

Tuesday Evening Bible Study.
May 26, 2020

1. **Structure of 1st John**

I want to keep the structure of 1st John in front of us as we prepare for this week's reading — 2:7-14:

- a. 1:1- 2:6
 - i. 1:1-4 What was from the Beginning
 - ii. 1:5-10 Walking in Darkness or in Light
 - iii. 2:1-6 Walking just as He walked
- b. **2:7-14**
 - i. **2:7-11 A commandment that is old yet new**
 - ii. **2:12-14 The family restored**
- c. 2:15-3:10
 - i. 2:15-17 The World versus the Will of God
 - ii. 2:18-25 Endurance amid Antichrist's coming
 - iii. 2:26-27 Anointing in Truth
 - iv. 2:28-3:3 Confidence at Christ's coming
 - v. 3:4-10 Children of God, Children of the Devil
- d. 3:11-5:12
 - i. 3:11-18 By this we know love
 - ii. 3:19-24 By this we shall know the we are of the Truth
 - iii. 4:1-6 By this you know the Spirit of God
 - iv. 4:7-12 By this God's Love was manifested among us
 - v. 4:13-21 By this we know that we abide in God and God in us
 - vi. 5:1-5 By this we know that we love God's children
 - vii. 5:6-12 The testimony that God has borne to the Son
- e. 5:13-21
 - i. 5:13-17 The boldness in our asking
 - ii. 5:18-21 What we know

2. **Scripture Reading**

1 John 2:7-14

⁷Beloved, I am writing 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.

⁸Yet I am writing you a new commandment that is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. ⁹Whoever says, "I am in the light," while hating a brother or sister, is still in the darkness. ¹⁰Whoever loves a brother or sister lives in the light, and in such a person there is no cause for stumbling.

¹¹But whoever hates another believer is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has brought on blindness.

¹²I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven on account of his name. ¹³I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young people, because you have conquered the evil one. ¹⁴I 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 people, because you are strong and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

3. Notes and Commentary

According to the **Abingdon Bible Commentary**, John prepares to make his argument against the Gnostic who says "I am in the light". In these crucial foundational verses of 7 & 8, John articulates that what he proclaims is not new; rather, it is an existing and old commandment present with believers since before their conversion and yet the commandment is new to the world. The commandment of love is essential to Christian experience yet the commandment to love is new as it is realized for the first time in Christ and through Christ's Church. The commandment to love, is the gift of God revealed in Christ and made possible through Christ. This is a fundamental Christian principle. For John, the principle of Love is the basic character of the Christian faith. Any love that is not of God/Christ is inadequate.

As John argues, a person cannot claim to be in the light and yet not love a brother or sister which displays the inadequacy of love that doesn't find its origin in God. Gnostics, claim to possess some secret knowledge that affords salvation. One of John's arguments against the Gnostic thought is the basic principle of love that is experienced by the faith community and is proclaimed to the world.

In verses 10 & 11, John offers a summation - the true follower is the one who is truly in the light which means a person who loves brother and sister. However, those who do not love brother and sister continue to walk in the darkness. This understanding would have been eye-opening for the Gnostic who thought they could live above the demands and commands on the earthly flesh. These false believers who relied on the knowledge rather than love had fooled themselves by thinking they were walking in the light all the while their path was in darkness.

We can begin to see the challenge the true Christian faith offered the world and those who rely on knowledge and on being right. We may find ourselves reminded that a right relationship with God is found through the experience of Divine grace and love; it can't be earned or bought.

As you read these few verses, pay careful attention to how John uses the Gnostic reliance on dualism, particularly light and dark. Notice how John uses these devices to make his point about true Christian faith as opposed to false belief in knowledge.

4. Discussion Questions

How can the command to love God and others be new and old at the same time?

What are the two tests given in this passage for determining whether one really knows God?

After reading this passage, how would you define love?

What does this passage tell us about God and our relationship God.?

Next week we will read 1st John 2:15 — 3:10.