



new life fellowship

**Sermon Title: God, Politics and The Church: Resisting the Politics of Fear**

**Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor**

**Scripture: 1 John 4:16-21**

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

*1 John 4:16-21 (NIV)*

### **Sermon Outline:**

In this passage of scripture, we see John writing to the church as a father. He wants the people to be formed in the way of love. John comes back again and again to one word: love. He says that our lives would be made perfect in love and is trying to instill this in his spiritual children. John lets them, and us, know that fear is the antithesis of love and love has come to cast our fear.

Fear can make us do irrational things. Every day we live we are told to fear something, even though it may or may not be true. In a world marked by evil forces, fear is the currency of political hostility. We are not called to deny our fears, but we are called to resist being formed by them. The politics of fear is dominating our lives and our culture. Dangerous truth about our lives is that we don't give critical assessment to this.

Fear and love cannot stay in the same place. Either one is going to push out the other. God is love. *If our lives are not marked by love, we do not know God, because God is love.*

The **Gospel Truth** is that perfect love casts out all fear. The **Cultural Reality** is that paralyzing fear casts out love.

When we think about political engagement, it is very easy to see people as who they support and reduce them to that without seeing there are a lot of forces that form them. What we see on the surface is another person's way of voting, but beneath the surface we don't see the other forces at work such as: Christendom, reading of the end-times and deep embedded FEAR. When you know someone's story, it is amazing how much compassion you have for that person. We need to see all of humanity as being made in the image of God.

The Jesus way is marked and formed by love and not led by fear. God's love is contingent on God's love, not what we do. The gospel casts out fear because there is nothing that can separate you from the love of God.

How can you live a love that casts out fear:

- Love that seeks to understand
- Love respects differences
- Loves works hard to see the humanity of others.

The perfect love of God is the most powerful force in the world. This is not something that we do, it is grace. Grace is God doing something for you that you cannot do for yourself. When you give yourself to receiving the love of God, the love of God will effortlessly flow through you. It is Christ who lives in and through you. When we dwell in God, and are filled with his love, this is the only way the world is going to be healed because perfect love casts out all fear.

**Sermon Summary:**

This Sunday Lead Pastor Richard Villodas continues our sermon series on God, Politics and the Church. Today Pastor Rich discusses resisting the politics of fear and how this can be used as a strategy to perpetuate hostility and division.

**Sermon Questions:**

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, what were you raised in a home that was surrounded by fear or love? How does your upbringing shape who you are today and how you view others? Are you motivated by fear working in a survival mode or by love seeing others in the image of God?
3. Are you living your life right now in the Gospel Truth or in the Cultural Reality? Are you being formed by fear or love?
4. In your relationship with God, would you say you are you a dipper believing that transformation is contingent on you, or are you a dweller, knowing that transformation happens not on your terms but on God's terms?
5. In order to extend grace to others, first we must be filled with the love of God. Can you find time this week to be still and dwell with God, so that you can receive His love and pour it out onto to those around you?