

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 13TH–14TH, 2025 // FIRST JOHN

WALKING AS HE WALKED (1 JOHN 2:3–11)

The false teachers in Ephesus claimed to know God on a deeper level than others, but they made no effort to obey God's commands.

- Their philosophy would later become known as "Gnosticism." It taught that God was known primarily through mystical enlightenment; moral behavior (or what was considered "sinful" by some) had no connection to a person really knowing God spiritually.

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU KNOW HIM? (V. 3)

The evidence that someone truly knows God is not that they have had certain mystical experiences. It is that they practice a simple, loving obedience to God's commands.

- When we're converted and regenerated ("born again"), God changes our heart and writes His law upon it. We're not perfect, but we're not careless or indifferent about God's law.

FALSE CLAIMS (V. 4)

In contrast, anyone who says, "I have come to know Him," but doesn't keep God's commands is a liar and the truth isn't in him.

- Anyone can claim to know God or be a Christian.
- John tells us that if there isn't a heart change and life change, recognizable and noticeable through a change of behavior, then a person is deceived and is deceiving others.

THE LOVE OF GOD MADE COMPLETE (V. 5)

Whoever sincerely and lovingly keeps the Word of God can have the assurance that they are "in Him."

- A complete ("perfected," "mature") love for God will show itself, not in the fervor of ecstatic or emotional responses but in daily obedience, faithfulness, and commitment to following God.
- How do we obey when no one is watching?

WALKING AS HE WALKED (V. 6)

When we remain (or "abide") in Jesus, we will walk as He walked.

- He walked in obedience to the will of the Father, even when it was painful and difficult.
- He walked in humility and sacrifice.
- He walked in truth, holiness, and courage.
- He walked in love towards the poor, broken, outcast, immature, and those who hated Him.

ACCORDING TO JESUS, WHAT IS THE GREATEST (AND SECOND GREATEST) COMMAND?

In Matthew 22:37–40, Jesus made it clear that a love for God that involves all our personhood ("heart, soul, mind, and strength") is the most important command we could ever keep.

- But the second most important command is a radical commitment to loving others just as much as we love ourselves.

WALKING IN LIGHT—LOVING OTHERS

The command of Jesus to love others is an "old command that [we've] had from the beginning" (v. 7). It is a foundational truth of Christianity, but it is one that is easily forgotten.

- Remaining in the light of Christ involves loving others as Jesus has commanded us to love others (but especially loving other Believers, "brothers and sisters," v. 10).

"BY THIS EVERYONE WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER" (JOHN 13:35).

Christians are commanded to love their neighbors (Lk. 10) and their enemies (Mt. 5:44).

- But there is to be a unique, supernatural, God-given, familial, and holy love between disciples of Jesus. The world should be able to look at the love that exists within the Church and know those people are students of Jesus!

WALKING IN DARKNESS—HATING OTHERS

To say that you are "in the light" while you hate other people and other Believers is to make a false claim. Any kind of hatred towards other people is a form of spiritual darkness (v. 9, 11).

- "I love Jesus, but I hate the Church..." How can you claim to love Jesus and walk in His light when you hate His body, His bride, and His people?

"BUT I DON'T HATE ANYBODY. I JUST STRONGLY DISLIKE THEM!"

Most people who are full of hatred in their hearts will never say it out loud or admit it to themselves.

- "Hating your brothers and sisters" means any enduring pattern of heart posture, thought, feeling, or behavior that devalues, distances, harms, or refuses to seek the good of another member of God's family.
- Behavior is a language. We reveal that we're holding hatred in our hearts when we:
 - Show contempt (seeing others as beneath you).
 - Withhold good (choosing not to help).
 - Practice indifference (not caring enough to act).
 - Hold on to resentment/unforgiveness.
 - Gossip/slander/constantly criticize.

STEPPING INTO THE LIGHT

The darkness of hatred, resentment, and contempt leads us to spiritual blindness and keeps us stuck (v. 11, Mt. 7:3–5).

- How can we get unstuck? By stepping into the light.
 1. Be honest with yourself and God. Confess your sin and ask for His help and healing.
 2. Choose to forgive and practice empathy, pray for the ones you struggle with, and choose love.

IDENTITY AND STRENGTH (1 JOHN 2:12–14)

A PASTORAL PAUSE FOR ENCOURAGEMENT

Up to this point, John has been calling these Believers to obey, to walk in the light, and to recognize the seriousness of sin and false teaching.

- His tone has been quite sharp, corrective, and very protective.
- John has more warning and correcting to do, but first he issues some encouragement.

BEFORE WE GO ON, REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE...

John doesn't want his correction of these Believers to erode their confidence in Christ.

- He wants to remind them of who they already are in Christ:
 - They are forgiven (v. 12).
 - They know the Father (v. 14).
 - They have overcome the evil one and are strong because of God's Word (v. 14).

"I AM WRITING TO YOU, LITTLE CHILDREN..." (V. 12)

We each begin the Christian life as little children.

- When we are in this state spiritually, it is enough for us to know and be amazed at the forgiveness of our

sins and all it took for God to forgive us through Jesus Christ.

- In Christ, we are completely forgiven on "account of His name"—we didn't earn it through works; we received it because of His grace.

