

The Tell-Tale Sign of a True Christian

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[0:00] ready to see the land where Jesus walked it's pretty transforming when I was able to go gosh 1995 however long ago that was I think there were three different parts of the trip where I just wept just overwhelmed this is where he was this is where he walked and though there's a lot of churches built over places that are either authentic or not that you can't actually get to because there's church there a little annoying but to me I want to see the real thing I don't want to see a church there are some very authentic places you can go that haven't been covered up that haven't been hidden you know so there is the real

Gethsemane that you can go to we will go to not the garden but the Gethsemane the oil press the place underground that Jesus stayed every night that last week with his disciples there is the garden there's the tomb it's quite a experience to see Golgotha you know you got to subtract all the buildings around it to get the feel for what what it was originally but there's a skull there and there's a garden right nearby with this hewn out tomb when I was there you'd go in the tomb and then you of course the bars weren't there back in the original I don't think Joseph that's there for keep the tourists out because that's a very you know if that's where Jesus laid then that's sacred and there's always people that like to mess up what's sacred but when you turn around and come back out of the tomb because I videoed the whole thing and you turn around and come out of the tomb it says he's not here he's risen it's like oh okay cool that's why it's empty yeah okay so anyway so yeah Lord willing we'll get the chance to kind of prime the pump a little bit every once a month or so give you a feel for what we'll see it's really worthwhile it's really worthwhile all right Shema Yisrael Yahweh Eloheinu Yahweh Echad right you're right what Rick read for us this morning the Shema hear oh Israel did I spit on you a little bit no no no the Lord is our God Yahweh Eloheinu Yahweh Echad Yahweh the Lord is one and it's I don't know if I can remember the rest of it Lovavka with all your heart Nefeshka with all your soul Mo'od with all your guts all right loving God Ahav Ahav how'd you say it Rick Ahav Ahavna Ahav which means to cling just about every Hebrew word has a picture to it so all right so we already have a message or this is kind of an afterthought what am I doing three days people three days there will be a sense of normalcy in my life my wife returns I just have three more calendar days to scratch off on my calendar pick her up on Wednesday so I might miss practice on Wednesday because I gotta pick up my wife so not you know good okay good I'm glad you're okay so take out your Bibles with me and turn to the timer starts now take out your Bibles and turn with me to 1st John 2 verse 7 2 verse 7 we are in a new section

John begins a new section here he begins a new test he's been talking about how do I know that I have eternal life he's giving us marks of that chapter 1 into chapter 2 6 he's given the first mark of walking like Jesus walked now he's going to talk about loving like Jesus loved this is our second so we're going to read from 1st John 2 7 through verse 14 so if you're able please stand as I read 1st John 2 verse 7 beloved I am writing to you no new commandment but an old commandment that you have had from the beginning the old commandment is the word that you have heard at the same time it is a new commandment that I'm writing to you which is true in him and in you because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness whoever loves his brother abides in the light and in him there is no cause for stumbling but whoever 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

[6:24] I am writing to you little children because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake I'm writing to you fathers because you know him who is from the beginning I'm writing to you young men because you have overcome the evil one I write to you children because you know the father I write to you fathers because you know him who is from the beginning I write to you young men

because you are strong and the word of God abides in you and you have overcome the evil one so it reads let's pray father guide us today as always open our eyes that we might see wonderful things from your word make us to take this text and walk cause us to walk lord in this word for we delight in this path incline our heart toward your truth and not toward selfishness turn away our eyes from looking at vanity and revive us in your word we pray in Christ's name amen please be seated three days three days so signs do you have signs in your home dirty clothes go here yeah signs are important signs give us information they warn us they warn us they make us aware of things my lovely wife

Delinda likes signs in our house so as you come in you know it'll say something like this home has endless love and laundry one of her favorites that she always points out to somebody that comes in is a sign that says I used to be indecisive but now I'm just not sure in the kitchen it says over the door there's a five dollar charge for whining so don't whine in the kitchen over the laundry basket it says there's two signs over the laundry basket one on the laundry basket one over the laundry basket one says don't you just love those 12 seconds when all the laundry is done the other one on the basket said if it's not in the basket it ain't getting washed I always tell her it's on its way it's working its way toward the not in the basket!

doesn't get wash and my favorite that is in one of the rooms you could guess which one it says everyone wants to change the world but no one wants to change the toilet paper be the change Zach no oh oh oh yeah right yeah oh you can see he was really hurt by that all right so signs inform us they are indicators of facts or of conditions or of qualities um first john is written that you may know you have eternal life he's writing about how I know he's giving tests he's giving signs indicators right signs of a true christian that I really have fellowship with god that I really walk in his light that I do in fact have eternal life it's not because

I asked for just simply because I asked it but has he given it to me and how do I know for sure that he's given me this new life by the change in my life how do I walk how do I treat others etc so here in chapter 2 verses 7 to 14 he gives I think the supreme test the supreme sign of true Christianity loving our Christian brother and sister loving he says brother but he means brethren he means inclusive brother and sister so we've learned the first test he gave us in chapter 1 5 to 2 6 gave us the first test is walking in the light as Christ walked in the light right and then he divides that up into four distinctions so he talks about first fellowship with

God if you say you have fellowship with God yet you walk God is light that's the message so if I say I have fellowship with God who is light yet I walk in the darkness obviously I'm lying!

