

# 1, 2 & 3 John

July 23, 2023

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is First, Second, and Third John. The scripture reading is First John 2, 12 to 14. Thank you to Dave, Jon, Gloria, and Don for being part of the video. Our prayers and sympathies are with the Mowat family following Darlene's passing. And happy birthday this week to Kelli and to Mariam.

## Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

Welcome. We invite you to come and take a seat and join us in our gathering to praise God. There are some announcements to be made. We have birthdays. Earl has a birthday this week and Jon has a birthday this week. Excellent. Jon, I have discussed is 78. And they just... How old is Earl? 15. Well, I know that sometimes he acts like that. Very good. No anniversaries this week.

And prayer requests. The Whitfield family is mourning the passing of Liam. He was 11 years old and had been battling leukemia for some time. And we continue to pray for Ruby. So we go to God in prayer. Let's bow our heads.

Father God, we praise you as a creator of all things. And we pray for those with afflictions, illnesses, for comfort. We ask that you help us recognize and respond to those in need. Our prayers are with the Whitfield family and their loss of the son and grandson. Our prayers are with the Mowat family. We pray for Ruby and her continued healing. And there are others amongst us who may be struggling. In various problems, we ask that you fill their hearts and renew their spirit. We ask that you help us all to draw closer to you through your love expressed in Christ Jesus, your son, in whom we pray. Amen.

## Communion

I don't know how many of you depend on a GPS to get you to where you're going. I'm not into that category. My kids are. So we were going to a cottage one time and we driving along following the GPS and we stopped. The GPS said turn right. So we did. And it said turn left and we did turn left and we did and turn left and we did. We came back to the very street we started at, but on the opposite side of the road. But what it should have told us was turn left at the first one. But anyway, it didn't. But I thought about that. I thought about spiritual reality. All of us are going to be confronted with Jesus at some point in our life. And we're going to have to stop and think about him. And what are you going to do with him? We have a song that says, what are you going to do with Jesus? And I got thinking about that.

What are we going to do? And so my thinking is this. We need to stop. Stop. Think about Jesus. Give up all the stuff you've been fed over your life of books or music or whatever it may have been. But think about Jesus. Him only. Then we need to look. Need to search. We search the scriptures so we can learn about Jesus. If you go to the library, you can go there, but you'll never learn about Jesus in the millions of books they have. There's only one book in the library and I'm not even sure they have one. It's a Bible. But you search the scriptures so you can find out who is this Jesus that we keep talking about. And when we do that, we find him.

We need to ask him, Lord, which way should I go? Left, right, straight forward. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the light. There's no other way you can come back to God except through him. And I thought, wow, that's amazing. Search the scriptures. We find out who he is and then we have to walk in his ways. We walk as he would have us walk. That takes a lot of courage, a lot of insight, a lot of wisdom to know what he wants us to do. It's okay for people to tell us in all the books that have been written and how to be happy, how to do this and how to do that. But Jesus teaches us he is the way, the truth and the life. So if we stop and follow that GPS to heaven, it's going to tell us follow my son, Jesus, the Christ, the son of the living God.

There's a song that Adam started teaching us a couple of weeks back, Gentle Shepherd. Gentle Shepherd, come and lead us, for we need you to help us find our way. Gentle Shepherd, come and feed us, for we need your strength from day to day. There's no other way we can turn to who can help us face another day. Gentle Shepherd, come and lead us, for we need you to help us find our way. That's the GPS I want to follow is the truth himself. Let's go to him in prayer.

Father, we thank you so much for Jesus. He was willing to come and take upon himself our sins on the cross of Calvary. That was his body that was given, his blood that was shed, that there's no other way back to you except through him. And by faith, Father, we ask that you will help us to walk in the way that he has taught us to do the things he asked us to do. And at the end of the day, you will welcome us home. And so Father, keep alive within us faith and hope. And we just pray that you'll bless us all according to your will today as we partake of the loaf and the cup at this time. For we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

## Reading

### 1 John 2:12-14

I'm going to read some of the ancient words to you this morning from 1 John 2, 12 to 14. This is John speaking to us. I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear 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 men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

## Sermon

Good morning, everybody. Glad that you are with us today. Today we're finishing up our series of the epistles. And I'm being rather ambitious today because we want to look at first, second, and third John. So we'll be moving to the next chapter of the chapter. And we'll be going through the chapter. And we'll be going through the chapter. And we'll be going through the chapter. And we'll be going through the chapter. And we'll be going through the chapter. So we'll be moving right along. John is one of these wonderful writers who emphasizes the love that we have because of God loving us. And he also assures us of our own salvation. Listen to his words. I write these things to you believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. This is the confidence that we have in approaching God. That if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have received what we've asked of him. And then he says, if you see any brother or sister commit a sin that does not lead

to death, you should pray and God will give them life. I refer to those who sin did not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. And I'm not saying that you should pray about that. All wrongdoing is sin. And there is sin that does not lead to death. And then he says these words. We know, we know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin. The one who was born as children of God and that the whole world is under the control of the devil. We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true by being of the Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

So John just capsulizes all this loving that Jesus demonstrated. And so in first John, he talks about understanding salvation as best as we can. And he begins with these words, "that which is in the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched. This we proclaim concerning the word of life," meaning Jesus. "The life appeared and we have seen him and testified to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." And then he says this, I think with a smile on his face when he writes it. We write this to make our joy complete, not just mine, but all of us. Here's this wonderful salvation, this wonderful love that he pours out to us so that we can receive it. And once we receive it and love it, we can share it with others. This is the message that we have heard from him and declared to you, God is light. And in him, there's no darkness at all. And if we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in darkness, we lie and we do not live out the truth, but then these precious words. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin.

