

The Confidence of Love

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Preacher: Jesse Kincer

[0 : 0 0] All right. Thank you, Ellen. Again, my name is Jesse. One of the pastors here is a huge privilege to have you here with us today, and it's a huge privilege for me to bring to you the Word of God.

For those of you who know me, you're probably thinking, what looks different about him? I'm not going through a midlife crisis. I just got contacts, and I'm very happy that I finally got to shed the glasses after wearing them for eight or so years. And so, yeah, that's what's going on.

If it's your first time seeing me, hey, this is normal. This is what I look like. All right, cool. Let's just pray before we dive into the Word, okay? Let's do that. Lord, we come to your Word, and we're excited about it. Your Bible, your written Word is something that isn't just suggestions on a page. You say it's your power to change our hearts. Lord, we can't just read and listen and automatically have that happen. It actually is by your grace, God, that you come and you use your Word to do that. And so, everything I say today isn't the magic thing that's going to make that happen. Actually, Lord, we need you. We need you working in us and through us. We can't do it in our own strength. And so, I pray that you would do that today. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

So, we are continuing on in this letter from John, and it's been an amazing few weeks already. Alan was up here preaching last Sunday. If you missed last Sunday, I would really suggest you go and listen to that and what is an amazing thing on what love is and what love looks like, and it'll really change your life. We need to be changed more and more by God's love as Christians and let His love change us more and more. And today, what we're going to be talking about is how what God's love actually gives us confidence. So, if you're like me, you probably woke up today not thinking, man, I wish I was more insecure, right? None of us think that. None of us really want to be anxious and afraid. And it's important that we don't live in that reality because, you know what?

Fear, you have these two primary motives as a person, right? You can live in love or you can live in fear. And fear, what it does, it drives us to do all sorts of horrid things. It drives us to abuse, it drives us to abuse, murder, oppression. It drives us to be less kind. It drives us to be more focused on ourselves. It drives us to be less joyous in our lives. We lose joy because of anxiety and worry that fear brings. And we become more stingy, become less generous. And think about it, man, when you're afraid, you probably don't get the sleep you wish you get, right? And so, here's the thing, guys. If you're like me, man, to be free of fear would be an amazing thing because, man, a heart that's full of fear is a heart that can't be full of love. And so, you can't have those two things dwelling at the same time. And here's what's beautiful. The passage we're looking at today actually deals with that. It deals with how we can live in that reality of confidence and security in our relationship to God.

[3 : 15] 1 John 3, verses 19, it starts this way. By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him. For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and he knows everything. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God and whatever we ask, we receive from him because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And this is his commandment that we believe in the name of his son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us by the spirit whom he has given us. Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. For many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. Little children, you are from God and have overcome them. For he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are from the world, therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us. Whoever is not from God does not listen to us. And by this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

This is God's word. So we all have a truth we believe in, right? All of us do. All of us believe something is true and it's something that not is only true, but something we actually live by.

These truth principles that we hold on to guide us in the way we live. So kind of if you think about a popular saying today that probably many of us have heard and many of us have said is, you know, that is your truth, but you know what? This is my truth. And that saying is a real convenient wall to put around what we believe as kind of as a protection against any truth opposition that may come against it. And if you think of another popular phrase that is kind of thrown around today is, hey man, I'm just living my truth. It's kind of like, hey, I hear what you believe, but you know what?

I'm just living my truth, so leave me alone. And that's a claim of, you know what? Absolute personal sovereignty and autonomy. You know what? I am the king of my castle. I am the lord of my life. You don't get to tell me what to do. I know what's best for me. I know what's true for me, and I'm going to live that out. And our cultural moment that we live in today reinforces this as the road to fulfillment, as the road to happiness, as the road to the good life. And if you're here and you're listening to this, not a Christian, man, I'm not picking on you. This customization towards personal truth and towards, hey, I got to believe whatever I want and you can't say anything about it, it's what we do as Christians as well, right? We curate God's truth to fit our sinful desires. And it's probably why if you're here today and not a Christian, you could probably say, point out a huge difference between some of the Christians you know and what Jesus looked like in the Gospels, right? You're just like, man, when I read the Gospels, when I hear about this person Jesus and how he lived, man, it's just very different to what I see the Christians that I know and how they live and how they act. And unfortunately, you know what? That is true. And I'll confess that we as Christians can be some of the most insecure, mean-spirited people you will ever meet, unfortunately. And I don't say that as a joke,

I say that very repentantly. And I have to say that even in my own life, I've acted that way. And today, I'm still, God is on this journey of working in my life and my heart so that I'm not like that. And by God's grace, he's changing us and changing all of us to be less that way, less insecure, less mean-spirited, less hurtful, and all those things, to have more confidence in him.

