

Walking in the Light – Part 11
How Do We Know? – 1 John 4:13-5:4
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Nov. 17th, 2024

Intro:

- Some of you may have grown up in a church that practiced confirmation or required catechism classes. They may or may not have been helpful to you, depending on your experience. The goal of these classes should have been to provide a structured process of teaching the Christian faith through the form of questions and answers.
- As we are now getting to the end of this letter, John addresses a number of questions and provides answers in a rapid-fire way, one after another. Today's passage may feel a little like a catechism or confirmation class directly from the Word. In this passage, John answers important questions that you may have thought about or that you should think about and have answers for.
- I have structured this sermon in a question-answer format found in and flowing from our text. In this section, we will be covering five questions and answers. They are good and helpful, and they contain questions for us to ask and understand as they all surround and address the main theme of this letter, which is how we know that we have eternal life. These are things you can rehearse and come back to if you are wondering or doubting your salvation. If you understand what is in this section, you will have an unshakable foundation for your faith.
- At the end of this message, there will be a test, and in order for you to go home, you must pass with at least 75% or higher grade (JK). However, there indeed will be a test that you want to surely pass because this test is for real and has very significant implications.
- Let's open our Bibles to 1 John 4:13 (page 1056). We will read our passage section by section, keeping an eye on what question is being asked and how it is answered.

1 John 4:13-16 NIV

This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. 16 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 them.

How do we know we live in God and He in us?

- *By God giving us His Spirit* – The Holy Spirit indwells us at the moment we first believe as a seal of ownership on us and as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come (2 Cor. 1:21-22, Eph. 1:13-14). He works in us by convicting us of sin and guiding us in truth (John 16:8-13, 1 Cor. 2:12-13), by producing His fruit in us (Gal. 5:22-23), by gifting us (1 Cor. 12:4-11, Eph. 4:11-12, Rom. 8:9-11) and empowering our witness (Acts 1:8, Acts 4:31), by conforming us into the image of Christ, and by providing assurance of salvation (Rom. 8:15-16, John 14:16-17), among others things.
- *By God sending His Son as Savior* – This is a historical fact. There is more written about Jesus than any other historical figure. He is a real person who really came from Father in the flesh. He really lived a sinless life. He really gave Himself as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. He really was resurrected from the dead, and he really ascended into heaven with the promise of His return (John 4:42, 1 Cor. 15:1-28, 1 John 1:1).

- *By acknowledging Jesus is the Son of God* – Do you do this? Do you truly believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father? Do you believe that God came in the flesh and dwelt among us? If you do, then God lives in you and you in God (John 1:1-14, John 6:44, John 11:25-27, Rom. 4:9-13).
- *By knowing and relying on the love God has for us* – God is love as evidenced by the sending of His Son. We can know the voice of the good shepherd by spending time with Him as His Spirit is within us. No one can snatch us out of His hand; we are saved because of His love for us. There is nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (John 10:27-30, Rom. 8:38-39).
- *By living in love through God's love* – If you live your life loving others as God defines love, you live in God, and God lives in you. As we have seen, John emphasizes this over and over again. Our love for God shows itself by our love of fellow brothers and sisters (John 15:12-17, I Thes. 4:9-10, 1 John 2:10-11, 3:14-16, 4:11-12).

1 John 4:17-18 NIV

This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. 18 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.

How do we know we can have confidence on the day of judgment?

- *By being like Jesus in this world* – We do this by following His example, His word, and His Spirit with our lives. We fix our eyes on Him and then run the race that is marked out for us as we press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Heb. 12:1-3, John 10:27, Col. 2:6, 1 John 2:6, Phil. 3:14).
- *By being made perfect in God's love* – You must understand God's love for you through knowing what He says in His word and by observing what He has done through His Son. Know the kindness and love of God through Jesus who saved us, not because of the righteous things we have done, but because of His mercy (Titus 3:4-7, Eph. 3:11-12, Heb. 4:14-16).

1 John 4:19-21 NIV

We love because he first loved us. 20 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

How do we know if we love God?