[11:54] I am cleansed I am forgiven I am washed and I have fellowship with one another so putting that together fellowship with God involves walking in his cleansing!

light but not by myself but with one another with others there's a cleansing that comes when we a kind of cleansing when I just confessed there's another kind of cleansing that comes when I'm with other believers when I'm fellowshiping sharing things and then he goes on from there walking with God includes confession to cleanse our daily sins we've been cleansed at salvation we are forgiven but there are daily sins there are things that we do that hinder our fellowship with God and then the third distinction he says he talks about authenticity so in other words walking in that light being honest and true authentic with God helps us conquer our nagging sins so we go from confession of sins to now conquering our sins right so when we do sin we have an advocate we have a defender Jesus Christ before the throne we're just saying before the throne of God here he stands right we have that advocate and he is not just our helper!

he is the propitiation he is the satisfaction for our sins he has paid the debt that helps us continue to conquer our sins and then a fourth distinction he talks about how do I know I know God how do I know I have relationship with God not just know things about God but actually know him because I spend time with him I know what he feels I know what he thinks!

I know what he wants that me so the first test we saw there in those four parts are walking as Christ walked does your walk match your talk if you say you are a believer does that show you say you have fellowship with a God who is holy and light, is that reflected in you? Are you walking in that light?

[14:32] Or are you hiding? Because if you walk in the darkness and you hide, you don't get clean. Cleansing, you come to the light, but light cleanses and restores and conquers and etc.

So there's this, now he comes to a second test. John is going to go through these various tests, these three tests, and he'll cycle through them from different perspectives. Here's the first time he's

going to talk about loving our brother.

Second test is loving as Christ in the light. So if I truly love God, I will love my brother. If I love Jesus, as Jesus said, if you love me, what?

You'll keep my commandment. And my number one commandment is love one another. If you love me, that's not a threat.

If you love me, you would do this. It's not. If you love me, if that's true, if you love me, you got it. You'll do it.

[15:42] You'll do it because you love me. Okay? So, so here, so John is writing now about this test, but he also adds this section in verses 12 to 14 that kind of talks about these three groups of people.

So I wanted to kind of put those together. I think they relate because John is writing to clarify two things. He's clarifying two facts. In verses 7 to 11, he's clarifying their authenticity as true Christians. Love proves we're real Christians. Loving our brother or sister proves. Right? And then secondly, he wants to affirm them.

In verses 12 to 14, he's, excuse me, he talked to three groups of people and affirmed some things. He wants to assure them, give them encouragement. After kind of going through all the tests, they might be going, boy, I don't know, do I measure up?

Wow, John's got hard tests. And so he knows these people. He wants, he wants to affirm, I know you. I know you children. You have been forgiven. I know you fathers. I know you walk with the Lord and I know you young men, you young women.

[16:54] You're strong and you overcome and et cetera. So he wants to assure them. Okay? So, one fact of authentication with the test and then one fact about affirmation of true believers.

So, let's look at the test first. This, loving our Christian brother is sure proof we live in God's light. When we love our Christian brother or sister, it is the, it is the telltale sign.

It is the supreme test that we are, in fact, walking in God's light, that we know God, that we love Jesus. However you want to say it.

Do you love? So, he's going to, in this section, very interesting how John writes. I mean, he's just, the more I read him, the more I'm like, okay, this guy, he didn't just throw it all down.

You know, he's, he's very thoughtful. He's very old. Right? They called him the ancient one. Right?

So, the fathers he writes to are children to him.

[18:04] I mean, he's, you know. But he, he gives three contrasts here. He talks about an old and a new commandment. An old commandment and a new commandment. Okay? Then he's going to talk about walking in light or walking in darkness.

So, light and darkness. Again, back to that picture. And then he's going to talk about the application of that, loving or hating. So, these contrasts.

You love or hate? Are you in the light or in the dark? Are you, and which commandment are we talking about? An old one or a new one? So, first of all, the old and new. Verse 7, he says, I'm not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment that you've had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. Now, the first thing I want you to notice is it's singular. It's the command. Earlier in chapter 2, he talked about commands pluralism.

Plural. Verse 3. All right, so chapter 2, 3. By this we know that we have come to know him if we keep his commandments. Plural. All right, whoever says I know him but does not keep his commandments is a liar.

[19:09] All right, he's just talking about the whole teaching of Jesus. Now he's going to talk about and single out one command. The command. The old command, he says. It's not new.

It's old. It's from the beginning. It's the word that you've heard. So what does he mean from the beginning? Well, let's clarify what command he's talking about here.