[7 : 03] And why are we like that? Why are Christians like that? It's because, honestly, we choose to let our hearts guide us instead of God's truth. You know that old, that song, listen to your heart, because it's calling for you. I think I got that right. Man, it sounds really nice. It sounds like really good sentiment. It sounds like really good wisdom, but actually, it's huge error, and it leads us into error. We listen to our hearts instead of God's truth, which is exactly the opposite of what the apostle John is telling us, right? And John's not just telling us. The Holy Spirit is the one who inspired him to write this, God the Holy Spirit. And so, this is what God the Holy Spirit is telling us today. Listen to what he says. By this, we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him, before God. What is it? How do we do this? Does he go on to say, man, listen to your heart no matter what? No, he doesn't say that. He says, for whenever our hearts condemn us, we have to realize this, okay? God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. So, my first point here is, man, truth does not come from our ever-changing hearts. Truth comes from a never-changing God.

See, our hearts can confirm what truth is, and that's awesome, but you know what? We also have to realize that our hearts can also confuse the truth. Our hearts aren't stable. That's why that happens.

Our hearts aren't stable. They are inconsistent things. Sometimes they get it right, and sometimes they get it wrong. We probably all know someone in our lives that live out their life by their emotions.

They're just led around by how they feel. Man, you know what? Sometimes they're fun to be around, and sometimes they are horrible to be around, right? Not so much fun to be around. One moment, they're gushing with love. One moment, they're really happy, and then the next moment, they may be exploding with anger or just in despair and sorrow. They vacillate between, like, very warm and welcoming to very cold and mean. And in the context of this passage, John is specifically referring to our heart's confidence in God's love. He's saying, don't look to how your heart feels to determine whether or not God loves you. Why? Why is that? Why does he want us to know this? Because your love for God, my love for God, isn't always going to be perfect. Man, I wish it was so. I wish we could love God perfectly and consistently. But that's just not true. We're not always going to feel close to God in our relationship with him. We're not always going to feel we're like in the middle of his presence. We're on the sweet spot of our relationship with him, or it's all gravy, no lumps, right? And in those times where God seems distant, man, it's so easy to start worrying about our position before God, to start worrying and thinking, man, does God really love me? Does he care about me?

Is he keeping me at arm's distance because I did something wrong? Our hearts condemn us in those moments. They don't help us in those moments. They don't push us towards God. Actually, man, they make us feel guilty and ashamed, and we get to wonder and get insecure what's going on. And we can start to think, you know what? You know, we did it, so I got to be the solution. I must have done something to deserve this. And we start to think, gosh, what have I done? Maybe I just haven't done enough.

[10 : 39] Maybe there's not enough good things I did, and so God's mad at me, and this is his way of taking it out on me. Or maybe we've been a little naughty lately. Maybe there's some things, you know, we can look over our shoulder in the recent past, and we can say, like, I know that was a bad call, and I did it anyway. I wonder if that's what's going on. But either way, the confidence of our hearts can change from one moment to the next. Man, it's so easy. And when we choose to be led around by our feelings, now what happens is, again, we fall into all sorts of problems. We fall into believing an anti-gospel. We fall into believing false truths of, man, I got to do more. I've got to be a better Christian. Man, to fix this, I got to do more giving, more serving, more sacrifice. Now, I'm not against giving or serving or sacrificing more. But, man, if you're being motivated to do that, it's coming from a place of earning God's love rather than in confidence in God's love. I want to tell you right now, if that's where you're coming from, that's where you're doing, all you're serving, all you're sacrificing is absolutely worthless. God doesn't want it. If you're trying to earn his love through that way, all that work you're putting in, all that effort you're putting in, you're going to get to heaven, and you're going to find out it's absolutely worthless. See, here's the thing.

