

## Testifying to This Conquering Love – *1 John 4:14-21*

**Introduction** – As John continues his argument about a love which has conquered these brothers and sisters, and by extension, has conquered us, he presses out the power, extent, and transforming power of the love of God which abides in us and in which we abide. In one sense, it is not necessary for us “*to do*” anything to change this world; God has, is, and will. Such confidence brings assurance to us regarding ourselves, the community around us, and the world.

**Testifying Love** (vv14-16) – We love one another because we have been conquered by love and this love is the Holy Spirit in which we abide (vv12-13). It is by the Spirit that we acknowledge the incarnation of the Son and by the same Spirit that we are enabled to love God’s ways and God’s people. Our lives, our love, our righteousness (all God’s gifts to us in Jesus Christ) testify to the world that the Father has sent His Son as Savior of the world (v14).

**Savior of the World** – Jesus Christ was not sent to be the potential Savior of the world; God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, will not fail in their united will. Neither is “*world*” to be reinterpreted to be a smattering here and there of all the nations; God sent His Son to save the world, not to condemn it (John 3:17). Our duty is not to make this happen, but through our love, to testify that God is doing just that (Psalm 110:1-2). We do not love the world by downplaying the truth, nor do we testify to the truth if we do not love one another.

**Reformation of This Testimony** - As we pray for reformation in the church, we are praying for a return to this testimony by our lips and through our lives: the Father sent the Son to be Savior of the world. Consider Jesus’ words as He looked out over the multitude (Matt 9:36-38). We should see the same multitudes today in our election returns, our hatred of fruitful wombs, our twisting of the truth in our pulpits, and our education systems for future generations. Pray for a testimony to the truth of God’s conquering love of over the world.

**Believe in God’s Love** (vv15-16) – Our salvation rests in that “*we have known and believed the love that God has for us.*” It does not rest in *our* love for God or we will always be brought to a place of insecurity, for we never love perfectly. It rests in believing that God has loved us. The issue is not whether my love for God was adequate, but whether God’s love for me was adequate. Similarly, the issue is not whether the love of the world for God is adequate, but whether God’s love for the world is adequate.

**Bold Love** (vv17-19) – When this gets a hold of us (the truth and the love of God) a radical transformation in us occurs. Recognizing that we are sinners, we come before the bar of God’s judgment seat with all boldness – because none of that boldness rests in us. There is no resting in our self-exertions, our resolutions, our teeth-gritted determination to be better – to be loving. It is a rest in God’s love – period.

**Perfect Love Casts Our Fear** – The fear that is cast out is the fear that Adam had when God came into the Garden after he had sinned. It was a fear that caused him to run and hide from God. It is a fear that comes from a conscience that knows it hates God and His ways. John is talking about a fearful conscience, not a fearful man. For there is a fear of God that drives us towards God, a fear and trembling that desires nothing other than to approach God (2 Sam 23:3, Psalm 19:9, Prov 1:7, 2 Cor 7:1, Phil 2:12; Heb 12:28-29).

**Imitative Love** (vv20-21) – Drawn by this perfect love, conquered by this perfect love, trembling in this perfect love, and living in this perfect love, we cannot but imitate it. And we cannot say we love God while hating the images of God all around us. “*...we know that we abide in Him, and He in us...*”(v13) because His Spirit has been given to us. “*...God abides in him, and he in God...*”(v15) because he testifies that Jesus is the Son of God. “*...he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him...*”(v16) because God is love. What happens? The fruit of God’s love over, upon, and in us, is our love for one another. And this love is a testimony to the world of God’s conquering love.