



DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

SERIES: 1 JOHN "GOSPEL TRUTH FOR LIFE TOGETHER" •

1 JOHN 2:1-17 • 9/17/2023

MAIN POINT

We can live lives marked by love as we remember the loving sacrifice of Jesus our Advocate

INTRODUCTION

What is the most successful team you've ever been on? What made you successful?

What was the dynamic of that team like? How did you feel about one another?

Why is it important to know there is someone who is willing to fight for you?

It is a wonderful thing to know that someone will fight for you. How much more wonderful to know that One is the Son of God. John realized that even those who are children of the light will struggle with sin. When we encounter that struggle with sin, the best thing we can do is to continually look to Jesus. What we will find is not One who is ashamed of us, but One who is on our side as our Advocate. This, in turn, leads us to love others.

UNDERSTANDING

READ 1 JOHN 2:1-6.

Why did John address his readers as little children? What does that indicate about the nature of his letter?

Was John implying it was possible for people to be completely without sin? How do you know? If he didn't mean that a person could be without sin, what was his intent?

John was realistic with his assessment of the Christian faith. He recognized that there is no middle ground with Jesus—there is either darkness or light. To that end, he knew that habitual, unrepentant sin could not characterize a true follower of Jesus. This was an important point to make in order to counter the false teachers of the day who believed that behavior had little to do with what they believed.

How would you respond to someone who believed something similar to these false teachers—that behavior and faith have no relationship to each other?

While obedience can never merit salvation, those who truly know Jesus and are known by Him are profoundly changed. They desire above all to walk in the way Jesus walked, so that even when they sin, they are quick to repent and turn repeatedly back to Christ. The good news is that in turning to Christ they find an Advocate waiting for them.

Why is it personally meaningful to know that Jesus is not just your Savior but your Advocate?

The word “propitiation” refers to the removal of divine wrath. Apart from Christ, we are left to pay the just penalty for our sin. But Jesus absorbed the righteous wrath of God on our behalf at the cross. The cross is the ultimate example of Jesus’ advocacy. Because He died in our place, we can know that even now He is on our side.

1 JOHN 2:7-11.

What does verse 7 show us about the nature and character of God?

As far back as Leviticus 19:18, the people of Israel were commanded to love their neighbors. However, this command takes on a freshness for the Christian given the demonstration of Jesus’ love. Jesus laid down His life, not for those who were worthy, but for those who were unworthy. When we love as Jesus did, we play an active role in revealing the light of Jesus to those around us.

Who has loved you in a manner similar to how Jesus does? How has that person brought light to your life?

How could John be so definite in his statement that if you hate your brother you live in darkness?

The defining mark of the disciple of Jesus is love. In this command, we see how the love of Jesus is expressed day in and day out. When we love each other, we are transferring what we have first received from the One who died to save us from sin and death. As we do, the darkness is continually pushed back in favor of the light.

READ 1 JOHN 2:12-17.

In your spiritual life, which of the three stages John addresses in verses 12-14 can you most relate to: children, young men, or fathers? Why do you answer as you do?

Which of the reminders in these verses do you most need to hear today?

John assured Christians of their standing before God: God has forgiven their sins; they know Him; and they have overcome the evil one. Next he warned his readers against an attitude that would lead to spiritual ruin—love of the world and its things.

What does it mean to love the world? Why is this incompatible with loving God rightly?

In 1 John 2, the term world refers to unbelieving society, seen as a rebel order hostile to God. Viewed as an evil system, organized under Satan's control, the world should not be loved, because it tempts believers away from God and into sin. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus has overcome the world (John 16:33), and faith in Him assures us of victory over the hostility and power of the world controlled by Satan.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What is the ultimate fate of the world and its lusts? How should this truth cause us to respond to the temptations we face day in and day out? How should it impact our relationships with people who don't know Christ?

In what situation do you struggle to demonstrate the love of Jesus? How is God speaking to you about that through His Word in 1 John 2?

How does knowing that Jesus is your Advocate help you know how to move forward in that situation?

PRAYER

Thank God that He has graciously given Jesus as the sacrifice for your sins. Pray that you would dwell on that sacrifice, being quick to repent of sin and quick to love those around you with the same love God has extended to you.

