

**SERMON: Walking with Jesus is Walking in Love****GOOD Morning OIC & Welcome to Father's House**

**Today, we continue the First Letter of John the Apostle. As is the whole Bible, it was inspired by Holy Spirit. In my last Message “ Walking with Jesus is Walking in the Light” I closed with words from the glorious hymn: “Hallelujah I have found Him , whom my soul so long had craved. Jesus satisfies my longings, and through His Blood I now am saved.” Rejoice with Dorothy and I, oh OIC Believers in Jesus! This song is the joy of walking with Jesus in the Light! ...But wait. How can we keep this a secret as we see here that John wrote: *but also for those of the whole world.* Our joy is Holy Spirit power, unction, a burden of Love, not of Law, to tell the whole world that Jesus died for their sin too! Let's Do It!**

Today, John opens the next verses by highlighting or comparing the true Christians from the false Christians. Knowing that John focused this letter on protecting Christians from the heresy of Gnosticism creeping into more churches, this approach or style of writing is not surprising. In my last Message about the First Chapter of John's First Letter, I said : “Gnosticism was becoming popular in society, especially the province of Asia. The 1<sup>st</sup> Century Gnostic's basic concept is that all material things are evil and only spiritual things are good, so because God is good He must be only spirit and cannot have a body. This gave some challenges to young Christians. These believers that knew Jesus as good, had a human body.

Whether Gnostic heretics were in any church or not, John wanted to show the kind of erroneous attitudes they, or other *false Christians* would display. In John's First Letter he presents tests by which one can demonstrate the reality of his relationship with God as well as reveal heretical teachers.

**Now the Apostle John takes aim with the Word of God against these impostors. This whole letter aims at teaching Christians to make a judgment on those in their midst**

**who claim to be Christians. We pastors and teachers are often accused of “judging” Christians. Many errors and heretical movements have started among Christians “afraid to judge.”** In Metro Boston USA, I saw a lively church appoint a homosexual as a leader- teacher. When Dorothy and I tried to warn a member there who was a friend, she said: “We don't judge!” About a year later that church was ejected from the denomination it had been in for many years. Many tears flowed as the members who made the Holy Bible their authority fled from this church, and many hearts were broken. The church continued on its own rejecting the Bible Truth that homosexuality is a sin.

A must say a few words to help to understand this tension on judging. I am planning to teach this fully in a Wednesday Bible Study, for it is very important for a healthy church. The Lord warned about judging Christians with some sinful behavior in **(Matthew 7.1-3)** *“Do not judge so that you will not be judged. 2 For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. 3 Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? It is obvious Jesus was pointing out our natural tendency to be hypocrites. It is also important to note, that gross sexual behavior such as homosexuality, being condoned, rather than prayed for in love, is not just the speck that is in your brother's eye.*

For today's message, I hope to simplify this issue by showing one Bible teaching, helping to solve the problem of “judging.”

There are two words in the Greek New Testament for judging: *krino* – which covers a range from harsh to the extreme of condemnation; and, *anakrino* – which means “appraise” or “evaluate.” This should help you brothers and sisters who want to show compassion to others, and keep a sound mind for yourselves. OIC is known as a place with Love. Love need not be compromised to be watchful. { I plan to have a more thorough Bible teaching on “judging” in a future Wednesday night Bible Study. }

Please remember that appointed ministers in the Church: pastors, teachers, missionaries, prophets, will all stand before the Lord Jesus as He asks them, **”Did you protect My Sheep?”** And lest we forget, it was our Lord Jesus Himself who said in **(Matthew 7.16)** *You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? ....*

**This whole Letter is the Apostle John presenting several tests to evaluate or appraise true Christians as opposed to false Christians. It also is a self-test, but the main purpose is a TEST of possibly fake Christians.**

### ***TEST #1 - OBEDIENCE***

**(1 John 2.3)** *By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.* The original Greek brings out more to exegete or show true meaning of this verse. In **(1 John 2.3/MOUNCE)** *Now this is how we can be sure {γινώσκω (ginōskō)}* *that we know {γινώσκω (ginōskō)}* *God: if we keep his commandments.*

Thus, the Greek original literally may be read *Now this is how we can know that we know God.* This point fits into what I had preached recently regarding *Blessed Assurance*.

