

1st John

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Chapter 1

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— 2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—

Just the first several words here along with what we have read in John 1:1 sets the tone for the first point that Jesus is God. Now keep in mind that the argument that we will see was not this point. Those who were in apposition agreed with this and believed this.

There are many today though who will argue against Jesus being God, and rather they believe that Jesus was entirely a man.

But here the opposite, and this is why we see John writing this letter to the churches. The group that John is coming against believed that Jesus was God and only God and that Jesus' image was not man at all but somehow spirit.

If Jesus came as only God he could not have fulfilled the requirement of man to be righteous and holy in order to gain salvation. Our faith in Christ being both God, and man in the flesh, as well as Him living a perfect sinless life, only then could that be credited to us through our faith as righteousness.

John continues on in verse 1 ~ **“which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life”**

John now brings these two parts of Jesus perfectly together, he is making it clear that Jesus is God and is as well man, Jesus was from the beginning but as well we could touch Him and see Him. John uses here the term “the word of life” as a representation here of who Jesus is.

It is important as the church is being confronted and corrected that the words used be clear and firm. John didn't want in any way for his words to be taken wrongly thus creating another problem.

I personally have gotten myself in situations many times with being direct on scriptures clear meanings. But as God moves me by the Holy Spirit I can do nothing other than to teach truth, I am compelled to do that.

3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

This first half of verse 3 **“that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us”** John is telling them how important it is to understand what he is saying. The opposite of what John has just said would be “that which we proclaim to you, if not understood and agreed upon, will cause us not to be able to have fellowship with you.

That's how important this truth is. It cuts like a two edged sword.

He goes on that this fellowship is also with God and Jesus meaning what you are believing is not fellowship with God and Jesus.

4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

John finishes with a hope, the hope is that if they come back to the truth they will be more complete, and that if they don't their joy will be incomplete.

Scripture says that we are to be like minded and I hope that as we study through scripture together this will be the case.

Walking in the Light

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

John starts this section off by reminding the church that he was with Jesus and having been with Jesus and hearing from Jesus first hand that there can be little argument about what John is saying to them.

Those who are leading this church astray were not with Jesus, at least not in the intimate way John was, but most likely not at all. There is a good chance that these are wolfs in sheep's clothing really.

So what John is saying in verse 5 is that from the lips of Jesus Himself, he personally heard Jesus say that “God is light, and in Him is no darkness”.

What would be some examples of what darkness means? being evil, being a liar, being unjust, we could name many things that can describe darkness but in short darkness is sin.

6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

I see this taught unfortunately in very self righteous ways at times. Christians will battle the sin of the flesh and at times the mind to the day we die. But there is a constant battle going on against the flesh and mind and there is a true desire to live like Christ did.

So what is walking in darkness? It is surrendering to this battle that we fight and saying I'm a sinner and I'm OK with that. It's saying I give up, I surrender to the darkness and I will live a life of sin without regret or conviction. That is walking in darkness.

Being in this state means as John says “we have no fellowship with him” if we are, and if we think we do we are liars. Being out of fellowship means we are not Christians at all, that is the lie.

We are lying to ourselves, we are lying to others and we are lying to God. So what is the cure for this? What is the way of life we are called to?

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

If we are aware of our sin and battle against our sin and feel conviction from our sin, Jesus' blood will cleanse us from all of our sin.

Conviction is a powerful thing and it is a sign of a believer. Unbelievers do not feel convicted for anything. They may feel sorrow or regret in a worldly way for doing some wrong but they do not feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

John is saying true spiritual fellowship can only be had by those who are truly believers.

There is a sense in which we may have some fellowship with unbelievers. You can have your fishing or golf buddies and you may fellowship with them about these things, but you will not have spiritual fellowship with them which includes God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit as well as other believers.

I don't believe a Christian can desire not to have fellowship with other believers. A Christian cannot live a life with only unbelievers for fellowship and say they don't want fellowship with other Christians and be a Christian.

8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

This is a very powerful verse and let me tell you why. If we want to win souls for Jesus we must come from a place of humility and honesty.

If we explain the gospel biblically we will explain it in a way which tells the unbeliever there is hope and that our hope is in the fact that we are in need of Jesus every single day. Jesus is not needed just once at the moment of being reborn but needed always until they day God calls us home.

