

# 1 JOHN

## 2:3-29

### 1 John 2:3-2:29

Taught at our Sunday evening service, 10th July 2022 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

**Reading:** 1 John 2:3-2:29

**Good evening. Let's pray.**

#### Introduction

Last Sunday evening we began a new study through 1st John - one of five Bible books penned by the apostle John - and we got as far as verse 2 of chapter 2 of this five chapter letter.

As a quick recap of the introduction last week, the **theme**, as summarised by many, is that God is light, God is love, and God is life - which are three descriptions John gives in this letter. John also gives us 5 purposes that he wrote it:

1. That you may have fellowship with other believers (1 John 1:3)
2. That your joy may be full (1 John 1:4)
3. That you may not sin (1 John 2:1)
4. That you may know that you have eternal life (1 John 5:13)
5. That you may *continue* to believe in the name of the Son of God (1 John 5:13)

The **topics** that John writes about (in order that we might have and know these things) include ones such as fellowship (we spent some good time looking at that last week), and sin, spiritual deception, prayer and Jesus' return. He writes much about love, which is mentioned 33 times, as well as things we can *know* - that verb is used 39 times in this letter.

And in doing these things, John makes a strong rebuttal to the Gnostics of the day that believed Jesus was not God, or that He didn't have a physical body - ideas that persist today. Specifically we saw that rebuttal start in the opening 4 verses of chapter 1, and we'll see it tonight in verses 18-25.

## Overview of 1 John

Now, starting zoomed out, the five chapters can be summarised as follows:

- Chapter 1 - A real Jesus and restored relationship with God who is light
- Chapter 2 - We know that we know Him, but should walk our talk, and avoid deceptions
- Chapter 3 - We are children of God, and should abide in Him, and love others that do
- Chapter 4 - Be careful what you listen to, and love one another for God is love
- Chapter 5 - Obedience to Christ should follow the certainty of what has been done for us

## Overview of chapter two

Zooming into chapter 2, I suggest the following summary:

- v1-2 - Fellowship with God and one another (continued from 1:5-10) (studied last time)
- v3-11 - Assurance of salvation, and the test for mere churchgoers
- v12-14 - The spiritual condition of those that John is writing to
- v13-17 - The love of the world vs the love of God
- v18-27 - Truth vs deception
- v28-29 - A call to obedience

## Chapter two

So then, let's zoom in further still, and pick up our study in verse 3 of chapter 2 where we read:

### 1 John 2:3

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

This is a big verse.

Let's start by considering what these commandments are that John is referring to. They are not the law of God - as in the 10 commandments - though of course I hope none of us lie, steal, commit adultery, or murder!

But rather, they are the commands of Christ - through His own words, and through those who penned the New Testament under the direction of His Holy Spirit. We find as many as 1050 of these throughout the New Testament, and even when we group repeated commands they still tally around 800. And these commands are instructions for how we should live, not so that we might *be* saved, but because we have *been* saved.

Indeed it's important to note that the text doesn't say "by this we know Him" but "by this we know that we know Him". And there's a huge difference between the two.

That is, this is how to have confidence and assurance in your salvation. That is, your salvation is not by works, but *evidenced* by your works - by the things you do and things you don't do, that is; the way you live your life.

James writes:

### James 2:17-18

Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

Oh, but that seems like hard work. Really? As hard as dying on the cross? Indeed, John tells us that keeping His commandments is not hard work – we read in chapter five...

**1 John 5:3**

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

Likewise Jesus said:

**Matthew 11:28-30**

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

How do these commandments become easy and light, and not burdensome? Because of *why* we keep them. We don't keep them because we have been told to. We keep them out of love for our Saviour who has shown such incredible love toward us. We no longer do as we please, but do as Christ pleases. And in doing so we maintain *not* our salvation, but our fellowship with Jesus. Indeed, the Greek term used for know is one that indicates intimacy – that is, when we keep His commandments, and thus have fellowship with God, THAT is when we really get to know Him and have that sweet communion with Him.