"FATHERS..." (V. 13)

We begin our walk as "little children," but something is wrong if we stay there. We are to mature into spiritual fathers and mothers.

- "You have come to know [Him]..." Spiritual maturity has its roots in the depth of fellowship and relationship we build with Jesus.

- There is no substitute for years and years of an experiential, daily relationship with Jesus.

"YOUNG MEN..." (V. 14)

In the church, there are also spiritual "young adults"—no longer children but not yet fathers.

- They are engaged in the spiritual battle now ("you have conquered the evil one").
- They carry the truth inside of them ("God's word remains in you").
- They are gaining spiritual strength ("you are strong").

FOLLOWING JESUS AND WALKING IN HIS LIGHT LEADS TO GROWTH, MATURITY, AND TRANSFORMATION.

That growth comes from abiding in Him and letting His Word abide in us.

- That results in obedience and life change.
- No matter where you are in your spiritual journey with Jesus, if you belong to Him and are abiding in Him, you're on the right track! Keep going and keep growing!

WARNINGS (1 JOHN 2:15–29)

TWO THREATS TO OUR FELLOWSHIP

Relationships that matter to us are relationships worth protecting.

- Walking in the light and experiencing fellowship with Jesus, God the Father, and other Believers in the Church is important. We must protect our fellowship from two main threats:

1. The world and its desires (vs. 15–17)
2. The antichrist/false teachers (vs. 18–27)

THREAT 1: THE WORLD AND ITS DESIRES (VS. 15–17)

When John uses "the world," he is not saying that we're supposed to be unloving towards the people in the world (God loves "the world" in this sense, Jn. 3:16).

- He is referring to the priorities, mindsets, and idols of a world that doesn't know God.
- There is an anti-God or ignoring-God way of doing things that characterizes human society.
- For those who don't know God, what are they living for? What motivates them?
- "The lust of the flesh"—what feels good, pleasurable, comfortable, or convenient.
- "The lust of the eyes"—what looks good and makes them look good (vanity).
- "The pride in one's possessions"—what one gains in life that makes them feel significant.
- If we fall in love with any of these desires (we know we're in love with them when we're motivated primarily by them, not by love for God and others), God's love is not in us.
- We will be drawn away from our relationship with God and eternal things and into a love affair with all that "is passing away." This is one of the biggest threats to our walks with Jesus!

THREAT 2: THE ANTICHRIST/FALSE TEACHERS (VS. 18–23)

The time between Christ's first advent (the incarnation) and second advent (His return) is the "last hour," the last act of human history.

- There is a figure coming in the last days who will embody an open hostility and opposition to Jesus (the antichrist). But there are many antichrists! There are many people who bring false teaching in opposition to Jesus.
- In the "last hour," there will be plenty of false teachers who will even claim to represent the Christian faith.
- "They went out from us." Many of these antichrists, at one time or another, identified themselves with biblical Christian communities. The fact that they left the body of Christ demonstrated that they were not of us to begin with (v. 19).
- John assures these Believers that they already have what they need to recognize and avoid these false teachers; they have been anointed by the Holy One, and the Holy Spirit will help them recognize what is true (v. 20).
- Lies and truth don't mix. False teaching always exposes itself because it doesn't align with Jesus or the clear teachings of the Bible (v. 21).
- The ultimate lie is denying that Jesus is the Christ; anyone who rejects Jesus' identity as fully God and fully man is opposing God (v. 22)
- John calls that deception "antichrist" ("against Jesus"), and anyone who does this doesn't have the Father (v. 23).
- This is not a minor disagreement; it is a rejection of who Jesus is and a rejection of Christianity!

OUR PROTECTION—REMAINING IN HIM (VS. 24–29)

How can we protect our walk with Jesus from the threats of the mindsets/priorities of the world and the false teaching/lies of the world?

- Hold on to what you first believed (v. 24). Keep the gospel centered in your heart. Don't trade the biblical Jesus for "new" spiritual ideas.
- Seek the Holy Spirit's discernment (v. 27). If something seems off, ask the Lord for wisdom.
- Stay close to Jesus every day (vs. 27–28). Keep walking closely with Jesus and letting Him shape your priorities and mindsets.
- Keep obeying the Word and living righteously (v. 29). True faith shows up in righteous living, and obedience keeps you aligned with God's heart.
- How is your walk? Are you remaining in Him?

WHAT HAS YOUR HEART? THE WORLD AND ITS DESIRES, OR THE THINGS OF GOD AND HIS DESIRES FOR YOU?

- The world will always tell you to "follow your heart" and put yourself—your own success, comfort, image, and desires—first.
- God says to follow Him—to deny yourself, to obey, and to love Him and people like Jesus.
- What parts of your heart still prefer "the world's way" over God's way?

WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING TO—THE LIES OF THE WORLD OR THE TRUTH OF GOD?

- Do you rely on the Word and the Holy Spirit's guidance, or do you let fear, culture, media, or influencers shape what you think is true?
- Would your faith stand firm if it were mocked, challenged, questioned, or opposed?
- Are you abiding in Jesus consistently (prayer, Scripture, obedience), or just visiting occasionally?