Faithless works are just as dead as a workless faith. Faithless works are just as dead as a workless faith. When we work to earn God's love, we're believing a false truth. We aren't believing the gospel. The gospel tells us our relationship with God isn't earned by our works, and it's not kept by our works. But it was earned by Jesus Christ and what he did for us, and it continues to be sustained by what Jesus continues to do as our high priest in heaven ever interceding and working for us, and what God's doing by his Holy Spirit, working in our lives, transforming our hearts, and keeping us united with him and abiding in him. And this is what John is getting at. He's saying, don't listen to your heart, guys. Little children, don't listen to your hearts. It's not going to be good. Listen to God's truth. Let God's truth inform your hearts. Never let your heart inform God's truth. Why? Because God is greater than your heart. Because he knows everything. That's why he's greater than your heart. 1 John 3.20, at the end it says, God is greater than our heart. How? Because he knows everything. Man, here's the thing, guys. What he's getting at is God knows everything about us, and yet he loves us. Think about that. God knows everything about you. Every little thing you think, every little thing you know, everything that you've done, and still he loves you. That's another good reason not to listen to your heart. Your heart doesn't know everything. Man, God knows everything. Your heart doesn't know everything. I want to ask you this. Who would you rather have teaching you physics? Albert Einstein or a kindergartner?

No-brainer, right? Of course. It makes sense. We would want Albert Einstein. We would be a little more confident in knowing that, like, okay, I'm getting the good stuff here, listening to Albert Einstein. And here's the thing, when it comes to confidence in God's love, your heart is about as trustworthy as a three-year-old teaching you physics. Listen to what John is saying to you and I.

Stop listening to your heart. Stop listening. Remember, focus on, meditate on who God is. Meditate on what he's like. Meditate on his character. Meditate on his attributes. And here's one of them. Guess what, guys? He's all-knowing. He knows everything. He knows what is really true. And he knows you better than you know yourself. He knows who you were. He knows who you are. And he knows who you will be.

Think about that. He is all-knowing. Boom. He knows who I was, Jesse, in the past. He knows fully who I am in the present. And you know what? He knows fully who I'm going to be. I can't tell you that. I can make a guess, but I can't guarantee you what I am going to be. I hope it turns out well for the sake of my wife and my kids and all of you. But I don't know. And here's the thing. God does. And you know what? He still loves me. And I can't tell you how much confidence and security that brings to my heart.

[15 : 17] I'm really thankful that Haley didn't have that insight before she said yes to marrying me. That she could see what I was going to become. She was going to see all the bad things I was going to do and all the ways I was going to disappoint and hurt her. Because you know what? She would have probably said, no thank you. See, when we realize who God is, when we realize his character and his attributes, our confidence before him and in him can only grow. Which means the result is we're going to trust him more. We're going to love him more. And because of that, we're going to obey him more. Now, saying all this, we have to realize that this doesn't come without opposition. See, we have a real spiritual enemy who is dead set against this happening in our lives. And he doesn't want us to believe God's truth. He doesn't want us to know God's truth. He doesn't want us to love God more. He doesn't want us to live for him more. He doesn't want us to abide in him. And he doesn't want us to obey God. See, Satan does whatever he can to keep us from God's love and from believing his truth.

1 John 4, 1 through 3, it says this, beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. For many false prophets have gone out into the world. And by this, you know the spirit of God, every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.

And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the Antichrist. Now, when you hear Antichrist, I know there's kind of like, oh wow, was he talking about left behind?

Is this like, you know, the beast coming and all that stuff? No, it's the spirit of the age that we live in. It's just being anti-God and anti-gospel, the spirit of the Antichrist. This is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

They are from the world. Therefore, they speak from the world and the world listens to them. You've probably heard this saying, don't believe everything you hear. Some good wisdom to live by, right? Parents, you might want to drop that in every once in a while to the kids. If you know someone younger than you, you could be a good big brother or big sister to them and say, you know, don't believe everything you hear, don't believe everything you read. We just need to make sure we as Christians, we're not gullible. We need to make sure we're not being led away by error. We want to be, make sure we're being led into God's truth and not false truth, which is a tough thing because if you think about it, Christianity is built on the premise of believing a message, right? The gospel is good news.