That means our sin must be front and center in our lives right behind Jesus. The moment we think we are all that and so righteous is the day we no longer need Jesus in our lives and are no longer a believer.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

This is something I need to get far better at. Our daily confessions help us grow in our reliance on Jesus. It tells him we need him greatly every single day.

10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

God and Jesus both know we have sinned and will again sin. If we say we do not John says we say God and Jesus are liars. Scripture says we need them always and all scripture is God breathed.

My need is for Jesus always and my humility in approaching this fact will hopefully draw others to Christ - and being self righteous will do the opposite and push them away from both God and Christ.

Chapter 2

1A ~ My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

The apostle John starts off here in chapter 2 with this warm and very personal recognition of the relationship that he feels he has with these Christians in Ephesus.

Now there could be a dual meaning in this statement so we will look at both of them but I would say these dual meanings are both appropriate. John in his relationship with these Christians, is one like a father over his children. Being an apostle John as well as the other apostles disciplined these Christians since they were brand new baby Christians. The apostles fed them with the word and saw to their spiritual needs as they matured. This is the first meaning.

The second meaning is one of authority. Remember this letter is a corrective letter from John and he wants to make perfectly clear to them that his understanding of Christ and as well his authority within the church over these Christians, is much like a father's knowledge and authority over his children.

You see John knows their souls are on the line here, that this is a crossroads for them. He knows it is a matter of heaven or hell for these Christians and it is his responsibility to do everything that God has equipped him to do to insure their progression continues to heaven.

This is the same responsibility of every pastor and teacher and unfortunately far to many of them today are failing badly.

1B ~ But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

The advocate John is talking about here is not the same person this church believes in unfortunately. John is trying to get them to understand this.

The “we” John is talking about is the advocate of those who are in fellowship with him and the other Christians. John has already stated that these Christians are not in fellowship with him or the others in the last chapter.

2A He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Propitiation ~ In the Bible, propitiation is the act of turning away God's wrath by offering a sacrifice, particularly the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is a way of appeasing God and avoiding divine retribution.

The word “our” here does not include these Christians, because by the biblical definition of propitiation it includes the payment for sins or in other words salvation. John is using the word “our” to signify Christians who are in fellowship with him.

Are you with me so far?

This verse then says **“2B and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world”**. If John is trying to bring this church back into fellowship because Jesus' propitiation does not include them because they are worshipping a false Jesus – how can the propitiation of Jesus gain unbelievers forgiveness and salvation? It can't.

Based upon scripture then, John is talking about all the Christians in the whole world.

Another view of this would be that Jesus' propitiation is capable of covering the entire world if every single person came to faith. But the application of the propitiation of Jesus is only for the saved.

God only sends people to hell if their sins are not covered by the propitiation of Jesus. God does not send people to hell once they are covered by the blood of Jesus or God would be an unjust God.

3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.

Now John just got through saying that if we (Christians) do sin then we have an advocate in Jesus. Jesus is not the advocate of unbelievers but rather only believers.

So when we look at this verse we also need to look back to what we read last week in chapter 1:8-9.

1:8-9A If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Then also in chapter 1:7 about “walking in darkness”, that if we walk in darkness it means we have completely walked away from the faith and are living a life in sin without Christ.

Keeping the commandments is not perfection but is a life of being in Christ and living a life of faith, repentance and sanctification.

1:9B By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

The “he” is Jesus here and the obvious message is that our faith in Jesus should be expressed outwardly in our daily lives.

The New Commandment

7 Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. 8 At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

John is letting them know that even though this church in Ephesus is falling out of fellowship with other believers because of their false beliefs that he still loves them and cares about them.

What John is doing is reaffirming probably the most important commandment ever given to mankind, but he doesn't come right out and say it. John is talking about the commandment to "love one another"

Leviticus 19:18 ~ You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

John is reaffirming what Jesus reaffirmed in the Old Testament. But it is important to take note that in all of these passages they are all talking about loving fellow believers specifically. Other verses will talk about loving your enemy but here it is specific to fellow believers.

Jesus in His words says, "all people will know you are my disciples, **if** you have love for one another" but I'm not always sure the church as a whole is doing a good job at this. Many individuals don't do a good at this and as well many churches don't do a good job at this. But we all need to come together as Christians and get better at this.

8 because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

John's comment here In my opinion is two fold. John is talking about the spreading of the gospel and the growing of the church and as well Jesus being the light in the darkness though I think it is hard to separate these two things.

