

**SERMON: Walking with Jesus is Walking with your Teacher the Holy Spirit****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. But first, I want to let this dear OIC Congregation know that I am attempting to make my sermons more understandable to the Internationals here whose primary or first language is not English. My desire has always been to rightly divide the Word of God as close as possible to the original meaning as in the Greek New Testament. To “rightly divide” is to explain or bring out clearly the original meanings. This is the meaning Holy Spirit gave to those who wrote it. The English translation closest to the *Greek* is the *New American Standard Bible (NASB1995)*. As you visitors came in you may have noticed Today's Sermon in Japanese. This is translated from my written sermon. However, the challenge is bringing God's Word across cultural barriers, or cultural differences in thinking. We need to be confident the true meaning is translated, not just “words!” So I have decided to use the *New Living Translation (NLT)* as the English Bible on which I base my sermons. This has more understandable English sentences for less than fluent English speakers. To keep the Message True, as I prepare each Message, I will more often refer to the original Greek New Testament, *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece (NTG)*; and other English/Greek Bibles and dictionaries that I have trusted since a student in seminary about 40 years ago. My heart aches and breaks for any of you who miss what wonderful words of life God desires to give to you through my attempts to rightly divide the Word of God. Thank you for your patience!

**Now**, In my previous messages from the First Letter by the Apostle John, I have attempted to bring out the meaning of John's instructions to Christians. This was to help them to do the will of God, by **Walking Close with Jesus**. I am summarizing what John has said so far in this First Letter of John by four things:

1. **Walking in the Light and thus not sinning in Chapter 1- 2.2**
2. **Walking in Love and especially in loving fellow Christians in Chapter 2.2 – 2.14**
3. **Walking with Heart Holiness, a heart that desires God and not sinful pleasures in Chapter 2.15-25**

and Today I add

4. **Walking with your Teacher the Holy Spirit in Chapter 2.26-3.11**

Last week I ended with **THE PROMISE HE HIMSELF GAVE TO US.** In **(1 John 2.25/Beck)**, *And this is what He promised us --- everlasting life!*

I had chosen Beck's translation over the New American Standard's because Jesus promised us *everlasting*, not *eternal life*. Eternal means “no beginning and no end.” God Himself has no beginning and no end. We had a beginning, our Physical life began at birth, and our spiritual life began when we were Born-Again. So we became Christians with everlasting life. We have life that will last forever- or everlasting. Now in our mortal bodies as we await our new spiritual bodies. What a PROMISE from our Lord Jesus!

With His Promise safe into the depths of our heart, and with the Father's love, John now reminds the churches of the people who are in the church but are trying to trick them away from Jesus. In **(1 John 2.26)** *I am writing these things to warn you about those who want to lead you astray.* John called these people *Antichrists* because they deny that Jesus was equal with God and came in the flesh. John also had emphasized that Christians already have all they need to overcome this challenge for they are *abiding on the Vine, Jesus*. They continue with Him everyday and have a close relationship with Him. They want to know truth in their experiences, by the Spirit, which John emphasizes next in, **(1 John 2.27)**, *But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what he teaches is true—it is not a lie. So just as he has taught you, remain in fellowship*

God in the Church and on the Earth today is Holy Spirit, often referred to as the Third Person of the Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Spirit. He makes Jesus real to convict sinners of sin and encourage saints of their salvation, Christ in their hearts. John tells the Christians they can be confident in their Helper and Teacher. Holy Spirit's ministry to testify of Jesus is so complete that in **(2 Corinthians 3.17,18)** we read: *For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.... So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.* John was confident that Christians who sensed Holy Spirit as their Teacher, would have the Words of Christ guiding their lives. So they would not follow the deceivers and heretics who were in the Church; or, had just stopped going to the Church. This created a crisis of *divisiveness in these churches* as evil seeds of Antichrist had been planted before they left. These Antichrist ideas took away the peace of agreement in the church.

I must mention that obviously John was someone teaching these Christians who *don't need anyone to teach you what is true*. As I shared in my messages from **(Ephesians 4.11-12) 11** *And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.* John is alerting Christians about “teachers” who were people entering the church with no official **credentials**. . In those days, the good **credentials** were from the Apostles, or their disciples, as well as letters from established church leaders. The Apostles were the missionaries who had seen Jesus and were sent by Him.

