



Session 1: 1 John.... “A Loving and Enlightening Sermon”

*Written to the people of the congregations by a pastor who loved his flock dearly.
The letter was sent out to the various churches over which he has charge.
The letter was written in Ephesus (Probably around 85-90 A.D.; before he was exiled to the Isle of Patmos).*

By A.D. 85-90, certain events had almost inevitably happened within the Church, especially in a place like Ephesus.

Facts and Probabilities:

- **Many were second-or even third-generation Christians.**
*The thrill of the first days had, to some extent at least, passed away
In the 1st days of Christianity, there was a glory and a splendor...but now
Christianity had become a thing of habit, “traditional, and half-hearted,
nominal.”
People had grown used to it, and some of the wonder had been lost.
Jesus forewarned the disciples, “The love of many will grow cold.” Matthew 24:12*
- **Some of the members of the Church found that the standards which Christianity demanded were becoming a burden and they became tired of making the effort.**
*They did not want to be “saints” (hagios = holy); different.
The distinct difference between Christians and the world was their love for things of the world.
Jesus said, “If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you.” John 15:19.
(Jesus praying to the Father) “I have given them your word and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.” John 17:14.
Jesus’ words are true....and penetrates to the marrow of our bones (literally to the quick...to the deepest part of our soul and spirit.
This involved an ethical demand.
It demanded a new standard of purity, a new kindness, a new service, a new forgiveness....
And this was difficult.
Once the thrill and the enthusiasm of being a Christian wears off, it became and becomes harder and harder to stand out against the*

world and to refuse to conform to the generally accepted standards and practices of the age.

- **Note:** *1 John shows no signs that the church to which it was written was being persecuted.*

The peril...and the hardships was not persecution....but seduction.

Seduction...came from within.

The trouble which 1 John seeks to combat came not from people who were out to destroy the Christian faith but from those who thought they were improving it.

It came from people whose aim was to make Christianity intellectually respectable (secular philosophy and contemporary thought sermons). It came from people that stood in the pulpit and stated.... "To get the people to think like we think we must accept some of their thoughts....but steer them to a higher thought by loving them just the way they are, with all the baggage they carry, and bring them to our way of thinking when they know that they don't have to give up their lifestyles to be 'one of us'....."

Note: *Jesus said, "Many false teachers prophets and teachers will arise, and lead many astray." Matthew 24:11*

Paul said, "I know that after I have gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them." Acts 20:29-30.

One group was the Gnostics:

Gnosticism = basis belief...only spirit was good and that is all that matters; the material world was essentially evil.

This belief is the conviction that the one real aim in life is to liberate the human spirit from the vile prison house of the body.

They believed:

Any real incarnation is impossible.

Jesus was not human...He was only spirit.

Seemism..or Docetism = taught that Jesus only seemed to have a body (Jesus was purely spiritual and had nothing but the appearance of having a body.

Gnosticism...Gnostic belief had certain practical consequences in the lives of those who held it.

1. **The Gnostic attitude to matter and all created things produced a certain attitude to the body and the things to do with the body.**

There were 3 different attitudes:

- **It might take on the form of self-denial** (fasting, celibacy and rigid control), even ill treatment of the body. *The idea that celibacy is better than marriage and sex is sinful.*
- **It might take the form of assertion that the body did not matter and that, therefore, its appetites might be satisfied without restraint.**

Since the body was in any event evil, it made no difference what was done with it.

There were even people that believed that it was highly knowledgeable and relevant to know the best and the worst of life...they must enter into every experience of life at its highest or deepest level...

In this context, they believed that it was the highest level of knowledge to know every kind of sin.

John countered this with... “ God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.” (1 John 1:5).

- ***It might take the form of pure spiritual state...and that these people have reached spiritual perfection (Separating them from the rest of the world). They felt themselves as “above and beyond sin.”***

2. Destroyed fellowship between the Christian believers:

This belief divided the people into two (2) classes:

- 1. Those who were capable of a really spiritual life,*
- 2. Those who were incapable of a really spiritual life.*

The Gnostics produced a spiritual “aristocracy” who looked with contempt and even hatred on lesser mortals.

The Gnostic heretic:

They talked of being born of God, of walking in the light, of having no sin, of dwelling in God, of knowing God.

They had no intention of destroying the Church and the faith; there intentions were to cleanse the Church of dead wood and make Christianity an intellectually respectable philosophy, fit to stand beside the great systems of the day.

The false teachers: They had been within the Church, but they had withdrawn from it.

1 John 2:19, “They went out from us, but they did not belong to us.”

They were people of influence, for they claimed to be prophets. Although they had left the Church, they still tried to disseminate their teaching within it and to deceive its members and lead them away from the true faith (1 John 2:26)

The questions we must ask ourselves:

- 1. Do we want to live like the world...or live a life that is pleasing to the Father?***
- 2. When confronted with evil, do we want to stand firm against it?***

Session 2: The Message of John

The 1st letter of John is a short letter...with the objective of his writing being twofold:

- 1. That the joy of his people may be completed (1 John 1:4)*
- 2. That they may not sin (1 John 2:1)*

However attractive the wrong way may be, it is not in its nature to bring happiness.

To bring joy and to preserve them from sin are one and the same thing.

John's Idea of God:

- 1. God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all (1:5)*
- 2. God is love, and that made Him love us before we loved Him, and made Him send His Son as a remedy for our sins (4:7-10, 16)*

John's conviction is that God is self-revealing and self-giving.

To give an account of John's true belief...and his direction and conviction by and through the God that he knows...is found in the following passage:

"This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth."

John's Idea of Jesus:

Because the main attack of the false teachers was on the person of Christ, this letter, which is concerned to answer them, is especially rich and helpful in what it has to say about Him.

- 1. Jesus is the one who was from the beginning (1:1, 2:14)*
When we are confronted with Jesus, we are confronted with the eternal.
- 2. Jesus is the Son of God (4:15, 5:5)...must be convinced of this. That the relationship of Jesus to God is unique (none like it)..*
- 3. Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah (2:22; 5:1)*
To say that Jesus is from the beginning and that He is the Son of God is to preserve His connection with eternity....
To say that He is the Messiah is to preserve His connection with history (God's plan at work through His chosen people, was moving...God's creative work in bloom)
- 4. Jesus was most truly human. "I touched him with my own hands" John said. (1:1-3) No writer in the New Testament holds with greater intensity the full reality of the incarnation than this simple apostle who loved the Lord Jesus.*
It was by water and blood that He came (5:6)
He laid down his life for us (3:16)
- 5. The coming of Jesus, His incarnation, His life, His death, His resurrection and His ascension all combine to deal with human sin.*

6. *As a result of all this, through Jesus Christ, all who believe have life (4:9, 5:11-12)*
7. *All this may be summed up by saying that Jesus is the Savior of the World (4:14)*

The whole initiative lay with God. It was God who sent His Son to be the Savior of men and women.

