

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 14TH, 2025 // FIRST JOHN

### OBEDIENCE HIM (1 JOHN 2:3-6) CORRECTING PROBLEMS

This hard-hitting letter from John continues to point out things the church needed to hear and respond to. It appears that people in Ephesus were claiming to know God, possibly through mystical enlightenment (Gnostics), yet made no effort to keep God's commands.

- **We cannot claim to know God while having little to no concern for keeping His commands.**

### THOSE WHO KNOW HIM OBEY HIM

We will know we are Christians and have fellowship with God **"if we keep His commands."**

- To know Him is to love Him, and to love Him is to obey Him. Genuine saving faith will have a pattern of obedience. **If we evaluate our walk and do not see a pattern of obedience, then the reality is that we may not be walking with Jesus.**

### ARE WE SETTling FOR LESS?

In a sophisticated and well-educated place like Ephesus, people were likely **accepting knowledge of Jesus as a substitute for an experiential relationship with Jesus.**

- **We can know about Jesus without ever truly knowing Him.** Knowing about Christ will not save our souls. Saving knowledge is to know Him fully and trust Him wholly.

### RESPONDING TO GOD'S LOVE

Let's be clear: This is not claiming a works-based salvation nor claiming that we have kept all commands perfectly.

- The issue is whether we **take God's commands seriously** and try to **follow through in obedience** to His commands. **Loving obedience is a natural response to fellowship with God.**

### WE SHOULD BE MATURING

John assures his readers that if we take God's commands seriously and try to keep them, then **God's love is truly made complete in us.**

- Being "made complete" means we are maturing. A relationship with Christ is a lifelong journey, not a destination or stop. **We should be growing and changing to look more like Him as we go.**

### FOLLOWING HIS EXAMPLE

To walk as He walked does not mean we are to walk on water as He did. It means we are to **walk as He did in His relationship with the Father.**

- We should follow Jesus' example of obedience to the Father (John 4:34; John 6:38; Matthew 26:39) while operating in **complete dependence on Him for everything** (John 5:19).

### REMAINING IN THE LIGHT (1 JOHN 2:7-11)

#### A NEW/OLD COMMAND?

John says he has a new command to share with his readers, though it is actually an old one.

- The old command to **love God with all your heart** (Deuteronomy 6:5) and **love your neighbor** (Leviticus 19:18) was cited by Jesus (Matthew 22:37-40). Through the cross, He gave it new perspective, demonstrating the depth of love we should have for others (1 Peter 2:21).

#### "THE TRUE LIGHT IS ALREADY SHINING"

Continuing the imagery of light and darkness, John points to the Spirit's help in loving God and others.

- The only way we can properly love others is by living in the "true light" that is "already shining." **How we treat others is an indicator of whether we "remain in the light" or "walk in the darkness."**

### LOVING THE WORLD (1 JOHN 2:12-17)

#### WHAT IS THE SOURCE?

Our **"sins have been forgiven,"** we have victory over **"the evil one,"** and we **draw strength from God's Word** because we **"have come to know the one who is from the beginning."**

- Spiritual maturity does not come from intellectual knowledge but from the depth of our relationship with Jesus. **The greatness of knowing Jesus must be paramount in our lives.**

#### "DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD..."

After assuring his readers that they did know God, he warned them against false teaching and the dangers in the world.

- **"The world" (kosmos) refers to the attitudes and values that disregard God or blatantly oppose Him. We are to love the people in the world, as God does, but not the sinful attitudes and values they may embrace.**

#### "THE ONE WHO DOES THE WILL OF GOD REMAINS"

In context, when John says, **"If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him,"** he does not mean that God does not love those who love the world (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). He means that **those who are in love with the world are unable to love God at the same time.**

- To choose friendship with the world is to display hatred toward God (James 4:4).

### KNOWING THE TRUTH (1 JOHN 2:18-27)

#### "IT IS THE LAST HOUR"

Jesus' return will be heralded by the antichrist. The prefix *anti-* means "opposite of" or "instead of."

- We are to live as if Jesus' return could happen at any moment, while also being ready for those who will come claiming to be Christ. **It is only through having a genuine relationship with Jesus, the true Christ, that can we ensure we are not deceived in the last hour.**

### "THE SPIRIT OF THE ANTICHRIST" (1 JOHN 4:3)

Although the coming of the antichrist will be a sign of the end, John tells us that **"even now many antichrists have come."**

- This means that the actions and thoughts of individuals who oppose the things of God and even God Himself have always been in the world. **Many will walk away, following principles and practices that oppose God.**

#### "ALL OF YOU KNOW THE TRUTH"

In verses 20-23, John points to the antidote for false teaching: **the inspired Word of God.**

- The truth has been communicated by the Holy Spirit, and **this truth is available to all Believers.** The Holy Spirit and the truth of God's Word are available to everyone through fellowship with Jesus, not just a select few as the Gnostics taught.

#### ABIDE IN TRUTH AND IN HIM

John encourages his readers to remain in the truth they already received. The word "remain" or "abide" means to **obey, follow, observe, and hold to.**

- John is not saying that we do not need teachers or have already learned everything but that **we do not need any other teachings that differ from the "good news" we received from the beginning.**

#### KNOWING HIM

- Do we care more about having knowledge of God than living for Him?
- The presence of God will impact the conduct of a Believer.
- We cannot have fellowship with God if we neglect His commands.
- God makes Himself known through **creation, our conscience, Jesus, and the Word.**

#### KNOWING HOW TO LOVE

- We have the Holy Spirit to help guide us in properly loving God and others.
- Biblical love (*agape*) is not a feeling but a bending of our will for the benefit of others.
- Jesus gave us the perfect example of how we are to love through **His life on Earth and His sacrificial death on the cross.**

#### KNOWING TRUTH

- Are we reading the Word and submitting to what it says about sin, salvation, fulfillment, and love?
- If we humble ourselves, we will see that without fellowship with God we can't be saved, fulfilled, or properly love. But when we are in a relationship with Jesus, we can be everything God desires for us to be!