9 Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. 10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. 11 But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Hate and love among believers does not mix, it is like oil and vinegar. You can shake up that bottle but if you let it sit for only a few moments separation is already taking place. Hate will cause division faster than anything among believers and within the church it can spread quickly and destroy a church.

There is no room for hate among us. John goes as far to say if you have hate for a brother or sister in the faith then you are not in the faith at all.

Now it is rare that the apostles say things for no reason at all so it is likely that not only did this church have a unbiblical understand of Jesus but there must have been some hate flowing in this church as well.

Possibly among those with a correct understanding of Jesus and those who have been led astray and are following a wrong understanding of Jesus.

See unbiblical positions in a church will cause hate a division which is why we need to constantly be seeking truth and growing in it. And when we find falsehoods we need to correct them quickly.

12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.

We mentioned this last week this term “little children” and what John means by this. It could be his love for them is like a father or it could be that they are immature in there faith which is why they have false beliefs.

We also talked about how John has said more than one time that they are out of fellowship with believers because of there false beliefs but here John is approaching at least some of them as still being saved.

13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father. 14 I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

John is ending on a positive note in his closing of this section. It could be that he feels that this corrective letter has brought them back into the fold of believers. I hope it did.

Do not love the world

There are two contrasting points within these two sections and in the middle, sandwiched in-between, is a message about the Antichrist and I want to cover that separately. These two sections today flow well together.

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

If you are of the world you will put the things of the world first in your life. You will put those things before God and before Christ.

When it talks about love of the world or things of this world God is obviously talking about two different things that we face in life for the most part. The first is of the world, this can be things we battle in our minds. It is those sinful thoughts or being absorbed in the ways of the world. The second is the things in this world which are more physical, they are things we can touch.

15 If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him

So again why is this the case? Because anything we put before God is our god. God should be our first love, and the one we primarily give our time and efforts to. If we are doing this we know the father is in us. If you are not giving God the majority of our time and efforts, the thing you are giving it to is your god.

Now, many would say but what about my wife or husband and my children? If your wife or husband and your children don't see you putting God first I can almost guarantee you they won't put God first either.

16 For all that is in the world the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

Sexual sins, that being both physical and mental leads to a breaking down of our relationship with God. At minimal it will put distance between us and God.

And pride, our only pride should be in Christ not ourselves. Living a life of humility is the way of the believer.

Proverbs 8:13 ~ The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.

Many don't like that we should fear the God, but there is always a balance. Balancing the fear of God with our love for God together in harmony is what we should seek.

17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

The context of this remember is a letter to a church that has some issues in which John is trying to correct. The normal progression of the Christian is to mature in your understanding of Christ and living it out daily. This is what the world passing away and its desires means for the believer, or it should. You are moving away from these things of the world and moving closer to God and His will. His will is for us to be like Christ.

Children of God

28 And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

29 If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

The word “abide” means to accept and to act in accordance with. We don't want to be like these believers in this church in Ephesus and we don't want to be like the church in Sardis.

Revelation 3:1-2 ~ “I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. 2 Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.

Will you abide in Christ or will you shrink on that day when he stands before you? Are you confident that you are prepared for that day or are your works incomplete? Will you fall to your knees in shame or stand before him tall that His work in and through you is complete?

These are warnings to us, and we need to wake up in our service to Christ and doing everything possible to complete the tasks He has put before us.

It is not enough to just say I believe.

29 If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

The saying goes “practice makes perfect” does it not? Being Christ like is a life long quest and we are always a work in progress in our attempt to meet that goal.

I know it is a difficult road because I am on it as well. The world will fight to drag you away from Christ if it can.

Warning Concerning Antichrists

18 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.

(18) This may be confusing in some ways saying that the antichrist is coming and that many have come. But John is talking about two different things here. One is “the antichrist” the one that we read about in Revelation.

The other is those who appeared at first to be Christians, were a part of Christian things and among other Christians, but they moved away from the faith no longer believing that Jesus is their Lord. These people now speak against Jesus.

Signs of the End of the Age

Matthew 24:10-13 ~ And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

False prophets are easy to recognize, they speak of things that are not of God and not of scripture. Any “prophet” who speaks anything other than what we can find in scripture is not only a false prophet but as well an antichrist. A true prophet will always speak from scripture revealing to us what God has said through scripture.

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

John now says something very interesting and I will only speak to what John is saying here in these verses.

