

Series: 1 John  
Title: No Man Hath Seen God  
Text: 1 Jn 4:12-16  
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**1 John 4: 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.**

**Proposition:** John declares that love to brethren is active in God's child because God dwells in us and his love accomplishes this in us. Therefore, this is how we know that we dwell in God and he in us because he has given us of his Spirit.

**Title:** No Man Hath Seen God

Why did John make that statement when speaking of a believer's love to our brethren? That is one thing we will try to see in this message.

## LOVE PERFECTED IN US

**1 John 4: 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.**

What does John mean when he says God dwells in us and his love is perfected in us?—*"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."* The reason any sinner loves is because God dwelleth in us. "God is love." When God, who is love, dwells in us, he makes us behold his great love for us in Christ Jesus and thereby makes us *dwell in love*. Love is of God. God gets all the glory for making us *dwell* in love to him and our brethren. Praise God for love! To "*dwell in love*" is to continue to the end of our lives welling in love.

The Mississippi River curves in places and flows north. But if you look at the big picture, it always flows south. There may be isolated acts where brethren do not love as we ought. But he is not talking isolated acts. He is talking about the big picture, "*he that dwelleth in love*" is he that continues, remains, abides in loving God and loving his brethren unto the end.

1 John 2: 24: Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning.

From the beginning—from the first hour—we heard that we should believe on Christ and love one another.

1 John 2:24: If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain [abide, continue] in you, ye also shall continue [abide, dwell] in the Son, and in the Father.

Our text says if we dwell in love it is because God dwelleth in us and his love has accomplished this in us. It is because God dwelleth in us and by his same effectual word that made us clean, he makes us abide in him. Christ said, "*Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*" Then by the same word he commands, "*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing*" (Jn 15: 3-5). Christ dwells in us and his love is accomplished in us.

When God dwells in us, he has created in us a “*spirit in which is no guile*”, a “*pure heart*”. In that new heart, God—who is love—dwells, abides, continues, remains. Thereby, we dwell in love unto the end. By his love, in our new spirit in which is no guile we love God with no guile, no dissimulation.

Deuteronomy 30:6: And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

And we love our brethren with unfeigned love.

1 Peter 1: 22: Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren,...love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever

What does it mean that “*his love is perfected in us.*” God’s love has “accomplished” this end in us.

John 19: 28: After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now ACCOMPLISHED [perfected], that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

When we dwell in love to God and love to our brethren , it is because God dwells in us and God’s love has accomplished this end in us. Down in verse 17-18, God’s love is perfected or accomplished in us, when his love removes from us a fear of judgment. In our text, his love is accomplished in us when we love our brethren.

So “perfected” does not mean that we become sinless and perfect. Our sin-nature is with us until death. It means by God dwelling in us, God’s love for us has accomplished making us dwell in love to God and our brethren. Robert Hawker said, "...all that we can call love or affection in us, either to God or his people, are but the mere effects from him, and his love to us as the cause."

## **NO MAN HATH SEEN GOD AT ANY TIME**

**1 John 4: 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.**

Why does John support this truth by saying, “No man hath seen God at any time?”

We cannot see God. So where do we see God? We behold the invisible God by beholding the GodMan, Christ Jesus, in whom God dwells.

John 1:18: No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him* (Jn 1: 18).

Colossians 2:9: For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

John said, “*God is love.*” And God loves his people. But “*No man hath seen God at any time.*” So where do we see the love of God toward his people? We see it in Christ’s actions which manifest God’s love toward us.

1 John 4: 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. 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.

1 John 3: 16: Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us:

The way we know that *God dwells in Christ and Christ in God* is by beholding Christ's works. We behold *God's love for his elect* by beholding Christ lay down his life for us. Christ said,

John 5:36: But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, [perfect, accomplish] the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

John 10: 37: If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38: But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.

John's point in our text is "*No man hath seen God at any time.*" We see God by beholding the GodMan in whom God dwells. And we behold God's love for us by the actions Christ performed throughout his life and by laying down his life and propitiating God for us.