In **(1 John 2.28)**, *And now, dear children, remain in fellowship with Christ so that when he returns, you will be full of courage and not shrink back from him in shame.*

***remain in fellowship with Christ.*** - As a good teacher, John repeats this simple reminder: *remain in fellowship with Christ.* In one sense fellowship with Him who is **the Word become flesh**, is the Bible from the first to last, Genesis to Revelation. But, of course, the focus is **for personal fellowship, which means to dwell, remain, or in the English slang “to hang out together” with the Person, Jesus Christ.** When I sang *Just A Closer Walk With Thee*, I hoped and prayed that you OIC Saints would be helped by it. I hoped you would sense the songwriter's passionate desire to be with Jesus. I also chose sermon titles for this Letter of John, with the sermon theme, **Walking Closer with Jesus.**

Then we read, ***so that when He returns-*** Please notice dear OIC Saints that John did not say: “If He returns,”

but “when He returns.” When we walk close with Jesus regularly, even daily, His sudden appearance will not seem as startling or shocking or sudden as we might think. As I have preached before, whether a new Christian or a seasoned older Believer, the Father's love draws us closer in our daily walk. This causes us to desire His appearance, His Return in the Clouds. Then He will take us Home! Often we have a season when we do not feel that we have been drawing closer to the Lord. Then later, He shows us that we have been maturing according to God's plan, including when we didn't feel that way.

Next, ***you will be full of courage*** - Our heart love means that ***we will be full of courage*** when we see Him. Our confidence is not in ourselves, but in Christ. This is the source of today's courage now, as well as our courage *when He returns*.

Next we read, *not shrink back from him in shame*. – None of us is perfect while on this side of Heaven. So, you may ask: **Pastor Bruce, what may be some causes for a Christian to *shrink away from Jesus when He returns*?** Well, I have four I thought of:

1) Staying safe in an hostile world, 2) Fearing men more than God, 3) Not seeking for your faith to grow, & 4) Excusing un-willful sins with no desire to overcome them.

1 When we see Jesus face to face, we may realize that our first purpose in life was to stay safe in a hostile world is often based on making the main purpose in life to achieve financial strength on earth rather than placing treasures in Heaven. The Lord Jesus alerted us to this weakness in **(Mark 8.36)** *And what do you benefit if you **gain the whole world** but lose your own soul?*

2 Another reason to *shrink back from him in shame* may have been fearing men more than God. In **(Mark 8.38)** *If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*”

3 Not seeking for our faith to grow. We must not be content to just have saving faith. We must seek or ask Jesus to cause our faith to grow. New Born-Again Christians should be as the Apostle Peter wrote in **(1Peter 2.2)** *Like newborn **babies**, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment,* But, the Apostle Paul exhorted or strongly encouraged older Christians to change their lifestyle. These were Believers not seeking for spiritual growth. We see this in **(Hebrews 5.11-14)**, *11 There is much more we would like to say about this, but it is difficult to explain, especially since you are spiritually dull and don't seem to listen. 12 You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. 13 For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right. 14 Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.* **A special note, dear OIC Christians. It is important that you ask Jesus if He sees you as these Hebrew Christians that Paul was correcting for *spiritual laziness*. Jesus places Christians who are more mature in faith and educated in the Bible to set an example for His Sheep. This is not to discourage you or for feeling self-condemnation. God looks at your heart to see if *you are spiritually dull and don't seem to listen* (Hebrews 5.11). It is your heart, not your slowness to learn, that God will appraise or judge you for. Any judgment is to help you to get back to growing again.**

4 Realizing that you were excusing your un-willful sinful habits with no desire to overcome these by prayer. You may have sinned without wanting to sin. But then you excuse them as

“bad habits” rather than asking God to change you from committing these un-willful sins. God will answer sincere prayer as more Holy Spirit power will be given to build a Christian's confidence as in **(Romans 8.37)** *No, despite all these things, {tribulations, tests and trials}, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.*

Reviewing the above shortcomings: 1) Staying safe in an hostile world, 2) Fearing men more than God, 3) Not seeking for your faith to grow, and 4) Excusing un-willful sins with no desire to overcome them; these are things serious enough to cause *shame* and not *rejoicing* at Jesus' sudden appearance. John is reminding the Church, and all of us today, that we do not need to be in that sorry condition. We do not need to *shrink back from Jesus in shame*. We may all keep making fellowship with Jesus our number one purpose in life. Then we will have nothing but great joy when we see Him.