<p><i>Within the short span of this letter, the wonder and the glory and the grace of Christ are most fully depicted.</i></p>
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John's Idea of the Spirit

In this epistle, John has less to say about the Spirit....in that he covered the subject thoroughly in the Gospel of John.

The function or work of the Holy Spirit is powerfully depicted in the gospel.

However, it is John's intent in this epistle to show a function of the Holy Spirit as a liaison between God and His people. It is the Spirit who makes us conscious that there is within us the abiding presence of God through Jesus Christ.

1 John 3:24b, ".....And this is how we know that He lives in us; We know it by the Spirit He gave us."

1 John 4:13, "We know that we live in Him and He in us, because He has given us of his Spirit."

<p><i>It is the Spirit who enables us to grasp the precious fellowship with God which is being offered to us.</i></p>
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To study John's letter will confirm us in the true faith and enable us to have a defense against anything that would seduce us.

We might be tempted....but because of our faith and the conscious will that sustains us by the Holy Spirit, the temptation can be thwarted.

1 John 1:1-4, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ² The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³ We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We write this to make our joy complete."

The aim in writing this gospel is found in these verses:

1. ***The Wish to Produce Fellowship with the Community and Fellowship with God (v.3)***

The pastor's aim must always be to bring people closer to one another and closer to God. The Christian message can be summed up as having two (2) great aims.....love for one another and love for God.

Any message which encourages and leads to division is a false message.

2. *The Wish to Bring His People Joy (v.4)*

After the understanding that it is the message of Christ that we are sinners....and that this knowledge must lead to true repentance, it is the pastor and the Lord's intent for the child of God to understand that he/she is forgiven. This is the message of joy.

3. *The Ultimate Finish and John's Aim Is to Set Jesus Christ Before Them.*

Keep the main thing the main thing....There is no salvation in any other. There is no greater aim than to win the heart's of the sinner to saving knowledge of Jesus

John's Right to Speak...and the Authority in Knowing That What He Says is True....His personal experience in being with Christ:

1. *He says that he has heard Christ...*

What people are interested in is not someone's opinions and views, but a word from the Lord (via the Spirit).

There are preachers that first listen to God and then speak to men and women through preaching...and teaching.

There was an old Scottish preacher that his congregation said, "When he preaches, he often pauses as if listening for a voice."

True teachers are those who have a message from Jesus Christ because they have heard his voice from the inward side.

2. *He says that he has seen.... And looked (gazed) at Christ.*

John walked with Christ, dined with Christ, and watched him intently.... As he performed miracle after miracle.

Gazing or looking at Christ has a deeper meaning than just seeing Christ. It has the connotation that it is not a passing look...but a grasping of the significance of that person. This seeing and gazing (looking at Jesus) is to search the deep things that Jesus did.... Thinking, contemplating, grasping, and knowing the full meaning of why a person is where he is.

We cannot see Christ in the flesh as John did; but we can still Him with the eye of faith.

3. *He says that his hands actually touched Christ.*

After Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to the disciples and said, "Look at my hands and feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." Luke 24:39

John was adamant making sure that his congregations in which he pastored understood that Jesus came amongst with a body that had feelings...and was as we were. He was fully human.

John had three (3) great things to say about Christ in the first 4 verses.

1. *Jesus was "from the beginning." In Him the eternal God personally entered our world.*

2. *Jesus' entry into the world was a real entry....real humanity that God took upon Himself.*

3. *Through that action there came to men and women, boys and girls the word of life...the word which can change death into life and mere existence into real living.*

1 John 1:5, "This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all."

God is light....and in Him is no darkness.

What does this statement tell us?

- *God is splendor and glory...*
- *God is self revealing....light is seen and God is seen....God wants man to take notice of Him. He wishes to be seen and to be known.*
- *God is pure and holy....the "light" reveals to us his white purity and stainless holiness (He is unstained from the forces of evil)..*
- *God guides us...to say, He is the light...is to say that he lights the way on the path in which we must tread.*
- *In the presence of this light...God reveals Himself...the flaws and stains which are hidden in the shade are obvious in the light. Light reveals the imperfections in any piece of work or material.*

So, the imperfections of life are seen in the presence of God.

Darkness stands for the very opposite of the Christian life:

- *Darkness stands for the Christless life....."Christians are not in darkness, for they are children of the day." (1 Thessalonians 5:4-5)*
- *The dark is hostile to light...dark and light are hostile enemies.*
- *The darkness stands for the ignorance of life, apart from Christ....darkness is the lostness of humanity without Christ.*
- *Darkness stands for the chaos of life without God. Without God's light, the world is a chaos in which life has neither order or sense.*
- *Darkness stands for the immortality of the Christless life. "Because their deeds were evil, people loved the darkness rather than the light (John 3:19).*
- *Darkness is characteristically unfruitful. If growing things are deprived of the light, their growth is arrested (stunted...and finally dies)....the darkness is the atmosphere without Christ in which no fruit of the Spirit will ever grow.*
- *Darkness is connected to hate and that which is unlovely....
 *To promote hatred, dark and weary shadows are its characteristic.
 Grotesque creatures house in dark places.**
- *The dark is the home of the enemies of Christ and final goal of those who will not accept HIM....
 *Persistent and rebellious sinners are those for whom the mist of darkness is reserved (2 Peter 2:9; Jude 13)
 DARKNESS IS THE LIFE WHICH IS SEPARATED FROM GOD!**

1 John 1:6-10, “If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 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, purifies us from all^[a] sin. ⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.”

As John sees it, there are two great tests of truth:

1. Truth is the creator of fellowship.

If men and women are really walking in the light, they have fellowship with one another. No church can be exclusive and still be the Church of Christ. Anything that destroys fellowship cannot be true.

2. Those who really know the truth are each day more and more cleansed from sin by the blood of Jesus.

“The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.” It is a general principle...that every day the blood ought to be carrying out a cleansing process in the life of the individual Christian.

...Not only does it cleanse us from sin...but it is equipping us in holiness day by day.

