

# FRIDAY 04 November 2022 "Perfect, Fearless LOVE" (1 John 4:14-18)

Good morning my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

I wonder how many different answers you have heard in your life to this one, simple yet profound question: **'WHO is Jesus Christ?'** Of course, that question is often followed by another important question: **'What difference does it make who Jesus is?'**

As I did yesterday, I invite you, here and now, to answer those two questions. *Your quality of life now, and your eternal destiny hinge on your answers to those questions:*

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We're continuing our journey with John the apostle and friend of Jesus, as he is writing his first letter in the later part of the first century. Once again John rolls out his parchments and picks up his stylus as the Holy Spirit leads his heart and his mind. John is in chapter 4, verse 14 ***"We have seen and testify that God the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world."*** Wow, that's powerful! You may recall John began this little letter with a similar statement that confirms he was an eyewitness to Jesus and all Jesus did on earth.

In 1 John 1:1 John wrote: ***"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes and our hands have touched, - this we proclaim concerning the word of life: The life appeared, we have seen it and testify to it and we proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard..."*** (1 John 1:1-4)

*I wonder if we can imagine how encouraging it was for those who knew John personally, or who read his letter, to know that John had been a dear friend of Jesus. John had walked the dusty roads of Palestine with Jesus day after day. John had sat beside Jesus many times at meals, and John had taken Jesus out fishing on Lake Galilee several times. John had awakened many, many days with Jesus over there, sleeping on the ground, just like John and all the disciples, as they traveled from place to place. John had followed Jesus from the Garden of Gethsemane to His trials. John had witnessed the beatings and John had followed in the crowd as Jesus had carried His cross to Golgotha. John had been there, standing with Mary, the mother of Jesus and Mary Magdalene, as they watched Jesus die on the cross, and John had watched them bury Jesus' body. John had seen the risen Jesus several times and John had watched Jesus ascend from the Mount of Olives, up into the clouds. *Yes, John was an eyewitness and proud to declare Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of the world, whenever he had the chance.**

John leans forward now to continue writing... **"If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they live in God."** (1 John 4:15) Once again John gives us a tangible evidence of an authentic Christian: *a person who unashamedly declares that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, God the Son.*

Now in the days that John was writing, if a person publicly declared those words, be they Jew or Gentile, be they peasant or nobleman, wealthy or poor, educated or illiterate, slave or free... that simple, single, powerful statement identified them as a person to be persecuted. *Christians were not respected, nor protected. Christians were harassed, humiliated, persecuted and sometimes punished. Why?* Because then as now the darkness hates the light, wrong hates right, evil hates holy. Authentic Christians lived counterculture for they tried to live honorably not deceptive or deceitful lives. They lived and demanded truth not untruth or lies. Then as now it was not welcome, that lifestyle was rejected by the majority.

But John explained how such living was and is possible. In 1 John 4:16,17 John writes: **"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."** *This life changing, powerful LOVE of God, which we discussed yesterday, was so powerful it sustained people in the horrificness of persecution!* May I ask... does God's powerful love sustain you, my friends?

*Another thing which was very powerful in the hearts and minds of these first century persecuted Christians was the assurance that God promised HIS justice will eventually prevail, eventually!* John wrote: **"In this way love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgement, because in this world we are like Jesus! There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment."** (1 John 4:17,18)

Now the truth is these Christians in the first century lived in fear. Fear that persecutors would break down the door of their home, drag them out and beat them. They lived in fear they'd be fired from their jobs for no reason other than their employer wanted to hire someone who was NOT a Christian. They feared their children would be harassed at school by teachers or bullies because they were the kids of Christians. So how can John say, **'there is no fear in love'?**

*John was urging his Christian friends and readers to understand what he had experienced.* He had been harassed and persecuted for only one thing... **he was known to be a friend of Jesus!** But what John had learned as he watched Jesus handle the horrific persecution which He received way too often, was that the Holy Spirit of God can give you an inner strength, an assurance of God's watchful eye upon you when evil is coming against you.

*Jesus was able to withstand the horrific anger of humanity, including crucifixion because he was able to look beyond the cross, beyond the grave, to see His resurrection and the multitudes of people who would be ransomed and rescued from their sin bondage and sin condemnation because of their belief in Jesus and Jesus unleashing of His mighty resurrection power into them!*

The writer of the book of Hebrews put it this way: **"Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him, who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."** (Hebrews 12:1-3)

Oh, my that is so clear, so powerful, so encouraging! *Can you and I look beyond our present pain, our suffering, whatever it is, and look forward to the day we will stand before Jesus in heaven? Can we look beyond that to the eternity, forever and ever, that we will have with Jesus our Savior, God the Father our heavenly Father, the Holy Spirit, all the holy angels and all other Christians from all time, all together in heaven for eternity!?* That perspective makes anything we might be suffering here and now seem quite small and insignificant, doesn't it?

*We have no fear of the ultimate day of Judgement when every person will stand before Jesus as the Righteous Judge, for in that moment all our sin is unrecognizable, for it was covered by the blood of Jesus when we repented, and it was taken away from us and replaced by the Holiness of the Holy Spirit in our cleansing!* That's why John says the perfect and powerful love of God, expressed through Jesus and His atonement death and resurrection, and His love alive in us through the Holy Spirit does in fact defeat all fear!

Wow, **you and I have reason to live fearless in a fearful world my friends!!** Are you? Let's give great thanks to Jesus right now, and here's a great song to help us celebrate these wonderful truths.

**Today's Scripture is 1 John 4:14-18.**