Next, in **(1 John 2.29)** *Since we know that Christ is righteous, we also know that all **who do what is right** are God's children.* Here John refers back to what he wrote in **(1 John 2.3)** *By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.* Christians whose lifestyle is one *who does what is right*, must be keeping Jesus' commandments. Jesus' righteous character is shown by their life. *They are God's children.* Also, 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? ....*

John now reminds us of the simple truth that “God loves us!” In **(1 John 3.1)** *See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him.*

Dear OIC Saints, it is such pure joy to call God our Father, Daddy; and know that He calls us His Children. There is a special feeling and attitude when any father calls someone his child. There is a sense of pride in that child. Father God feels that way toward all of us Christians all the time. We are His prize. We are bought by His only Son. And we are living Treasures for His storehouse in Heaven. His love for us is everlasting as in **(Deuteronomy 33.27):** *The eternal God is your refuge, and his everlasting arms are under you.* Maybe you can remember your early days with Jesus, and some praise songs and hymns. A few months ago, Shingo, one of the OIC Worship Team leaders, led us to recall these songs. From our rebirth to now is such a small piece or part of *everlasting*, from now until FOREVER! But such Love, such wondrous Love, that God would love a sinner such as me or you! We accepted Jesus! Now we are walking forward to Glory

with Jesus, despite our mistakes and stumbling with sin. **How Much More He must love us now!** He sees our love back to Him, so small compared to His Great Love to us, but always He sees it a with special affection to us. Yes, He calls us His dear Children.

***But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him, in (1 John 3.1b).*** This is part of heaviness of the Cross which all Christians must carry. Non-Christians reject us and treat as unjustly. But we have sadness in our hearts for them, because they do not know our Father, God...they do not know LOVE!

**(1 John 3.2- 3)** *2 Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. 3 And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.*

**When Christ Returns, or Appears-** Well, the Bible often presents the “bad news” before the “good news!” We just read in **(1 John 2.28)** the warnings about *lazy or slothful Christian living*, and what shame these Christians will have when Jesus suddenly appears! Now, we hear the **Good News, for those who have a heart to fellowship with Jesus-** *But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is.*

Dear OIC Christian who feels so weak in faith: **You may ask, Oh Pastor Bruce, my heart seems to not keep that desire to fellowship with Jesus...day after day! Yes, dear Saint. The Bible says in (Acts 10.34/KJ21)** *Then Peter opened his mouth and said, “In truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons,”* What God did for Peter, Paul, other Christians and even me..He will do for you. Ask Him to strengthen your weak and shaking knees of faith. Ask Him for more desire for Jesus. It will be done!

Now, **Can you imagine what it will be to be like the sinless, perfect, loving, just, holy, and powerful Son of God, JESUS?** John the Apostle is declaring this by the Holy Spirit who breathed the Bible. It is God's Promise for Christians. I preached last week's Message: **Walking with Heart Holiness, with the Sub-Title-THE WORLD IS PASSING AWAY - I said:** “The temporary gains from yielding to the world's temptations compared to walking with Jesus are shown us in **(1 John 2.17)** *The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.*” I am praying that next year OIC will have special Theology classes, including *eschatology- the Biblical study of the End of Time.* I try to include some of this in my sermons, when the text at hand allows it. It is worth some excursions, with the Spirit's help. **Why, Pastor?** Because we all can quickly get “too content or comfortable” in the present world.”