TRUE RELIGION IS THE MEANS BY WHICH EVERY DAY WE COME CLOSER TO ONE ANOTHER AND CLOSER TO GOD.

3. Those who say that they are not sinners...or who say they have no sin..is a liar....and the truth is not in Him. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father unless He comes through me.” John 14:6

Who is “the Word”? Who is “the Truth”? Who is “the Light?.....JESUS!

Session 3: John Teaches from a Mature Understanding of the Scriptures (Heart Knowledge) to Hearts that are Immature and Vulnerable!

1 John 2:1-2, “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”

The tenderness and love for the younger generation is shown here...

His purpose in writing is to prevent them from sinning.

“You have given your life to Jesus ... and now it is very important that you don’t think lightly to sin.”

Two things to remember:

- 1. Sin is universal...and anyone who claims never to have sinned is a liar.***
- 2. There is forgiveness of sins through what Jesus Christ has done, and still does....***
But...don’t take sin lightly...Don’t think... “I have sinned, so what...why worry about it? My name is written in the Lamb’s book of life?”

John’s response:

- 1. Knowledge Involves Obedience***

Christians are people who have come to know God; and the inevitable accompaniment of knowledge must be obedience.

- 2. The Union with God and Man (Us) Involves Imitation of Christ.***

Those that claim that they abide in God (2:6) and in Jesus Christ must live the life that is conforming to the life in which Jesus lived.

Summary:

- Christianity is an ethical religion***
- Human beings are so often an ethical failure.***
- There is a barrier erected between us and God...because of this failure.***
- The way we sinners enter into the presence of God (all holy) is through Jesus...our Advocate.***

Advocate = “parakletos” –comforter; or the most common for this Greek word, “to call someone to one’s side” in order to use that person in some way as helper and a counselor.

Advocate is even more intimate...is like a lawyer who is your close friend who pleads one’s cause.

Jesus Christ is the prisoner’s friend...who has set the prisoner free...and remains a friend who stands in for him every time he comes before the judge.

Propitiation for our sin “Hilaskesthai” ...

Jesus is the person through whom guilt for past sin and defilement from present sin are removed.

Meaning...Through Jesus Christ our fellowship with God in first restored...and then maintained.

This love is for the whole world....

The hymn... 'The love of God is greater far..than word or tongue can ever tell...it goes beyond the highest star..and reaches to the lowest hell.'
God's will and desire is that all men might come to know the saving knowledge of Jesus.

1 John 2:3-8, "We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. ⁴ Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. ⁵ But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶ Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did. ⁷ Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. ⁸ Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining."

The quest of the human spirit...is to know God, to abide in God and to have fellowship with Him.

- 1. The human race can arrive at God by the sheer process of intellectual reasoning and argument.**

A real challenge is to get to "know God" (a knowing).

The Greeks believed and taught..before Christ came along that we need to explore more knowledge to get to know the God of the universe. Our minds...our intellect to converse with God.

- 2. The human race can arrive at God by experiencing an emotional experience with Him.**

To know God...and also to "feel" God (a feeling).

- 3. To know God...to feel God...is to have fellowship with him.**

**John says... "Not unless you do what He asks you to do!" You can't do your own thing...educate yourself, have emotional highs...and then not keep His commandments...you are fooling yourself, but not God!
You must talk the talk...and walk the walk!**

**John speaks about a commandment which is at one and the same time old and new.
John 4th Gospel...John 13:34, Jesus speaking "I give to you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."**

In what sense was that commandment both old and new?

- 1. It was old in the sense that it was already there in the Old Testament...**
They had heard it before (Leviticus 19:18); "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
- 2. It was new in that it had been raised to a completely new standard in the life of Jesus.**
 - It became new in the extent to which it reached.**

In Jesus, love reached out to the sinner....it reached out to the Gentiles...it reaches out to you.

- *It became new in the lengths to which it would go.*

Nothing that anyone would do or could ever do that would turn Jesus 'love into hate. He even prayed for God's mercy on those who were nailing him to the cross.

John reiterated (stated again) that truth is not only something to be grasped by the mind; it was something to be done. James said it time and time again... "Be doers of the word and not hearers only.

Since Jesus had not come by the end of the 1st century, John believed and taught that Jesus' 2nd coming might not be an event that was eminent...but that it is a process in which darkness is steadily being defeated by the light...and the end of the process will be called by God...it is His plan and Jesus the Christ will fulfill the purpose in which light defeats darkness.

Let's Play Truth or Consequences!

What do you think about the following statement?

"In today's world there are no black and white areas, only gray ones. Everything is relative. What might be good for you might be bad for someone else. What might be bad for you, might be good for someone else. We are finding out that truth is what you want it to be."

What do you think about this statement? "If you feel like doing it, that is your business. Who has the right to tell you what to think, feel, say or do except you. It is your life—what right does anyone have in telling you what to do with it!"

What type of philosophy is this?

Now...What is the Truth?

1 John 2:9-14, "Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. ¹⁰ Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. ¹¹ But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them. ¹² I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. 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. ¹⁴ I write to you, dear children, because you know the Father. 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 lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one."

John states that there are no gray areas when it comes to love for the brethren and love for others...our neighbors. You are either in the dark...or you are in the light. Our neighbors cannot be disregarded...they are part of the landscape. The question is "How do we regard them?"

We may regard other people:

- *As negligible...a self-centered approach. These people make plans without taking other people into their calculations at all. (Their need, their sorrow, their welfare, and their salvation are not their concern).*
- *With contempt...treating others like they are fools in comparison to our intellect and attained recognition...like they are inferior (like slaves were treated).*
- *As a nuisance...a feeling that those "others" put themselves in dire straits (in poverty, sickness and afflictions)... "They don't deserve our help because they made wrong choices and they have to live with it. Why should I pay tax to give to these people that don't appreciate those that have."*
- *As enemies...thinking that they are competition. They are the enemies because they are trying to take what I have....or working to get.*
- *As brothers and sisters...their hurts are ours, also. Their needs are our needs, their interests are our interests.....To be in fellowship with them is the true joy of life.*

"I write to you"... "I have written to you.".....What is the difference?

- ✓ *When John says to us, "I am writing," he is thinking of what he is at the moment writing and of what he still has to say.*
- ✓ *When John says, "I have written," he is thinking of what has already been written and his readers have already read.*

What is John saying... "My whole letter—the part already written, the part being written and the part still to come—is all designed to remind Christians of who and whose they are and of what has been done for them.

Who they are...still children trying to get to the place where they know their purpose..and know what the outcome will be in the end.