So he says it's not new but then he backtracks and says in verse 8, but it is new. It's old but it's also new.

It's not new in the sense of time. It's not new as in the sense of being recent. It's been around from the beginning but it is new.

There's a newness about it. So what's new? It's new in him, he says, verse 8. At the same time it is a new commandment that I'm writing to you which is, so what is this newness?

[20:11] It's true in him and in you. So in him, who? Well, the one we're going to find out gave this new commandment. How is it new in you?

Because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. There's a newness about it. It's not just written on stone and either done or not done. It is written in hearts. It's got a newness that brings transformation because the darkness is already passing and the light is already shining. It's changing you, this new commandment. It has a new power. It is a process of changing. Now notice, not all the darkness is yet gone in you. It's true in him and it's true in you in that the darkness in you is already passing, starting to be erased, starting to fade away, not all gone, but starting to change.

[21:16] I'm learning to deny myself more. It's not so much about me. I'm learning to care about others so the darkness is already passing away and the light is already coming so I'm conforming a little bit more to Christ.

I'm a little bit more. I'm not like him yet but I'm starting to share some of his qualities, some of his kindness, some of his sacrifice, some of his concern and care. See? That's how it's new. There's less darkness and more light. So then verse 9, he's going to, so there's the standard, there's the command. It's both new and old. So, which command is that? One command that is both old and new. It's not new in the sense of recent in time. So, when did Jesus die?

Anybody know the proximate date in the first century? 30 AD. 30 AD. Right?

[22:21] 30 AD. 30 to 33 depending on where you mark the Passover. Okay? I mean, there's some things you have to, you know, when was Caesar's decrees? But pretty well established. We're right about 30 AD. He was probably 33 to 36 years old. So, when did John write this letter? Does anybody remember? Quiz!

When did John write this letter? About 95 AD. So, 95 from 30 is how much? 65 years. It's been a while. When Jesus first gave that command in 30 AD or before that and John is now writing to his readers, it's no longer new recent commandment. It's been around 65 years or more. See what I'm saying? So, it's not new in that sense. It's not new as in you've never heard this. It's brand new for you. It's fresh out of the oven.

[23:21] This is, it's been around a while. But it is new because when Jesus gave it, he said, it's new. It's new in several ways.

But John is just going to point out that it's new in the sense of transformation process. Okay, so verse 9, now he brings up the test. Here's the test. Are you ready? You ready to take the test? So, verse 9, if you say, so, who professes to be a Christian, right? Whoever says he is in the light, what does that mean? I'm in the light. I'm walking with Jesus. Right? I know Jesus. I'm a Christian. Whoever says he is in the light, he is a believer, he's been born again, prayed the prayer, but, what? Hates his brother is still in darkness. So, that's the test. You say, you're a Christian, do you love your brother and sister and fathers and children, young men, young women in the church?

[24:33] Do you hate them? So, so, so the test is, how do you know? It's by how you treat your brothers and sisters. You're still in the dark if you hate your brother.

So, so what does hate mean? Here's where it's confusing. So, I don't hate my brothers and sisters. I'm just, you know, I'm not repelled by them. I'm not, you know, I may not like some of them because, you know, some of them are, you know, weird. But, I don't hate them. I don't have this opposition for them. I'm not, I'm not against them. I just want to ignore them. So, I don't hate them. So, I'm okay, right? As long as I don't hate my brother or sister, I'm still in light, right? I'm good, right? Is that what he means? Why does he say hate? Why doesn't he say those, if you just don't love your brother, then you're in the darkness? Why didn't he say that?

[25:29] Why does he say hate? Because hate, man, that sounds like over the top. That sounds more aggressive, right?

I don't have anything against them, except, you know, they're inconvenient to me. So, what's hate mean? So, we trace this in Scripture. How does Jesus use the word hate? Remember in Matthew 6, he talked about don't serve two masters? Right? Don't have two masters. Why? Because you'll love one in, hate the other one. Really, hate the other one? He defines that further by you'll hold to one, you'll be loyal to one, and you'll despise the other. So, love is loyal, hate is despise, which literally means to think little of.

So, hate means think little of. When Jesus said in Luke 14, if you're going to follow me, then you're going to have to hate your father and your mother, your brother, your sister, your wife, and you even need to hate your own self if you're going to follow me.

[26:41] Now, did he mean, that sounds contradictory. I thought we're supposed to honor our father and mother. I hate them. My brother said, oh no, we're supposed to love my brother and sister, but compared to following Jesus, I'm hating them.

See, it's a comparison. It's not an opposite necessarily, it's a comparison. Hate my own self. By the way, Jesus said in John 12, you shall hate your soul in this world that you might save your soul for eternity.

So, hate my soul in order to save it. So, I'm not really against my soul, I actually want to save my soul. And the way I save my soul is to hate my soul in this world.