But on the contrary, we then read:

**1 John 2:4**

He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

If you say you're a Christian, but don't keep His commandments, your life is the lie. You're saying one thing, but living another. And you should indeed question if you know Him at all.

But what of the Christian who sins? Maybe you're thinking "But I sinned today!" Or "I sinned last week". "Does that mean I'm not saved?"

No, there's a distinction between falling into sin vs diving into sin. We all do sin. We know that, because just last week we looked at chapter 1:8 which says "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But there's a difference between wrestling with sin, and loving it. And John's intent is that we might have confidence as to where we stand.

So, are you sleeping with your girlfriend? Are you getting drunk every weekend? Are you continually stealing from your employer? Are you withholding wages from your employees? Do you have an uncontrolled foul temper? Do you regularly swear like a trooper?

If so, you need to come to your senses and realise you've either broken your fellowship with the Father (see last week) and need to confess your sin, and stop your sin. Or, you need to be honest and examine yourself to see if you are indeed a Christian, or have just been pretending.

Don't let yourself live the lie of pretend Christianity.

**1 John 2:5**

But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.

So again, John wants you and I to have confidence that we are saved. How do we know? How do we have this confidence? By keeping His Word.

It therefore follows that we need to know what His Word says! Why is that? Because in it we have all that we need. We read in 2 Timothy...

**2 Timothy 3:16-17**

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Back in 1st John we read:

**1 John 2:6**

He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

You may remember the WWJD bracelets, bookmarks, posters, t-shirts and such from the 90's that stood for What Would Jesus Do? As good a reminder as that may be, to actually do what He did, we first need to KNOW *what* He did - to ask What DID Jesus Do?

From being angry at evil, yet without sin, to preaching the truth. To having zero focus on acquiring things of this world. Able and willing to leave family for the sake of serving. Washed His disciples feet. Laid down His life for the church (husbands take note of that!).

John continues...

**1 John 2:7**

Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.

John is not trying to get legalistic, demanding we do or don't do certain things to earn our salvation. No, no. He's saying this is nothing new, that we love God with all our heart, soul and strength.

But then says...

**1 John 2:8**

Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.

Didn't he just say this is nothing new? And now he's saying it's a new commandment? Yes, but not in the way we read it in English. The greek word for for new, *kainos*, implies fresh. So while the commandment isn't new, it gathers fresh meaning in light of what Christ has done for us.

And speaking of light, he writes...

**1 John 2:9**

He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.

So coming back to the point he made in chapter 1, that *God is light, and if we walk in darkness we don't practice the truth*, he says here that not only our closeness of walk with God is indicative of our relationship with Him, but so is our relationship with others also indicative of our relationship with God. He says:

**1 John 2:10-11**

He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

The problem is this; God is light. It is by Him and His Word that we make sense of right and wrong. It is that light that reveals the errors of our way. We read:

**Psalms 119:105**

Your word is a lamp to my feet  
And a light to my path.

And when we remove the lamp to our feet and light to our path by straying from the Bible, we're in no-mans land with an enemy that wants to shoot us down. We will stumble.

Now this doesn't mean that we won't some people annoying or objectionable (though sometimes that *IS* our issue not theirs) - but that we should never hate them, and doing so actually reveals we're in darkness - that we're not walking in the light. Note these words Jesus spoke...

**John 8:12**

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

What did He say? Look at this account in Matthew 22:

### **Matthew 22:36-40**

Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

If you want further evidence of your salvation, you should find it in how you love others. But if you find that you don't love others, be sure that this isn't because you have no love for God either.

John now writes regarding his audience...

### **1 John 2:12-14**

I write to you, little children,  
Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.  
I write to you, fathers,  
Because you have known Him who is from the beginning.  
I write to you, young men,  
Because you have overcome the wicked one.  
I write to you, little children,  
Because you have known the Father.  
I have written to you, fathers,  
Because you have known Him who is from the beginning.  
I have written to you, young men,  
Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you,  
And you have overcome the wicked one.

