesus Christ, it is perfected that we might have, what? Boldness in the day of judgment. So, that's the fruit of God's love, that boldness in the day of judgment. You say, "Well, how can you have boldness in the day of judgment when you consider standing before a holy God who is absolutely holy and whose presence cannot tolerate sin, even one?" Well, he gives us the answer in verse 17, "because as he is, so are we in this

world." The work of the LORD Jesus Christ so completely reconciled those sinners for whom he died to God that God sees them as one. Who is he? He's the Son of God. Who are we? Well, if God chose us and Christ died for us, we are the sons of God. I am a son of God.

That's more important than even being able to stay I'm the son of the President of the United States or the son of some other well-known figure. That's just nothing but temporal. To be able to be called a child of God, but that's so complete is the work of the LORD Jesus Christ and his death and the reconciliation that he accomplished there at Calvary that as he is, so are we in this world. Who is he? He's holy. Who are we? Holy. In ourselves, no. This is not some inherent holiness that's given to us by the Spirit. It is a legal standing with God the Father to where when he looks upon us, he sees no sin. It's been put away. Either Christ paid the debt or he didn't. He sees nothing but sonship. He sees nothing but righteousness that he himself, the just God, imputed and put to the account once for all of everyone for whom Christ died.

You know, just like children, the love of God is perfected. When we first learn this, it does humble you but the more the LORD teaches you that you're a sinner and the more the LORD shows you that your only hope is in Christ, the more that love is perfected and gives us boldness in the day of judgment to where I'm so confident of this fact and of him as the Savior and substitute that in the day of judgment, I won't even have to open my mouth. Christ has already spoken. My name is already written in that Lamb's Book of Life. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. And the more the LORD teaches you that, the greater his love is seen against the backdrop of our own sin and what we know or who we know we are. It's not any inherent righteousness. It's a righteousness imputed.

I can imagine when David went to fetch, I like that word the way the scriptures put it, Mephibosheth, who was lame from a fall, and the son of Saul's house, and I can imagine people that didn't understand the love that David had for Jonathan because it was for Jonathan's sake he sought him, he fetched him. It wasn't for Saul. It wasn't even for Mephibosheth. And brought him into his house and sat him at his table right along with every one of his other sons, from that day forward, Mephibosheth always had his place at that table and if he wasn't there, David would seek him, "Where's Mephibosheth?" You know, as he would come in and out, it was evident he was still fallen, lame from the fall. You know, his legs were lame. They remained lame. Just like we do in this life, we continue to be sinners in our nature. That won't be removed until the resurrection, until the LORD completely transforms these bodies. But when he was seated at that table, his lameness was hidden under the table. As he sat there and others that may not have known his history saw him sitting there, they would see him just as equally as one of the sons of David as anybody else sitting around that table. And that's what God does with our sin. He has put it away. The effects continue but there's nothing that's ever going to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus and that gives us boldness in the day of

judgment. I can't imagine facing the day of judgment without the knowledge that Christ is there as the Advocate. Already seated and me seated in him.

And so that's the fruit of God's love. We approach death and judgment not presumptuously, not with any kind of cockiness, but confidently and cheerfully because of God's love to us in Christ and what he has accomplished. We couldn't have this peace in any other way. And down in verse 18, not only is one of the evidences of fruit of God's love, that boldness in the day of judgment, but as it says in verse 18, "There is no fear in love." You know, apart from Christ, we'd have reason to fear the law, we'd have reason to fear Satan, we'd have reason to fear the world, fear death, fear God's justice. But he says there is no fear in love, in this love, the love of God in Christ.

"But perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment." We've all lived under that slavish fear of the law, that legalism. You know, if a person hears nothing but the law and condemnation, they're going to fear. They're going to be tormented by the dread of that wrath and judgment. But when a sinner is taught of Christ, perfect love casts out all fear.

It says here, "He that feareth is not made perfect in love." That's what conditional preaching does, it puts sinners back under the law. Preachers love to dominate with fear. But for one who is the child of God and God has taught of the death of Christ, perfect love casts out fear. Casts it out. The only way it can be cast out is knowing that Christ has done the work and finished it, completed it.

And then finally down in verse 19, fourthly, verse 19, the fruit of God's love is that grace to love him in return, "We love him because he first loved us." This is so contrary to what preachers are saying, "You love God, then he'll love you." No, we love him because he first loved us. And that's an evidence, that's a fruit of the love of God, giving him all the glory, knowing that our love for him, it's not because we loved him that he loves us but our love, if we have any love for him, it's because his love preceded ours. I've had some say, "How can you love a God like that when you talk about God being sovereign and just and holy and righteous?" Well, I love him because he first loved me. He taught me something of his holiness. He taught me something of his justice satisfied in the death of the LORD Jesus Christ. In that I see a great love of God for a sinner such as I.

But finally, fifthly, verses 20 and 21, the fruit of this love of God is going to be love for the brethren. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother," and I believe he's talking here in the term brother, not just in the general term of brotherhood. You know, there are many in this world who are hateful. It doesn't give us a right to hate them, but they're hateful by nature and so you might justify hating them back. You know, we're not so taught. We don't know whether the LORD's or not. You know, they might be one of the LORD's. It just hasn't been revealed yet.

And so, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother," even if it's a brother in the flesh or one who is the LORD's, it says here, "he is a liar." You stop and think about, you



know, conditional love, if we rejoice in an unconditional love of God for us, why would we make a condition as to how we love another sinner or not? Whether we'll love another sinner or not? The scriptures are pretty clear.

"He is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Nothing can be more contradictory than for a man to say, I love God and hate his brother. It's a lie that he speaks and such a thing is impossible. A man can't love God and hate the image of God, in other words, his creature that he sees before his eyes and say at the same time that he loves one he's not seen. So this is another argument for a love for sinners based upon not just the authority and commandment of God, but based upon knowing how God has loved us. If he has so loved me, why wouldn't I be merciful? Why wouldn't I be gracious to another? This is one of the evidences also or fruit of God's love. These are things that are beyond our ability, I will confess that, and yet the more we consider, the more we reflect upon just how it is that God has loved us through his Son, the LORD Jesus Christ, that love is perfected in us and for those that are the brethren whatever state they may be in.

Alright, let's take our hymn books and sing hymn number 352.