[18 : 00] The gospel is a message about what God has done and it has information. So, how do we know which one we should believe? How do we know what to believe? Well, this is what John gives us. Does the message align to the Bible? Does the message align to the gospel as it's revealed in God's word? So an example, easy example, a friend of mine years ago attended a service in Carteret County at a church. There was a prophet that was brought in and he was prophesying. During one of the things he was prophesying, he looked at a lady and told her, it's like, man, God wants you to know that you can trade in your husband and upgrade to a better one. Good reaction, guys. All right. Okay. Just because he said, thus God has said, man, we just got to stop and say, whoa, whoa, whoa. We got to test that spirit.

We got to test that spirit. That's what John's getting at. And how do we do that? What do we test it against? Do we stop and see, ooh, my heart really didn't like what that guy said right there. You know? Because there might have been some people in there, a lady might have been like, yeah, my husband's a jerk. Hey, man, I'm going to take advantage of that and get out of this as soon as possible. God's giving me a way out. Now, we tested it against what the Bible says, right? Man, the Bible is objective truth. It's something we can go to and it's something we know is never going to change. And when we say the Bible is God's word, we're being really literal about that, you know? We're not just throwing around that phrase in a meaningless way. We really believe what's written in the Bible. God spoke those words. Those words came from him. Those are oracles of God that he wanted us to know because he was revealing who he is, what his nature is, what he's on about, and what he's doing, and what he demands of us.

It's all in the Bible, as I point to my iPad, because it has the Bible on it. And here's the thing, guys, any message that contradicts God's written word is not from God.

And so what we believe is we say, man, the Bible is our highest authority, right? We don't stand next to the Bible like buddy-buddy. We're on the same level of authority. We don't stand over the Bible and say like, oh, you know, I can interpret it for myself and just get out what I want to get out of it. No, the Bible stands over us. It's ultimate truth, right? The Bible is the only book you read.

As you read it, it reads you. And it makes yourself known. You begin to understand yourself more, and life makes more sense. It's God's word, and that's the difference. And any message contradicting that doesn't come from God. Actually, all it is, it's a distorted gospel. And you know what? This has been a scheme of the enemy for a long time. Check out Galatians 1, 6 through 8, okay? This is a letter written by the Apostle Paul to a church in present-day Turkey. I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who you called, who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel. Not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preach to you, let him be accursed. And Paul's taking the gloves off here, right? It's like, where's the kindness, bro? What happened to that? What happened to all this lovey-dovey stuff, man? You're just like, you're going for it. And so Paul's writing this, and he was a contemporary of the Apostle John, and it was written in the first century to the beginning of the church and how it was growing. And so what we see from this is that, like, man, you know what? This isn't just new to us today. There's just like the first time Satan got busy distorting gospels isn't happening in our moment right now, and he's been doing this forever. You can go back to the beginning of the

[22 : 25] Bible, right? Genesis 3, how he got Adam and Eve to sin, what did he do? He came to them, very crafty.

He said to them, you know what? Did God really say? I'm going to take the truth that God told you, those words he heard, and I'm just going to distort them a little bit so that you get confused, lead you into temptation, and then it leads us into sin.

And today, he still does this. He still distorts the gospel of Jesus. And here's the thing, guys. This is why Paul says, you know what? If dudes are doing this, man, let that person be a curse, because distorted gospels don't bring freedom. You know what distorted gospels bring? Bring bondage.

They put people into bondage. They don't make your life better. They make you more tired. They make you more cynical. They hurt you. They hurt others. They put us into bondages of guilt or shame or fear that we got to work our way into God's good grace, or when we sin that we can't be forgiven by him. We have to prove ourselves in order to be forgiven, or we get into the bondage of pride and arrogance and prejudice. Ooh, I keep all the rules. Look at what I can do. You know, the bondage of a moralistic gospel, and all that does is cause us to think too highly of ourselves and begin to look down on others.