When a sinner receives Christ, regardless of what emotions God had chosen to give him, he knows, maybe after some period of time, *deep inside*, that he met the Lord, receiving pardon for his sin. Thus he begins **to know that he knows** something he never knew or experienced before.

Note that the Apostle John uses the Greek word, *ginosko*, *to know* in **(1John 2.3)**. Classical Greek used at least two words for “know”: *oida*, which is referred to knowledge gained by abstract learning; and *ginosko*, often used for knowledge gained through experience. John uses *ginosko* twice in this verse in order to describe ones knowledge of God as a Person, not merely an object of philosophical facts; or, as we may say, *not just head knowledge*.

**(1John 2.4)** *The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* Born-Again Christians have a change in heart with a strong desire to *keep His {Jesus'} commandments.* They keep Jesus' Word as a result of a desire to walk close with Jesus, and to have intimate *fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ* as we saw back in **(1John 1.3)**. People around them see a change in behavior in their lifestyle as they keep Jesus' commandments over a period of time. They may stumble and fall short, but God sees their heart, and their lives still show Jesus in them, the Hope of Glory. An impostor or false Christian's actions, not keeping Jesus' commandments, will eventually show that *he is a liar, and the truth is not in him;*

### ***TEST# 2 LOVE?***

**(1John 2.5-6)** *but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: 6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.*

**Love here means love we should show to God, not love from God.** The context or surrounding verses which are evaluating or testing the actions of one who claims to be a Christian makes this clear. Evaluating how this person acts toward God, not God toward him, is the evaluation or appraisal of this person which John is teaching to the churches. The second half of this verse, *in him the love of God has truly been perfected,* is also easily misunderstood by the word “perfected.” Quoting from *The Complete Biblical Library (TCBL)*: **“Human love for God is imperfect in this life, but this verse (1 John 2.5/ NTG ) uses a word *teteleiotai* which means completion not absolute perfection. This love which becomes complete when it results in loving action. The final phrase { *By this we know, ginosko, that we are in Him.* } repeats the test of any claim to fellowship with God: obedience to His commandments”** Therefore, a Christian's love to God is shown or appraised by his keeping Jesus' commandments.

### **TEST #3 LIFESTYLE OR HABITS OF LIVING**

**(1 John 2.6)** *the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.* Christians should have a resemblance to their Lord Jesus. Their way of life, or, walk, must show this *in the same manner as He {Jesus} walked.* Jesus walked in perfect obedience to His Father's commandments. You may ask: “Pastor Bruce, do I have to obey Jesus' Commands as perfectly as Jesus obeyed His Father?” Definitely not, dear OIC Saint! The word, *walk*, as I said already, is **a way of life or habitual image** a person shows. As the Bible says in **(Romans 6.14)** *For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but **under grace.*** Here in Osaka, the acclaimed *dinning room of Japan*, there are so many wonderful restaurants and fragrant , even delicious, aromas throughout the city. Such was Jesus obedience to His Daddy, God. For we read in **(Ephesians 5.2)** *and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a **fragrant aroma.*** Being *not under law but **under grace,*** God sees our heart to obey Jesus and our walk resulting, **but always through the telescope or magnifying glass of our being in Christ, the Beloved.** God sees, or smells, so to speak, **a sincere Christian's lifestyle as a fragrant aroma.**

**(1 John 2.7)** *Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.* The old commandment was the “New Commandment “ that Jesus gave to His Eleven Apostles. Eleven Apostles for Judas had just left the Passover Supper to turn Jesus in to the Jewish Authorities for 30 pieces of silver. God's timing for this new and novel commandment is seen in Jesus' words to these Apostles in **(John 13.33)** *Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’* Within four days of this Last Supper, Jesus would be deserted, tried, beaten, scourged, crucified, buried, and raised from the Dead. Jesus knew they would all have post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or be numb in mental shock. But He wanted His last words in *flesh and bones and blood* to count! So He said next reading in **(John 13.34-35)** **34** *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35* *By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

