

I JOHN 2:1-11

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I John chapter 2 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

In our last study we saw one of the reasons that John wrote this letter. He said in I John 1:4, “**And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.**”

Interestingly enough, Karl Marx wrote, “*The first requisite for the people’s happiness is the abolition [elimination] of religion.*”

In a sense, that is true. God is not interested in some kind of formal religion but in a relationship with us. And that is a huge difference from religion.

But make no mistake about it, Christianity was Karl Marx’s focus because Jesus transforms life and he did not want lives to be transformed but conformed to what he wanted to do!

But let’s look at this for a minute.

First of all, God is not interested in making us happy, but He is working on making us holy or more like Him. But pastor’s and teachers are telling their people that God wants them to be happy and thus, they are not holy!

And secondly, as John has stated, our faith in Jesus Christ brings into our lives great joy, a fullness of joy and that is something that they world can never do, they can never duplicate that joy that the Lord has given to us. And John is telling his readers that this joy that he has received into his life, he wants them to have as well!

And as we divided this letter up last week, we began to look at a section we called ***GOD IS LIGHT*** and it covers chapters 1 and 2 of I John.

The point of God being light is that He is pure, He is holy, and John tells us there is no darkness in God at all!

That is a foundational truth that we must apply to every situation we face, or we will come to a distorted picture of God. We may even come to the conclusion that He is not good, He is not perfect, there might be some darkness in Him.

Obviously that is wrong, as John tells us, **“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.”** I John 1:5. That is not open for debate, it is just a fact!

Now, as we move into chapter 2 of I John, he is continuing this thought of God being light and if we want to fellowship with Him, we need to walk in the light where He is.

And as we will see, John is going to speak of things that need to be manifested in our lives, not for salvation but as the evidence showing that we are saved.

It is as James tells us, **“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”** James 1:22-25.

Again, James is not speaking of what we need to do to be saved because Jesus alone saves us. What James is saying is that just knowing the truths of God is meaningless if you don't apply them to your life, it is an empty or dead faith!

I realize that this is hard for some of you to believe but let me give you an example.

Judas was part of the 12 Apostles that Jesus chose. He followed Jesus, he heard Jesus teach, he even served Jesus but when you look at his life, when you look at what Judas did, he was never a true believer because he didn't live what he said he believed. His faith was dead, he was a Judas branch like many are today, they are not saved even though they may have a zeal for God, it is without knowledge!

It is as we are told in John chapter 15, **“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”** John 15:6.

Again, that is what we might call the Judas branch. They look like they are saved, they sound like they are saved, but they are not, just like Judas. Because all that talk and all that they did were not of Christ, it was just for show, it was a façade, they will be judged and not enter into that eternal life with Christ.

Now some feel that Judas was saved, and he lost his salvation, but please, please, don't come to that faulty conclusion that he was saved but then lost his salvation, he walked away from it. I don't believe that the Scriptures teach that you can lose your salvation.

Let me explain.

In Matthew 7:21-23 we are told, **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”**

You see, Jesus said that He never knew them, not that He once knew them but since they walked away, He doesn't know them anymore, they lost their salvation. Jesus goes on to say that the wise man not only hears the Words of God, but he also does them, he applies them to his life!

And John is going to show us the heart of God for us and what He has done for us knowing our weakness.

He then will move on and give to us a test to see if we know Him, practical things to see if we are applying the things of God to our life.

He then moves on and speaks of the spiritual development of believers, the maturing process.

From there he speaks of things we should and shouldn't love.

The deceptions that will come in the last days and are here today and how these deceptions are dispelled by the light of God's Word!

And he closes this chapter by admonishing us to abide in Christ and walk worthy of the high calling by which we have been called.

With that said, let's begin reading in I John chapter 2, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening keeping in mind that ***GOD IS LIGHT!***

I JOHN 2

VERSE 1a

Remember what John told us in I John 1:8, 10. He wrote, "**If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.**"

Now we might come to the conclusion that since we are going to sin, that it is inevitable that we as Christians are going to sin, and then, when I do sin, I can just confess my sins before God, and He will forgive me. And so, why not just go ahead and sin? There is no point in trying to stop something that is going to happen anyway, right?

Wrong!

And I think that is why John jumps in here to make sure you understand that just because you are going to sin on this side of heaven, don't take sin lightly and give into it. John was writing to them so that they don't sin, or as he put it, "**My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. . . .**"

And this is the second reason John wrote this letter.