It doesn't compel us. These false gospels, these distorted gospels, they don't compel us to love God more. They don't compel us to love Jesus more. Actually, the opposite happens. And here's how these distortions happen. It's one of two ways. What happens is either Satan gets us to take away from God's word, right? We take away from his word, which means that God's boundary lines that he's given us, what he said like, man, this is what it looks like to please me and live for me. Satan comes and say, let's just reduce those. Let's take some of those away. And that's called living in license. We take license that God's okay with our sin. We start changing the rules of sin and changing what sin is and trying it. And that's one distortion, right? License. And the other distortion is legalism. We add to what God has said, you know? Oh, you know what? I'm going to add to God's rules. I'm going to add to what he demands of us. I'm going to add to his salvation, you know? Jesus isn't enough. It's going to be Jesus plus something else. And as soon as you do that, you end up in a distorted false gospel, which doesn't lead to freedom. It leads to bondage. And that always ends in disaster. It always ends in disaster because here's the thing, man. Sin, sin unchecked and sin unrepented of, man, it acts like a bomb and not a bullet. That's what we say all the time here at One Harbor. Man, sin acts like a bomb and not a bullet. It just doesn't take you out. Man, it explodes and the shrapnel takes a whole bunch of people out. A lot of people get hurt all around you because of sin. And that's why it's important to know the true gospel from a distorted gospel. So here's the million-dollar question to you and me today. How do we do that? How can we know? How can we be sure? How can we have confidence that the gospel that we're believing in is the real gospel, the true gospel, and not some distorted false gospel?

[25 : 47] And this is what John says. You test it. Okay. You test it. Just because it sounds good to your ears and just because your heart may respond to it in a positive way doesn't make it true.

There are very eloquent men out there who can pitch you a message that sounds amazing, filled with wonderful words. And you know what? It's not true.

Let's check out what some dudes in Berea did in Acts 17. This isn't too far after Jesus ascended into heaven and his disciples started going out preaching the gospel. It says, the brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas from Thessalonica, a city in that area, and they sent them away by night to Berea. And when they arrived, they went into the Jewish synagogue, and they started preaching the gospel. That's what they would do. They'd go in and start preaching the gospel to these guys who didn't know about the gospel at all. So this was news to them. Now, these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica. They received the word with all eagerness, examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Notice it doesn't say about them the audacity, you know? The writer isn't like, how dare these guys? Don't they know that this was Paul speaking to them? Couldn't they have just received it as gospel truth? How dare they have checked out their message? Actually, no, they weren't rebuked for what they did. They were actually commended for what they did. And here's the thing. What we see is these two things. Man, they received their message eagerly, but they went and checked it out. They searched the scriptures for themselves to make sure that, like, okay, this is what Paul's telling us. This really sounds good. We're receiving eagerly. I want to make sure that everything checks out in here. It's okay. I'm going to search the scriptures for myself. And it said many of them believed because of that. And so, you know, there's this temptation to be like, man, we want to receive what we hear from the pulpit. We want to receive what we hear from a platform or a podcast. We want to receive it with eagerness, right? But man, without knowledge, that's a dangerous thing. The Bible talks about, like, zeal without knowledge. That's a bad thing. That's a really bad combination, all right? I can just say for myself, my early pastoral years, my early years following Jesus, unfortunately, a lot of zeal, not a lot of knowledge. And you know what? Unfortunately, I look back and people got hurt because of that. Unfortunately. And I've had to repent of that. And I've had to allow God's grace to come in and teach me and guide me. And he's had to mature me. And I'm by no means, I by no means have it perfect now. But you know what? I'm allowing that truth to invade my life. And I want to grow in my understanding of the gospel and who I am in Christ. And so that I cannot do it. So I could avoid those things again. I don't want to hurt people. Man, I want to love God more and love people more. I don't always get it right and go, you know what, guys? You're not always going to get it right. But that shouldn't keep us from pursuing this thing of having zeal and knowledge. We should be wanting to do both. I want to commend that to you today. And if, man, if you realize you've hurt people in the past, it's okay. You can, God's not going to stop loving you. You can stop and say, man, I've blown it.

