

(1 John 4:9-21, NIV84)

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. This is LOVE: not that we LOVED God, but that he LOVED us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so LOVED us, we also ought to LOVE one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we LOVE one another, God lives in us and his LOVE is made complete in us. We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.

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 him. In this way, LOVE is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in LOVE. But perfect LOVE drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in LOVE. We LOVE because he first LOVED us. If anyone says, "I LOVE God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not LOVE his brother, whom he has seen, cannot LOVE God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever LOVES God must also LOVE his brother.

In the Bible passage above I took the liberty of capitalizing each occurrence of the word LOVE. This was to make it stand out all the more obviously and to highlight what John, the Apostle of LOVE, has to say to us by divine inspiration.

The fearmongers in our society want to keep us on the edge of our seats and on the edge of our sanity. We see news reports designed to promote fear: fear to go out of our houses, fear to interact in public, fear to travel, fear to fly, fear to go without masks, fear to visit our relatives.... The list is endless. What, if any of this, are we to believe? Who knows.

Let us rather be sheltered in what we can be certain of: "the LOVE God has for us." God's LOVE is something we never need to doubt or question; let's REST in it and let's LIVE FREELY in God's LOVE.

LOVED in Christ with you,
Pastor Golm

July 7

Are You Afraid?

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear. 1 John 4:18

Are you afraid? Afraid of your conscience? Afraid of tomorrow? Afraid of the long uncertain road which lies ahead? In the next few meditations we will speak of some of the basic fears that haunt the human race (including Christians in their weaker moments), and we will view these fears in the light of God's Word.

A noted newspaper columnist, when writing his final column, stated that, after having read more than 90,000 letters from his readers, he was convinced that "Fear is private enemy No. 1". The great and the lowly, the rich and the poor, the cultured and the unlettered-it made no difference-through every level of society there ran, like a poisoned stream, the paralyzing disease of fear.

But God does not want his children to be afraid. "Fear not" is the divine overture which might well be prefixed to every Bible promise: "Fear not", thy sins are forgiven thee; "Fear not", there shall no evil befall thee; "Fear not", your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things; "Fear not", I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

We who have experienced the love of God in Christ need never be afraid of anything that our loving Father might have in store for us. "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"-also the needed strength and courage to bear the burdens of each day?

In every cross, in every trial, in every problem or perplexity we can feel our Lord's loving hand upon our shoulder, and hear his reassuring voice: "FEAR NOT!"

Oh, Lord, remind me daily of Your tender love for me. And let the remembrance of Your love cleanse my heart of every fear. In Your mercy grant my prayer. Amen.

(Devotion from: Daily Walk With God - Meditations for Every Day, by Herman W. Gockel)