

1 John 4:18

by John Gill

Perfect love casts out fear, and when we truly love God and believe in Christ, we are free from fear and punishment.

Scripture: Psalm 34:4, Matthew 10:28, Romans 8:1, 2 Timothy 1:7, Hebrews 2:15, 1 John 3:16, 1 John 4:16, 1 John 4:18-19, 1 John 5:13

Topics: "Love", "Fearlessness in Faith"

Description

John Gill emphasizes that perfect love drives out fear, particularly in the context of love among brethren. He explains that where genuine love exists, fear--especially the fear of judgment and death--dissipates, allowing believers to stand firm in their faith. Gill contrasts this with the torment that fear brings, which can lead to a life of bondage. He asserts that true love for God and others assures believers of their salvation, freeing them from the anxieties that accompany fear. Ultimately, he encourages the congregation to cultivate a sincere love that reflects their faith in Christ.

Transcript

Ver. 18. There is no fear in love,.... In the love of the brethren; where that is, there is no fear: so far as that prevails and gains ground, fear removes; not the filial fear of God, the new covenant grace of fear, which is the beginning of wisdom, and is consistent with faith, hope, love, and spiritual joy; but either the fear of men, which brings a snare: those that truly love Christ, his Gospel, and his people, they are not afraid of men; the spirit of power, love, and of a sound mind, is opposite to a spirit of fear, nor can they stand together; and such strength there is sometimes in brotherly love, that the saints are not afraid of death itself, but freely lay down their lives for one another; see 1Jo 3:16; or it may be rather, that they are not afraid of the day of judgment, and of hell and damnation; where hatred of the brethren has place, there is a fear and dread of these things, as were in Cain; but those that love the brethren, they know they are passed from death to life, and shall not enter into condemnation, and therefore are in no fear of any of these things:

but perfect love casteth out fear; when love to the brethren appears to be perfect, that is, genuine and sincere, and a man knows that from the bottom of his heart he sincerely loves the saints, he concludes from hence, as he may, the truth of his faith, which works in this way; and this frees him from the fears of men and devils, and of the future judgment and wrath to come. The Jews have a saying {w},

"worthy is his portion that rules over the place of fear, for lo, there is nothing that rules over the degree of "fear" but "love"."

Because fear hath torment: it distresses a man, fills him with anguish, and makes him restless and uneasy, and keeps him in servitude; through the fear of men, of the devil, death, judgment, and hell, he is all his lifetime, or as long as this fear lasts, subject to bondage: or "fear has punishment", as it may be rendered, and is by the Vulgate Latin version; it is a punishment itself to a man; and its being criminal deserves punishment, and is punishable; see Re 21:8;

he that feareth is not made perfect in love; or "by love"; that is, he that is possessed, and under the power of a servile fear of punishment, is one who is not, by the love to the brethren, made to appear to himself to be a sincere lover of God, and true believer in Christ; for was he, he would not be in fear of destruction and death, since whoever truly loves God, and believes in Christ, shall certainly be saved; though such persons, at times, may not be without their doubts and fears.

{w} Zohar in Exod. fol. 87. 1.

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