Now let me say this because I think it is important that we understand what sin is all about.

The Greek word for "**sin**" speaks of "*missing the mark.*" This was a term used in archery for hitting the bull's eye or hitting the target dead center!

What does that mean to us?

It is as Paul said in Romans 3:23, "**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**" Or all have missed the mark!

And what is that mark? It is a bull's eye or perfection. That means the only righteousness that God will accept, the only way we can enter into heaven is by being absolutely perfect.

Now, in saying that we can clearly see that none of us hit that bull's eye, we miss the mark that God has set and apart from Christ and His righteousness being imputed into our lives by faith, (II Corinthians 5:21) we will not enter into heaven.

And thus, we know that we are going to sin because there is a battle between the flesh and the Spirit in this life, but we need to strive against sin, not to give into sin.

And that truly is the heart of the Father. He does not want us to sin, He does not encourage us to sin, He does not condone sin.

In fact, He has given to us the things we need so we don't sin. Paul, in Galatians 5:16 tells us, "**I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.**"

Like I have said, there is a battle between the flesh and the Spirit as Paul tells us in Galatians 5:17, "**For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.**"

Thus, when we give into the flesh, then the works of the flesh manifest themselves in our lives – we sin.

When we submit to the guiding of the Holy Spirit in our lives then the fruit of the Spirit is manifested in our lives.

It is a battle, but the heart of God is that we don't sin, that we guard against sin, we strive against sin in our lives.

Remember the story of Daniel and how, as a young man, he was taken to Babylon as a captive and they were training him and his friends in the ways of Babylon. And in the midst of this wicked nation, we see Daniel take a stand as we are told in Daniel 1:8, "**But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.**"

That would "**defile**" speaks of staining. Daniel did not want to stain his walk with the Lord by giving into these things the King of Babylon was offering him.

We too need to purpose in our hearts not to defile ourselves before our King, Jesus Christ.

But what happens when we do sin, and we will in these bodies of flesh?

John goes on to tell us.

VERSES 1b-2

As I have said, to get into heaven God requires perfection from us, and we all fall far short of that reality!

Make no mistake about it, we are not perfect in a practical sense, we do sin.

But the wonderful news is that when we come to Christ, when we repent of our sins and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of our lives, we are adopted into the family of God by faith and we are perfect in a positional sense.

You see, as the Father looks upon us the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed us from all our sins, we are as white as snow!

But what happens when we do sin, and we will?

When we do sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, a defense attorney, Jesus Christ!

The Greek word for “**advocate**” is PARAKLETOS, which means “*one who speaks . . . in our defense.*”

Now when I think of a defense attorney, I see someone who manipulates the truth to get his client freedom at times.

But if Jesus did that, He would not be righteous.

Then how does Jesus defend us, how does He refute the accusations that Satan brings against us?

And he does bring accusations, charges against us and we are guilty of those crimes. In Revelation 12:10 we are told, **“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.’”**

So what happens when he brings those charges against us?

Our defense attorney, Jesus Christ steps forward and speaks in our defense.

But if we are guilty, and we are, how can we be set free from those charges against us?

Because our advocate has become our propitiation or atonement for our sins.

You see, God became sin for us, He paid in full the penalty for our sins, enduring the wrath of God that was due us!

Thus, Jesus does not defend us by manipulating the evidence because we are guilty before God.

What He does do is say that our penalty was paid in full by Him, and He can show the scares to prove it! ***CASE CLOSED!***

What is interesting to me is when they were translating the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, back around 250 B. C., the Greek word they used for Mercy Seat is the same Greek word that John uses for propitiation, HILASMOS!

In other words, on the Day of Atonement, when the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies and poured out the blood upon the Mercy Seat to atone for the sins of the nation, and his own sins, John is telling us that Jesus has become our Mercy Seat and it is His blood that was shed to atone completely for our sins!

In fact, Paul tells us in Hebrews 7:25, **“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”**

In regard to this word **“propitiation,”** Alford tells us: *“The word implies that Christ has, as our sin-offering, reconciled God and us by nothing else but by His voluntary death as a sacrifice: has by this averted God’s wrath from us.”*

Listen to what Peter said in I Peter 3:18, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”**

You see, sin is no longer a barrier between God and man, if you receive Jesus as your propitiation for your sins! Yes, sin can hinder our fellowship with God, but our salvation is secure in Him!

