

PERFECTED IN THE LOVE OF GOD

1 John 2:1-11

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

The Test of Knowing Him

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.

He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

The Apostle John was the self-ascribed, that is, he called himself the one that Jesus loved, in his gospel account of Christ Jesus, as we refer to as the book of John, or the gospel of John. Our passage of Scripture today though is in the first epistle of John. Nevertheless, what we find in comparing the gospel of John with the epistles of John are that his gospel account is focused on Jesus and who He was and said that He was, whereas the epistles are the expounding upon the doctrine of Christ Jesus. Yet John would not have said that he was the one Jesus loved if it weren't true. In fact, all of the writers of the books in the New Testament could have said the same thing. First and foremost, John recorded the Words of Christ Jesus, 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." Similarly, John tells us in his first epistle, of which we are considering today the first part of the second chapter, but in the fourth chapter John says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. **We love Him because He first loved**

us." (1 John 4:18-20) John knew that Jesus loved him, by his own personal interactions with Jesus, but He also knew the truth of the gospel of Christ Jesus, that John recorded for us in John 3:16-17 and then in John 14:6, where Jesus proclaimed, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." Where that led John, as it should us, is to not only acknowledge Jesus as the Way, Truth, and Life, but that we also live in His Way, His Truth, and His Life, which includes for us being perfected in the love of God through Christ Jesus which is the perfect will of God, our Heavenly Father.

Jesus' proclamation of being the Way, Truth, and Life should speak to us about the fact that Jesus was not sent by our Heavenly Father to JUST die on a cross for our sins, which of course He did do that, praise the Lord! He rose from the grave on the third day, conquering death, overcoming sin and evil, and therefore made it possible for us to have eternal life IN HIM, to all who will believe on Him and receive Him. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12-13) That is, as Jesus put it to Nicodemus, the process of being born-again (John 3:3), being born of the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of Christ. (Romans 8:9) That is the love of God speaking to us through His Word!

Right after John said, "We love Him because He first loved us", he continued by saying, "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" (1 John 4:20) Jesus was asked what is the great commandment of God and He said this, quoting Deuteronomy 6:4-5, as recorded in the gospel of Mark, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:29-32) That, brothers and sisters, is the fullness of the doctrine of Christ! The gospel of Matthew account of that dialogue concludes by Jesus saying, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:40)

In John's second epistle he speaks of the doctrine of Christ saying, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son." (2 John 1:9) That part of the gospel of Christ Jesus, the doctrine of Christ, can get overlooked by trying to just encourage people that God loves them and sent His Son Christ Jesus to die on a cross for their sins. But that is what Jesus taught as well, by saying, "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." (John 14:23) That is the process of what the Word tells us, of what God is leading all of us to, to believe on Christ Jesus, to repent of our sins, which is the Greek Word metanoeo which means to realize a need for change and to heed that call for change, and to THEN receive Christ Jesus and His Righteousness. Paul tells us, "Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" We are being called into to repentance so as to receive Christ Jesus and His Righteousness but He doesn't just go away after that, so that we then are just waiting for Jesus to take us to our heavenly abode. Jesus is from the beginning to the end our Way, Truth and Life. Paul told us in **1 Corinthians 1:30**, that Jesus is for us Wisdom from God, Righteousness from God, Sanctification from God, and Redemption from God through Christ Jesus. That is all so we CAN love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind and to also love others as God loves them, to live according to the heart of God which IS the doctrine of Christ.

"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation [the satisfying of the requirement of the perfect law of God] for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." God is not just waiting to beat us up when we sin. He wants us to turn from that sin and then turn to Him for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus did not just preach the love of God and to just BELIEVE. In giving a parable about someone who goes out looking for his lost sheep and finds it and then greatly rejoices, Jesus said, "I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance." (Luke 15:7) Twice, in the book of John, Jesus is recorded to have said, "Go and sin no more." The woman caught in adultery, Jesus told her that he didn't condemn her, but to go and sin no more. The man whom Jesus had healed at the pool of Bethesda found Jesus later in the temple and Jesus said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you." (John 5:14)

In our passage of Scripture in **1 John 2**, Biblegateway.com entitles this passage as "The Test of Knowing Him" as John tells us, "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked." Which, once again, is loving God and loving others. I must confess there are many times that I had to be honest with God and say, "Im going to do this or that, not because it is in my heart to do it but just because I know I am supposed to." Each day, each

situation we are to be taking heed to that day or situation being our day or situation of salvation. For every day is our day of salvation as one who is a child of God, who who has been bought at the price of the blood of Jesus. That essentially is what is our walking by faith and recognizing as God intends for us to realize, that it is Him that is working in us, just as Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) If there is a flaw in our character or a problem in a situation that we are in, we have to stop and say, help me Lord Jesus and He will always make a way for us, as He IS the Way!

That speaks to what Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8-10) We ARE His workmanship but that certainly doesn't mean we only do what we feel like doing. The doctrine of Christ Jesus always compels us to love God with all that is in us and to love others as ourselves. There are mornings that I don't necessarily "feel the love" to love God wholeheartedly or to love other people. Sometimes it can be downright tough to love other people.

We have been given a "new commandment" as Jesus put it. "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." (John 13:34-35) The way we can have an impact in our families, among friends, and in our community, is our love for one another. We are, that is, those who have believed on and received Christ, being perfected in the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. That isn't always a pleasant experience as our flesh or carnal mind and sometimes even our heart fights against us in having to love someone else, especially, well you know who they are.

So, at this point one may be wondering about the application of this message. How do we make it works for us to love God with all that is in us and to love others as ourselves? As we are God's workmanship, as He works in us His fruit of the Spirit of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control", we will begin to recognize as the Apostle Paul said, that the Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are children of God. (Romans 8:16) Yet our Heavenly Father, our Creator and Sustainer is not just a philosophy or just a formula or procedure that we tap into according to the laws of nature. He is God Almighty and He wants us to go to Him in prayer, seek understanding of Him and to know Him by studying His Word, and to ask Him for the help we need, and then to walk in what we know of as His perfect will of loving God and loving

others. "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (**Philippians 4:4-7**) Those requests that we take to the Lord in prayer will undoubtedly have some personal requests for shelter, transportation, a place to live, etc.

Yet, ultimately God cares more about who we are in Christ Jesus than He does for who we are according to the ways of the world. Jesus told us to not worry about even what we will eat or wear but to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (**Matthew 6:33**) Paul said as much, once again, in Philippians saying, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (**Romans 12:1-2**) We are submitting ourselves to God as His creation, according to the flesh and then to the spirit, as we are children of God. The saying, "life is what you make it" is really only a half-truth, which should tell you where that derives from. Life for us, to love God and to love others is what God has made it to be, and He intends for us to know Him, trust Him, and honor Him, acknowledging Him as our Lord, God, and Savior, and Heavenly Father.

Each of us here today who have believed on Christ and have received Him are intended by God to be a blessing to God and a blessing to others. To close, the Apostle Peter tells us, "Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing." (**1 Peter 3:8-9**) We are blessed to be a blessing to be blessed to be a blessing, and on and on. May each of us today be blessed to be a blessing as we continue to walk in His marvelous light-loving God wholeheartedly and loving others, as He desires for none to perish but that all will come to repentance.