

**WALKING IN THE LIGHT- First John and the Path to Living Deeply in Christ - Part twenty-one**

**Sunday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - 10:00 a.m. - Teaching #2109**

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**KNOWING GOD AND KNOWING YOU ARE LOVED BY GOD (continued)**

**1 John 4:13-21 - "By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. [14] And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. [15] Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. [16] So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. [17] By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. [18] There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. [19] We love because he first loved us. [20] If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. [21] And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother."**

There are phrases in this text that give it incredible strength:

**IPAD TEXT - "...we know that we abide in him and he in us..."(13).**

**"...we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for**

**us."(16). "...so that we may have confidence for the day of**

**judgment...."(17).**

This is not the expression of some wishful, inner longing for self-esteem. These are words of ***certainty***. They are words you can ***lean*** on. They will ***hold you up*** when all else seems to rot and crumble.

I said last week there were three life sustaining principles in this text. In short, the issues of this text can be boiled down to first, ***knowing God*** , second, ***knowing you are loved by God***, and third, ***knowing you are saved by God***. In the long view of things, those are the three most vital issues for any thinking person.

Then we took the whole of last week's teaching centering on the key idea that only grace can give rise to authentic, God-pleasing holiness. The law and our regulations of the faith only bring an awareness of sin. And we ***are*** sinners, to be sure. But the gateway to new life isn't my best efforts at law-keeping. The gateway to life is the reception of divine grace through humble repentance of my failure before God's holy standards.

But there's more to be studied. What are the ***effects*** of divine grace freely received? What does it do? Where should I see its fruit growing in my daily life? John presses into this next. And it's our point number two moving on from last week's teaching:

- 2) **WE ARE ROOTED IN GOD'S LOVE BY EXTENDING HIS GRACE TO OTHERS**

**IPAD TEXT - 1 John 4:16b-21 - "...God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. [17] *By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.* [18] *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.* [19] *We love because he first loved us.* [20] *If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.* [21] *And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.*"**

Our first point raises a nagging question. What about people who don't seem to be awakened by grace as are others? Why do some people fail to find transforming power in grace? If power is in grace, and the grace is all God's, why don't all people experience the same power? Why would anybody remain unchanged by saving grace?

That's John's subject in these vital verses. Grace can overcome immorality. Grace can overcome pride. Grace can remake the broken. Grace can soothe worry and fear. God's grace seems to overcome just about anything plugging up the spiritual arteries in our hearts.

But there is something that can keep God's love from being “perfected” among His people - 4:17a - “By this is love perfected with us....’

And the context of those words makes plain the path to being perfected in God’s love John has in mind - **1 John 4:19-21 - “We love because he first loved us. [20] If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. [21] And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.” - IPAD TEXT**

In short, I must *extend* His love to *abide* in His love. And I use that *will* word - *must* - because that’s the very word John uses in our text - “And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother” (21). John wants to make clear that this kind of love for my brother or sister isn’t *automatic*. *I* must do this. *God* doesn’t do it for me.

And I must *extend* His love on the same basis as I *receive* His love. That’s why I took so much time on the first point of this message underscoring *how* we received God’s grace in Jesus Christ. Remember the thread that runs through this whole passage. John wants his readers to *know* God and to *know they are loved by God*.

But there is a way we can poke a hole in the bottom of our own boat. **Hatred** kills the life of the Spirit in my heart. It snuffs out the transforming power of divine grace. Of course, most of us don't think we **hate** anybody. But there's another internal attitude that **causes** hatred - one with which we're all familiar - one the Scriptures warn against more than lust, or greed or fornication. It's **anger**.

There is nothing else that is said to grieve the Spirit and give place to the Devil more quickly or with greater certainty than anger. Anger is the **root** of hatred. The Scriptures mince no words over this:

**IPAD TEXT (2) - Proverbs 22:24 - “Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man....”**

**Matthew 5:22a - “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment....”**

**IPAD TEXT - 2 Corinthians 12:20 - “For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder.”**

**IPAD TEXT - Ephesians 4:26-27, 30-31 - “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, [27] and give no opportunity to the devil....[30] And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. [31] Let all bitterness and *wrath and anger* and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.”**

**IPAD TEXT (2) - Colossians 3:8 - “But now you must *put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.*”**

**1 Timothy 2:8 - “I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands *without anger or quarreling....*”**

That's just a sampling of the warnings of scripture against anger - especially against a brother or sister.

Just in passing, it is interesting that expressive worship, while thoroughly commanded in the Scripture and in no way optional, is only acceptable when offered from lives free from anger to brothers and sisters in Christ. Such is the polluting power of anger over even the greatest and most important activities in the Christian life.

"But how do I overcome anger. How can I rise above this sinful reaction, especially when I'm being wronged by someone else?"

3) OBEY JOHN'S TWO PRINCIPLES FOR STAYING CLEAN AND OPEN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

- a) *Take each situation poisoning your soul with anger and place it in the context of the cross.*

John gives clear example of this - **Verse 14 - "And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world."** **Verse 19 - "We love because he first loved us."** - IPAD TEXT (2)

In each angering situation I must stop and collect my thoughts. I must bring my mind into proper order. I must refuse to act by *instinct*. I must pause. I must think and meditate on Biblical truth in *slow motion*. I must think of the cross of Jesus. I must think about how I was loved. I must put it all in the context of the cross. By that I mean I must ask questions like this one: *"If God treated me just as I'm treating my brother with whom I have issue, how long would I last?"*

- b) *I must hold before my mind the future day of judgement.*

Our tendency is to live exclusively in the present moment. This is where **vengeance** always tastes sweetest. So we deliberately choose to live for the moment. We choose not to see each part of our lives properly related to the whole. Again, John brings correction:

**IPAD TEXT - 1 John 4:17 - "By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world."**

Jesus said the one who was angry with his brother lives in danger of judgement. John says I must think of the final judgment whenever my brother's face comes up on the screen of my mind. My small personal vengeance is not worth the wrath of God.

Keeping my life free from anger and hatred will keep me looking forward to the second coming with peace and confidence in my heart. ***Don't let anybody else rob you of that joy by making you hate them.***

Let me repeat that. It's a great rule for all of life, and especially true if you want to know the joy of the Lord - ***Never allow someone else to ruin your life by making you hate them!***

Keep your heart sound. Keep your heart sure. Keep in step with the Holy Spirit of God. Keep your soul glued to calvary, the source of God's grace - the source of your power for holiness. Learn all over again to **"rely on the love God has for us."**