John was there. He saw and heard it all. Possibly some Christians thought that he was making some new doctrine for their Christian Faith. Realize, dear saints, they did not have Bibles as we have, to keep at home to check and verify every doctrine in the Church. So John said in **(1 John 2.7)** *Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but **an old commandment** which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.* They did not have Bibles, but they knew the story or Gospel of Jesus from John and other trusted men and women who knew Jesus. The old commandment, as Jesus taught about love, was not therefore a new doctrine by John. Next, John very slowly or gradually gets to Jesus' “punch-line”, or “point of power” in the “old commandment” in this Letter, which was a “new commandment” when Jesus taught about it to His apostles in **(John 13.35)** which is: *By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

**(1 John 2.8)** *On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.* Let us look at the second phrase in this verse first. As I said last week, John wrote both His Gospel of Jesus and this First Letter at about the same time in Ephesus. He must have been trying to connect the Gospel and Letter together, in a way, with **(John 1.4-5)**, and at the same time teach the newness of 1<sup>st</sup> Century Christianity. **4** *In Him was life, and the life*

*was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overpower it.* The darkness ( Greek- moral and spiritual darkness) could not overpower Jesus to prevent fulfilling His Mission, sent from the Father to save Men from total destruction by God's righteous judgment. This is in John's Gospel and also in the minds of the true Christians.

The first phrase of **(1 John 2.8)**: *On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you.* History, especially of the Gospel turning the world upside down, as well as the experiences of the Christians John was writing to, showed the worldwide and personal result from Jesus' Gospel: deserted, tried, beaten, scourged, crucified, buried, and raised from the Dead....and, last but not the least, God giving His very Holy Spirit to all Christians: the small and the great, the rich and the poor, the Jew and the Gentile, the male and the female! This Love from God which Christians have never grows old, therefore, *which is true in Him and in you.*

I like these words from (TCBL) : **“...that there is a sense in which the commandment is new, in relation to Christ because His death gave new meaning to the word “Love.” And it became new to Christians as they experience it in their own lives.”**

#### ***TEST#4 LOVE OR HATE YOUR BROTHER***

Next, John gets back to appraising the Christians who may be impostors or fakes in **(1 John 2.9)** *The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.* As I was taught years ago, “Love is something we do!” Again, we see the parallel of John's Gospel and Letter from **(John 3.19)** *This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.* God has created us in His image. He has feelings, and so do we.

Christians especially can feel, with their Savior, toward each other, toward His Father, toward the sinner and those suffering. Yet, “Love is something we do!” This is a vital fact for newlyweds as emotions of love may last 50 years, or 5 minutes. But we have an awesome Teacher who is Love. So, a “Christian” in **(1 John 2.9)** *... who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.* If “Love is something we do!”, so also, “Hate is something we do!” or often, is the refusal from doing anything. So, putting on a show of *walking in the light* means nothing without the acts of loving your brother, so, *yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now, or is practicing darkness.*

**(1 John 2.10)** *The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.* John here tells us that the “secret” of a true Christians to *love his brother* is to *abide in the Light*. Abide is that close fellowship as we saw in **(1John 1.3)** *what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.* This is an intimate personal relationship with God. Jesus also used this word abide” in his lesson about a Grapevine in

**(John 15.5)** *I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.* As a new Christian you might feel God is throwing away your natural talents when Jesus says: *for apart from Me you can do nothing.* Does Jesus mean I must only do religious work with Him?

**Not at all.** In the 5<sup>th</sup> Century, it was Augustine of Hippo, also known as Saint Augustine, who opened the door to future church leaders allowing science into the Christians faith. The Roman Catholic Church was the only Church at that time. Augustine's Theology Books, used today in Protestant Seminaries, show that he would have aligned with the Protestant Reformation about 1,000 years later. It was Augustine's personal “**Walking with Jesus is Walking in Love**” lifestyle that gave his nontraditional theological ideas acceptance. One of his famous quotes that challenged other Christian leaders: “**All truth is God's truth.**” This set Christians free to use their talents in research and discoveries revealed in nature. Many of the breakthroughs into modern scientific knowledge came by Christians influenced by this freedom.