Whose they are?...God's children...bought with a price...and watched over by the family...a brother and a father who cares for them with a passion.

What has been done for them?...blood atonement, sins covered, an advocate (lawyer) that acts as defense against the accuser...in front of the Almighty Judge.

For John, it was of supreme importance that Christians should remember the status and the benefits they have in Jesus Christ.

LITTLE CHILDREN, FATHERS AND YOUNG MEN....

- ✓ *One thought....Three age groups in Church.*

Little children....sweet innocence of childhood and forgiveness.

Fathers....mature wisdom which comes from Christian experiences...and everyday life experiences.

Young men...strength which enable us to win the battles against the evil ones.

- ✓ *Little children...means all Christians...and they are divided into two groups:*
 1. *The fathers....the old...mature in the faith (but realizing that we must be seeking more.)*
 2. *The young men...the young, immature...still growing in what it is all about...but are willing to trust those that have been there to lead them.*

God's gifts to all people in Jesus Christ...

- *The gift of forgiveness...*

Power in the name of Jesus. What is in a name...it represents strength and power if it is a good name.
- *The gift of increasing in the knowledge of God.*

Getting to "know" God...and having fellowship with Him. No strings attached; just realizing that it is not our intellect God wants from us...it is our respect, our feeling of security in Him.
- *The gift of victorious strength.*

Strength to overcome the evil one.

1 John 2:15-28, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. ¹⁶ For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷ The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. ¹⁸ Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. ²⁰ But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. ²¹ I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. ²² Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. ²³ No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. ²⁴ As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵ And this is what he promised us—eternal life. ²⁶ I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. ²⁷ As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him. ²⁸ And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

God's world...and man's world.

We must understand what John meant by the world, the "kosmos." Christians did not hate the world as such. It was God's creation; and God made all things well. Jesus had loved the beauty of the world; not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like

one of the scarlet flowers which bloomed for a day and died. Jesus again and again took his illustrations from the world. In that sense, Christians did not hate the world. The earth was not the devil's; the earth and all its fullness was the Lord's.

But...."Kosmos" acquired a moral sense. It began to mean the world apart from God

God's world...has the love of the Father...and those that seek him and his ways. God's world is the world that encompasses all that was made and that which was from the beginning.

Man's world does not have the love of the Father...because man's world seeks something made with hands..made with intellect...something that reaches maximum pleasure in the world's accomplishments.

God's world and the Evil one's world collide every day. How we handle stress...how we handle life...how we handle temptation...gives us a clue as to whose side we are on!

False teachers are going to be amongst us....they have pleasant things to say. Their hearts are full of lies..and empty promises.

God's promises are true. God never lies. If you remain in Him...He will remain in you.

Do we choose to lose...and be confused...or do we choose to let God be our hiding place...our decision maker?

Session 4: Do We Practice What We Preach?

The Life In Which There Is No Future...

Two (2) Things John Has to Say About Those Who Love the World and Who Compromise With It:

1. There Are Three (3) Sins Which Are Typical of the World:

➤ ***Flesh's Desire...***

Meaning far more than sins of the flesh (sexual sin). In the New Testament, "the flesh" is that part of our nature which, when it is without the grace of Jesus Christ, offers a point of entry for sin. It includes not only the sins of the flesh....

But also all worldly ambitions and selfish aims.

Remember—The flesh's desire is heedless of the commandments of God, the judgment of God, the standards of God, and the very existence of God.

➤ ***Eye's Desire...***

"The tendency to be captivated by outward show."

It is the spirit which can see nothing without wishing to acquire it and which, having acquired it, flaunts it....the spirit which believes that happiness is to be found in the things that money can buy and the eye can see.

➤ ***Life's Empty pride...***

The tendency to lay claim to possessions and to achievements which did not belong to him in order to exalt himself.

John sees the above as men and women of the world who judge everything by their own appetite and who boast of their treasures and pleasures...and even some that they don't have.

2. 2nd Warning...Those That Attach Themselves to the World's Aims and the World's Ways Are Giving Their Lives to Things Which Literally Have No Future.

<i>Remember...the people of this world are doomed to disappointment; the people of God are assured of lasting joy.</i>
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THE TRUTH OF THE ABOVE SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY IS FOUND IN THIS SUMMARY:

LIVE CONTINUALLY IN CHRIST...

IF WE HAVE LIVED CONSCIOUSLY IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST, IF DAY BY DAY WE HAVE TALKED AND WALKED WITH GOD, THAT WILL BE A SUMMONS TO COME HOME AND TO ENTER INTO THE NEARER PRESENCE OF ONE WHO IS NOT A STRANGER BUT A FRIEND.

PROOF THAT A PERSON IS ABIDING IN CHRIST IS BY THE OF THEIR LIVES.

DECLARATIONS OF FAITH AND LOYALTY WILL ALWAYS BE PROVED OR DISPROVED BY PRACTICE.

The Question is.... Do We Practice What We Preach?

1 John 3:1-2, "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

John reminds us of what a privilege it is to be called "the children of God."

Names are important: Parents give names to children...and then to let them know how important that name is. To uphold that name and not to put that name to shame.

How much more....should we not put the name of Christ to shame. We should hold fast to the fact that we represent Christ...and what He stands for...what he died for.

John wanted us to remember that "this life is only the beginning."

Now is the time to live for Him....because we shall be like Him at His appearance.

John 3:3-8, "All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

⁴ Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. ⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. ⁶ No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

⁷ Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. ⁸ The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."

This passage is directed against the Gnostic false teachers.

They justified sin...

They said...and were telling the people in the Church:

- ***That the body was evil and that, therefore, there was no harm in satisfying its lusts to the full, because what happened to it was on no importance.***
- ***Truly spiritual people were protected to such an extent by the Spirit that they could sin to their hearts' content and come to no harm.***
- ***There was an obligation on true Gnostics both to scale the heights and to plumb the depths so that they might be truly said to know all things.***

John's reaction to the Gnostics Philosophy.

- **John begins by insisting that no one is above the moral law.**
- **Certain basic truths about sin.**

John tells us:

- **What Sin Is.**

Sin is to obey oneself rather than to obey God.

- **What Sin Does.**

It undoes the work of Christ. Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). To sin is to bring back what he came into the world to abolish.

- **Why Sin Is.**

Comes from the failure to abide in Christ. As long as we remember the continual presence of Jesus, we will not sin; it is when we forget that presence that we sin.