There is much joy and happiness in our Loving Father's heart for all His Children while we are still in the world. But, the Apostle Paul made the reality of sufferings clear to Jesus' Sheep whom he was teaching. For he said in **(Acts 14.21-22)** *21 After preaching the Good News in Derbe and making many disciples, Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia, 22 where they strengthened the believers. They encouraged them to continue in the faith, reminding them that we must suffer many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God.* Only God knows the hardships that each of us must suffer. Paul knew that, as Charles Haddon Spurgeon once said: “The greatest Comforts from Jesus occur during the most severe trails!” Our focus on someday seeing Jesus is a shining Star. Like a sailor at sea, God sets our compass by our Shining Star Jesus. Our compass or direction for our sailing ship is thus set to chart our path to Glory. We look ahead to see Jesus, and also *that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is.*

This next verse in **(1 John 3.3)** is a wonderful source of power over sin in our life: *3 And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.* This is another reason why I want to preach and teach my brothers and sisters about the Biblical End Times. Our thinking forward has some natural help in rejecting the foolishness of choosing sin today. But It is also supernatural, of course. Holy Spirit gives us more power to stay *pure, just as {Jesus} he is pure,* as we eagerly expect to be welcomed in His Loving Arms at His Return.

Now John goes back to the theme of the true Christian's life compared to the false Christians' or Antichrists' activities. **(1 John 3.4-6)** *4 Everyone who sins is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God. 5 And you know that Jesus came to take away our sins, and there is no sin in him. 6 Anyone who continues to live in him will not sin. But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know him or understand who he is.* Jesus came to earth to die for our sins and set us free from the curse of the Law of God. Being right or acceptable to God when under the Law of God means to never break any Law of God, or to never sin. All men are born in sin **(Psalm 51.5)** *For I was born a sinner— yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.* So it was impossible for men to never sin. Mankind is cursed to separation from God. But Jesus died for Mankind on His Cross, Justifying anyone who would accept this Free Gift from God. We read in **(Galatians 3.13)** *But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”*

When Jesus set us free from the curse of earning our salvation by *keeping the Law of God*, He did not abolish or nullify the right and wrong, or, the good and evil, of the Law of God. As He said before His Crucifixion in **(Matthew 5.17)** *“Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose.*

Next, **(1 John 3.4/NLT)** *4 Everyone **who sins is breaking God’s law**, for all sin is contrary to the law of God.* John uses the words *breaking God’s law* to make one thing very clear that the Law still stands as God’s Law, and breaking it is still sin! John was concerned that Christians might confuse their freedom from the Law for Salvation, with freedom to break God’s Law, sin. God chose the time, place, and the Greek language for the writing of the New Testament. Most English translations miss the importance of this verse and the words *Everyone **who sins***. The *original Greek* has detailed verb tenses and the correct translation is, **(1John 3.4)** *Everyone **who makes a practice of sinning** is also breaking God’s law, sin is lawlessness.*

I remember when I first read this verse as a young Christians I felt a feeling of fear of condemnation if I sinned just once. The Apostle John never encouraged sin, but he knew that God does not want Christians back under a bondage of losing their salvation because they commit a sin. John is showing that it is a lifestyle that shows one ***who makes a practice of sinning, is walking in lawlessness.*** Obviously and clearly to all around, this person is not in close fellowship with Jesus.

*5 And you know that Jesus came to take away our sins, and there is no sin in him.*

Again, by the Greek verb tenses in **(1John 3.6)** we see the important difference between committing a “sin” and having a lifestyle or way of living “sinfully”. **6 Anyone who continues to live in him will not *keep on sinning* (Greek).** *But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know him or understand (Greek-ginosko) who he is.* John again uses the Greek verb **ginosko**, which means to know in a personal way by experience. He did not use the Greek word **oida**, which means intellectual or *head knowledge* only. As a father of three children I was careful to direct my children to have relaxed and friendly talks with me and also for me to lead them in prayer. I refused to be just satisfied with their increasing Bible knowledge, which was easy to get as I am a Minister. As your pastor, I hope to encourage anyone here as God’s, not my children. Jesus has to end up inside our heart...somehow...to be our Savior. Holy Spirit uses some of our head knowledge, but usually He leads to some outer experience to connect the two, head and heart knowledge, for a true relationship with Christ. One of the most intellectual and intelligent, Christians in modern times was C.S. Lewis. He was actually of Anti-Christ thinking at first. But,



one of his books has a clear title that expressed his new life in Christ. The book is *Surprised By Joy*. As the old hymn says: *O Happy Day..O Happy ay, When Jesus washed my sins away!* With all the ups and downs, blessings and battles, victories and losses...let's remember what made C.S. Lewis so happy. Jesus took away my sins and your sins. As Jesus said on His Cross just before He left His body in Death:

“It Is Finished!” (John 19:30). This is joy! Our sins can no longer separate us from the God who is Love. Jesus finished the JOB! O Happy Day. This is heart knowledge; together with head knowledge, we have “experiential Christianity,” or what we experience of Jesus.