John says that those who have walked away, were not Christians to begin with. He goes on to say “**if they had been of us, they would have continued with us**”, in other words, if they were really Christians they would still be here.

19 But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

The proof that they were not Christians to begin with is that they left the faith. John says that this is “plain” or in other words it was obvious they were not believers because they left.

20 But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.

All true believers are anointed by God with the truth. The ones that left were not anointed with the truth of God and of Christ. God did not anoint them with this basic knowledge that all believers have because they were not believers to begin with.

21 I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the Antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.

So this is not talking about the “antichrist” but rather all the people of the world that deny God and Christ. They are little Antichrists but not the big one.

23 No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. 24 Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

No one who denies Christ has the father in them. No one it says. This is why even the Jew will have to at some point bend a knee and confess Jesus as their Lord and Savior or they will not enter heaven.

John also says that if you confess Jesus as Lord the father is in you. It is impossible to believe in the true Jesus without God being in you. This is why I always start my sharing of the gospel with God not Jesus. It is a natural flow from God the father to Jesus.

26 I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you.

27 But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

Understand that what John isn't saying is that we don't need to study scripture, he isn't saying that.

What John is saying is that because you are saved you know God because you have been anointed with the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit brings the knowledge that God and Jesus are real. No one can teach you that God and Jesus are real once saved, you already know it.

What naturally goes with this then, is that unless someone is anointed with the Holy Spirit they can never know God and Jesus enough to be saved. God has to work in you first through the Holy Spirit. God has to open your eyes and soften your heart by the power of the Holy Spirit so that you can see God and see Christ for who they truly are and then you want nothing else.

You can talk to a person until your head comes off but if God isn't working in that person and drawing that person to Himself you are casting pearls before swine. They won't ever understand, they can't understand.

But in saying that we are to try because we are commanded to and we don't know who God is working in and who He isn't working in but scripture says they still need to hear the gospel to be saved.

Chapter 3

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

The world does not know those who believe in God and who believe in Jesus. They don't understand why we believe, they don't understand why we want to live our lives for Jesus, they don't understand any of it. Matter of fact they can't understand any of it until God opens their hearts and opens their minds to understand it.

John 15:20 ~ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

You want to know if you are getting it right for Jesus? If you are being persecuted by the world. When the world wants to push you down because of your faith, when they get tired of hearing about your love for Jesus, when they see you struggling to live right as scripture says, they will persecute you one way or another. They don't want to hear it.

But it is impossible to be persecuted if we are not putting ourselves out there for Jesus. If we are not speaking truth, if we are not speaking scripture, if we are not living right, if we are not sharing the gospel, we will not feel the persecution Jesus said we will feel.

2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

If this isn't obvious it is talking about Christ's return. When Jesus came the first time the disciples really didn't have a good grasp of who Jesus was. They were always trying to figure Jesus out and often misunderstood Him.

But when Jesus comes again this will not be the case because we have some huge advantages that the original disciples didn't. We now have scripture compiled about Jesus to know Him better and we have the Holy Spirit revealing the true Christ to us now in which the original disciples didn't.

When we stand in the presence of Jesus, when He returns once again, we will be overwhelmed with a compelling desire to refine ourselves and purify ourselves to a level much higher than we have been able to before. And I hope we all see His return because that means it will happen soon.

4 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

We talked about this before, when people make a practice of sin it means they are intentionally living a life of sin which means they do not have Him in them, they are of the world.

5 You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. 6 No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.

So this is looking back to when Jesus came the first time in order to remove the sins of those who would believe in Him. No one who is a follower of Christ, will keep on sinning meaning what was stated in the last verse, those who practice a life of sin do not know Him.

7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.

So here we have the opposite of verse 4. We need to keep in mind though that our righteousness is attributed to us by believing in Jesus and His righteousness. Our practice of righteousness says that we are a believer and because we are believers our righteousness is in Christ and His perfection.

8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

Remember last week when John said that those who left the church were Antichrists, I called them little Antichrists? John says here that those who live in sin are of the devil and Antichrists are of the devil.

John goes on **“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil”** in other words Jesus' life and work on the Cross was to defeat Satan.

This comment is in present tense so we know John isn't talking about Revelation times.

Galatians 5:1 ~ For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

We have been set free if we are in Christ, this is how Christ destroyed the works of the devil.

