

John is continuing the topic that he began at the end of chapter 6 describing how we can know that we belong to God because of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our life. In this passage he discusses how the Holy Spirit manifests Himself in us through love for God and for others. This is an evidence of our salvation, as John says in v. 13.

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. ⁸ He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God” - We ought to be exhibiting love for one another because, as children of God, we share the family trait of love.

“and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God” - The love in our heart for God’s people is the evidence that we have been born of God. Love is the natural result of being born of God.

“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” - If we do not have any love for God’s people then that is a sign that we do not know God. God is love and that characteristic will be evident in those who belong to Him but missing in those who don’t.

⁹ In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

After declaring that God is love, John shows us how God demonstrated His love toward us who are lost sinners. We recognize God’s love for us by the fact that He sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through His Son’s death.

¹⁰ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us” - We may love God, but our love for Him is nothing compared to His love for us. We know this because of what He was willing to do because of that love.

“and sent his Son to be the propitiation [an appeasement; satisfaction] for our sins” - God’s expression of love for us far outweighs anything we could ever express to Him. John is measuring the greatness of love by the magnitude of what that love is willing to do. Nothing that we could ever do for God could compare to what He did for us in order to redeem us from our sin.

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another” - If God’s love for us was enough to make Him willing to give His Son as a sacrifice for us, then loving one another should be nothing in comparison. John revisits this idea later in v. 20.

¹² No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. ¹³ Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

“No man hath seen God at any time” - No one has ever truly seen God in His natural form. The closest occasion may have been when Moses asked to see God’s glory (Ex. 33:17-23) and God allowed him to see Him from behind but even then God hid Moses in a cleft of a rock and covered him with His hand to protect Moses from being exposed to the pure glory of seeing God’s face.

“If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected [accomplished; completed] in us” - John’s point is that no man has ever seen God and yet God can be seen in us when we demonstrate our love for one another. That love is evidence that God dwells in us and that His love has done a work in our heart. **John 13:35** *“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”*

“Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit” - The presence of the Holy Spirit indwelling us is evidence of our salvation and the evidence of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling is the love He gives us for one another.

¹⁴ And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. ¹⁵ Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

“And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” - Even though “no man hath seen God at any time,” John and the other apostles (the “we”) have seen the Son (Jesus) Who was sent by the Father to be the Savior of the world. They are now testifying to what they have seen through their writings and preaching.

“Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God” - Anyone who also believes that Jesus is the Son of God is proving that they also know God, for only the Spirit of God can convince a person of that fact. **Matt. 16:16-17** *“¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. ¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”*

¹⁶ And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

“And we have known [understand] and believed [to be convinced; to have confidence in] the love that God hath to us” - John and the other apostles recognized the love that God has for us and were convinced of its reality.

“God is love” - Love is one of God’s foremost characteristics and one that He is most known for. Praise God for His love! God also is holy, and if His holiness were not tempered by His love then He would have pronounced His judgment on our sins and we would not have had any hope to escape hell.

“and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” - Since love is a chief characteristic of God, those Who “dwelleth in God, and God in him” will manifest that characteristic as well. It is an evidence of salvation.

¹⁷ Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

“Herein is our love made perfect [completed; accomplished]” - John is going to show us a benefit of God’s love accomplishing its work within us and this benefit is another evidence of our salvation.

“that we may have boldness in the day of judgment” - The benefit and evidence of God’s love being completed in us is that we no longer have to fear the coming judgment. We are redeemed by the blood of God’s own Son and all our sins have already been judged on the cross of Jesus Christ. Therefore we have nothing to fear on the day of judgment.

“because as he is, so are we in this world” - Being born of God, we have become like Christ in this world, showing His love for others and doing works of righteousness. The world hates us like it did Him and we will be persecuted as He was. Therefore we should not fear facing Christ in judgment because we will be like Him.

“There is no fear in love; but perfect [completed; accomplished] love casteth out fear” - Because God’s love has accomplished its work in us, our fear of judgment has been replaced with perfect peace. **Rom. 5:1** *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”* We have nothing to fear when our Judge is the One Who loves us.

“because fear hath torment [punishment]. He that feareth is not made perfect [complete] in love” - Someone who fears the judgment is afraid of the punishment they will receive. Such a person either does not yet understand their position in Christ or else God’s love has not yet done a work of grace in his/her heart.

¹⁹ We love him, because he first loved us.

We are able to love God only because He loved us first and sent His Son to die for us. His love has completed its work in us (saved us), giving us the Holy Spirit Who enables us to love Him and one another.

²⁰ If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar” - If we belong to God, then we are able to love God. John has already established that those who belong to God will love other Christians, so if a person says that they love God and yet hates their brother then they must be lying for the two states cannot exist simultaneously in the same person. The same salvation that causes a man to love God will also cause him to love his brother.

“for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” - It should be easier to love someone that we are familiar with and can see, hear and handle and relate to than to love someone that we can only read or hear about and have never seen.

²¹ And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

A person who loves God is someone who is saved, and Christ’s command to us who are saved is that we love one another. **John 13:34-35** *“³⁴ A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

³⁵ By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”