- **Where Sin Comes From.**

It comes from the devil (Satan); and the devil is the one who sins, as it were, on principle. We sin for the pleasure that we think it will bring to us; the devil sins as a matter of principle. In the world there is a power hostile to God, and to sin is to obey that power instead of God.

- **How Sin Is Conquered.**

It is conquered because Jesus Christ destroyed the works of the devil.

He has broken the power of evil, and by His help that same victory can be ours.

1 John 3:9, “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God.”

Take at face value, this means that it is impossible for anyone who is born of God to sin.

John has already said, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” 1 John 1:8

“If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him (God) a liar...and he urges us to confess our sins (1 John 1:10).

Not contradicting...He is thinking about the present age and the age to come. John depicts four (4) stages.

- (1) The ideal is that, in the new age, sin is gone forever.*
- (2) Christians must try to make that true and, with the help of Christ, struggle to avoid individual acts of sin.*
- (3) All Christians have lapses...and, when we do sin, we must humbly confess them to God, who will always forgive the penitent heart.*
- (4) Christians cannot be deliberate and consistent sinners; Christians cannot live a life in which sin dominates their actions.*

John is demanding a life which is always on the watch against sin, a life in which sin is not the normal accepted way but the abnormal moment of defeat.

Remember, we are more than conquerors in Christ. Live like it!

Session 5: “Life reveals the children of God!”...B.F. Westcott

What do you think this means?

We can tell what a tree is by its fruit...and similarly we can tell what a man or woman is by that person's conduct.

1 John 3:10-18, “This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister. ¹¹ For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. ¹² Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. ¹³ Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him. ¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”

John tries to make it very simple...he says... “Anyone who does not desire to do what is right is by that fact shown not to be of God.”

Righteousness is the key.

We can't obtain righteousness by our acts...we can prove that we have the righteousness of Christ by trying and seeking to live like Him.

John says to be righteous is to love our neighbors...

Why did John feel that this was such a critical point in defining Christianity?

- ***It is a duty which has been impressed upon Christians from the first moment that they entered the Church. The Christian ethic can be summed up in one word....LOVE!***
- ***The fact that people love one another is the final proof that they have passed from death to life.***
- ***Not to love is to become a murderer. Jesus said that anger, bitterness and contempt were sins just as serious (Matthew 5:21-22)...hatred in the heart is as if there is murder in the heart.***
- ***The Christian life is the imitation of Christ. He forgave those who crucified Him. “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 2:5***
- ***John insists that we will have plenty of opportunities to prove our love for Christ...be helping and loving someone else...even if they don't love us.***

And...Remember:

- ✓ ***Righteousness always provokes hostility in the minds of those whose actions are evil.***
- ✓ ***Wherever Christians are, even though they say nothing, they act as the conscience of society; and for that very reason, the world will often hate them.***

1 John 3:19-24, “This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰ If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴ The one who keeps God’s commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.”

There is only one test....to know in whom you believe....and to know that you are “really” a Christian!

John’s test....simple and far-reaching. It is love.

Now....just because you love other people does not mean that you are Christian....but...it is the final, clinching test question!

Romans 10:9, “For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord...and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.”

Now...do you love your fellow man? Do you try to keep God’s commandments?

Then....be calm, be at peace, be assured that you will see God.

Our hearts might condemn us...but God is greater than our hearts and knows all things.

What two things set us apart?

- 1. Believing in the name of God’s Son...Jesus the Christ!***
- 2. Loving one another...as He gave us this commandment.***

Does anything hinder you...this day....in you loving your brothers and sisters in Christ?

***It is simple to know in whom we have believed....Heart Knowledge!
How Do We Know We Are God’s Children?***

1 John 3:24b – 4:1

“This is how we know that He (Jesus) abides in us, by the Spirit which He gave to us. Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if their source is God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

Note: Spirit and spirit(s)....

Difference is that the Christian has the Holy Spirit...not some, just any spirit working in us!

Early Church had manifestation of the Spirit....Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

There are different thoughts on this!

Most modern churches do not know what the manifestation of the Spirit means...because they are afraid of it.

Question: When did the church lose it...and when did the gifts of the spirit diminish...and where does it say in the Word that the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was extinguished...or inappropriate for the Church?

Why would we listen to man....and not listen to the Spirit?

Many are guilty of grieving the Holy Spirit....

Are we guilty of grieving the Holy Spirit?

The Ultimate Heresy....

Found in 1 John 4:2-3, "This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world."

For John, Christianity...and the Christian Faith can be summed up in one sentence: "The Word became flesh and lived with (amongst) us." John 1:14

Any spirit which denied the reality of the incarnation was not of God.

John lays down three (3) tests of belief:

- 1. To be of God, a spirit must acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah.*

To deny this statement, John felt that:

- ✓ It is denying that Jesus is the center of history (everything revolves around this figure...this man).*
 - ✓ It is denying that Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises of God.*
 - ✓ It is denying Jesus' Kingship (He came not only to sacrifice, but to reign).*
- 2. To be of God, a spirit must acknowledge that Jesus has come in the flesh. (Must know and understand that Jesus came in the flesh...and felt pain as we feel pain).*

3. To be of God, a spirit must acknowledge that Jesus arose from the grave.

SALVATION DEPENDS ON YOUR SPIRIT BELIEVING THAT JESUS WAS MAN AND....GOD'S SON.

*Hark, the Herald Angels sing, Glory to the newborn King.
Christ, by highest Heav'n adored; Christ the everlasting Lord;
Late in time, behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel.*

1 John 4:4-6, “You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. ⁵ They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶ We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit^[a] of truth and the spirit of falsehood.”

There is a great truth...and a great problem revealed in this scripture!

Truth: *Christians do not need to fear the heretics.*

In Christ, the victory over all the powers of evil was won.

Problem: *The false teachers will neither listen to nor accept the truth which true Christians offer.*

John returns to his favorite contrasting theme....the opposition between the world and God.

The world, as we have seen before, is human nature apart from, and in opposition to, God. Those who have their source in God will welcome the truth; those whose source is the world will reject the truth.

The answer must be that:

- *There are no limits to the grace of God (but there are always consequences to our choices).....and,*
- *There is such a person as the Holy Spirit.*

1 John 4:7 – 21, “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. ¹³ This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.”

This is a closely interwoven passage...best when read in its entirety!

Several teachings from this passage:

I. TEACHING ON LOVE

➤ **Love has its origin in God (v. 7)**

God is love. To be like God and be what we were meant to be, we must also love.