1 Corinthians 7:22-23 ~ For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men.

Though we have been freed from the slavery of sin and Satan, we are now bondservants to Christ.

A bondservant is a slave. The word bondservant is the translation of the Greek word doulos, which means “one who is subservient to, and entirely at the disposal of, his master.

9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.

10 By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

This in many ways is a recap of what we just went over. John is bringing it back together all in one clump.

Love One Another

As I have said before we need to always be reminded that as we study scripture that we are looking at the context in which the section of scripture is written. This helps us to ensure that we are not causing any issues with what God is saying to us.

The context here in these verses is that John is writing this letter to this church in Ephesus, and I would say based upon what we have been reading thus far, is to the believers within this church and not the ones who left the faith who John said were never believers to begin with.

11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12 We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.

The first thing we need to do is look at the Greek word for love here being that there are several variations. We need to make sure what type of love or what level of love John is talking about.

The Greek word here is agape, which is often used to describe the selfless, sacrificial love that God has for humanity. Another words, God's love for us was so great that He gave His only Son as a Sacrifice to all who would believe in Him.

So again the context, John is saying to the believers in this church to love each other as God loved you and sacrificed His Son for you. You can't get any deeper love than this. A deep sacrificial love in which you would do anything for a brother or sister in the faith. Is this us as a church? Is this us as a individual believer?

13 Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. 15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Once again John says Do not be surprised that the world will hate you. We talked last week about Christians being persecuted for their faith and that a sign that you are being the Christian God has called you to be is that you feel that persecution in some deep way.

John goes on to say that as a believer, that we have passed out of death into life. This is of course the spiritual death that every human is born with, everyone is born with the sin of Adam, dead in their transgressions and sins scripture says, which means we are born with a dead spirit that needs to be made alive again so that we can accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

There is a great description of the unbeliever in the book of Romans.

Romans 3:10-19 ~ as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” 13 “Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.” 14 “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.” 15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 in their paths are ruin and misery, 17 and the way of peace they have not known.” 18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

This is how God sees the unbeliever, we are hopeless without His intervention. The unbeliever is not righteous, does not understand God, does not seek God, doesn't do anything good, they deceive people, they are bitter, they love to murder, they are facing ruin and misery, they do not know peace “Jesus”, and lastly they do not fear God.

The unbeliever's dead spirit does not give them the ability to do anything spiritual.

Understand an unbeliever's spirit is not partially dead or just sick, it is 100% dead as a door nail, and the Holy Spirit is the only one capable of reviving that spirit.

16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

When we have plenty we give so others have some some in which before they had none or very, very little. It means we give of our time and efforts. It means we keep watch over and check in on each other to make sure we are alright.

19 By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; 20 for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

Reassuring our heart before Him is the understanding that we need to check our heart against scripture and what God says. It is saying don't trust your (feelings) but rather trust in God. Our feelings can and will deceive us at times and it cannot always be trusted.

As we read verse 22 staying within the context of what we just read. The context is trusting God and not our heart so whatever we ask needs to be in light of this.

Not trusting in ourselves for what we want but rather in God and the scriptures in which we find the truth of God and what He wants from us.

It is another way of saying not my will God but your will be done. Knowing this when we ask God for something anything that is within His will He will give us always doing so keeping in mind what is best for us.

Many think God is their personal genie that they can ask for wealth, fancy cars, fancy cloths, and a huge house. There are plenty of churches that will teach this out there, and they are 100% wrong.

So whatever we ask know scripture well enough, thus know God well enough, that when we ask, if it is within His will we will receive it.

John now is going to close this chapter up.

23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

24 Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

By this all people will know that you are His disciples, if you have love for one another. The context here is that this is talking about your brother and your sister in Christ.

Chapter 4

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Before we get started with this verse I just want to remind you about two verses we read last week that I think go well with verse 1 here.

1 John 3:19-20 ~ By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; 20 for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.

So last week, scripture told us to be careful of trusting our heart because our heart can deceive us at times and rather trust in God. Our heart is where our feelings come from correct? The heart and it's feelings at times lead us astray of the truth. Our feelings and God's truth do not always align.

What we feel though may be legitimate to us, and that is OK, but we need to be careful that those feelings do not get in the way of God's truth and our faith. How I feel has no affect on God and His perfect, righteous and holy plan for His creation. God's truth comes from what is revealed to us through scripture when understood correctly.