And I need to repent. I need to go repent to some people and make amends, you know? And it's good to do that. And you know what? God, by his grace, he works that in us and he works us through that.

And so thankfully, man, I'm not the pastor I was before, but I'm not the pastor that God probably has for me to be into the future. But like Martin Luther says, by God's grace, I am what I am.

[29 : 23] History is full of passionate people who believe the wrong thing. Passion alone doesn't save us. Passion alone doesn't make something true. Just because our hearts race when we hear something doesn't make it the gospel. Now, this can be confusing because the reality is and the truth we understand is that the Holy Spirit works in our hearts the same way when we hear the truth gospel, the true gospel, right? When we hear the gospel, it says he opens up our hearts to respond to it.

You know, that gospel that we hear, because it's good news, we're like, oh, wow, that's amazing. I want to jump on that. Something happens in our hearts when we hear the true gospel. So this can be confusing again, like, okay, Jess, you're not really helping me out here. How do I know, right? How do I know what's going on? Because we don't want to quench the spirit either.

And again, the only thing that we do is when we hear these things, we got to go and we got to look at the Bible. We got to see it for ourselves because God's truth trumps our feelings. And when I talk about go and knowing the Bible and knowing what the gospel says, I'm not talking about buying a pair of Dockers and a collared shirt and enrolling into a seminary for some, like, serious Bible study. That's not what I'm saying. You don't have to do that.

Man, what I love about this passage, and I love how John is so pastoral, he gives us a super easy litmus test, right? Anyone can do this first. Man, is this message I'm hearing, is it telling me and leading me to believe that Jesus is God's Son who came in the flesh to die for my sins?

That's one thing, right? And the other thing we see him telling us and saying, test this out, is this message that I'm hearing, is it telling me and leading me to love people more and love God more in the same way Jesus loved me and loved our Heavenly Father? Those are the two things. That's it.

[31 : 22] And that takes a lot of pressure off. You don't have to learn Greek. You don't have to learn Hebrew. That's awesome. Man, God loved us enough to warn us that there's going to be false gospel, and he also loved us enough to give us some easy handles on how we can sniff them out.

And he did this because he's so committed to us, that he's so committed to abiding in us and us in him. And not only that, he shows us he's not only committed in this passage, he's not only committed to us, but also that God is able, he's able to keep us in his love.

1 John 4, 4, it says this, little children. I love that. Man, if I die, understanding that, that when I go before God, that man, I just want to hear those words spoken over me. The older I get, all I want to hear is my Heavenly Father say over me, little child, I love you.

That's the best, that is the best news in the world. That is the most freeing thing for my heart. And I hope it's the most freeing thing for your heart. Little children, children, you are from God. You are from God. You are born of him. You are his. He's your dad.

He's your father. Be confident in your position before him. Little children, you are from God. And have overcome them. Overcome who? Overcome the false spirits. Overcome the false teachers.

[32 : 49] Overcome the false gospels. You have overcome them. For he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. God is able to keep us in his love. This is what strengthens our hearts whenever we get insecure. This is what strengthens our hearts. This is what keeps us from living in fear and acting out in all kind of bad ways. This is what keeps us assured in that we are abiding in him and he is abiding in us and that we know his love and his love is never changing. It's never stopping. It's never giving up. Always and forever. Right? Man, guys, whenever we're tempted, whenever you and I are tempted to doubt God's love, whenever we fall into despair, whenever we feel shame or guilt and we feel like God doesn't love us because of what we've done or what we haven't done, or if we fall into pride and arrogance and we become cold towards him, we think we got this on our own, but we're tempted to doubt God's love or push away God's love. Man, our confidence and our comfort doesn't, don't come from looking to ourselves, but remembering who he is and what he has done. He sent his only son.

He sent his only son, Jesus, in the flesh, fully God, fully man, to die in our place for our sins. Romans 8. I think it's Romans 8 verse 1. It could be 9 verse 1.