One example is Johannes Kepler in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. I learned of his genius as I was a consultant with a large Research Company as we solved problems for the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA). I was a sinner, without hope in this world or for the next. But, after I became a Christian, my wife home-schooled our son in the 6-7<sup>th</sup> Grade. I found time evenings to do the science teaching. I knew from my work with NASA that Kepler's Law allowed men to calculate the exact motion of orbiting planets. Without this, there never would have been any space travel at all! Then teaching my son form a book of Christian scientists, (Johannes Kepler, Sower Series, **Giants of Faith in Science**) I found my old hero from my rocket science job, Kepler. What a joy to share with my son that freedom for Christians to find answers in God's Creation. From the **Giants of Faith in Science:** “He {Kepler} often became so excited with his discoveries

that he would write songs of praise to God along with recording his findings in his scientific journals! In all of history there has never been another man like Johannes Kepler.”

Kepler had said “ Those laws [of nature] are within the grasp of the human mind; God wanted us to recognize them by creating us after his own image so that we could share in his own thoughts.” He was likely inspired by **(Psalm 19.1)** *The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.*

Kepler, like Augustine, was doing his science job, walking in the Light with Jesus' glorious help. This was just as the Lord said in **(John 15.5)** *for apart from Me you can do nothing!*

Truly, when we are Abiding with Jesus we are Walking in the Light. **{Dear OIC Saints, please give me feedback on my personal excursions in sermons. I feel this is often the best way to Cross Cultural Barriers with ALL you International Saints: as we all share a deep desire for our families and friends to know and live as John's Letter teaches for our Lord Jesus!}**

Reading **(1 John 2.10)** *The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.* You may ask, Pastor Bruce, if I love my brother {sisters also of course} will I never sin? I cannot promise what the Bible does not. But John said loving your brother has you walking in the Light. This spiritual Light, Jesus' closeness, opens our eyes to many hazards in the spiritual road we are traveling on. I believe that a serious commitment to love your brother will prevent many temptations that cause stumbling in your walk to Glory.

Now the other side of the coin, or on the opposite side of the spiritual fence: **(1 John 2.11)** *But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.* John is making a simple comparison that all people with eyesight or vision have experienced, especially in that 1<sup>st</sup> Century before even oil lamps were at street corners. Without the Light of Jesus, you hate your brother, for you can not see where you are going in the spirit world. You are blinded by *the darkness* and cannot see that your walk is Evil.

Again, John recalled Jesus teaching about Jesus, the Vine, and Christians, the Branches. So in **(John 15.6)** *If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. Not walking in the Light with Jesus is the same as not abiding with him and leads to cast them into the fire which is perishing in Hell.*



Often there must be “bad” news, before there is “good” news in the Bible. After alerting the *little children* of the tests to appraise their own *walk with Jesus* but in particular and focusing on possible impostors, John pours out God's love to give them *Blessed Assurance*.

### **CONFIDENCE IN YOUR CHRISTIAN IDENTITY**

**(1 John 2.12/MOUNCE)** *I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you on account of his name.* The Apostle John was very likely the only surviving original Apostle when he wrote this Letter. He uses the affectionate term, *little children*, to emphasize his father-like love for all Believers in all the Churches; and experiential authority having lived with Jesus: seen His miracles, His Crucifixion, His Burial, His Resurrected Body and His ascension back into Heaven. John was the Spiritual Daddy for all the Churches in that sense. If he, the Father figure for the whole Church, says *your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake*, all Believers would accept that simple encouragement.

