

SERMON: Walking with Jesus is Loving Christians because God loved us**GOOD Morning OIC & Welcome to Father's House**

Today, we continue verse by verse, to exegete or bring out the meaning of the First Letter of John the Apostle. As is the whole Bible, it was inspired by Holy Spirit. 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 have summarized what John has said so far in this First Letter of John by five things:

1. **Walking in the Light and 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 in Chapter 2.15-25**
4. **Walking with your Teacher the Holy Spirit in Chapter 2.26-3.9**
5. **Walking with Love for Christians must be shown by good works in Chapter 3.11-23**

and Today I add-

6. **Walking with Love for Christians because God Loved Us**

Last week's Message ended with **(1 John 3.23)** *And this is his {the Father's} commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he {Jesus} commanded us.* John in one short verse has summed up the basics of Christian life by two things :

- 1) Obeying the Father's Command to believe in His Son makes a sinner a Christian;
- 2) Obeying the Son of God's Command to *love one another* is needed for a Christian to walk close with Jesus. This is shown in the next verse, *remain in fellowship with him, and he with them.*

John then summarizes a Christians Walk in **(1 John 3.24)** *Those who obey God's commandments remain in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us.* John is saying that remaining in fellowship with God depends on obedience of God's commands. Then, John adds the confidence of the blessed assurance that Jesus lives in us *because the Spirit he gave us lives in us.* **Remember God's commandments do not mean the Law**

as the focus or goal of Christian Living. It is that the *Spirit he gave us* who directs us to not sin, thus not break God's commandments, and also, be active in bringing God pleasure in our actions.

(Romans 8.14/NASB1995) *For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

Christians will mature and come to realize that the Spirit lives inside them; and **the Spirit** is not just a force in the world around them.

Next, the Apostle John warns these 1st Century Christians of a real danger to the Church, **False Prophets**. He also tells how to discern, or know the presence of, False Prophets. In **(1 John 4.1)**, *Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world.* John will focus or point again to the Gnostic heretics in those churches receiving his letter. Let me remind you of what a Gnostic claims--- that all spirit is good, and all material things evil. Therefore, that if Jesus is good, He could not have come in the flesh. This warning of False Prophets is a more general warning to the church for all time until Jesus Christ returns. We saw in **(1 John 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.* John was warning especially of Antichrists and heretics of all kinds. Therefore these people showed an obvious Antichrist lifestyle. That is how the Christians can appraise and judge them. **BUT...False Prophets** are more deceitful and more difficult to discern. John is instructing the Christians to discern their "spirit." This shows that they may not show an obvious sinful lifestyle as the Antichrists. In recent years, one reason that Christians can not judge their lifestyle is because they often "come to the Church" on the Internet! When someone claims to be a prophet, Christians should feel a sense of respect for that *calling*. But, even so, we must try to *test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God*; as John teaches in **(1 John 4.2-3)**: *This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God. 3 But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here.*

So John is reminding the church that the true way to know God is only through knowing Jesus who came in a human Body. So also to know if someone is a true prophet, we ask if they believe the truth about Jesus. As the song we sing here at OIC: "Knowing You, Jesus, knowing You, There is no Greater thing!" Knowing Jesus is how we come to know God.

TAKEAWAY #1 On the Christmas Season

News of Jesus, **in (John 1.14)** *So the Word became human and made his home among us. For sinners to become Christians they must believe that Jesus was 100% God and , at the same time, 100% Human but without sin. The Christmas Season began as a time to celebrate Jesus Christ's coming in the flesh as a baby. As that season approaches, we might have some opportunity to share this glorious fact with our friends and neighbors.... that Jesus Christ, the Word of Life, came to us all in a real body.*

*Next in (1 John 4.4), But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. Many English speakers here have likely heard this verse in the old King James Bible translation, (1 John 4.4/KJV21) Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. John was affirming how that early church had won a victory over those people, those false prophets, those heretics. Of course, there is a wonderful admonishment or encouragement in the Bible. Always be full of joy **in the Lord**. I say it again—rejoice! in (Philippians 4.4). God did not intend for us to pretend that the world no longer has spirits of Antichrist. This means we still have future battles and victories to win over them...and just as the 1st Century Church won, we WILL WIN because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.*

TAKEAWAY #2

The stresses on everyday life often has Christians wanting to be happy by pretending we are already in Heaven. Well, we are not! There are “false prophets” and heretics around to hinder our faith. Faith, such as the Apostle Paul had, not pretending, will have us to be Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! The blessed assurance to just know that we are in Jesus, and Jesus is in us, causes true joy over all outward circumstances and weary tests. Please take note that the Apostle Paul wrote this verse of JOY while in a Roman Prison. But, you might say: Pastor Bruce, I don't have that much faith! Well, I don't think I do either; but, I will not pretend things against the Holy Bible teaching to make myself feel happy!

*Reading (1 John 4.5): Those people belong to this world, so they speak from the world's viewpoint, and the world listens to them. Many “false prophets” simply appear as the “experts” in the news and social media. It is difficult to stay informed these days without having to hear those people who act as prophets about the future of the world. They may not even call themselves “prophets.” But many topics in the news have religious meanings and show the *spirit of Antichrist in the world*. Here is a quote from *The Life Application Bible* about Heresies: “Before you accept what religious*

teachers say about any topic, listen carefully to what they believe about Jesus. To deny either His divinity, or His humanity is to consider Him less than Christ the Savior.”