Jeremiah 17:9 ~ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

We have talked before about those “feel good” churches out there. We need to be careful of them as well as those feel good people.

1 John 4:1 ~ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

So now God tells us in scripture to be careful of the spirits and that they need to be tested as well as our heart, and scripture is where we get the questions and answers to these tests.

2 Corinthians 13:5 ~ Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

There is a whole lot of testing that needs to be happening in our lives in order to insure we are the Christian's we are called to be. And if when studying scripture we don't see much of ourselves in it then as we just read we have failed the test and Christ is not in us.

I can assure you that the church in Laodicea that is mentioned in Revelation three, probably thought they were doing pretty good.

2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

If you confess or another confess or a spirit confess Jesus, and I would say confesses that Jesus is lord of their life, that they are of God.

The devil is a liar as well as all his minions and followers. In one of my discussions with someone this week, they felt that the Bible was not trustworthy and accurate. The interesting thing is that they said that they are a believer. Of course I said that the only reason they know about Jesus in the first place is because of scripture.

Without scripture, whatever Jesus we conjure up in our minds is a false Jesus and the only true Jesus is the one we find in scripture.

4 Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. 5 They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Someone will say, we shouldn't judge people. And I say, I'm not God is. What makes you right? I'm not, God is and I have just shown you that in scripture.

6 Whoever knows God listens to us ~ But I would say that in context what that means is that they listen to us when we speak from scripture, when we speak the truth from scripture. Our personal opinion is not usually worth much.

And those who do not listen to us when we read from scripture, they are not of God. That's what God says, I'm not judging God is.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 ~ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

God Is Love

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Probably one of the most confusing words to mankind is this word love. It's so confusing that this pastor named Dr. Gary Chapman wrote a book called The Five Love Languages. What this attempts to do is help people in marriages understand each other better by understanding how a person feels loved.

So what are these five love languages you may ask. They are; quality time together, words of affirmation, physical touch, receiving gifts, and acts of service.

The reason why I know about this book is because I was in a relationship with a woman once who wanted me to read this book with her.

I think at this point is where our relationship started to go down hill, because I said to her no where in these five are “don't make your man read stupid books like this”.

Honestly I think the book is backwards. It should be recognizing and understanding how your spouse or potential spouse loves you based upon understanding scripture. I think I would have read that book.

Everything we do should be framed around scripture and this book seemed to be framed around worldly things in my opinion.

Matthew 22:34-40 ~ 34 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” 37 And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

But love is the key reason why we should do everything we do in life. The love we received from God and Christ set the tone to how we love others, and that's sacrificially.

9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

So here it is the example of love for us to follow. God's love for His creation was brought to life in Christ's coming to earth so that we might have salvation through Him. This is the ultimate sign of love, the giving of one's life for another who did not deserve it.

Understand, I would have given my life as a sacrifice to that person I mentioned earlier, but I for sure wasn't going to read that book.

10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Understand this is speaking about pre-salvation, that is that pre-salvation no one loves God, matter of fact it is the opposite.

Romans 1:28-31 ~ 28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

This in some ways if not most were every single one of us before God saved us.

Understanding this in the reflection of what Christ has done for each of us should at times crush is. This is why I always say it is important to have a clear understanding of who we were before we were saved. Knowing our true state allows us to then to see God and Christ to their fullest in the love mercy and grace we were given.

Romans 5:8-9 ~ But God demonstrates his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. That is love at its greatest.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

I believe that here where it says “His love is perfected in us” it is talking about the Holy Spirit in us.

13 By this (love) we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

Love is one of the indications that the Holy Spirit is in us, and we know that love is the greatest of all things, and that all we do as a Christian is encompassed in love and motivated by love.

But what we don't want to do is take this understanding of love and throw out everything else God and Christ teach us.

I've said before sharing the gospel which in part is helping a non believer to understand their sin and the need for a savior is the most loving thing we offer, because we don't want them to spend an eternity in hell.

Satan on the other hand says that it isn't loving at all, and if we say anything to another which then makes them aware of their sin that is hateful and isn't Christ like. That's how Satan deceives believers.

John 8:11, Matthew 4:17, Matthew 12:41, Mark 1:15, Luke 3:8, Luke 5:32, Luke 13:5, are all verses where Jesus directly says repentance is required for salvation and there are far more that say it in other ways. So we can't leave it out because salvation cannot happen unless repentance is a part of it.

Love is helping others to understand what salvation is and what it requires, and we say it lovingly.