So I picture in my mind, John, in an upper room, maybe somewhere, and he knows the prophets very well. And of course, he had a relationship with Jesus very, very well and the resurrection of Jesus and Jesus going to heaven and coming back someday. So I see him in a room and he's writing to people who are just beginning to maybe think a little bit about who is this Jesus? Well, who's going to teach him? If you're asking questions about Jesus, John, I think is saying, well, if I don't teach them, who's going to teach them? And maybe that's something that we might consider. If someone doesn't really know about Jesus, can I share with them? And here, way back then, he's making this claim that Jesus is Lord and Savior of all. And then he says this, "My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate, one who is between us and God, with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous one. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world. No one, no one has dropped so low in life that they can't come to Christ.

We remember the story of Paul. Saul, who condemned Christians, put them to death until one day a voice from heaven came and spoke to him. Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? And he says, well, who are you, Lord? He said, I'm Jesus Christ, whom you are crucifying. His life just changed. His life just changed. To know that there is this creator of all beings, this creator who loves us, who pours out his love to us, who forgives us, who welcomes us. He is an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous one. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, but not only for our sins, but for the sins of the entire world. And then he talks about reasons for writing. And one of the things he talks about is, stay away from disliking people. Choose to say, I used to live this way, but I'm going to like people now because of the love that God has given me. And if God has given me this love, I want to like people to the point where I can teach people so that they can love God and teach others about Jesus as well. So here's what he said. Dear friends, I'm not writing to you a new command, but an old one, which you

have had since the beginning. The old command is the message you have heard. Yet I am writing to you a new command. It's truth is seen in him, Jesus, and in you. Because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. Those who claim to be in the light, but hate fellow believers are still in the dark. And those who love their fellow believers live in the light, and there is nothing to make them stumble. But those who hate a fellow believer are in the darkness and walk around in the darkness. They do not know what they're going because the darkness has blinded them. It's the emphasis of coming back to Jesus, stronger than ever.

And so John says, I want to tell you why I'm writing these things to you. And so here's what he said, and I like this because we read it this morning. I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. I'm writing to you fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I'm writing to you, young people, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear children, because you know the father. And I write to you fathers, because you know who is from the beginning. And I write to you, young people, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one. So then he says, do not love the world or anything in the world, for if you love the world, the love of the father is not in you. For everything in the world, and he talks about what he means, the cravings of sinful people, the lust of their eyes, their boasting about what they have and do, comes not from the Father, but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. Now he's not suggesting for a moment that we can't have fun in this world, that we can't enjoy this world, but he's saying, remember where all this comes from, that this life that we have, God knew us before we were born. And so we come into the world, we know about Jesus, where we have a relationship with him, and we want to share that relationship with others. And so our friends might come up and say, well, tell me about all this. And maybe you've had that experience where you've just sat down and started chatting as the days go by, and the weeks go by, the months go by. They have turned their life around, and they see Jesus face to face, if you will. They have a personal relationship with Christ, as you and I do.

And sometimes it's an interesting word, but it's this word. It's called the anointing. The anointing. Back in the Old Testament, when there were certain festivals going on, there was anointing. Before the priests could carry out their sacrifices, they had to be anointed. They had to be washed and covered and so forth. And there is this anointing that is talking about in the Bible, and the anointing is God's holy spirit living in us. But you have an anointing, John says. We do. We have an anointing from the holy one. And all of you know the truth. I don't write to you because you don't know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie comes from that truth. Who is the liar? It is whoever denies Jesus is the Messiah. Such a person is the Antichrist, denying the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father. As for you, see what you have heard from the beginning, that it remains in you. If it does, you will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what He promised us, eternal life. So I'm writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you receive from Him remains in you. And you don't need anyone to teach you. But this anointing, this anointing we have in Christ. And so He says, don't be ashamed of any of that. Now, dear children, continue in Him, that when He appears, we may be confident and unashamed before His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of God. And that one day, and that one day, when the world stops and God breaks through and Christ comes for all of us, we're not going to be ashamed. We'll be

so grateful for the blessing that He has given us. No more death, no more crying, no more pain, for that old order of things has passed away. And behold, all things have become new.

