

Introduction

- What are you afraid of? Common phobias: Arachnophobia — Fear of spiders, Acrophobia — Fear of heights, Claustrophobia — Fear of confined spaces
- Uncommon phobias: **Ablutophobia** — Fear of bathing or washing
Nomophobia — Fear of being without a mobile phone
Pogonophobia — Fear of beards **Ergophobia** — Fear of work or the workplace **Hippopotomonstrosesquipedaliophobia** — Fear pronouncing of long words
- For some of us, we fear love. We fear loving others with sacrificial practical love. Maybe you have hard time loving others with the love of Jesus because:
 - You might be rejected.
 - You might be hurt.
 - You might be betrayed.
 - You might be embarrassed.
- Big statement from John: “Perfect love drives out fear” ([1 John 4:18](#)).
- John has been telling that one of the ways we know we belong to God is by how we love others. But, love is a challenge, in part love is a challenge because it’s hard to love. It’s even fearful to love.
- John’s argument: when you know how much you are loved by God, it empowers you to love boldly. The kind of love that God empowers us to give is not weak or timid. It’s fearless. It’s bold. It’s radical.

- I want to show you from this text three ways you can have a fearless love.

Never stop marveling at God's love for you.

- John has repeatedly told us that loving others is evidence of the love of God in us. He's not done challenging us to love.
- John wants us to know that love - real, sacrificial love is from God. While the world may experience love, but the world doesn't know real, unconditional, life-giving love apart from a relationship with Christ.
- vs. 7 - If you're born of God and know God, you will love like He does. If you don't love, if there's hatred in your heart, or if your life is characterized by self-love - constantly putting your needs above others, you don't know God.
- vs. 8 - God IS love. NOT God is loving, but God IS love. Love is the essence of the character. Everything God does is out of His love for us. God is wrathful - He is angry at sin and what it does to us because He loves us. God is just - He decisively deals with sin because He loves us. God is jealous for His people because He loves us. He is compassionate, merciful, forgiving, and gracious because He loves us.
- vs. 9 -10 - Think about God demonstrated His love for us - When we were unlovable and not reciprocating His love for us, as the greatest act of love human history has ever known, God sent His Son to the world so that we might live through Him. He sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice (propitiation) for our sin. He decisively dealt with our sin through the sacrifice of His Son. The Son of God paid our penalty, suffered the wrath that we deserved, so we could get what we don't deserve - the gift of salvation.
- vs. 10 - "Not that we loved God..." We loved ourselves. We loved the world. We weren't seeking God. We didn't desire God, but He desired

us. Ultimately, what makes you a follower of Jesus is not your love for God, but God's love for you. Your love for God is evidence of His love for you. We love God because He first loved us (vs. 19).

- John's argument: You can't experience the amazing, unconditional, sacrificial love of God and not be changed. God's love changes everything about us.
- Now... we want to KNOW this God who loves us. We want TIME with Him. We want to LIVE for His will. We want to hate the things He hates and love the things He loves.
- I need to MARVEL at God's love for me because I will not love others well unless I'm continually amazed at how much I am loved by God. How do I do it?
- **Slow down.** None of us make enough time to meditate on who God is and what He has done for us. We're all rushing from one thing to the next not making time for meditating on the truth of Scripture. (Fighter verses instead of scrolling - making me slow down.)
- **Look for the cross rather than looking for practical advice.** Every passage you read in the Bible ask a simple question: "How does this passage show me the love of God? Instead of Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth - a guidebook with practical wisdom to make my life easier. When you look for the cross you'll begin to understand that God's love is indescribable ([Ephesians 3:18-19](#)).
- **Daily remind yourself of the evidence of God's love for you.** [James 1:17](#) - every good gift comes from above - your life is full of good gifts from God - count your blessings - there's no getting around it. God loves you.

Never lose sight of why you must love others.