Paul says in Acts 20:18-21 ~ “You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, 21 testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Even the Apostles and disciples taught repentance, and they all did it out of love for others and as a command.

The greatest thing you can do is share the gospel and repentance, there is nothing greater.

14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

John is giving his first hand testimony of Jesus which is extremely important. In court you cannot submit hearsay as evidence to something, it has to be a first hand account or the judge will most always not allow it. So we need to understand the many first hand accounts we are given in scripture as to the truth of Jesus because that is authentic evidence of his life.

15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. 17 By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.

Do you have confidence of your salvation based upon the love you show others, the love of sharing the gospel? This is so important, and my hope is that every Christian has this confidence.

18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

This is a great verse.

I mentioned before about unbelievers needing to fear God and that it is in some ways a step to salvation because if you fear God then you fear hell and you are aware of your sin.

Romans 3:18 ~ “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

But here speaking about believers it says that “perfect love casts out fear”, fear of what “punishment” it says or Hell. That if we truly love Hell isn't something we should truly fear, meaning that we won't fear it because verse “17” says we may have confidence that we won't be sent there.

19 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

When scripture says “brother” that is usually an indication it means fellow believer. You must love your brother and sister in Christ.

But we also know we are supposed to love unbelievers as well. So are you loving unbelievers? Are you sharing the gospel and the fear of God and hell and the need for Christ? If you are you are again you are showing the greatest form of love there is.

Chapter 5

Are you born of God? Do you understand what it mean to be born of God?

1A Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: 1b and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

Now birth to me as a man isn't necessarily my strong point in understanding everything that goes into when it come to being birthed, so I'm going to need some help with a couple of things. I am also not a father myself so again birth is not my strong point.

God chose this word “born” to indicate to us how our belief in Christ came about. God uses certain specific words that we can relate to in order to help us understand what is being said better.

Before being born we are conceived and I do understand what that means for the most part. But I have a question, when we were conceived what part did we play in that? None... Did we have a choice in being conceived? No...

What about being born? What part did we have in being born? None... Did we have a choice in being born? No...

So this word born and as well being conceived is the process God chose for our faith. He conceived us and He birthed us into faith and salvation. This gives us great clarity on the process.

Now we have a part in this. What do we want to hear after a baby is born? Crying right? That is our part after our being born again, we want to cry out with joy in our salvation by professing Christ as Lord and Savior. And what a true joy it is.

1B and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

What is the meaning of begat as it is used here in this verse?

Begat: to father or sire. So again God begat us or fathered us. This is just affirming what we just discussed.

Does this picture God gave us help you understand the process of your salvation better?

It goes on in saying that if we were conceived and born into our faith we also shall love others who have been conceived and birthed into that same faith.

We as brothers and sisters in Christ share in the birth process having the same father and we need to love one another because of it. Not only do we need to but we will if we are true Christians.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

Who are the children of God here? Believers are.

How do we know when we love other believers?

When we love God and keep God's commandments. When we are living a Godly life, the life He has called us to live in scripture, we will love other believers because scripture tells us to.

Keep in mind anything scripture tells us to do is a commandment. It's not just those ten we hear all the time about but rather everything scripture tells us we should be doing.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

Grievous: something severe, painful, burdensome, or deeply distressing.

For the Christian keeping the commandments shouldn't be any of these things to any great extent. We may struggle a little here and there, but not in any extensive way. We want to do what God says now as believers, we desire it.

4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

We are born of God for salvation and our salvation overcomes the fallen world and it is a victory. Who's victory is it though? It is God's victory being He conceived us and birthed us for this very purpose.

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

There is only one way to overcome the world and the death it brings, only one way and that way is through faith in Christ.

6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

Now there are two understandings of this first section of verse 6, when it talks about Jesus coming by water and blood. The first is that it is speaking about Jesus from His baptism to his crucifixion. So it is taking into account Jesus within what would be considered His ministry years.

The second understanding of this would be that it is only talking about his crucifixion and specifically when His side was pierced to insure that he was dead.

Why the second comes into play is that if you remember a little ways back when we discussed that at this time there were false believers in Christ who thought that Jesus was only Spirit and was not man in the flesh at all.

Understanding this then the fact that when His side was pierced and both water and blood came out it indicated that He was not only Spirit but was as well man in the flesh.