So, it doesn't mean I, what does it mean? So, when he says, if you're hating your brother, what does that mean? It means, if I think little of them, if they're lesser priority to me, if I ignore them, then I'm hating them.

That's what he means. To hate my, I'm actually hating. Remember how Jesus talked about, shall not murder, but what do I say to you? You've heard, don't murder, right?

[28:04] You're going to hell. But, what do I say to you? What do I say is the same as murder? Hate. Cursing. Right?

Hatred is, you're hating your brother if you're ignoring them. If you think a little of them, if you give them low, low priority, that's, in God's eyes, hating your, because what's love?

How do I love my brother? What is love? Well, that's, I pay attention to my brother. I, I, they go high on my priority list.

There's someone I don't ignore. They might be inconvenient. It might cost me my time and my energy. They might, you know, it might be, but that's love.

So, then he talks about, the impact, verse 10 and 11. So, if I love or hate, what's the impact?

[29:11] What are the results? If I'm, if I'm the one, verse 10, who loves my brother, what, what does that mean? So, verse 10, whoever loves his brother, what? Abides in the light. And, what's the impact?

In him, there is no cause for stumbling. What does that mean? Does that mean others don't stumble over me? Yeah, probably. Does that mean I don't, if I love my brother, I don't stumble?

Probably. There's no hindrance. See, if I'm loving my brother, that means I'm looking for ways to take care of him or her.

I'm watching out. I'm also becoming aware, as I get to know them, what things might cause them to stumble. And, I'm not going to be that stumbling block. See, if I know they struggle with a certain issue, I'm not going to encourage them to do, you know, if they're struggling with that.

For instance, drinking wine. Anything wrong with drinking wine? Anything wrong with drinking too much wine? Yeah. So, it's not the wine that's bad, it's the control.

[30:22] Right? Right? So, if my brother has trouble, has overcome alcoholism, or is fighting that, then I'm going to be aware of that, and I'm going to, I'm not going to tempt them to drink with me.

If I'm going to have a glass of wine, and that's too much for them. Right? So, that's an easy example, but, that kind of thing. If they have trouble with food, no, we're good with that one, right? It's okay to overeat. I can't wait to when my wife gets back. And then, so, what about for the hater? Verse 11, what's the impact for them when they hate? So, verse 11, whoever hates his brother. Now, look at the impact here. If you're hating your brother, you're ignoring them, you're not, you're not thinking very much of them, you're, you know, they're, they're not a priority for you.

Whoever's hating his brother is in the darkness, and not only is in the darkness, darkness, but is walking in the darkness, and, does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.

[31:35] So, what does that mean? So, he's walking in the darkness. What's walking? So, difference between being in the darkness, and then walking in the darkness. So, we talk about walking, that scriptures talk about walking all the time.

You know, walk in Christ, walk in love, walk in truth. So, so, so, what am I doing when I'm walking? Is this walking, by the way? I'm getting dizzy.

No, that's not going anywhere. When I'm walking, what am I doing? I'm going somewhere. That's why it says, they're walking in the darkness, and they don't know where they're going. Where

they're going.

See, it's about a where. So, walking is about a direction. Walking is about, not just a pattern of my life, but the direction I'm on. What road did Jesus want me to be on? The wide one?

The narrow one. That's a harder one. Wide one, that's lots of, I got a picture, Delinda got me a picture at home. Why is everything about Delinda lately?

[32:37] That has the wide and narrow gates. It's a cartoon picture of that. The wide road is huge. You've got all these attractions, and then there's this little narrow one that leads to life and glory.

But it's a really narrow little road. See, which road am I walking? What am I doing? So, somebody who's hating is in the, not only in the dark, but they're walking around in the dark, and they don't know where they're going.

Because they're blind. God, hatred blinds us. Hatred puts me in the dark. The dark makes me blind. That's the impact.

So, what is it that made this commandment new? He talks about this old commandment that's really a new commandment. Jesus did. In John 13, this is where it's recorded.

It both records Jesus talking about a new commandment, but right before that, John 13 records how Jesus loved his disciples, and he loved them to the end.

[33:45] And then he took off his garments, and he put a towel around him, and he went around and washed the feet of the disciples. And I remember, when he came to Peter, right? Peter's like, I can't have it.

No, no, no, no, I need to wash your feet. You're the master. I'm just, you know, let me wash your feet. And Jesus says, if I don't wash your feet, you don't have any of me. And Peter's like, okay, Lord, just starts dripping off all his clothes.

Wash all of me. You know, Peter, I got to have it all. And she says, no, no, put your clothes back on. Just your feet. You're already clean, brother.

You're already clean, Peter. Because I spoke the word of cleansing to you. But your feet, your daily, you get, you still get your feet dirty every day. And that, and let me wash your feet.

So it's a picture of that confession. So he does that. So when he had watched, so John 13, 12, when he had washed their feet, put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, do you understand what I've done to you?

[34:46] And they're probably sitting around going, nope. You call me teacher and Lord, and you're right. For so I am. If I, then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, what's the implication?

