

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 7- The Test of Love

56. The Law of Love Part 4

WAOY Friday/Monday 07/20-23/07; WOSM Monday 12/19/22

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to examine what John taught about "The Law of Love". So, let's open our Bibles to **1John 2:7-11** and read those verses again together:

7 Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.

8 On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.

9 The one who says he is in the Light and *yet* hates his brother is in the darkness until now.

10 The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

11 But the one who 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.

Now the Apostle John was concerned about the fellowship that Christians have with God- so he wrote these words to describe to us what true fellowship with God looks like and what deception looks like. He has already told us that an ongoing struggle and effort to keep God's Commandments- not perfectly but honestly- is mandatory to *having* and *maintaining* a genuine fellowship with Jesus Christ. Now John tells us in these verses that loving the brethren is also an intricate part of any true fellowship with Jesus Christ.

So since loving the brethren is part and parcel to our fellowship with Jesus- we need to understand what loving the brethren is all about so that we may be faithful to do it.

John says that to fail to love the brethren will interrupt our fellowship with the Father and will therefore dishonor God and rob us of many of the blessings of the Christian life. But the way John writes this- tells us that when we *refuse* to love the brethren – we are sinning- that we are disobeying God and we are rebelling against God, and we are in affect saying that we would just rather not bother to do what God says to do. This is another example of “doing what is right in our own eyes” and it is an arrogant and terrible sin.

But John is also telling us here in these verses that by loving the brethren – we are *proving* that we are in a correct fellowship with Jesus Christ. You see if we are saved- we crave to do what God says to do- that is because we now have within us the new divine nature which desires to obey God.

So, when we do what God says to do- we are proving that we belong to Jesus; we are verifying that this new nature lives within us; we are testifying that we are saved.

You see, we should look at this Epistle in a two- fold way. We look at these words that John wrote under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit- and we compare ourselves to them. And because we are saved- we want to line up with what John is saying here and so we examine our own hearts and see if we are being obedient to the things that John teaches here. And that is right, and we should do that.

But there is another way to look at what John wrote here. Because we do strive to keep Gods’ Commandments; and because we do strive to love the brethren- we are proving beyond any doubt that we have received the new nature and that we are saved.

The first way to look at this causes us much sorrow and if the shoe fits, we need to wear it- but the second way gives us great comfort because as we see that we are changing from glory to glory and as we see that we are doing what John says to do here- we can know without any doubt that we are born again.

You see, under the Old Testament- all we had was Commandment. We had Law which demanded perfect obedience. But under the New Covenant- God has become Man and dwelt among us- Immanuel has come and now God the Holy Spirit doesn’t come on

occasion and by times and fall upon us and then lift and go away like He did to the Old Testament saints. No, now because we are saved- God the Holy spirit dwells inside us and walks inside us and stays inside us and never leaves!

Today we do not have God speaking *partial* Truth through human prophets- who themselves were sinful- but today we have God speaking full and completed Truth to us through Jesus Christ as recorded in infallible Scripture. Today we do not have ceremonial washings- but God cleans us up from the inside. Today we do not have animal sacrifices – but we have Jesus Christ- the Lamb of God taking upon Himself the sins of the whole world. Today we no longer have a priesthood whereby the priest has to offer a sacrifice for himself first and then offer one for the people- but we have a sinless and spotless High Priest- Who through His Own Death- offered Himself to take away our sins.

Today we do not have the Law of God written on tables of stone- but we have the Law of God written on the tables of our heart. Today we do not have the flesh of our foreskin circumcised to prove that we are in the family- but we have the foreskin of our hearts circumcised in the waters of baptism which proves that we have been adopted into the family of God.

Today we do not have signs and symbols and types and shadows, but we have the full and complete and finished and mature Revelation of God to Man through the Lord Jesus Christ. Today we do not have a temple made with hands and a city in a particular geographic location- but today we have a greater than Solomon's Temple and a city whose Builder and Maker is God.

So, John is reminding us that we have no more excuses. We cannot say that we do not know because God has given us the true light. We cannot say that we do not see because God has opened our eyes. We cannot say that we don't understand because God has girded up the loins of our mind and given us the Mind of Jesus Christ. We cannot say that we have no power because Power Himself now lives within us. We cannot say that we have no desire because God has given us both the desire and the ability to do of His good pleasure.