- vs. 11 - If God love us in this way we MUST love others - It's not optional - it's an obligation.
- It's easier NOT to love. It's easier to be self-centered and focused on your desires. Why must you love? Why is it commanded? Why is it an obligation for followers of Jesus to love?
- You make the love of God visible when you love like Jesus. No one has ever seen God (vs. 12). John and the disciples saw God incarnate, but no one has ever seen the God the Father in His fullness. John's argument is that we make the love of God visible when we love others with the love of Jesus. In the way we love, we're able to point people to an even greater love. A humbling thought: God shows His love to the world through His church. What are you saying about the love of God by the way that you love?
- You make the love of God complete when you love like Jesus (vs. 12). What does John mean? You see the full expression of God's love in your life in the way He shows you compassion, forgives you, nurtures you, grows you, cares for you. He doesn't leave you (vs. 13). He placed His Spirit in you as evidence of His ongoing love for you. You're in Him, and He's in you. As you submit to God's gracious work in your life, others see evidence of God's love for you. You show the world what it looks like to live in the love of God.
- You make the love of God known when you talk about the love of Jesus (14-17). You talk about what you love. When you have experienced the unending love of God, you can't help but talk about it. We confess Christ as Lord and testify of His love for us. Does the way you talk about God demonstrate that you love Him? Does the way you talk about God demonstrate that you want others to know His love?

- **An obligation to love like Jesus is not a chore but a glorious calling.** It's hard to love. It's costly. It's sacrificial. It's not always received. You could end up hurt when you put yourself out there, but what a joy to be able to love others in such a way that it points them to the Kingdom. You are called to join God in His mission to bring others into His Kingdom - what a glorious calling. You GET TO be involved in the lives of others for the sake of the Gospel.
- **An obligation to love like Jesus moves you towards people, not away from people.** Jesus loved you before you loved Him. NOT love JUST the people you like or the people who think like you, but people who are difficult to love. Personality differences, people who think different than you, who have treated you poorly, etc. doesn't excuse you from withholding love. Who is God calling you to move toward in love that you would otherwise avoid?

Never let fear stop you from walking in love.

- John continuing to remind us about God's love for us. Since God has made His love complete in us, we can stand in confidence on the day of judgment (vs. 18) because on that day of judgment it will be evident that we are like Him.
- vs. 18 - We have confidence because of God's love for us, not fear. No fear in love - Perfect love drives out fear. God's complete love in us - We know we're forgiven, accepted, and cleansed. We know that nothing can separate us from His love. We know that we are eternally secure. We KNOW we are His. His love has driven out the fear of judgment or punishment for our sins. We know the love of God is complete in us. If we fear judgment then we don't understand God's love for us.
- vs. 20 - Now, we love (without fear) because He first loved us. The love of God compels us to love others. We don't fear that God will judge us,

and we don't fear people either. Because love is complete in us, we can love with complete love - not a fearful love.

- vs. 20-21 - Yet another reminder that if you say you love God, that love will be evident in the way that you love others. You can't love God who you have not seen and at the same time hate people you see in the flesh.
- Some of us are afraid to walk in love towards others, but you don't have to be afraid because of the confidence you have in your relationship with God. Since you have confidence in God's love for you:
- **You don't have to worry about what others think of you.** Worry cripples us from extending the love of God. e.g., Will others think I'm wrong for forgiving that person who hurt me? Does it really matter what others think of you when you are assured of what God thinks of you? How God thinks of you matters far more than how others think of you.
- **You don't have to let past hurt keep you loving others.** Some of us have a hard time loving others because we're afraid we're going to get hurt. You don't want to give of yourself to someone who may hurt you. Don't let past hurt hinder present obedience. If you are secure in God's love for you, you can take steps towards loving others even if it feels risky for you. Your ability to love grows stronger as you practice love NOT as you use past hurt as an excuse to NOT love. Instead of trying to protect yourself, rest in the reality that you are protected by God.
- **You can take steps towards bold love.** You have no reason to fear showing bold love. Forgiving someone who wronged you, giving generously towards someone without any expectation of anything in return, sharing the Gospel with someone, a gracious confrontation ("I can't watch you live this way), showing up in the hard moments (grieving, sick, struggling). Who is God calling you to show bold love to this week?

- Have you experienced the bold love of Jesus? Believe that Jesus loved you so much that He gave His life for you. Believe that He died the death you deserved and rose from the dead to set you free from sins and give you the gift of life. Turn to Him today.