➤ **Love has a double relationship to God.**

It is only by knowing God that we learn to love, and it is only by loving that we learn to know God (v. 7 – 8).

Love comes from God, and love leads to God.

➤ **It is by love that God is known (v. 12)**

We cannot see God because God is spirit; what we can see is His effect. We can't see wind or electricity...but we can see its effect. The effect of God is love. God is known by the effect He has on the individual.

➤ **God's love is demonstrated in Jesus Christ (v. 9)**

When we look at Jesus, we see two (2) things about the love of God.

- 1. It is a love which holds nothing back (God loved men and women, boys and girls so much that He sacrificed His most Beloved possession.*
- 2. It is a totally undeserved love. How in the world could God love such poor and disobedient creatures as we are?*

➤ **Human love is a response to divine love (v. 19)**

We love because God loved us. It is the sight of His love which awakens in us the desire to love Him back...as He first loved us...and also to love our neighbors as He loves them.

➤ **When love comes, fear goes (verses 17-18)**

Fear is the characteristic emotion of someone who expects to be punished.

God's true nature is not to punish...but to forgive...and love. That is why He still bids the lost to come. Punishment comes only when there is rejection of God's love...Mercy is always waiting...but Mercy and Grace never forces the human to love. Rebellion has always been what separates man from God.

Once we know God's true nature and accept it as fact (He loved us so much that He gave of His own flesh and blood), fear is swallowed up in love.

The fear that remains is the fear of causing Him grief in His love for us.

- *Love of God and love of other people are indissolubly connected (vs. 7, 11, 20)*

The energy of love discharges itself along lines which form a triangle...whose points are God, self, and neighbor.

The only way to prove that we love God is to love the men and women whom God loves.

It is our destiny to reproduce the life of God in humanity.

What great things does this passage say about Jesus Christ?

1. It Tells Us That Jesus Is the Bringer of Life.

God sent him that through him we might have life (v. 9)

There is a world of difference between existence and life. We all have existence, but we do not all have life.

Living with Christ turns mere existence into fullness of life.

2. It Tells Us That Jesus Is the Restorer of the Lost Relationship with God.

God sent him to be the atoning sacrifice for sin (v. 10).

Jesus bridged the awful gulf between God and us.

3. It Tells Us That Jesus Is the Savior of the World (v. 14)

People need to be saved from themselves; they need to be saved from the habits which have become their chains; they need to be saved from their temptations; they need to be saved from their fears and anxieties. In every case, Jesus offers salvation; He enables us to face the present and to meet eternity.

4. It Tells Us That Jesus Is the Son of God (v. 12)

He and He alone can show us what God is like; He alone can bring God's grace, love, forgiveness and strength.

Jesus is the one that introduced mankind to the Spirit of God....

It is the Spirit which sets us free...It is the Spirit which convicts and convinces us to do what is right...and to stay away from evil.

It is the Spirit...in whom Jesus introduced us, that makes us dare to address God as Father (Romans 8:15-16).

What a Wonderful God...What a Wonderful Savior...What a Wonderful Spirit...in whom we yield to the awesome presence of God!

Session 6:

The Simple Fact—Christianity Is Based on: Faith and Actions in Response to Our Love for the Truth

1 John 5:1-2, *“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. ² This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands.”*

As John wrote this passage, there were two (2) things (facts) in the back of his mind:

1. The love of God and love of others are inseparable parts of the same experience.

Two great commandments:

- *Love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength;*
- *Love our neighbor as ourselves.*

(No greater commandments than these).....Mark 12:28-31

2. The natural law of human life.

Family love is a part of nature. Children love parents; parents love children; siblings love each other. Now....John transfers this thought to Christian thought and experience...

The Christians undergo the experience of being reborn (God is their Father...loving Him for all that He has done for them)

The birth, however, is into a family...and the rebirth must characterize the family experience....loving father, mother, brother and sister. (Mark 3:35).

It has been said: “Man is not only born to love, he is also born to be loved.”

1 John 5:3-5, *“In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, ⁴ for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”*

Obedience is the only proof of love.

We cannot prove our love to anyone other than by seeking to please and bring joy to that person.

What other scripture speaks about “proving” our love for God?

When John states that God’s commandments are not heavy...he tells us why they do not have to be heavy.

(John does not mean that obedience to God’s commandments is easy to achieve.)

Christian love is no easy matter.

It is not easy to love people whom we do not like...or those that hurt our feelings...or injure us.

How is it that John can explain this passage...(that His commandments are easy...not heavy)?

Here is how.....Matthew 11:30, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

- **God never will lay a commandment on anyone without also giving strength to carry it out.**
With the vision comes the power; with the need for it comes the strength.
What is impossible for us becomes possible with God...Luke 18:27
Luke 1:37, “For nothing is impossible with God.”
- **Our response to God must be the response of love; and, for love, no duty is too hard and no task too great.**
- **There is something in Christians which makes us able to conquer the world (worldly thoughts, worldly actions, and worldly passions)....that is FAITH.**
Faith...comes from hearing—and hearing by the Word of God.
Faith...Power to overcome.
Faith...in the incarnation (Jesus as God’s Son)...and the conviction that God shares and God cares.

Once we possess that faith...certain things follow:

1. **We have a defense to resist the infections of the world.**
The pressures of worldly standards and motives; fascinations of the wrong things. From within and from outside come the temptations which are part of the human situation in a world and a society not interested in and sometimes hostile to God.
2. **We have a strength to stand up to the attacks of the world.**
The human situation (life) is full of things which seek to take our faith away (sorrows; perplexities of life; disappointments and frustrations of life; failures and discouragements of life).

But....There is a God...and there is His Spirit living within us to give us strength to fight the battle!

3. We have the indestructible hope of final victory.

The world did its worst to Jesus. After the cross came the resurrection and.....After the shame came the glory!

Jesus....is with us...for us...and He offers us a share in that victory which was His...

If we believe that Jesus is the Son of God....and was the first resurrection....we can count us in on the victory through the cross...and into heaven to be with Him.....forever!

1 John 5:6-8, “This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷ For there are three that testify: ⁸ the^u Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.”

Water and the Blood...

Could mean:

- ***(Baptism of Jesus.....and the Crucifixion of Jesus)***
- ***Born of woman....water breaks and the baby comes forth... Born of God...blood of Jesus...His DNA.***

John 19:34-35, “One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified—so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.)”

John was very much a part of Jesus’ ministry. It is pretty plain that John was the only one that could testify that he saw water and blood flow from Jesus’ side.

