THE LOVE OF THE FATHER

Living in the Fullness of His Love

Scripture: 1 John 4:16–21 (NKJV)

God's love is more than something we believe in; it is a love that transforms how we approach Him and how we treat others.

INTRO: WHEN GOD'S LOVE BECOMES PERSONAL

Church, one of the greatest blessings in life, is knowing that we are genuinely loved by our Father. His love brings comfort, strengthens our faith, and reminds us that we are never beyond His care.

Throughout this series, *The Love of the Father*, we have discovered the wonderful blessing of God's love and His promise that nothing can separate us from His love through Jesus Christ.

But today, we are reminded of something just as important. **God doesn't simply want us to know that He loves us. He wants His love to transform the way we live.**

In **1 John 4:16**, John declares**, "And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him."**

This beautiful passage reveals three truths about living in the fullness of our Father's love.

1. GOD'S LOVE MUST BE BELIEVED

1 John 4:16- John begins by saying, **"And we have known and believed the love that God has for us."**

There is a difference between knowing that God loves us and personally trusting in His love. We can believe that God is faithful yet struggle to trust Him when circumstances become uncertain. We can know that God forgives yet continue carrying guilt over mistakes we have already brought before Him.

John reminds us that God's love is something we must personally embrace. The word *abides* means to remain, continue, or dwell. Our Father desires an ongoing relationship with us, where we continually grow trusting His promises.

STORY: Think about a little boy standing beside a swimming pool while his father waits in the water with outstretched arms. The boy knows his father loves him, but he is afraid to jump. Finally, he trusts his father's words and leaps into his arms.

What changed? His father's love never changed. ***What changed was the boy's willingness to trust him.***

Church, the same is true in our relationship with God. His love remains faithful even when our circumstances change. Rather than allowing fear, disappointment, or past experiences to determine how we see God, we can draw closer through prayer, His Word, and fellowship with Him.

Faith in God's love gives us the strength to trust Him, even when we don't understand what He is doing.

2. GOD'S LOVE PRODUCES CONFIDENCE

1 John 4:17–18

As we grow in understanding the Father's love, something wonderful begins happening within us. His love produces confidence in our relationship with Him.

John declares in verse 18, **"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment."**

John is speaking about the tormenting fear of God's judgment. Through Jesus Christ, we no longer have to live under the constant dread of condemnation. Our confidence is not based on living a perfect life, but on what Jesus accomplished through His death and resurrection.

STORY: Imagine a child who accidentally breaks a window while playing baseball. Afraid of his father's reaction, he considers hiding what happened. But when he finally approaches his father, he discovers that although his mistake must be addressed, his father's love has not disappeared.

What a beautiful reminder of our relationship with God! Our Father does not ignore sin, but through Jesus Christ, He has provided forgiveness, mercy, and restoration.

Perhaps you have been carrying shame over something that happened years ago. You have repented, yet you continue allowing that failure to define your relationship with God.

Church, don't allow yesterday's shame to keep you from experiencing today's grace.

Hebrews 4:16 encourages us to **approach God's throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find help when we need it.**

Remember: The Father's love gives us confidence, not because we have never failed, but because Jesus is faithful to save and restore.

3. GOD'S LOVE MUST BE DEMONSTRATED

1 John 4:19–21- John makes one of the most beautiful declarations in Scripture: **"We love Him because He first loved us."**

Before we ever prayed our first prayer, attended our first church service, or made the decision to follow Jesus, God had already demonstrated His love toward us.

And now, the love we have received from God should become visible in how we treat others.

John reminds us that ***we cannot genuinely claim to love God while continuing to hate our brothers and sisters.*** Loving others is not simply a suggestion; it is a commandment from God.

Look at the example of Jesus. He showed compassion to the Samaritan woman at the well, welcomed Zacchaeus, called Matthew to follow Him, and extended mercy to those who had fallen into sin. Even while suffering on the cross, Jesus prayed for those who crucified Him.

His love was not limited to people who treated Him kindly. ***His love was demonstrated through compassion, forgiveness, and action.***

Church, sometimes we think showing God's love requires doing something extraordinary. But often, it begins with the simple opportunities right in front of us.

It may be forgiving someone who offended us, showing patience toward our spouse, encouraging someone who is struggling, or welcoming a visitor who walks into church feeling alone.

STORY: Imagine someone receiving a beautiful invitation saying they are valued and welcome, only to arrive and discover that nobody greets them or makes room for them.

The invitation said one thing, but the actions communicated something completely different.

Church, when we tell people that God loves them, our actions should help them experience that love.

Imagine the difference we could make if every person in our church committed to demonstrating God's love. Families could grow stronger, broken relationships could begin healing, and people who feel forgotten could discover that someone genuinely cares.

Jesus said in **John 13:35, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."**

The love we profess toward God must become visible in the love we practice toward others.

CON: A LOVE THAT TRANSFORMS OUR LIVES

Church, when we bring these three truths together, we discover the beautiful progression of God's love.

- ***God's love must be believed,*** because trusting His promises strengthens our relationship with Him.
- ***God's love produces confidence****,* because through Jesus Christ, we can approach our Father knowing that His mercy and grace are available to us.
- ***God's love must be demonstrated,*** because the love we receive from God should become visible through our kindness, patience, compassion, and forgiveness.

Imagine homes filled with greater love, marriages strengthened through understanding, relationships restored through forgiveness, and a church where everyone who walks through the door's experiences genuine care.

That is what happens when the Father's love becomes a living reality within us.

When we truly believe the *Father's love, we gain confidence through Christ*, and our lives become *a reflection of His love toward others.*

A PERSONAL CHALLENGE

As we close, consider this question: **Is the Father's love simply something you know about, or is it truly transforming the way you live?**

Perhaps today you need to trust His promises more deeply, release the guilt you have been carrying, or extend forgiveness to someone who has hurt you.

Whatever your situation, remember that the Father who loved you first is inviting you to draw closer to Him.

May we become a church that not only speaks about God's love but demonstrates it through the way we live, serve, forgive, and care for one another.

PRAYER

Father, thank You for loving us before we ever knew how to love You. Help us trust Your promises, grow in confidence through Jesus Christ, and demonstrate Your love in our everyday lives. Strengthen our families, restore relationships, and fill our church with genuine compassion. May everyone we encounter experience something of Your wonderful love through us. In Jesus' name, Amen.