Therefore, when John applies this principle to us, "*No man hath seen God at any time*", how then are we going to discern that God dwells in us and that God's love is perfected in us? It is by us loving one another, not in tongue, but in deed and in truth—"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

It is not merely by what we say but by what we do in love to one another. If God has given us of his Spirit, there will be in us a likeness to our Father who begot us. We will love one another in deed as he loved us in deed.

John 12: 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.

So brethren since no man hath seen God at any time, the only way we know that God dwelleth in us and that his love has accomplished this work in us is that we love one another, not merely "*in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth*" (1 Jn 3: 18). If he has given us of his Spirit then we shall!

## **FAITH AND LOVE**

**1 John 4: 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. 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...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?(1Jo 4:20).**

Lastly, let's apply this to faith and love in God's preacher as well as in God's people.

When it comes to a preacher—"No man hath seen God at any time." How then am I going to know God dwells in a man and that God's love has accomplished the end which God's love accomplishes in all his preachers? What does the Spirit of God always make his preacher and his people do? We believe and testify publicly the truth of Christ—"And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

One thing I discovered is that a church's statement of faith may be solid. But seldom do they preach publicly what they claim to believe. "*No man hath seen God at any time*" but God has given a sure way of discerning who God dwells in. If a man has the love of God in him then God says *whosoever*—God's people as well as his preacher—whosoever is not ashamed to testify publicly that Jesus is God in human flesh is of God. That means they preach the gospel of Christ. They declare unashamedly that Christ is the successful Savior, that he accomplished the redemption of his particular people, God's elect, and God's elect alone. *He said, "If is finished!" perfected! Accomplished!* They will declare that Christ is risen, reigning and calling out his redeemed. The preacher who has the love of God in him will declare that Christ has all power to keep his people and lose none but raise us up again at the last day. John says at the end of verse 15, "*God dwelleth in him and he in God.*" It is what he said in verses 2-3.

1 John 4: 2: Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist,...

Same is true of God's people as we hear a preacher:

1 John 4: 4: Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 5: They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 6: We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

So when God dwells in a sinner and God's love is perfected then we will declare Christ in truth according to the word of God. There is no doubt about it!

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

Think of the certainty of this brethren. Sovereign, irresistible God dwells in us. Not only are we partakers of the divine nature, but God is present in that new nature. Having washed us in his blood, Christ comes directly into that new heart and Christ dwells in us. Do any imagine that God is unable to make his child behold his great love for us and accomplish making us love those God loves?

John says if we don't there is one reason—"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?"

Here is a brother across town with a need. He is one God loved and sent his only begotten Son to die for. He is one in whom Christ dwells. If I won't love and provide for my brother who I can see, God says, then I don't love God who I can't see. I cannot see God but I can see you that God loved and sent his Son to die for. We cannot love God in person, but we can love our brethren in person. If God has given us of his Spirit, we will! Wherever God has sown the incorruptible seed in the heart of his child, there will be life and faith and love springing from that seed, and that seed abideth and so that God's child will abide in love.

As John says he "*dwelleth in love.*" God will not allow his love to be choked out by our flesh nor by the enticements of the world nor by our dearest family after the flesh. The stony ground hearer endures for a time, but he has not root—so "*afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.*" But not where Christ abides! He makes us to be rooted and grounded in the

love of Christ. Despite Satan's best efforts to set the children of God against one another, God makes us dwell in love one with another.

God's love perfected in us makes a believer love strangers in another land who he has never met who are his brethren in Christ, more than his own family after the flesh living on same block? When he sees his brother under attack and slandered, God's love makes him stand with his brother and comfort his brother, not question his brother.

Song of Solomon 8:7: Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love [to try to make a believer part with it], it would utterly be contemned.

No matter the price offered a believer to part with Christ and our brethren, God's love accomplishes making that believer say no way!

Romans 8:38: For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Brethren, let us endeavor to abound in love toward one another more and more.

Romans 13:8: Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

Brethren, let us pray for one another that God would increase us in love.

1 Thessalonians 3: 12: the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: 13: To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

And, brethren, tonight, when we lay down, let us thank God for his love and give him all the glory, *"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."*

**Amen!**