Let me share these words with you from Warren Wiersbe as he expounds on this fact of Christians sinning and what we need to do. He wrote,

Christ is our Representative. He defends us at the Father’s throne. Satan may stand there as the accuser of the brethren (Zech 3; Rev 12:10), but Christ stands there as our Advocate - He pleads on our behalf Continuing forgiveness, in response to His intercession, is God’s answer to our sinfulness.

“I would Like to become a Christian,” an interested woman said to a visiting pastor, “but I’m afraid I can’t hold out. I’m sure to sin again!”

Turning to 1 John 1, the pastor said, “No doubt you will sin again, because God says, ‘If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us’ (1 John 1:8). But if you do sin, God will forgive you if you will confess your sin to Him. But it isn’t necessary for Christians to sin. As we walk in fellowship with God and in obedience to His Word, He gives us ability to resist and to have victory over temptation.”

Then the pastor remembered that the woman had gone through surgery some months before.

“When you had your surgery,” he asked, “was there a possibility of complications or problems afterward?”

“Oh, yes,” she replied, “But whenever I had a problem, I went to see the doctor and he took care of it.”

Then the truth hit her! “I see it!” she exclaimed. “Christ is always available to keep me out of sin or to forgive my sin!”

The life that is real is a life of victory. In this letter, John tells us how to draw on our divine resources to experience victory over temptation and sin.

- Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT*, pp. 962-963

Exactly! Bring everything before the Lord and let Him bring healing and to strengthen you so that you don’t sin, but when you do, you have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ!

Now I do need to deal with this issue that God has chosen some for salvation and the others, He has chosen them for damnation!

That is so far from the truth!

Listen again to what John says here in I John 2:2, “**And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.**”

The Amplified Bible puts it like this, “**And He [that same Jesus Himself] is the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins, and not for ours alone but also for [the sins of] the whole world.**”

The Living Bible says, “**He is the one who took God’s wrath against our sins upon himself and brought us into fellowship with God; and he is the forgiveness for our sins, and not only ours but all the worlds.**”

Now in reading that in those different versions of the Bible, what conclusion did you come to?

The only conclusion you can come to, hopefully, is that Jesus died for the sins of the – ***WORLD!***

Jesus said in John 3:16-17, “**For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**”

Who does God love?

All the people of this world, He died for all of us!

Who can be saved?

Whoever believes in Him!

Do you see how clear that is and the only way you can come to another conclusion is that you are approaching the Scriptures according to your own preconceived ideas, like the Calvinist do or Reformed Theology, who believe God only died for the sins of some people, only certain ones that He has elected will go to heaven and the others are predestined for Hell! What a horrible and non-Biblical theology!

Jesus said in John 12:32, “**And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.**”

Notice, not just a select few but all people will be drawn to Him and then it is their choice, free will, to come to Jesus or reject Him!

And John makes it very clear here in I John that Jesus is the propitiation for the whole world.

Now let me add this because some will come to another unbiblical conclusion regarding this and they will say that it means all our saved?

No, what it does mean is that all can be saved if they receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

But if they don't, if they have not appropriated this pardon for their sins into their lives, they will die in their sins.

It is as Jesus said in Matthew 12:31, “**Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.**”

In other words, the work of the Holy Spirit is to bring people to Jesus and thus, if you reject that work of the Holy Spirit in your life, if you blasphemy the Holy Spirit by rejecting Jesus, then your sins are not forgiven because you have rejected Jesus.

That is tragic and yet many launch their souls into eternal fire because they reject the gift of life that is only found in Jesus, they reject the work of the Holy Spirit who is revealing Jesus to them!

Again, listen to what Paul tells us in Romans 10:9-13, **“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For ‘whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’”**

VERSES 3-6

Now some will say that if you only speak of grace you are giving people a license to sin. The Law is needed to keep people in line. I am sorry but that is ridiculous!

Spurgeon put it like this, “Those men who think that God’s grace, when fully, fairly, and plainly preached, will lead men into sin, know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. . . . Shall I hate God because he is kind to me? Shall I curse him because he blesses me? I venture to affirm that very few men reason thus.”

Absolutely. We obey the Lord because we love Him!

And when John speaks of knowing God here, he uses the Greek word GINOSKO.