And in (1 John 4.6) we read: *But we belong to God, and those who know God listen to us. If they do not belong to God, they do not listen to us. That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the spirit of deception.* The Apostle John says here that true Christians listen to “**us.**” His “**us.**” likely included only the original Apostles of Jesus, and those whom they disciplined and taught. For today's Church we may call “**us**” *Appointed Christians Leaders* which includes: Missionaries; Pastors; Teachers; and Leaders approved by Churches Confessing “Jesus As Lord.” Christians with a heart hungering for more of Jesus, for more of the Bible, for more of the Spirit; will be some of *those who know God* and will *listen to Appointed Christians Leaders*. But please note, dear OIC Saints, that not all *who know God* and “have a heart” to *listen* will have the same ability to understand. As I have preached before, God wants all His Children to grow, as we are fruits on the Vine, Jesus. But some grow faster than others. I liked what Andrew Miller said last week:”You all have your personal testimony of becoming a Christian. Maybe your Bible Knowledge seems small. But, no one and nothing can take that testimony away from you!” He also preached how your testimony goes through death to Glory, seeing Jesus. Keep this in mind especially if you judge yourself as a slow learner with Jesus. God sees your heart, even more than your brains.

Now John repeats Jesus' Commandment to Christians to **Love One Another**. In, **(1 John 4.7) 7** *Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. 8 But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.* As a young believer, myself, this seemed so simple to do. I learned, as did many in American Churches, a tune we sang from the King James Translation of 1st John: **{Beloved, Let us love one another, For love is of God and everyone who Loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love. Beloved – let us love one another --- first John four- seven and eight” }** But, as I matured, this simple commandment showed my struggle against my old sinful nature and doubts about LOVE, as there were some Christians who seemed to never love me back. Well, it is my job to love Christians for Jesus' sake! Yes, as it gets more difficult, we must obey Jesus' Command and keep on loving under difficult circumstances. When we do, **the power of Love** becomes more apparent! As the Bible says in **(1 Corinthians 13.8 / NASB1995)** *Love never fails;* And of course, we think about **the power of Love** in **(1 John 4.7)**. This tells us that “*Love comes from God,*” and **(1 John 4.8)** tell us that “*God is love.*” There is no power anywhere greater than His.

Verse 8 also tells us: *But anyone who does not love does not know God.* We Christians may fall short of consistently loving one another. But, we can stay prayerful to please God, to be like Him in love. Then He continues to pour Love into us to give to others; and, actually, back to Him. We

are not robots. For we can choose to love, or, to not love. Non-Christians cannot truly love, in particular, when they don't see any benefit for themselves in loving. They may do an act of love, even giving up their lives for a friend, or their nation. It may sound strange, but that is not consistently loving one another or one's enemies. In the everyday conflicts of life, that consistent love truly requires supernatural love. That only comes from God. Christians have that infinite source of Love, God Himself!

THE DEFINITION OF LOVE...

In **(1 John 4.9)** God *showed* how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. The action verb, **showed**, is *phaneroō*, in the original Greek New Testament (NTG). *phaneroō* means to bring to light, to set in a clear light; to manifest, display. God's sending His one and only Son into the world placed God's Love for mankind in a **clear light** for all to see! Jesus, the gift of Everlasting Life in one package, God in human flesh! **(1 John 4.10)** *This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.*

Imagine the world as seen from Heaven. It is a round globe of sin. God hates sin with an intensity that makes the earth and heavens shake. But, it is a little more than 2,000 years ago. He plans to send an object into the midst of it. You would expect an Angel of Judgment like a spiritual rocket ship with an atomic warhead to destroy all this evil mass of hate and filth in one massive explosion. But God...He sent his only Son, Jesus, to save it! Can you believe it? !!! *This is real love.*

The Living Bible captures more of the intensity of God's hatred of sin in **(1 John 4.10/TLB)** *In this act { Jesus coming to Earth as a human baby.} we see what real love is: it is not our love for God but his love for us when he sent his Son to satisfy God's anger against our sins. How Jesus satisfied God's anger is made more clear in the original (NTG) God sent His Son as an hilasmos for our sins, or, as a blood sacrifice for our sins. Hilasmos means a blood sacrifice to appease God's anger. God's anger at sin can only be appeased, or satisfied, by an hilasmos, blood sacrifice.*

The intensity of God's righteous anger against sin was clearly explained by the Apostle Paul in **(Romans 1.18-20/TLB): 18** *But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, evil men who push away the truth from them. 19* *For the truth about God is known to them instinctively; God has put this knowledge in their hearts. 20* *Since earliest times men have seen the earth and sky and all God made, and have known of his existence and great eternal power. So they will have no excuse when they stand before God at Judgment Day.*

TAKEAWAY #3

Our sins could only be taken away by appeasing God's Righteous Anger at sin. That required a perfect Blood Sacrifice, only the sinless Son of God could accomplish such a complete Sacrifice on the Cross. Jesus willingly obeyed God the Father and came and did that for us! God did not send the Angel of Destruction to destroy sin and thus Mankind. Instead, He sent His Beloved Son Jesus to save us!

Yes, Mankind was not capable of that kind of **LOVE**, until God sent it to us in His Son, Jesus. We cannot explain nor comprehend such love. But by His grace, we can receive it and learn to give it away to others, our brothers and sisters in Christ, and back to God! The following quotation from the footnotes for **(1 John 4.9,& 10/LAB-TLB)** is worth thinking about and meditating upon:

Love explains:

1. **why God creates - because He loves He creates people to love;**
2. **why God cares – because He loves them, He cares for sinful people**
3. **why we Christians are free to chose- He wants a loving response from us**
4. **why Christ died- His love for us caused Him to seek a solution to the problem of sin, and**
5. **why we receive everlasting life- His love expresses itself to us FOREVER!**
- 6.

And, Next, I will close this Message with **(1 John 4.11)** *Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other.*

Let Us Pray, and thank Him who is LOVE,

Thank you all for coming to OIC today, and OIC Church , Let's love one another.

REFERENCES

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