John used a literary form, called a *triplet*, to present God's Word in a poetic form. I have switched to the Greek New Testament **(MOUNCE)** as **John used a literary device only apparent in the original Greek language.**

**(1 John 2.13-14/MOUNCE)** *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. 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 have written to you, my children, because you know the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.*

In the above verses, of **1 John Chapter 2**, John singles out specific or different age groups that he is *writing to*, so to encourage their faith. He uses a poetic structure called a *triplet*: That is. 1) children, 2) fathers, and, 3) young men

- The children, all Christians, **(v.12)**, *I am writing to you my children because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.* If he, the Father figure for the whole Church, says *your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake*, all Believers would feel encouraged to accept that encouragement.

- The fathers are the *mature Christians*. **(v.13)** *I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.* That is Jesus as John wrote in **(John**

**1.1/NTG** ) from his Gospel : *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word.*

- The *young men* are men usually in that culture between 25-40 years old.

**(v.13)** *I am writing* to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. And, in JB Phillips translation **(1 John 2.13/JBP)**: *And to you vigorous young men I am writing because you have been strong in defeating the evil one.* Thus the Apostle John, led by the same Holy Spirit as Paul, was encouraging these Christians as the Apostle Paul did so in **(Romans 8.37)** *But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.*

John repeats this *triplet* but in the Greek aorist tense, thus *have written* and not *am writing*. Pardon my Greek. The Lord sets up one and puts down another for all the world's rulers and kingdoms for His glorious purposes. God caused the Greek General, “Alexander the Great,” to conquer most of the civilized world so that the New Testament would be written in the most complicated yet clear and exact language ever known, 1<sup>st</sup> Century Greek. So, I must not ignore John's purpose here. As we see **(1 John 2.14)** it appears to be a photocopy of the previous verses: *14 I have written* to you, my children, because you know the Father. *I have written* to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. *I have written* to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. **To show it with the triplet:**

- *I have written* to you, my children, because you know the Father.
- *I have written* to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.
- *I have written* to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. This has the added encouragement that the *young men* had the word of God abiding in them. Abiding, a key word in the First Letter of John, or “walking” with and “abiding” with the Light, Jesus.

**But why?** As Osaka has many multilingual speakers, there are particularly subtle things that are special to each language here, especially Japanese. Well, to the Greek speakers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, what John did was not subtle. **By putting his encouragement for their identity in Christ into this grammar structure and changing verb tenses, it has more power or strength.** “I am writing,” then “I have written:” let me emphasize, **By putting his encouragement for their identity in Christ into this grammar structure and changing verb tenses, it has more power or strength.** John's writing **(1 John 2.12-13)** in

the present tense, *I am writing*, and then in (1 John 2.14) suddenly shifting to the aorist, *I have written*. This Aorist verb tense, peculiar to 1<sup>st</sup> Century Greek, is for an activity that started in the past, but is continuing on into the future. John is speaking in light of Eternity in this grammatical structure, he starts with the present, then looks back, from a future point in time...from Eternity if you please. In other words, your identity in Christ, I assure you of it “now,” and “I have” assured you that it will continue into the future. Your identity in Christ is assured FOREVER.

We Christians have our identity in Christ from everlasting to everlasting, as John wrote in this Letter. We can start each day with the oldness of Jesus our Saviour, who is before time began, and the newness of His Cross , His Blood, which saved us from God's Eternal Judgment. Yes, God sees His Son's Blood always available to cleanse and heal us Christians. Whether our emotions are high or low, the Blood of Jesus reaches us everyday. Every day we can be free from sin and spiritual Death. I often remind myself of this with words from an old hymn: “The blood that Jesus shed for me, way back on Calvary, the Blood that gives me strength from day to day, it will never lose it's power. It reaches to the highest mountain, and flows to the lowest valley, the Blood that gives me strength form day to day, It will Never Never Lose Its Power. AMEN.

*Let Us Pray...*

## REFERENCES

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**NASB1995** - New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. All rights reserved.

**NTG** – Novum Testamentum Graece/ Nestle-Aland, Printed in Germany 1898 & 1979

**TCBL** - *The Complete Biblical Library*, The New Testament Study Bible, Empowered Life Academic, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74145 USA

**Giants of Faith in Science** - the Sower Series by John Hudson Tiner, Mott Media, LLC / 1977 / Paperback