Now in, **(1 John 3.7)** *Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right, it shows that they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous.* John was aware of *false Christians* in the Church, and Antichrist enemies of God. John encouraged the true believer to kind of step back and appraise or evaluate the behavior of the church goes around them. For this evaluation they needed to use their knowledge of right and wrong. Christians plumb-line or measuring stick for *righteousness* is Jesus Christ and His Sinless Life on Earth. By knowing him we can evaluate correctly.

The Apostle John, the eldest Apostle and the Apostle of Love, reminds those he calls *dear children* of this: behind the activities and actions of men that there is a spiritual world. **(1John 3.8)** says: *But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil.*

The world's population today is **8,161,972,572** . Every one of these people is either a *Child of God* or a *Child of the Devil*. John again wants to help the churches to not be tricked or deceived by people who claim or profess to be Christians. They were *people who keep on sinning* as a way of life. They are false Christians. Their way of life will not have the aroma or flavor or sense of being anything like Jesus, who is *righteous*. The false Christians' sinning lifestyle or habit *shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning*. John reminds the churches that sin is very serious is its source. The source of sin is *the devil*.

Next, John reminds the churches that **(1 John 3.8b)** *the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil*. There is joy and thanksgiving to God for Jesus is as in **(1 John 3.5):** *And you know that Jesus came to take away our sins, and there is no sin in him.* Just before He gave His spirit

into the Father's Hands through Death, Jesus said on His Cross: "It Is Finished!" Our sins can no longer separate us from the God who is Love. Jesus finished the JOB! O Happy Day!

Real Christians will not make a practice of sinning! Quoting *The Complete Biblical Library* (TCBL): "The writer here { John } makes his strongest statement about the standard of holiness expected in Children of God. The verse (v.9) follows his common pattern of stating truth both in a negative and then a positive form. " Notice this here in (v.9) the negative form, ***do not make a practice of sinning***; and the positive form, ***because God's life is in them.*** (1John 3.9) *Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God.*

The (TCBL) commentator then connects the words "have been born into God's family" with the idea or teaching in the natural sciences. In science this is the study of seeds and genetics. I wanted to verify this so I looked in my Greek New Testament (NTG). And yes, I do agree with the connection of "born into God's family" with the scientific knowledge of genetics. The words in the (NLT) "*because God's life is in them,*" was translated from the original Greek New Testament's words: *because God's seed (sperma) abides in him.*" So this thinking by (TCBL) fits. That is the natural handing down of traits via the genes at birth, is like the supernatural handing down of traits at rebirth in Christ. *God's seed (sperma)* means the character of Jesus imparted by the Holy Spirit's entering a Christians body at rebirth. This is also consistent with Jesus' statement in (Matthew 7.16) *You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?*

**But Pastor Bruce, I still sometimes sin! Do I have God's character seed in me? Yes you do! Sin is missing the mark on a target of holiness, God's Law. The Holy Spirit leads us into lives that might never miss the mark again. In (1 John 2.1) My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. {Greek-never ever sin again} And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. We see that Jesus is not offered as an Advocate for anyone persisting in a life of sinning, for (1John 3.8)says: But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil. But here the Word of God says any true Christian will find that it is impossible to practice sin as a way of life because God's Holy Nature, God's seed, Christ within him, will prevent that. That is a reason to be CONFIDENT, but not to get LAZY in the things of God. Christians who seek fellowship with Jesus will be giving Holy Spirit opportunities to water God's seed within them.**

**Let Us Pray,**

**REFERENCES**

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

**TCBL**- The Complete Biblical Library, The New Testament Study Bible, Empowered Life

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