You ought to wash one another's feet. If I will stoop to that, to do a servant's job, you should do just as I've done to you.

I've given you an example. Now you should also do just as I've done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant's not greater than his master. If the master's washing feet, the servant better be washing feet, right?

Nor is the messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you're blessed if you do them. So following Christ is doing as he did.

So what's the supreme command? What is the single command? That fulfills all other commands.

[35:55] Jesus said, a new commandment I give to you. A new commandment I give to you. That you love one another. How?

Love one another just as I have loved you. That's what makes it new. Well, it's new in two ways.

The old commandment was what? Love your neighbor as yourself.

So, this one is not love your neighbor. Now it's love one another. So now it's about Christian love.

He's not excluding world love. He's still talking about who's your neighbor. You know, you still love your neighbor.

But the priority one is love one another. So it's a new focus of love. And then it's as I have loved you. So there's a new measure of love.

I love my brother as myself. Well, what if my love for myself is kind of screwed up? I love my brother like, you know, because I neglect myself.

[36:52] I can neglect my neighbor. I don't like myself so much, so I don't have to like my neighbor. See what I'm saying? See, we can screw that up. But if the standard is love one another as Jesus has loved us, okay, that pretty much clarifies what we're looking at.

A very sacrificial, lay down your life, servant oriented kind of love. By this, then he says this, love one another just as I've loved you.

You all sort of love one another by this, by loving one another, all people will know that you are my disciples. If you have love for one another. In other words, Jesus already said before John said, it's the proof by this, all will know.

This is what distinguishes you from everybody else. This is what distinguishes you and proves and gives evidence that you are my disciple because you love one another.

You think, well, it should say love the world. Well, no, absolutely. They love the world. But first and foremost, the great priorities love one another. Why is that? Because that will draw people to Christ. [38:07] Look how they love each other. What is it about those people? And some of the people, I know some of the people in that group, how in the world did they love that person?

No, it's just, look how they love. The first church, why did the first church expand and blow up? Because, because they're laying down their lives for each other.

They're, they're, you got a need? I got one of those. Here, take mine. Well, I don't need your whole land. I'll sell my land.

You can divvy it up however you need it to for the folks here that, by the way, aren't going back home. They're staying in Jerusalem. They're supposed to go back home. Remember the Acts? Remember that? Remember, you get to Acts 6, and it's like, they're not leaving. No, because this great, big, huge church is really wonderful. It's nice and convenient. You're supposed to go preach the gospel in other cities.

[39:06] Stop hanging out. Anyway, became a drag on the church. How to get into that. Well, because love covers that.

Even when people are not doing what they're supposed to be doing, I'm still taking care of them.

Hmm? I mean, did Jesus only heal and help people that, you know, met a certain standard?

How often did Jesus get used? People came to him. Rightly, for healing, for help. Remember the 10 lepers?

He cleansed 10 lepers. How many came back? Say thanks. One. Jesus wasn't about, okay, you know, if I get ripped off, I'm not going to do it again.

Love costs, even if it doesn't, right? It's just, that's just how we live. That's how we live. Oh, that makes it harder, doesn't it? So Jesus gives a new commandment.

[40:11] What's new? The measure, as I have loved you. How does he love? He stoops to wash feet. He takes the place of a servant. And if he does that, we do that. And of course, ultimately, he sacrifices his life.

He lays down everything in their place. It's, love is costly. This kind of love costs something. It costs our time. It costs our convenience. It costs, sometimes money.

It costs, what? It costs. But loving our brother is sure proof we live in God's light.

You pass that test? I'm not saying perfectly. Do you love your brother? Do you love your sisters? So, having taught this, John now moves on.

He's going to pause before he goes on to the next test. He's going to pause because he has this pastor's heart that he's calling them beloved. He's calling them children.

[41:15] He's wanting to give them assurance. He's laid up some pretty hard lines, right? John's kind of like James. It's black and white. You're either in the light or you're in the darkness. You either love or you hate.

So, so, now he's stepping back and going, I didn't want to beat up any sheep here. So, let me talk to my sheep that I know and give them assurance.

Okay? He's giving them tests. He's not trying to beat them up. He's just saying, you need to know this. This is, because other people are saying other things and I want you to have the truth. But now I think he's pausing and saying, okay, let me just encourage you.

Okay? I know these children that I'm writing to. I know these fathers and I know these young men. So, here's his affirmation. It's that true Christians are in a process of growth and maturity.

True Christians are always growing. True Christians are always in process of growth and maturity. So, he gives these three groups, which I think represent stages of maturity.

[42:19] I don't think he's talking about chronological because it would be children, young men, and then fathers. But he's children and fathers and young men.

And I think they're representative of ages of growth. So, you have children and then young men and then fathers. Okay? So, children. Verse 12.

