

March 8, 2020 – Elmont Baptist Church

Text: 1 John 2:7-17

Message Series: 1 John: By This We Know

Week 4: Knowing & Growing

Introduction:

1. Remember, John is the last living Apostle when he writes this letter. His voice and influence are still very powerful as he lives out his last days.
2. This is most likely around AD 90-95, so somewhere around 60 after the resurrection of Jesus.
3. False teachers had crept into the church and brought with them dangerous teachings that John needed to address.
4. The most prominent teaching was that of Gnosticism. A teaching that said several alarming things such as: Jesus was not fully God and fully man – that He was a spirit but not human.
5. They also taught that salvation was obtained by “special revelation or knowledge”.
6. Gnosticism teaching says that the spirit is good, and all matter or physical is bad, so sin all you want and treat others however you want because the flesh is evil no matter what.
7. John writes to combat this false teaching, or heresy, in the church. He does this in very stark contrasts to say, “Be encouraged in your faith if as Christ-followers, members of God’s family, you are believing truth, obeying Jesus, and loving others”.
8. Whiles we may not call it Gnosticism today, but there are many that identify as Christ-followers but are not walking in fellowship-fueled obedience to Christ.
9. Throughout this Book, John will give four reasons why he’s writing...
 - a. That our joy may be complete – 1:4
 - b. That you may not sin – 2:1
 - c. About those that are trying to deceive you – 2:26
 - d. That you may know you have eternal life – 5:13
10. John describes God in two ways. He says, “God is light” and “God is love”.

11. Under those two categories, John gives three tests, or themes, of Christ-follower faith that he mentions over and over in these five chapters.
 - a. Truth or doctrine – what you believe
 - b. Obedience – how you live
 - c. Love – how you care about and for others
12. All three, he says, are essential evidence of being part of God’s family. We may still doubt at times, still sin at times, and still struggle in relationships, but grace rescues us and empowers us to pursue Christ.
13. We talked about truth or good theology the first week, and then about obedience the past two weeks. Today we’ll deal with love, and that how we care for others should give us great confidence in our faith.
14. John will write about loving others three different times using three different contrasts. In our passage today he uses light vs darkness.
15. In chapter 3 he uses life vs death, and in chapter 4 truth vs error.
16. The hope today is that we understand that...

Loving people like Jesus does requires a changed heart throughout our spiritual journey with no competing affections.

Read 1 John 2:7-17

1. Remember that John has just finished writing about keeping God’s commandments, and so he continues that thought by instructing them to fully embrace a new commandment by remembering an old commandment made new in Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
2. This new commandment is to love others like Jesus did and not to get sidetracked by falling in love with the world or the distractions of it no matter how long you’ve been a Christ-follower. And this passage teaches us that...

Loving People Like Jesus Does... v 7-11

1. **Requires a Changed Heart... v 8**
 - a. **Christ in you**

b. Christ through you

- i. John says that this commandment to love your brother, which obviously is a reference to the church, is true in Christ and in you.
- ii. In John 13:34 Jesus told His disciples to “love one another as I have loved you.” He’s raising the bar on love your neighbor as yourself (OT law) to love others like He loves them.
- iii. This can only happen by having a changed heart. A heart that has been set free from sin and death and reconciled to God in Christ.
- iv. After all, we can find caring people that don’t know Jesus. We can find humanitarian, feeding the hungry, injustice-fighting, orphan-adopting, truly-kind people that are opposed to Jesus.
- v. The difference in loving others like Jesus does is that we aren’t just kind and caring and all the things just mentioned, but that we point them to the truth of who God is in Christ.
- vi. And we’re willing to do that in self-denying, sacrificing, lay-our-lives-down kind of ways.
- vii. John is primarily talking about within the faith family here, but obviously we are to love everyone as Jesus did.
- viii. Remember he is combating false teaching that the church had been exposed to that left them still wounded by those within the church, and John is saying that it really does matter how they treat one another.
- ix. I have a tendency to read passages like we just did the past three weeks and either beat myself up or look around for others to whack over the head with the text, but John is known as the disciple of love not just because he wrote about love more than most anyone else, but because he loved the church, the people of God.

