

# Perfected Love That Gives Assurance

If someone were to ask you, ***“Are you going to heaven?”*** How would you respond?

Some of us might respond with a confident ***“YES!”*** While others might hesitantly respond, ***“I ... think so ”*** Still others may reflect on the weakness of their flesh and say, ***“I hope so ”*** but in their heart lack assurance they will hear, ***“enter in good and faithful servant”*** on the Day of Judgement.

A recent poll showed that 60% of Americans believe in Hell, but only 4% believe there’s any chance they will actually end up there. I not convinced those numbers are very accurate when it comes to those of us who are truly in God’s Kingdom.

God wants us to be confident in our Salvation. He wants us to set our hope fully on His return to bring us home with Him. But ***“hope”*** is desire - plus expectation. For those of us who are Christians, I’m confident we all have this desire, but unfortunately ***“expectation”*** is what many of can struggle with.

The Holy Spirit, through the Apostle John, wanted us to be assured and have confidence in our Salvation. And in the book of 1 John, John gives us different markers for our life to have this confidence. ***“If we walk in the light”*** (1 John 1:7); ***“If we confess our sins”*** (1 John 1:9); ***“If we keep His commandments”*** (1 John 2:3); ***“If we Love One Another”*** (1 John 4:17-18).

Our focus this month is 1 John 4:13-21.

***“<sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup> So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. <sup>17</sup> By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. <sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup> If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not***

***love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. <sup>21</sup> And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.”***

***1 John 4:13-21 (ESV)***

In verse 16 John tells us that ***“God is love”***, and whoever abides in love (*practices sacrificial love like God*) abides in God, and God abides in them. The word ***“Abide”*** is really John’s word for fellowship. In other words, if we are practicing the same kind of sacrificial love in our lives that God has shown us, we have fellowship with God.

And if we have fellowship with God, then can’t we be confident we’ll hear, ***“Enter in good and faithful servant”*** on the Day of Judgement?

So how do we practically apply this love in our lives?

In Matthew 25:31-40 Jesus gives us a glimpse at the Day of Judgement.

***<sup>31</sup> “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? <sup>38</sup> And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ <sup>40</sup> And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’***

***Matthew 25:31-40 (ESV)***

In this passage we see Jesus commending these people for feeding Him when He was hungry, giving Him drink when He was thirsty, giving Him clothes when He was naked. But these people seem a little confused and ask Jesus, ***“When did we ever see you and do these things for you?”***

Jesus responds, ***“When you did it for the least of these, you did it for me.”***

These situations where we see someone in need, and it tugs on the cords of our heart where we respond, are acts of love that most of us probably do a pretty good job practicing in our lives. When we see a real need, we tend to respond in love.

Think about it.

- When a brother or sister loses their spouse, we rush to their side to comfort, help, and heal.
- When a brother or sister comes down with an illness – Cards are sent, visits are made, and our love reaches out.
- When someone loses their job and asks for help to pay their mortgage or power bill. We dip into our wallets and provide for that need.
- When we hear about our Christian brothers and sisters in the Philippines who are literally hungry and thirsty and needing clothes – how many of us give Cindy a \$20, \$50, or \$100 to provide for that need and send to those Brethren?

Realize that as we step up to fill these needs in others' lives, God's love is being perfected in us, abiding in us. And John tells us how that should give us confidence for the Day of Judgement.

But there's another aspect of God's love which can be a bit more challenging for us. And that's what we'll discuss in our next article.