And so it makes sense that He would say this, see what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. And we know that when Christ appears, we will be like Him and see Him as He is. So don't let people, He says, don't let anyone lead you astray. And they talked about love and hatred, that it was dividing a lot of Christians. And then He says, so for this is the message that you've heard from the beginning, we should love one another. Don't be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he do it? Because of his own actions and those actions were evil. Don't be that way. This is how we know what love is, that Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for one another. If any of you has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need and has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in them? Dear children, let us love with words. Let us not love only with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth. And this is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in His presence. It's a beautiful description of the love that we should have for God, God's love and our love.

And so he says in chapter four, this is how we know that we live in Him, that He lives in us. He has given us His Spirit. And we have seen and testify, excuse me, that the Father has sent His Son to be Savior. And so we know and we rely on God's love for us. If you're having a bad day, just remember these words. We know that God loves us and will never leave us. He gives us His grace. He gives us His love. He gives us His confidence. There is no fear in love because love drives out that fear. He's given us this command. Those who love God must love one another. So that's first John and he concludes by saying, I write these things to you who believe in the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. This is the confidence we have in approaching God. That if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have because we've asked of Him. And then he says, we know that we are children of God and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us everything so that we may know Him, Jesus, who is true. And we are in Him who is true, being in His Son, Jesus Christ. So John lays that out.

So after all of that, what else can he say? But he's got something more to say. He's a preacher. He's always got something more to say. And so in second John, not John chapter two, just the book, second John, very brief. There's some contention, but begins by saying the elder to the lady chosen by God and her children. There's a possibility that that's somewhat symbolism, but I suspect that it means what it says, that there was a lady in the church chosen by God and her children, whom I love in the truth. And not only I, but also all those who know the truth, because the truth, which lives in us, will be with us forever. And then he says this in verse four, it's given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. And now, dear lady, I'm not writing you a new command, but one that you've had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk in obedience in his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that we walk in love. Many deceivers who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ coming in the flesh have gone out into the world. And then very strong words, any such person is a deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out. Watch out that you do not lose what we work for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God. And whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does

not bring this teaching, do not take them back to your house or welcome them. Anyone who welcomes there shares their wicked work. That's strong, strong language.

So John is making it clear that faith is so important and that God will pour out his faith into our lives through Jesus Christ by continually sharing that word, listening to that word, finding confidence in that word that God has always loved us. So a very brief book.

And then the last one is third John. And again, very, very brief. And then I'll be finished. He begins by saying this letter to the elder, to my friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth and these beautiful words, very brief, only 13 verses. Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. It gave me great joy to have some believers come and testify to your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in that truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that quotation. My children, Christians, are walking in the truth. Dear friend, you are faithful in what you're doing for the brothers and sisters. So precious, even though they were strangers to you, they have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth. I wrote to the church. But Diotrephes who always loves to be first will have nothing to do with us. So when I come, I will call attention to what he's doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and kicks them out of the church. Can you believe it? So dear friend, do not imitate what is evil. Here's what you imitate. What is good. That's what you imitate. Anyone who does what is evil is not seen by God. Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone. And even by the truth itself, we also speak well of him. And you know that the testimony is true.

And then he says, what a preacher would say, I have a lot more to say. I have so much more to write. But he said, I don't want to do so. I don't want to do so with pen and ink. I want to see you soon. And we'll talk face to face. I always wondered about the disciples, the apostles. Peter seemed so impetuous for the longest time. All of the disciples and apostles all had their unique personalities. We can sort of feel it when we hear this. But there's no doubt about it. When John writes, it's about love. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And also first John, and second John, and third John. And believe it or not, who writes the revelation? Well, we'll talk about that next week.

## Closing Prayer

It's a little intimidating sometimes to get up and sort of give a couple of thoughts. When they've been so expertly covered, and to add to it, I feel a little bit awkward. And I apologize if you've heard this before. These thoughts from me, possibly personal favorite scriptures, are in the John's epistles. We all go through our ups and downs in our Christian faith journey. Whatever the struggle, wherever it's outside of us or inside, we're often in turmoil of emotions or circumstances. And there's this confidence that Don has mentioned several times in John's letters that light prevails over darkness, good over evil, God's way over the world, and now I'm going to test. Most of the crowd is old enough to remember this.

There's a song, 1971, Bill Withers, Ain't No Sunshine When She's Gone. We could change that she to he and make a spiritual sermon out of that. But the point I'm getting to is, he didn't have the lyrics. And so he repeated, I know, I know, I know, I know, 26 times in succession. And it's recorded that way. So we come to the first letter of John, he uses the word know or known 32 times in 105 verses. You know, you

know, you know. And if that's not building some confidence, I don't know what is, you know this. Depending on which translation you use 32 times, they're inspiring, not an annoyance like the song mentioned before, it just became a little annoying that he repeated it so many times.

Inquiring minds want to know. And John says, you already know this. This is how you know. So we know and we rely on the love of God has for us. John knew that we would never find in ourselves the faithfulness needed. So he gives us this confidence in the faith by expressing love. Love to God and love to others. Perhaps the powerful expression, if we love one another, God abides in us. God lives in us. And his love is perfected in us. That's an awesome, incredibly confident building statement. God lives in us. It's if we love one another and his love is perfected in us. A prayer let us go from this place and allow his love to be perfected in us.

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