Now, that's a term for all. He's going to keep calling them children throughout this letter. To him, John, the elder one, the ancient one, they're all children to him. They're all part of his, what he has spiritually nurtured, what he has built up, what he has, probably in many cases, he has brought about their conversion.

So, Paul talked about, you're my child because you're my, I'm your spiritual father. Right? So, so that sense. Jesus called his disciples children. And in many ways, they were.

Spiritually. They didn't understand a lot. Right? He brought them along. They're still children.

Spiritual children. They're still young in the faith.

[43 : 25] They're still dependent. Children are dependent. They're still learning the basics. They still drink milk, not solid food.

Right? So, John assures these young in the faith of their forgiveness. First of their spirit, their salvation standing. You've been forgiven.

Not based on your performance. You've been forgiven according to his name. That's the basis of your forgiveness. forgiveness. And then at the end of 13, he says to them again, I write to you children.

Now, a different reason, a different affirmation because you know the father. You know the father. Child is beginning to learn this relationship with his father.

Okay? So, I want to affirm that. I see that in you. I see, I know that you're forgiven and I know that you know the father. father. Because he's already talking about tests of knowing. He's saying to the children, I know, you're already keeping his word.

[44 : 29] I see, I see that. I want you to know that. Then he talks about a second group, fathers. 13, I'm writing to you fathers. How is he going to affirm them that you know him who is from the beginning?

Father. So, these are the ones who are older in the faith. They've walked a long time with the Lord. They have gathered wisdom. They're not put away in a home.

They're still working. Okay? But they're older in the faith. They're teaching the young. And he affirms these fathers in their genuine relationship with the Lord.

You know, now notice that he had said to the children, right, right, into verse 13, you know the father of the, you're knowing your heavenly father.

Now he says to these fathers, these ones advanced in the faith, you know what? He didn't say the father. He says, you know who? The one who is what?

[45 : 35] From the beginning. And why is that? And he says it twice about them. Who's the one? Why didn't he just say, you know the father? Why? Well, these guys have been in the faith for a while.

They not just know the father, but they know the son and they know the spirit. They have, their depth of knowledge of the Lord has grown immeasurably. And they've known him.

They don't just know him as my father, they know him as the eternal one. He's the one from the beginning. They know him as the creator, the sovereign, the providential lord. Lord. They've seen a lifetime of him who always does what is right, who always does what is good.

Right? They have seen him come through. See the difference? Because of the time they've walked with the Lord, they know the Lord in a deeper sense.

Those are the fathers. Then we come to a third group. And this group becomes the main focus because he says the most about them, the young men.

[46 : 47] I think he also means young women. He just says the youth, the young ones. It happens to be in the masculine, but that's just language.

So he's talking about the young ones. He affirms, first of all, at the end of verse, middle of verse 13, I am writing to you young men.

Why? Because you have overcome the evil one. Now that sounds more impressive than you're forgiven and you know the father. Doesn't it? It just sounds like, whoa, are the children not coming, overcoming?

What about the fathers? They should have, well, no, they are, but this group has a distinction about them. They've overcome the evil one. They have had victory. They are engaged in the battle.

They are fighting the enemy and probably because of their youth, they are bearing the burden of the faith because the fathers who are older, probably physically older as well and so their physical prime is passed.

[47:58] But these young men and women, they still got the stamina. they still got the energy and they got the passion. You seen young people like this? Give me a cause.

Give me a cause. Especially if it's right. Huh? Give me a cause. And so they're probably on the front lines.

They're not worried about being on the front lines. Nobody out in front. Right? They haven't been beaten too long. The fathers have probably got scars all over, you know, okay, young one, it's your turn.

Not because they're unwilling to go out there but because we want fathers to be around a little longer. Daddy, you stay home for this one. I got this. All right, but if you need me, I'll go.

You know, that's it. Why are they overcomers? So he talks to them again at the end of verse 14.

And here he expands it. I write to you, young men, because you're strong.

[49:08] You're strong. You have power. You have power. And the word of God, what makes them strong? The word of God abides in you.

That's what makes you strong. And you overcome the evil one. How do you overcome the evil one? Because you're strong in the word and the word abides in you and that's how you fight the enemy. That's how you, how do I defeat the devil? James says, just resist him. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

He's scared of you. He thinks if he could get you to not resist, if he could just tempt you to be a little deceived, oh yeah, you're guilty. You need to forget about that Jesus thing.

And he starts talking about Jesus to the devil, he's trembling. Really, you speak truth to him.

[50:06] He's no match. It's not about me, it's about his word. Every time Jesus fought the devil, what did he do? He pulled out his sword and he said, it is written. It is written.

It is written. Now flee. End of battle. Now, they're not all that simple. Some battles keep going on. Jesus comes to the cross. Father, let this cup pass for me, but not my will, but thine be done. Good, done. An hour later. Oh Lord. Right?

Still fighting. Okay, get it? These are the young ones who fight because they're strong and they're skilled in the word. They're trained in discernment. They are wise because they're in the word. Christians are in a process of growth. Titus 2 talks about these different groups where Paul is urging Titus to instruct these different groups. And it's interesting because to each group, he wants them, he wants Titus to teach them about a certain kind of character.