The Triple Witness....

The Holy Spirit....and the water and the blood make it a fact....that Jesus was the Messiah.

Why do you know that you are saved?

The Holy Spirit testifies...

Remember....the Holy Spirit was the one that convicted you and convinced you that Jesus...died for you and is living today making intercession for you today at the right hand of God.

The Spirit descended upon Jesus in a special way at His baptism...

While John came to baptize with water, Jesus came to baptize with the Spirit (Mark 1:8; Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5, 2:33). He came to bring the Spirit with a power previously unknown. The history of the early Church is the proof that this was no idle claim. It began at Pentecost (Acts 2:4) and repeated itself

**over and over again in history and experience of the Church
(Acts 8:17; Acts 10:44)
Jesus had the Spirit, and He could give the Spirit to men and
women; and the continuing evidence of the Spirit in the
Church was – and is – an undeniable witness to the continuing
power of Jesus Christ.**

**The act of baptism (water baptism) and the observance of the Lord's
Supper depict and testify to our rebirth....and the blood that was spilled out
for our sins.**

**1 John 5:9-10, “We accept human testimony, but God’s testimony is greater
because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. ¹⁰ Whoever
believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has
made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given
about his Son.”**

**The law was quite clear...A single witness shall not suffice to convict a
person of any crime or wrongdoing in connection with any offence that
may be committed. Only on the evidence of two or three witnesses shall a
charge be sustained (Deut. 19:15).**

**If a triple human witness is enough to establish any fact, how much more
should a triple divine witness (Spirit, water and blood) be regarded as
convincing?**

Believing about Jesus....Is not enough!

Believing in Jesus....Is a Must!

**To believe in Jesus Christ is not simply to accept what He says as truth; it
is to commit ourselves into His hands, for time and for eternity.**

The idea of witness is an integral part of John’s thought.

Different witnesses all converging on Jesus Christ:

- **John the Baptist is a witness to Jesus (John 1:15; 1:32-34; 5:33)**
- **Jesus’ deeds are a witness to Himself (John 5:36)**
- **The Scriptures are a witness to Him (John 5:39)**
- **The Father who sent Him is a witness to Him (John 5:30-32; 5:37; 8:18)**
- **The Spirit is a witness to Him. “When the Advocate (Counselor) comes...the Spirit of Truth...he will testify on my behalf.” John 15:26**

**If people refuse to accept the evidence of those who have experienced
what Christ can do, the evidence of the actions of Christ, the evidence
of the Scriptures, the evidence of God’s Holy Spirit, the evidence of God
Himself, in effect, they are calling God a liar—and that is the very limit of
blasphemy.**

1 John 5:11-13, “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

With this paragraph, the letter proper comes to an end. What follows is in the nature of a postscript.

The end is a statement that the essence of the Christian life....is eternal life. Eternal is more than simply “lasting forever.” It is the life of God...in Him there is no darkness, just peace and serenity, power (defeat of frustration), holiness (the defeat of sin), a time wherein we are clothes with the purity of God and armed against the contamination of the world, love (the end of bitterness and hatred).

Such a life...can come through Jesus...there is no other way.

The Son knows the Father....and only He can fully reveal to us what God is like.

If we wish to meet someone whom we do not know and who moves in a completely different circle from our own, we can achieve that meeting only by finding someone who knows the other person and is willing to introduce us.

Jesus does that for us in regard to God....

One thing I know about the passage above....Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. John firmly and sincerely with fervor....taught it, and lived it.

We must do likewise....

Session 7: The Principle and Practice of Prayer

1 John 5:14-15, “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.”

Do we really understand the provisions God has made for us in opening lines of communication to Him?

In Fellowship...In Friendship...In Time of Need....In Time of Rejoicing??

- ***The basis of prayer—God listens attentively to our prayers.***
Greek word for “confidence”—Parresia (originally meant freedom of speech).
In God we have “freedom of speech.” He is always listening, more ready to hear than we are to pray.
 - ❖ *We never need to force our way into His presence or compel Him to pay attention.*
 - ❖ *He is waiting for us to come.*
- ***The Principle of Prayer—To be answered, it must be in accordance with the will of God.***

In John’s writings, he laid down the “conditions” of prayer:

- ✓ ***“Obedience” is a condition of prayer.***
We receive whatever we ask because we keep His commandments (1 John 3:22)
- ✓ ***“Remaining in Christ” is a condition of prayer.***
If we abide in Him and His words abide in us, we will ask for anything and it will be done for us (John 15:7).
- ✓ ***“To pray in His (Jesus’) name” is a condition of prayer.***
If we ask anything in His name, He will do it (John 14:14).

Prayer must be in accordance with the will of God.

Jesus teaches us to pray:

‘Your will be done,’ NOT ‘Your will be changed.’

The very essence of prayer:

Jesus himself, in the moment of His greatest agony and crisis, prayed: ‘Not what I want but what you want... Your will be done’ (Matthew 26:39).

C.H. Dodd writes: “Prayer rightly considered is not a device for employing the resources of omnipotence to fulfill our own desires, but a means by which our desires may be redirected according to the mind of God, and made into channels for the forces of His will.”

Even the Greek philosopher and thinker, Epictetus wrote: “Have courage to look up to God and say, deal with me as you will from now on. I am as one with you; I am yours; I flinch from nothing as long as you think that it is good. Lead me where you will; put on me what clothing you will. Would you have me hold office or refuse it, stay or flee, be rich or poor? For all this I will defend you before men.”

A revelation thought: We are so apt to think that prayer is asking God for what we want, whereas true prayer is asking God for what He wants.

Prayer is not only talking to God even more, it is listening to Him.

To Pray or Not to Pray?...That is the Question!

1 John 5:16-17, "If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. ¹⁷ All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death,"

Concentrate on what is simple, what is seen. This is about what is visible in the behavior of our brethren. **The passage says, "if anyone sees his brother sinning..."**

We may have heard rumors or we may have suspicions. There may be indirect evidence that leads us to believe some attitudes may need attention, or that growth should occur at a faster rate. Such matters may or may not require some attention. But they do not fall within the teaching of John in this verse. This is about what is visible in the behavior of our brethren: "If anyone sees..."

A brother may be guilty of sin, and the sin is not visible to us. We cannot detect it; we cannot see it; we have not knowledge of it.

Only God has perfect ability to see and know all sin. So whatever this verse is about, it relates only to what is visible: "If anyone sees..."

The Bible clearly shows two "types" of sin.