- *By understanding we love because He loved us first* – This is helpful for us, knowing that our love for God and others comes from Him. This is something that we can't manufacture but "tap into" so that His love can flow to us and through us. This is available for the asking. We love because He first loved us (Matt. 7:7-12, James 4:2, John 13:34-35, Rom. 5:5).
- *By not hating each other* – This is straightforward. If you say that you love God yet hate a brother or sister, you are a liar; you don't love God. If you don't love those you see, then you cannot love God, whom you don't see. True believers must not hate one another. Is there another believer who you hate? Ask God to examine your heart and ask God for His love for them (Matt. 6:14-15, Col. 3:12-17, 1 John 2:9-11).

- *By loving each other* – How do you know if you love God? By loving each other. Love for each other is evidence that we indeed do love God. Show your love for others by doing so in actions and in truth. The world will know that we are disciples if we love one another (1 Peter 4:8, 1 John 3:16-18, John 13:34-35).

1 John 5:1 NIV

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.

How do we know if we are born of God?

- *By believing in Jesus Christ* – Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ? Do you believe that Jesus is the deliverer, the anointed one, the Messiah? If you believe this, you are born of God because no one can come to God unless God reveals this to them (Matt. 16:15-17, John 6:44-47, 63-65, Luke 10:22)
- *By loving Jesus Christ* – If you love the Father, then you will love the Son. If you don't love the Son, then you don't love the Father. You can only have the Father if you have the Son (1 John 2:22-23, John 5:23, John 8:42-46).

1 John 5:2-4 NIV

This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. 3 In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, 4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

How do we know we love the children of God?

- *By loving God* – We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. This means that our highest goal is to honor Him and His name, that we entrust ourselves to Him fully. We think about Him, and give our strength gladly to Him. We know Him by spending time with Him, listening and talking, and worshiping Him (Matt. 22:27, Mark 12:30, 1 Cor. 8:3).
- *By carrying out God's commands* - Our love for God is evidenced by carrying out His commands. And what are His commands? To believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another. If someone says "I know God" but does not do what He commands, that person is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 3:23, John 14:15, 1 John 2:3-6).
- *By overcoming the world* – This happens through our faith. Faith looks for a way out of temptation, because God promises one (1 Cor 10:13). Faith is not overcome by evil, but overcomes evil with good (Rom. 12:21). We overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony (Rev. 12:11). Those who overcome the world through faith in Christ will receive the glories of heaven and a relationship with God as His child forevermore (Rev. 21:7).

Conclusion

- I have done my homework; now is the time for you to do yours. If you understand these things that have been laid out for us in this passage, you will have an unshakable faith and will continue to grow and mature from it and through it.
- Take time to look at the notes and look up the passages. Remind yourselves of the truth of these things. If you do, you will know what to do, you will not be deceived, and you will stand in

confidence in your faith and produce the fruit of the Spirit. Your life will be a living testimony to all, and you will be like a tree planted beside streams of water. You will yield your fruit in season, and your leaf will not wither. In whatever you do, you will prosper (Psalm 1:3).

- Prayer

Communion

Benediction

Know that the Lord your God is a faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations. Be blessed in the love and faithfulness of God (Deut. 7:9).

Questions for Growth Groups

1. Have you ever participated in confirmation or catechism classes? If so, how did they shape your understanding of faith? How does this passage in 1 John 4:13-5:4 reinforce or expand your knowledge of what it means to live in God?
2. According to 1 John 4:13, one way we know we live in God is through the presence of His Spirit. In what ways do you experience the Holy Spirit working in your life? Which of the Spirit's roles (convicting, guiding, comforting, empowering) do you most relate to right now?
3. John tells us that perfect love drives out fear (1 John 4:18). How does knowing and experiencing God's love give you confidence, especially as you consider the day of judgment? What role does being "like Jesus in this world" play in this confidence?
4. 1 John 4:20-21 emphasizes that loving God means also loving others. Why is our love for others a reflection of our love for God? Are there relationships where God might be calling you to grow in love?
5. In 1 John 5:1, we see that believing in Jesus and loving Him shows that we are born of God. How has your understanding of what it means to believe in Jesus grown over time? What does it mean to you to love Jesus as the Son of God?
6. John says that love for God is shown by keeping His commands (1 John 5:2-3). Why do you think obedience to God is central to loving Him? In what areas of your life might God be inviting you to express love through obedience?
7. 1 John 5:4 says that our faith helps us overcome the world. What challenges or "worldly" struggles are you facing right now? How does your faith in Christ provide a path to victory, and how can this group support each other in overcoming?