Therefore, there is therefore now no, for those who are in Christ Jesus. Later on in John 4, it comes to a point, this whole argument comes to a point where he says, you know what? If you're living in fear, fear has to do with punishment, but God's perfect love casts out fear. So if you're living in fear and you're afraid, you're not believing the gospel that Jesus died for your sins, past, present, and future, and that there is therefore now no condemnation.

God doesn't condemn you when you sin. When you sin, you know what he does. In Christ Jesus, by his grace, he doesn't also sweep your sin under the rug. He says, you know what? Come to me. I love you.

Repent of your sin. Man, I'm going to accept you. I'm going to reinforce and remind you that your my little child, whom I love, and you know what? That's never going to change.

[35 : 22] He sent Jesus to die in our place. He did this because he loved us. And Jesus, by his death and resurrection, overcame our sin, right? He conquered them. Jesus is our champion. He is the hero.

There's no fight left for us to fight. As far as it comes to, we can't sacrifice.

Like Jesus did. There's no sacrifice we can make equivalent to what Jesus did to have our sins taken away. He did it all. And he earned that for us. He's our champion. He's our hero, not us.

Now, it's by faith in Jesus. It's by believing, believing in that truth that we overcome sin and death. It's by this truth that God comes to dwell in us by the Holy Spirit. And knowing this truth, and knowing God's character, believing in them, and living in his love, and living out his love, man, guys, that is what gives us confidence. That's what makes us confident children of God. That's what, when we're feeling insecure, rips away that insecurity, that we could boldly go to the throne room of grace whenever we need him in our time of troubles. And we find a God who's not there to judge us, and he's not there to punish us. He's not there to thump us. He's actually there to love us, and restore us, and remind us that we're his children.

So, how do we respond? I want to say, if you're here, and you're not yet a Christian, man, I just want to remind you that you can't earn your way to heaven. You can't earn your way into God's love. No amount of good deeds is going to scratch the surface about paying off your debt of sin that you owe.

[37 : 06] Anything that we do, whether you're a Christian or not a Christian, man, all our righteousness, God looks at it and says, like, man, in comparison to Jesus's righteousness and what he does, your righteous acts are like filthy rags.

What you need to do is come with all that well-deserved condemnation and guilt in your heart, and tell God, man, God, you know all my sin. Confess to him, God, you know all my sin, and yet, it's saying here that you love me. I stand here condemned to sinner, and yet, this guy's holding out to me that you love me, and you forgive me because of what Jesus has done, and you could pray and invite God to wash you clean, wash you clean of your sins. Lord, make me yours, make me your child, and change me from the inside. Change my heart.

Man, I want to encourage you to do that today. If you're here, and it wouldn't say that you're a Christian, you could do that today. That's all it takes. Now, if you're here, and you're already a Christian, man, do you feel insecure? Did you come in here today feeling a little bit insecure about your standing with God? Are you wrestling with shame and guilt?

Are you wrestling feeling unworthy? Like, man, I can't go to God. I can't come and pray to him because I don't think he's going to listen to me because I haven't done this or I have done this. Man, that's believing a false gospel. Or are you trusting in your own righteous works?

Man, remember, stop looking to our hearts. Our hearts don't inform God's truth. God's truth informs our hearts. Let's listen to it. Let's repeat it to ourselves. Rehearse the gospel to yourself. Look to his truth. Remember, he knows everything about you. He knows who you were. He knows who you are, and he knows who you're going to be. And you know what? He loves you, and his love is never going to change. Now, right now, we're going to respond by taking communion. And all this, as we look at what's happening here, we have juice that represents Jesus's blood that was shed for our sins. We, the bread represents body that was broken for us. And all of this is why we never want to end by saying, let's, let's go and try harder. Let's go and just do better, and maybe God's going to love us.

[39 : 18] As we take communion, we're reminded that Jesus's blood was shed, and his body was broken in our place. And he did it for us. And this meal that we take and participate in right now, it brings us back to the unchanging truth of the Father's love for us. The Father sent his son, his only son. Jesus was sent by the Father, and he gladly surrendered his life and gave of his life.

And he did so that he could bring us into his love, because he loved us so. So let's take time to respond. And when you're done praying and responding to God in your heart, you can come and take communion. Thank you.