The second part of verse six indicates that the Spirit Himself bears witness to this fact about Jesus, because it says the Spirit is truth.

See if it is truly the Spirit then only truth can come from the Spirit because the Spirit is as well God and God has no attribute that would allow Him to lie.

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

If you wanted a verse to show people the truth of the Trinity I would say you are not going to get a better one than this. But we know that if you are well read in the scriptures it is plain to see throughout that there is in fact a Trinity and there is no mistaking it, it is clear.

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

In heaven it is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. On earth it is Holy Spirit and the water and the blood. So we need to again reflect on what we discussed in verse six about what the “water and blood” means.

Honestly I think either makes sense and both are a reference to the same person and that is Jesus. So on earth those who bear witness are the Holy Spirit and Jesus.

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

The testimony of the disciples and apostles about Jesus is extremely important but that is the witnesses of men.

The unbeliever looks at only man for truth because rarely is truth revealed to unbelievers by God, we see it on occasion but again rarely.

But to us who are saved we see it clearly, or we should. It has been revealed to every believer who Jesus is, so again we should see it clearly.

To not see it clearly is a cause of great concern if you say you are a believer in Christ.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

Why do we as believers have this faith in Jesus? The witness or the Holy Spirit is in us it says in the beginning of verse ten, and we already read that the Spirit is not a liar and cannot lie but is only truth.

The question is when do we know it is truly the Spirit assuring us? We know it is truly the Spirit when it is in harmony with the scriptures. That's why it is vital to know scripture.

The second part of verse ten says that anyone who does not believe in Jesus is saying that God is a liar. I can tell you this, God does not like to be called a liar.

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

The record states salvation only comes by faith in Jesus and that faith is a gift of God.

Ephesians 2:8 ~ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God

Can you believe in Jesus without faith? Can we have faith in Jesus with the Spirit in us intensifying that Jesus is true?

12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. There is only one way given for salvation! 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

“Ye have eternal life” Now we have to understand first this is for the believer obviously, but does it say it's possible that we will have eternal life or that if we are perfect from the point of salvation on to death that we will have eternal life? No, we have it! If we are in Christ we have it!

Gospel of John 10:28-30 ~ (Jesus) 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand. 30 I and My Father are one.”

Who is greater than God and Jesus? Are you greater than God or Jesus? Am I greater than God or Jesus? No one is it says.

So when Jesus says that you have eternal life and that no one can snatch you from His hand He means not any person can, nor Satan and not even ourselves can.

What assurance do we have and what secures us for salvation? The Holy Spirit in dwelt sees us through our Christians life and secures our Christian life.

Is the Holy Spirit God? Does anyone here have more power than the Holy Spirit? No one does! If you are truly saved we have assurance.

Now there are a lot of people in the world that think they are saved, there are a lot of false churches, there are a lot of lukewarm churches filled with people who think they are Christians, but they are not Christians. God will judge them on that final day.

Matthew 7:21-23 ~ (Jesus) Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Jesus is not fooled by those who say they are believers and are not. We can be though, and often we are.

Jesus says even those who seem to be doing everything right may not be. See, Jesus knows what they may have done in His name, but what we can't see that Jesus can is their wicked heart.

That's why we can't judge if someone is going to heaven or not, we can't see their heart. There will be people there that we will be shocked to see when we get there. There won't be people there that we for sure thought would be and we will be equally shocked.

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

The will of God and Jesus are contained in scripture and this is where we should seek the things from them.

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

Sin is a never ending thing even for the believer because of our sinful flesh which will follow us to our grave. We also have a sinful mind that we are hopefully always renewing and building up to be more Christ like. But that doesn't keep us from salvation and heaven.

So what is the sin that leads to death?

Never believing that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of your life to begin with. That's it.

18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. 19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

This seems like a contradiction to what we just read before but in its context it is not. This shows the importance of reading everything. The past verses just talked about the sin that leads to death and ones that don't. So in the context here this is talking about that believers will not commit the sin that leads to death.

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

There is only one way to heaven and that is in Christ Jesus.
21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

An idol is anything you put before God. That can be your spouse, your children, your grand children, sports, yourself, they Bible you prefer, all these and obviously more can be an idol to us.

Most of the time we don't even see our idols or we say that somehow that idol is somehow putting God first. We need to be careful and always look at why and what we are doing.

“To God be the glory”

Written in the year 2025 from a series of weekly teachings through the book of 1st John.

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