- x. So, after it feels like he's been a bit harsh and that maybe he doesn't think this community has any true believers in it, he reminds them quickly again of his compassion for them and confidence in them.
- xi. John is not writing to cause them to doubt their faith near as much as he's writing to strengthen and encourage them in their faith.
- xii. The false teachers had already left the church, but some damage, confusion, and wounds remained.
- xiii. John wants them to know that he does not doubt that they are genuine Christ-followers.
- xiv. So, he continues this thought that loving people like Jesus does requires a changed heart...

2. Throughout Our Spiritual Journey... v 12-14

a. We are forgiven

b. And overcome the evil one

c. To know God more deeply

- i. This is a weird little section if you pull it out by itself, but if you leave it in place, it is really helpful especially to those of us that have been in Christ for many years now.
- ii. One of the easiest things to do as Christ-followers is to let your heart grow cold toward others. People can be exhausting, hurtful, betraying, petty, divisive, and just plain silly.
- iii. And if you've been in the church long enough you've probably experienced these people and, at times, been this person.
- iv. But John addresses these varying phases of spiritual maturity in the middle of a section about what to love and what not to love, and the reason is to remind them that no matter how much you know or don't know, no matter how much you've overcome or not, loving others like Jesus does is not something we eventually get to or something we finally grow past.

- v. I love that John repeats the exact same phrase to the most mature group. These mature believers would know that there is nothing greater than deeply knowing the Father. Not just knowing about Him but knowing Him.
- vi. The ultimate goal of your salvation, or eternal life is not being forgiven of your sins or overcoming spiritual bondage or strongholds. Jesus said in John 17:3 and John makes the point here that, “this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”
- vii. Forgiveness is necessary for you to know God, and overcoming strongholds is a tremendous blessing of the power of the Holy Spirit, but never think of those things with loftier thoughts than the deep things of the character and nature of God.
- viii. Sin and strongholds will not enter your mind after this life, so begin now feasting on the eternal glory and grandeur of God through Christ.
- ix. Again, the hope is that we will desire to love others like Jesus does throughout our spiritual journey...

3. With No Competing Affections v 15-17

a. Commit your heart

b. To eternal things

c. Loving & obeying Jesus

- i. John has told us how we should love and now he tells us what we shouldn't love.
- ii. There's always this need to be reminded that competing affections can easily creep in undetected and do damage.
- iii. The damage may not have scandalous or legal consequences, but simply cause you to love something more than Jesus.

- iv. John lists three broad categories of worldly affections that we go after. He is saying that all sin fits into one of these categories and none of them can satisfy because none of them are eternal.
- v. Enjoy the gifts of God just don't worship them. If you can afford nice things, buy nice things; just don't let those things have affections that are only meant for Jesus.
- vi. He closes by saying, "whoever does the will of God abides forever." This is not you earning anything, but living in the enjoyment of what was given to you.
- vii. Keep abiding in Christ. Maybe start abiding in Christ. And do that with the promise of forever.
- viii. Take time to seek out and root out competing affections. Things that demand your time and resources and affect your emotions and conversations.
- ix. Keep getting closer and closer to Jesus and in that you will see more and more of your heart and the areas that need the work of the Holy Spirit no matter where you are in your journey with Jesus.

Closing

1. Remember, like we said last week, John writes with a fatherly motivation to remind these believers and us that our struggles do not mean we aren't believers, but rather as we keep journeying with Jesus we will...
2. ...Keep growing to love people like Jesus does with a changed heart throughout our spiritual journey with less and less competing affections.
3. Great ways to respond
 - a. Do you see how Jesus has changed your heart to love people more like He does?
 - b. Do you define your spiritual journey by how well you know God and love others or just how long you've been a Christian or things you have done?
 - c. Are you taking time to root out competing affections?