So, when we say that we are saved- we are saying that we have no more excuses and that we must now actually “do” that which God says. We now have the understanding and the will and the desire and the

ability and the power to love the brethren and to keep God's Commandments. The Old Testament Jew didn't have the will; he didn't have the ability; he didn't have the desire; he didn't have the power- but through Jesus Christ- we do have all that they didn't have and so we cannot use the same excuses that they used as to why we do not love and serve God.

So, unless we are lost; unless we are unsaved; unless we are yet in our sins- we must be obedient to what God says. Now if we are lost- then we don't have either the desire or the power to obey God or to love the brethren. But if we are truly saved- we have no excuse.

It would be ridiculous for John to demand that the lost world obey God's Commandments or to love the brethren- because the things of God are foolishness to them, and they do have the desire or the ability to do of God's good pleasure.

But it would also be ridiculous for John not to demand that saved people keep God's Commandments and love the brethren precisely because we have all that we need to do that.

Here in verse 8, John is repeating the same thing that Jesus taught. God through Christ has brought into the world a new order and a new Covenant. The Old has been replaced by the New. The Old has vanished to make room for the New. This new Covenant has totally and completely replaced the Old Covenant and it alone is the pathway to heaven.

At the very second that Jesus died and rose from the dead- no man was able to receive forgiveness of sins through animal sacrifices any longer. At the very moment that Jesus died and rose from the dead- God no longer honored a priesthood which was based upon inferior promises. At the very second that Jesus died and rose from the Dead- the Old Covenant vanished, and the New Covenant was the only game in town. John tells us in verse 8 that the darkness has now passed away and the true light has now shined.

With that true light; in that true light; because of that true light enabled by that true light; empowered by that true light- we are able to obey God and we are able to love the brethren and we are able to do what no one else was able to do before this happened.

So John is telling us the same thing that Paul and Peter taught here – that because the true light has now shined- because Jesus has come and died and been risen again from the dead by the Glory of the

Father- because we have been born from above by Grace alone through Faith alone in Christ alone without any human effort at all- because that is true- the darkness of disobeying God and the darkness of not loving the brethren is now past. The Apostle Paul put it like this in **2 Corinthians 5:17:**

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Being a Christian changes everything, you see. We are like new people in a new world- nothing is the same as it was before. And John is saying the very same thing here. He said that this world is a realm of darkness- we saw that as we went over the first chapter when John was talking about light and darkness. And here in chapter two John comes right back to this same theme- and once again, John is echoing the very same thoughts of his co-laborer, Paul when *he* said in **Colossians 1:13:**

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

And the Apostle Peter said the same thing in **1Peter 2:9&10:**

9 But you are ***A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION,*** so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

10 for you once were ***NOT A PEOPLE,*** but now you are ***THE PEOPLE OF GOD;*** you had ***NOT RECEIVED MERCY,*** but now you have ***RECEIVED MERCY.***

So, the concept that Christians are in living and dwelling in the light and lost people are living and dwelling in darkness was not unique to John- it is a common theme throughout the New Testament. How strange it is then to hear people say today that there really isn't any difference in the way that Christians live, and lost people live- John and Peter and Paul certainly didn't believe that. Look what Jesus Himself said about this very issue in **John 8:12:**

... I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

Now compare what we have just talked about with verse 11 of **1John 2**:

But the one who 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.

John is saying here that loving the brethren is such a vital and intricate part of being a Christian that only those who are not in the light but who live and dwell in darkness would ever hate his brother.

In other words- John is teaching here that loving your brother is one of the tests which prove that you are saved and hating your brother is one of the tests which proves that you are lost.

Now how do I know that what I just said is true? Because of what John says here. Not only is John teaching here that those who hate their brother are not in the light- but he is also saying here that those who hate their brother also have darkness *within* them.

Now it is very possible, beloved that saved people can temporarily sin and periodically lapse into wrong behavior. The Bible is clear about that. But the Bible also teaches that the essence of Salvation is that when a saved person does sin- he cannot, and he will not remain in sin. He will repent and he will turn from that sin, and he will serve the Lord. That is because the new divine nature within him will not allow him to remain in sin.

But no truly saved person ever has darkness within him. That is not hard beloved- it is impossible. Darkness within a person proves that that person is not born from above. So, when John says here in verse 11 that hating your brother proves that you walk and live and dwell in darkness – John is very clearly equating hating your brother with being lost.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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