This Greek word speaks of knowing by experience.

And this is John’s point. If you say you know God, that you have fellowship with Him, then you will keep His commandments; you will walk in obedience to Him.

This is not done for salvation, but it is the evidence that we are saved.

Jesus put it this way in John 14:23-24, **“... ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.’”**

You see, the more we walk with God, the more we are obedient to Him, the more we will know God, He will reveal Himself to us.

Why won't He reveal Himself to us if we are not obedient?

Because our actions show we don't care to know Him, we have a superficial relationship with Him.

And let me say this. For those who say they know God and yet are living in blatant sin with no conviction, no desire to stop, they are a liar, they don't know God.

Now that may seem harsh, but that is the reality.

You see, they may know of Him but there is no relationship, and the evidence is seen in their actions. There is no transformation that has taken place.

Again, we are not going to be perfect or without sin. But what is the desire of our heart, to obey the Lord or to do our own thing?

A great example of the transforming power of God in a person's life is seen with the people of Thessalonica.

In I Thessalonians 1:5-10 we are told, **“For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”**

You see, as they came to Christ, He transformed their lives.

Instead of rebelling against God, instead of living in sin, they turned from that life and served the living God, they were obedient to Him.

Again, Spurgeon said, “Do distinguish, however, between knowing about Christ and knowing Christ. We may know very much about many of our great men, though we do not know them. Now, it will never save a soul to know about Christ. The only saving knowledge is to know Him, His very self, and to trust Him, the living Savior, who is at the right hand of God.”

Here is the result of obeying the Lord. We know that we are saved, we have that assurance as we walk in the light as He is in the light.

Now I understand that none of us are perfect, like I have said. But if the pattern of your life is to sin, then you truly don't know God. But as a Christian there should truly be a change in our behavior in regard to sin.

Sin will not be completely done away with until we are taken home to glory but make no mistake about it, there is a radical transformation that takes place when we come to Christ.

Here are a few examples of that change that takes place:

- A Christian should no longer love sin as he once did.
- A Christian no longer will brag about sin as he once did.
- A Christian no longer plans to sin as he once did.
- A Christian no longer looks back on sin with fond memories as he once did.
- A Christian no longer fully enjoys sin as he once did.
- A Christian no longer is comfortable in habitual sin as he once was.
- A Christian is no longer comfortable being around those who are involved in sin.

You see, it is as Paul said in II Corinthians 5:17, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**

May we hate sin as God hates sin and live that new life we have in Christ.

Spurgeon put it like this, “The Christian no longer loves sin; it is the object of his sternest horror. He no longer regards it as a mere trifle, plays with it, or talks of it with unconcern . . . Sin is dejected in the Christians heart, though it is not ejected. Sin may enter the heart, and fight for dominion, but it cannot sit upon the throne.”

Thus, if we know God by experience, we will keep His commandments and as we do, God’s love is being perfected in us as we abide in Him!

And then John says in I John 2:6, **“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”**

In other words, John is telling us that if we abide in God then we need to walk as He walked.

Now, the question is, “*What does it mean to walk as Jesus walked?*”

Before I answer that question, let me ask you this because in answering this, the first question will be answered.

As you look at the life of Jesus, how He lived, how would you sum up His life?

Listen carefully to what Jesus said in John 6:38.

We are told, “**For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.**”

The pattern of Jesus’ life was one of obedience to the Father, a life of sacrifice, of dying to self that was born out of fellowship with the Father!

How did Jesus do?

Jesus tells us in John 17:4, “**I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.**”

He completed the work that He was sent to do!

Now when some read of walking as Jesus walked, they want to heal the sick, raise the dead, walk on water and-so-on.

Yes, Jesus did do those things, but they were all born out of His obedience to the Father which caused Him to walk accordingly, to be in those places where God the Father wanted to work.

Thus, if we want to walk as Jesus walked then we too need to live a life of obedience to God, a life of sacrifice, a life of denying self as we have that *KOINONIA* or fellowship with the Father!

We are told in Luke 9:23-26, **“Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father’s, and of the holy angels.’”**

One of the problems we see in the church today is this push for self-gratification, self-fulfillment, the focus is on self and not denying the flesh.

We have people seeking the build-up of self and we have church leaders that are willing to give it to them.

Thus, church has become more of an entertainment center than a place of worship.