[51:13] So you got the older men, the older women, the younger women, and the younger men. So that's interesting. So there's different stages where we need to concentrate on certain things.

So he says, but as for you, Titus, teach what accords with sound doctrine. So for the older men, the older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

Okay, all you older folks, is that how you are? I'm not older yet. I'm not. Older women, likewise, but let me add a couple things.

Likewise, are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, or slaves, too much wine. Ooh, I have a drinking problem in Crete. They are to teach what is good.

Well, women, women have another responsibility. They're to teach what is good and so train the younger women. Oh. Older women in the faith have a responsibility to teach the younger women in the faith because they've been there.

[52:19] Teach them what? To love their husbands and children. To be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands.

Ow! You have to love a man, be submissive? Why do all of this? So that the word of God may not be reviled. It's about, not about you, it's about who you represent.

And likewise, so this all applies to younger men as well, love their husbands, no, love their wives probably, what it means. Be submissive to their own wives. There's a mutual submission in marriage, right?

Well, that's not how I read the book. Well, you can read more carefully. Urge the younger men to be self-controlled. That's it. That's all you got to talk about to the younger men.

Just control yourself, young men. Is there a control problem, by the way, in Greece? Back then, he was on the, Titus was on the island of Crete. Because he says it to everyone.

[53:21] The older men, dignified, self-controlled. To the older women, not slanders, not slaves of much wine. That's about self-control. To the younger women, to be self-controlled. Must be an issue. In Greece, yes, very much.

The Greek culture, very much. In the first century, issue of self-control. Not a virtue to the Greeks. So, let me get one more thing, practical, about this maturity thing.

What is the distinction of Christian maturity? What is the distinction between a spiritual child and a spiritual adult? So, in Hebrews 5, we get this from the writer of Hebrews, who happens to be Barnabas.

Not everybody agrees with me, but that is the right one. So, he's talking about difficult things. You know, Hebrews has got some deeper stuff. So, he says, he pauses in Hebrews 5, 11.

He says, about this, what he's been discussing, we have much to say. And it's hard to explain.

Why? Not because it's hard to explain, but because of you. It's hard to explain because you have become dull of hearing.

[54:29] You're dullards. Why? What makes them dull of hearing? For though by this time you ought to be teachers, ouch, you need someone to teach you again the basics.

you need milk, not solid food. Now, for a true child in the faith, for one who's truly new to the faith, milk's good.

Of course, you give them milk. Of course, you start them with the basics. Of course, right, they're just young and learning. But if you've been around, by this time you ought to be, what? Not sitting in the class.

You ought to be teaching the class. By this time, you ought, remember that word, ought? We saw that last time. You have a duty. You have a responsibility.

You have an obligation to teach others. Older men teaching younger men. Older women teaching younger women.

[55:42] So, okay, you need someone to teach you again. You need milk, not solid food. For everyone who lives on milk is what? So here's the definition of a child, of a spiritual child.

One who is not mature. Everyone who lives on milk is what? Unskilled in the word. Unskilled in the word.

That's why they're not teachers of the word. They're unskilled in the word. In the word of righteousness. Since he is a child. That's a child. The child is one who's unskilled, inexperienced in the word.

They don't spend much time in the word. But solid food, here's the difference. But solid food is for the mature. For those who are the mature. They're the ones who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good and evil.

They're skilled in the word. Difference between a spiritual child and spiritual maturity is the word of God. How you know the word of God.

[56:46] Why is our skill in the word a measure of maturity? Why is the word so important? Can't we just all get along? You know, that's not my thing. I'm not a, you know, I'm not very smart.

I'm not a learner. Yeah, I said that for a long time. I'm not a reader. Yeah, I'm not a reader either. I stumble over words. Yeah, I stumble a lot over words. I didn't learn English until I learned Greek. Seriously, there's no, there's no, anyway. I get it. But then I began to catch on that the word has a lot of treasure and value in it.

This word not only tells me what is truth and what is error, it tells me how to live, how to be wise, how to recognize. Wisdom is about recognizing the consequences, right?

It's not just having knowledge but knowing how to apply my knowledge. So wisdom, the whole book of Proverbs about, you know, if you do this, this is the result. If you do this, this is the result. So notice the results so you can make a wiser choice.

[57:54] Right? Remember Ecclesiastes? I had to apply this. Ecclesiastes talked about if the blade, if the axe is not sharp, right, when you're chopping wood, what do you got to do if the axe is not sharp?

You got to, you got to swing a lot harder. I've been doing that for years. But, if one applies a little wisdom, what would that be?

Okay, dull axe takes harder, sharpen, sharpen good, sharpen wise. So I don't even sharpen my axe. Right?

How long did that take? I even learned about chopping wood from the scriptures. How valuable are the scriptures?