COMMENTARY

1 JOHN 2:1-17

2:1-11. In 1 John 2:1-11, John warmly and tenderly addressed his readers as little children not only here but in many other places in the letter. As a part of that affection, John wanted them to not sin. The verb tense here conveys acts of sin as opposed to habitual sin. John assumed they weren't living a sinful lifestyle, but also

realized that there would inevitably be a time when they did sin. What would they do then? According to John, they should remember the good and finished work of Jesus.

John described Jesus as our advocate, the same word Jesus used for the Holy Spirit in John 14:16. The word means “one called alongside” to present a defendant’s case. Jesus is the righteous one who fully obeyed the Father’s command, and because He is, He is qualified to represent us before God. The greatest way He demonstrated His love for us and His obedience to the Father was His voluntary death as the propitiation for our sins. The term propitiation refers to the removal of divine wrath. Jesus took the righteous and just punishment for sin on Himself, and because He did, we can always return to that fact when we find ourselves in sin.

But these sins cannot be our general pattern of life, because obedience to Christ’s commands is evidence that our faith is real and we know Him. The word know conveys the idea of knowledge by experience. Unlike the false teachers John was writing against who argued that conduct was unimportant, John claimed that anyone who claims to know Christ but doesn’t keep His commands is a liar. The genuine believer is the one who consistently keeps Christ’s word, walking as He walked.

As true believers walk as Jesus walked, one of the primary ways that walk will be exhibited is through their love. This wasn’t a new command; it’s as old as Leviticus 19:18, but loving one’s neighbors as one’s self was fresh in its centrality in the Christian life. It echoes the words of Jesus in the upper room (John 13:34), and its emphasis is on loving as Jesus loved. This kind of love pushes back the darkness of evil and hatred and reveals the true light that Jesus is and brings. So important is this love that a person cannot truly live in the light and at the same time hate his brother. That hatred is evidence that a person remains in the darkness, or in the realm of evil.

2:12-17.

Verses 12-14 seem to be reassuring John’s readers that they are in fact Christians. He contrasts the spiritual status of the believers with the assessment of the self-praising false teachers. Apparently, these teachers claimed that ordinary believers did not really know God because they had not received special knowledge of him through mystical means. If so, the following warning not to love the world (vv. 15-17) might also be prompted by these same false teachers who did love the world.

John addressed three sets of readers, little children, fathers, and young men. Often, when a Bible author contrasts ages (young/old), he does so as a figure of speech to

denote young, old, and everyone in between. If this principle of interpretation is accepted for verses 12–14, then whatever is said of each age category is intended to be true for all believers. If so, then like children, all of them had experienced the forgiveness of sins and all of them had known their heavenly Father. Like fathers, they had all known Him who is from the beginning. That is, they had truly known and experienced fellowship with God. Like young men, all of them had engaged in spiritual warfare and had overcome the evil one, the devil, and had grown strong, perhaps because of the Word (you are strong, and the word of God abides in you).

John seems to make it clear that his readers were Christians. They were my little children (2:1) and beloved (4:1). Far from calling into question their salvation or expressing dissatisfaction with their spiritual growth, John seems to reassure them of their salvation. Having reassured them, he then warned them against false teaching and dangers from the world.

Not only are they to love God and their brothers; they are not to love the world. The world in this context refers to the attitudes and values that disregard God or are blatantly against God. It certainly does not refer to God's natural creation or even humanity (we are to love the people in the world for whom Christ died, as God does, John 3:16), but to that part of human affairs that are under the authority of the devil. We love the people of the world, but we do not love the sinful attitudes and values they may embrace. If we love the world, we are not loving God. We cannot love the world and love God at the same time. This interpretation is strengthened by James 4:4, "Friendship with the world is enmity with God."

The reason we are not to love the world is that the world's values are in opposition to God. The desires of the flesh are the sinful interests and desires that draw us away from God. The desires of the eyes refers to sinful desires that corrupt us. The pride in possessions refers to the arrogance and pride that can overtake us as we try to "get ahead of the Joneses" and when we rely on ourselves rather than God for our material possessions and worldly positions. These values are foolish for two reasons. First, they do not come from the Father. Therefore, they interfere with our fellowship with the Father. Second, we are all going to die, and what we are living for will come to nothing.