

SOUL FOOD

DECEMBER 5, 2016

I JOHN 4:1-21 THE "SO" KIND OF LOVE

I don't know about you, but when I first wake up in the morning I am not exactly warm-hearted. I wish I could say that I am ready to seek God's face and spend time with Him first thing in the morning. But, I can't. I used to have a coffee mug that said, "There are two things I get up for in the morning: Jesus and coffee." Many times after a few sips of coffee I am more motivated to spend time in personal worship. However, I can also say that one verse contained in this passage provides great motivation to spend time with the Father. **"Beloved if God SO loved us, so ought we to love one another."** It is not just that God loves us...He SO loves us. This truth reminds me that Almighty God, Yahweh Himself, wants to spend time with me in order to teach me, counsel me, and fellowship with me. This passage reminds us of the love of God that is so great, He gave His only Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Because Jesus perfectly satisfied the wrath of God, I can come freely and boldly to the One who perfectly accepts me in the Beloved.

John gives us some helpful insights here into the basics of the assurance of salvation. If we believe that Jesus came in the flesh we have the assurance of knowing that the Holy Spirit abides in us. Secondly, if we believe that Jesus is the Son of God we know that God abides in us through His Spirit. Thirdly, loving one another is a cardinal hallmark of our being true believers. I am so blessed to know of these basic testimonies to the validity of my faith. There is much false teaching out there about what constitutes someone as a Christian. I have heard such false teaching that purports one can only read a particular version of the Bible in order to be a Christian or one must abstain from certain foods or even take certain vitamins! Do not allow yourselves to be taken in by such theological shenanigans. No matter the nature of your spiritual struggles always go back to the basics. Remember this teaching of John.

Lastly, John reminds us that we have the blessed privilege of living in hope and strength rather than fear. Jesus came to defeat the source of our ultimate fear, namely death and the specter of punishment. But the perfect love of God, which led to Jesus being poured out of heaven for us, casts out fear because we know that Jesus bore our punishment. We must preach God's love to our fears. His love is bigger than our fear. Never forget God's "SO" kind of love.