They are our light. They are the truth. They are the way. They show me how to grow. They show me what to learn. They show me where I can discern truth and error so that I can answer others who have questions about the hope that is within me.

[58:59] If I know the word, I know how to talk to this culture. I see this culture that is wandering so far from the truth and making up their own truth as we've talked about.

I have the truth. I know what to buy and not buy from the media, from the academia, from the government. Right? Because I know what's true.

if I read, if I dig in. Are you digging?

Difference between a child and an adult, a difference of maturity is how you become experienced in the word, become skilled in the word. How do I become experienced in the word?

Well, that means I get in the word a lot more. Not just a, a, a, a, okay, I'm reading, a, a, a, a, and God bless the little things out there that we, you know, daily reader things that, those are great.

[60:04] If you're doing nothing, it's better than nothing. So I read, I read a couple of verses or maybe I read a chapter and then I put it down and I, and I go. That's fine. But do you ever spend some time just digging?

Doing more than that? You know, reading and going, now, now why did he say that? What? You know, Columbo this text. Got a question?

Why, what, you know, when you said, why did you say it that way? What, why didn't you say, I would expect you to say, so thinking it through, connect it. Jesus was always talking to the disciples. Do you yet understand which the text means connect the dots?

Are you connecting the dots? What it said in the Old Testament, what I'm saying now, how it's applying here. Have you kind of made, and they're going and going, no, sure, we get it.

Right? And until the Holy Spirit came, they didn't get it. But he's always challenging them to think. Remember the, the, the, the proverb about asking Jesus a question.

[61:14] If you ask a question of Jesus, what are you going to get? What do you think? Questions. He's a teacher. I'm not going to give you the answer. You dig.

Okay, I'll help you. See, are you digging? Are you seeking to understand? Do you desire and long for the Word of God? Do you treasure it? Get in a study.

If you're not in a study, get in a study that digs deeper. Learn to read the Bible. We, we don't know how to read in this culture. Because language doesn't mean anything anymore.

Learn how to read. And read so I can understand. We, we jump to conclusions because I, I read and I read into it. I don't read carefully. I don't read slowly. Read so that you can interpret the Word. Inductive. So what we do on Sunday mornings, on, on Monday nights and on Thursday nights, we do inductive study. We take the Word. What is inductive? It means I draw out from the Word.

[62:20] I ask questions of the Word. I make observations. Who, what, when, where, why. You know, we Columbo the text and then we can, so we know what he's saying and then we can begin to see what it means.

Then I can start making interpretations. I can compare Scripture with other Scripture. I can apply the observations and begin to unpack it a little bit. Then I can make an application.

Until I know what he said and what he means, I don't know how to apply it. Right? So do inductive. Read. Instead of reading into. Most folks come, not here, but, but, gather in a Bible. We're going to have a Bible study. So get around. We're going to read a verse.

What's that mean to you? Who cares? By the time we get to our application, then we can say, what does that mean to you?

[63:17] Okay, now it's valuable. But when I'm just reading the text, I go, oh, I think Martha, she's having a bad day. I don't know where I came up with Martha, but, you know, Martha and Mary, Mary's, yeah.

We read into, what is it, what it means. So I could read into this word, hate, hate your brother. I could read into that and think, oh, oh, okay, I'm okay. I don't hate. I dig a little deeper if I don't know. Hate really just means ignore. Shoot. Now I'm in trouble. Do I really want to dig because then I get in trouble?

No, it's a good trouble to be in because I want to make sure I'm on the right road. when I learned to read the word and to study the word, I didn't have to be dependent on others.

This whole thing about a child is dependent. I need you to teach me. I used to depend on MacArthur and Swindoll, which is great, but I don't have to do that anymore.

[64:30] In fact, I can even disagree with them sometimes. One of them more than the other. Really, a lot more than the other one. Because I can know for myself.

Don't you want that confidence to know the word? All right. It takes, so to become skilled, to become experienced, takes steady practice, training, digging in.

So, true Christians are in a process of growth and maturity. How you doing? How you doing? I feel like I was a little rough on some edges here.

All right. I'm with my wife three days, right? Three days. I'll be better. A little edgy. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for John and his faithfulness to your word.

We thank you, Lord, that he doesn't hedge around things. He just gets right to it. He just speaks what is true, what is light and what is dark, what is love and what is hate.

[65:39] There's no real in between. There is love that, yes, of course, falls short, but it's still love.

And there's hate that may not be aggressive hate, but it's still a thinking little of. And so, Father, help us.

We pray that your spirit would give us conviction that we would not listen to the evil one who would want to shame and guilt us, but that you would speak clearly through your spirit, Lord, that we might know where we are, where you want us, where our duty lies.

And we thank you, Lord, for the assurance of our forgiveness, the assurance that we do, in fact, know you, the assurance that, Lord, we have gained strength and the word abides and we overcome the evil one.

we thank you for that power that you have put into us. In Christ's name, amen. Amen.