1. One that is repented of and forgiven;

John has already written, back in chapter one: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," (1 John 1:9).

So sin that does not lead to death is sin we confess; sin we forsake and ask God to forgive.

When we see a brother commit a sin not unto death (the guilty one repents), our response should be, ask God to give that brother life. God will give life to the penitent brother.

The apostle James also teaches about praying for this type: "if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him [facilitate his repentance]; Let him know, that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20).

Praying for this type of sin helps your brother and can “cover a multitude of sins.”

2. *The second type of sin is a sin that is not repented of.*

If one does not repent of any sin, that sin is not forgiven—Period! This type John refers to as a “sin unto death.” He tells us not to pray for someone who has done this. His lack of repentance means this sin will not be forgiven.

John says, "I do not say that you should pray about that." Why? Because God will not give life to one who continues in sin. "The prayer of one human being can never cancel another's free-will. If God's will does not override man's will, neither can a fellow-man's prayer. When a human will has been firmly and persistently set in opposition to the Divine will, our intercession will be of no avail. And this seems to be the meaning of "sin unto death; "willful and obstinate rejection of God's grace and persistence in unrepented sin."

Verse 16 functions to illustrate what verses 14 and 15 teach:

Asking according to His will. If you ask God to overlook sin a brother continues in, you are not asking according to His will. If you ask God to give spiritual life to one who sins unto death, you are not asking according to His will. We should never ask God to do something we know is against His will.

What we ask God should always be in harmony with His will.

- We should never ask God to compromise; to overlook sin people continue in.*
 - We should never ask Him to do something He has said is against His will.*
-

The limitation of prayer.....

It may well be that we pray with heartfelt sincerity; but God's aim and our prayer can be frustrated by those for whom we pray.

If we pray for someone who is sick, and that person disobeys the doctors and acts foolishly, our prayer will be frustrated.

Very important:

God may urge, God may plead, God may warn, God may offer; but not even God can violate the freedom of choice which He Himself has given to us.

It is often human folly (stubborn will...rebellious attitude) which frustrates our prayers and repels the grace of God.

Does that mean Satan wins? No...it means that a soul has entered into a pact with the rebellious one and chooses to be on the losing side!

If any confusion or uncertainty remains about the passage in John, refer to the book of Jeremiah.

"Therefore, do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you," (Jer. 7:16).

*Why? Look back in Jeremiah 7, and find the list of their transgressions in verses 6-11. The people were guilty of oppression, shedding innocent blood, theft, murder, adultery, lying, idolatry and other sins. While practicing all this iniquity they would "come and stand" before God in His house and claim they were permitted to do such things (see verse 10). God spoke to them about their rebellion, but they did not listen or answer (verse 13). God said to them, "I will cast you out of My sight." Thus God said, "Do not pray for this people." ***They were continuing in sin, leading to their own destruction.****

Another translation (RSV) calls "sin unto death"... "mortal" sin.

Mortal sin unto death....Without going through a long list of possibilities....we are going to make it simple:

- **Mortal sin unto death....is one that produces unforgiveness on the human side.** *God is willing to forgive....but cannot accept anyone who has not and will not accept the idea that his/her sin must be forgiven. Since sin cannot be part of God's kingdom, anyone who has not been covered in the blood of Jesus cannot enter into heaven. One must be willing to accept the responsibility for knowing that there is no way out of this world and into God's kingdom than to come as a little child and say.... "Father, forgive me....I have sinned."*
- **Denial of one's faith....mortal sin to death, or sin of apostasy:** *It is actually choosing not to listen to the Holy Spirit....and denying that the Holy Spirit is convicting of sin (shaking one's hand at God...and, in his/her heart denying the power of the cross).*
- **The mortal sin is the state of those who have listened to sin (Satan) and refused to listen to God so often that they love and regard sin as the most profitable thing in the world.** *(Selling their soul for profit....denying God of the pleasure of knowing His creation). A SIN IN WHICH THE PERSON ENJOYS AND FINDS GREAT PLEASURE IN RECOMMITTING OVER AND OVER! ***There are sins that people can commit which God takes seriously enough so as to end their lives.****

An example of this is of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-10 who lied to the Holy Spirit. God judged them for this and both were killed.

Another sin that is associated with death is found in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 where it is reported that a man was having sexual relations with his father's wife.

Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is another sin certainly worthy of death. God gives those who commit the sin over to the depravity of their hearts and minds and they are beyond a point of no return. Some believe that blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is a sin that leads to death. At the very least, it ensures damnation.

Therefore, it is possible for a brother to commit a sin unto death!

Probably....what John was referring to is what he is suggesting in this letter....that is...the most deadly sin of all sins was to deny that Jesus really came in the flesh (Refusing to believe in the incarnation)....the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord.

This possibility should sober every Christian, causing us to keep ourselves, abiding in Christ, growing in Him, testing the spirits and keeping God's commandments.

1 John 5:18-20, “We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the One who was born of God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them. ¹⁹ We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. ²⁰ We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.”

Close of letter....The Threefold Christian Certainty:

- 1. Christians are set free from the power of sin...**

This does not mean that Christians never sin; but it does mean that they are not the helpless slaves of sin.

“A child of God may sin, but his normal condition is resistance to evil.”

- 2. Christians are on the side of God against the world.**

The source of our being is God, but the world lies in the power of the evil one. The choices still confront us...whether we will stand with God or with the forces which are against God.

Really.....you know what is right if you are a child of God. The things that are important to God are obvious....and it is obvious as to what and where we stand.

- 3. Christians are conscious that they have entered into that reality which is God.**

The questions are answered in our mind when we “set our mind on things of God....and we are not conformed to the world but are transformed by renewing of our mind....”

This proves to the world...and to us...that we are HIS!

The time of guessing who we are is gone....and the time of knowing whose we are has come!

Last verse....1 John 5:21, “My dear children, guard yourselves from idols.”

Why tack this on to the end of his letter?

It is important....because idols were a part of the heritage of those in whom he was writing.

Temple of Diana....Center of immoral rites.

- *People who had sexual habits worse than animals.*
- *The priests were pagans...and even performed immoral acts in the temple.*
"The worst of the worst" one philosopher noted.

John noted that anything in this life which is worshipped instead of God and allowed to take the place of God.....is an idol.

The Christian must keep themselves from the infections of all false faiths....

There are many things the Lord hates! The one thing that He will not tolerate under any circumstance is the worship of false gods.

JEHOVAH GOD is the ONE and ONLY!