We no longer want to walk as Jesus walked, a life of sacrifice and obedience.

People are no longer looking for churches that are teaching sound doctrine, healthy doctrine, but is the church fun, are there singles in the church and-so-on.

It is what can I get out of church, what does it have to offer me instead of what gift has God blessed me with that I can bless others in the body of Christ with!

May we get back to the basics of walking as Jesus walked, in obedience to the Father and dying to self, living a life of sacrifice!

I like the way that Boice summed this up. He said, “The point here is that the one who knows God will increasingly lead a righteous life, for God is righteous. It does not mean that he will be sinless; John has already shown that anyone who claims this is lying. It simply means that he will be moving in a direction marked out by the righteousness of God. If he does not do this, if he is not increasingly dissatisfied with and distressed by sin, he is not God’s child.”

One more point and that is being in the will of God, walking in His will and seeing the work He will do as we are.

In Acts chapter 8 Philip is down in Samaria witnessing to the people there and revival is breaking out, people are getting saved.

Samaria is the place to be, seeing people saved is the life for me, land spreading out so far and wide, keep Jerusalem, just give me that countryside, or something like that. Sorry about that for those of you who are Green Acres fans!

Then, in the midst of this revival in Samaria, the Lord tells Philip to go down to Gaza, to a deserted place, to a desert area!

Now many of us would think that was a foolish thing to do, especially when all this was going on in Samaria, but Philip obeyed the Lord.

You see, there was this Ethiopian Treasurer who came to Jerusalem to find God and left empty. But while in Jerusalem he purchased the scroll of Isaiah, which was very costly.

And on his way home he was reading through Isaiah about the suffering servant and didn't know who the writer was speaking of.

Thus, Philip comes on the scene, he shares Christ with this leader, who then gets saved, baptized and heads home to tell others about Jesus.

You see, walking where Jesus walked is just a life of obedience and fellowship with the Father as He directs our lives and brings forth the fruit as we abided in Him!

VERSES 7-8

What in the world is John talking about? First, he says that he is not writing to us a new commandment but an old one and then he says that he is writing a new commandment to us!

What is he talking about?

Keep in mind that John is in his late 80's or 90's at this point and it maybe he is getting a little confused.

No, not at all! The Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit and this is something that God is saying to us.

But what does it mean?

The word that John uses for "**new**" is not a word that means brand new, like I bought a new car.

It means that it is something that has been around, but has been refreshed, made new.

Think of it like a 67' Mustang that just had a new paint job, new interior, new engine, it is beautiful. It is not a new car, but it has been refreshed, that is the point that John is making here.

Back in Leviticus 19:18 we are told, "**You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.**"

And in Deuteronomy 10:19 we are told, "**Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.**"

This is a natural love, the Greek word *PHILEO* fits in here. It is a reciprocal love or a love that gives in response to what it has received. It is a brotherly type of love and for the natural man, that is the highest capacity he can love!

Now what Christ has done is He has taken this human love and made it into a supernatural love, a word that was made for this is *AGAPE* love, or unconditional love.

You see, this is an old commandment that was taken and refreshed.

Jesus tells us in John 13:34-35, **“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**

And in Matthew 5:43-48 we are told, **“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ [The old commandment of love]. But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” [The new commandment of love].**

Again, this is not a natural love, but a supernatural love that comes from the Holy Spirit.

It is an unconditional love, a love that gives in spite of how we are being treated.

Paul, in Romans 5:5-8 gives to us the example of Christ, **“Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”**

God has poured out His love into our lives and we need to go out and share that love with others.

But you can't give what you don't have, and that is the problem many times. Those claiming to be walking as Jesus walked and yet not reflecting that love of God, that *AGAPE* love.

Now is this really important?

John is going to answer that for us in a minute.

Before we get to that, let me make one more point.

When John speaks of "**the darkness passing away, and the true light is already shining**" what does he mean?

I believe John is talking about the light of God that has burst onto the scene, the Messiah has come.

Remember what Simeon said as Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to be circumcised eight days after he was born.

In Luke 2:25-32 we are told, "**And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: 'Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.'**"

That light has come and has broken through the darkness and one day righteousness will fill this land because the Light, Jesus will rule and reign!

But what happens when we don't love people?

One pastor put it like this,

There will never be true reconciliation between you and the person with whom you're angry or from whom you're estranged until you say, "I'm not going to grind my ax any longer. I'm not going to press my point any further. I'm not going to prove I'm right anymore. I'm just going to die."

