

Fear and Love

1 John 4:7-21

"Fear and Love" is our sermon title today. *Fear Not* sermon series, during this 4th Sunday of Advent (Love).

- (1) Let's start with this sentence: "Perfect love casts out fear." (1 John 4:18)
 - But what does that mean? It's easy to misinterpret what John means...
- (2) Let's look at the entire verse (4:18): Fear has to do with *punishment*.
- (3) Now two verses (4:17-4:18): "Confidence on the day of judgment."
 - Judgment Day
 - Confidence. Confidence in love. *What* love?
- (4) The larger context (4:7-4:21, especially 4:10): "Propitiation for our sins."
 - A description of what happened on the cross: Propitiation: turn away wrath, remove anger.

Confidence. The opposite of fear is not love, but confidence.

- Confidence in divine love, as shown in the Son's death on the cross.

Christmas confidence!

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. Read the passage, 1 John 4:7-21. What words appear most frequently? Note this, because this typically steers us toward the correct understanding of the passage's major points.
2. Do you fear the "day of judgment" and "punishment"? (4:17-18) Do you think you should or shouldn't?
3. How does "perfect love" drive out this fear and replace it with confidence? Whose perfect love is John referring to, and how was it shown?
4. If the proper "fear of God" for the Christian does *not* include a fear of punishment on Judgment Day, then how would you describe that fear? What synonyms for "fear" might you use, and which ones wouldn't you use?