The question is, will you?

"But I'm innocent," you say.

So was Jesus.

"But I'm right."

Wasn't He?

The commandment He gave us is to die - to our pride, our complaints, our position, our proof.

"What if I die?" you ask.

"Does laying down my life and giving up my rights guarantee reconciliation?"

Was everyone reconciled to Jesus?

No. Not everyone is born again. Not everyone says, ***"Thank You, Lord, for laying down Your life for me."***

When you love like Jesus, some will respond and there will be reconciliation.

Others, however, will continue to spit and curse and mock - even as they did to Jesus as He was in the very act of dying for their sins.

But if we are to love as Jesus loved, like Him, we'll pray, ***“Father, forgive them. They just don't know what they're doing.”***

- Source Unknown

John is going to expound on what it means to hate your brother, where you are walking. Listen to what he says.

VERSES 9-11

Who is John writing to here?

I believe he is writing to unbelievers who might go to church but their actions, the things that they were doing showed that they were not saved.

You see, any person who claims to be right with God, in other words they are claiming to be a Christian, claiming to be living according to the light or the truth of God's Word but hates a fellow Christian, John says that he is deceiving him or herself and is still in darkness, they are still lost without Christ.

Think about that for a minute.

You say you have made a profession of faith, that Jesus is your Lord and Savior, and if that is true, then your profession of faith should be lived out in the practice of your faith.

But that will never happen unless you possess Christ, or I should say Christ possess you!

You see, the point that John is making here is loving the brethren.

“But you don't know what they did to me?”

Do you really think you deserve God's love because you are so good?

Of course you don't and yet He freely gives it to you, it is unconditional, it is not based upon your faithfulness, but His!

Thus, God wants us to do the same!

Remember what we read in I John 1:6, **“If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”**

We also need to keep in mind that Gnosticism was on the rise and the people of this cult hated those who were true to God's Word.

You see, as you looked at the Gnostics, their supposed profession of faith did not match up to their practice.

We are starting to see this hatred once again by those who don't believe in God's Word being the truth. Thus, they are looking for truth outside of God's Word and trying to apply that to their faith, which doesn't work!

And they come down hard on those who are following the truths of God found in the Word of God!

Why do they do this?

Because the truth of God's Word exposes their lies, and thus, they come against those that hold true to God's Word.

What we need to do as Christians is to stand up for the truth in love and expose their destructive ways.

Now some may feel that this is not being very tolerant or loving, but it is. If you knew something was deadly and yet you did not warn the person because you wanted to be tolerant of what they were doing, what they believed, is that love?

Not at all, but to stand up and warn them in spite of what they may say, that is love!

I like the point that John is making here, as difficult as it may be.

His point is this. If you love as God has called you to love, if you walk as He walked, if you are obedient to the Lord, then you will not stumble, you have nothing that will trip you up as you walk!

In Proverbs 3:5-6 we are told, **“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.”**

Also, in Proverbs 3:21-26 we are told, **“My son, let them not depart from your eyes - Keep sound wisdom and discretion; So they will be life to your soul And grace to your neck. Then you will walk safely in your way, And your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden terror, Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes; For the LORD will be your confidence, And will keep your foot from being caught.”**

In other words, if you walk in the light as He is in the light you will not stumble!

But if you refuse to love as God has called you to love. If you refuse to walk as He walked. If you refuse to be obedient to the Lord. Then you will stumble, your hatred will cause you to trip. And yes, Christians can and do struggle in this area as well. We can let hate, bitterness affect our lives and it will hinder our fellowship with God!

Isn't it amazing the things we can say or do when we allow hatred to build inside of us!

Why is love spoken of here and not something else?

Because if you lose love you lose everything.

Have you ever been around someone who has lost love, is unloving? I have, and it is miserable. Everything is wrong, everything is bad, no one is nice, nothing is good, and-so-on.

And you can see how hatred has blinded their eyes and they can't see where they are going!

Don't let hatred be a stumbling block in your life but let the love of God grow in you so it can be manifested through you to others!

It is as John tells us in I John 5:2-3, **“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”**

Now we are not going to finish up this chapter this evening, and I did not want to rush through it, so we will finish up next week I John chapter 2 as we begin to look at verse 12, a section dealing with spiritual growth.