What is he saying here? That he is writing to all, regardless of their maturity in life and in the Lord. There are 4 Greek words used in the original text describing the various stages;

- Teknia - the smallest of children, infants, newborn
- Paidia - little children who are able to walk and talk, but half grown and immature
- Neaniskos - young men, those who are no longer caught up in deceptions
- Pateres - fathers, who are mature, and who reproduce

And you see here how that progression is just like the Christian life. And we are to grow up, learning from our Heavenly Father, that we might come to that place of maturity where we are no longer tossed around by every wind of doctrine, but rather lead others to Christ, and raise, teach and train them in the ways of the Lord.

But we'll never reach that place of maturity if we don't eat. Just the same in our physical lives - it's the only way we grow. And we should pay attention to the following rebuke we read in Hebrews, regarding how well each feed in our own spiritual lives:

### **Hebrews 5:12-14**

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Now, we know that we should love God. We should keep His commandments. That's what any Christian should be known for. But John now writes about something we should not do...

### **1 John 2:15**

**Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

He's not talking about the world in the sense of God's creation. Nor is he talking about people, for as we read last week, "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." But rather he is writing about the systems of this world - and the allure of money, career, power, and so on.

And before you think you're immune to this, look at Demas, a man whose name even made it to the pages of the Bible. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul wrote...

**Colossians 4:14**

Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.

And when writing to Philemon about Onesimus, he mentions him again...

**Philemon 1:23**

Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

Counted here as a fellow labourer. Yet by the time he writes to Timothy for the 2nd time he writes...

**2 Timothy 4:9-10**

Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.

Oh may we not get caught up in this world. Money isn't a bad thing, but the love of it is, as we're told in 1 Timothy...

**1 Timothy 6:10**

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Charles Spurgeon commented:

Many a man when he begins to accumulate wealth begins also to ruin his soul... the more he saves the more he wants, and the more he wants of this world the less he craves for the world to come.

**Charles Spurgeon**

Paul isn't the only one to warn about the allure of this world and how it damages our walk with God, for James writes:

**James 4:1-4**

Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Can this happen to a Christian? Well, evidently yes as John is warning us right here not to love the world! Again, you can't lose your salvation, but you can lose your fellowship with your Saviour.

So how does this happen to a Christian? Satan has 3 tactics...

**1 John 2:16**

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

In Genesis 3 we see Satan promise that the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was good for food (the lust of the flesh), pleasant to the eyes (the lust of the eyes), and would make one wise (the pride of life). Then in Matthew 4, we read that Satan tried to tempt Jesus to turn stones into bread (the lust of the flesh), to look at the kingdoms that could be His (the lust of the eyes), and to prove Himself to the people by jumping from a pinnacle (the pride of life).

And he'll try the same with you. So beware. We read in 1 Peter 5...

**1 Peter 5:8-10**

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

We need to keep our eyes on our blessed hope - not on the temporary things of this world - as John now writes...

**1 John 2:17**

And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

We're comparing that which may just possibly, depending on our frail health and failing economy, last a lifetime of what, 80-90 years with a good run, with that which will last an eternity. Literally.

**1 John 2:18**

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.

John is saying that while *the* Antichrist (capital A) is still to come, there are many today (just like the Gnostics of John's time) who are anti-Christ (lowercase a), and their determination to do all they can against the cause of Christ is a continual reminder that we have a Saviour who is coming back to meet us in the air, and take us to be with Him forever more.

And John says of them...

**1 John 2:19**

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

In a way, better that those who are against Christ depart from the church, than they remain in it! And we see the same thing today - those that walk away, not only from this church, but any church, to pursue conspiracy theories and doctrines of men. And it is as evident with them that they are not seeking the truth of God's Word, as those that departed the early church.

**1 John 2:20**

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.

What does this mean? It means that we are filled with the Holy Spirit, who is able to guide us into all truth, as Jesus said He would. That we might know intuitively truth from error.

John continues...

**1 John 2:21-23**

I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

And so here, John calls out the Gnostic doctrines that Jesus was not the Messiah, the Christ. That God was not the Father of Jesus, nor Jesus the Son of the Father. And he calls them lies. How does He know, because he was there! That's what he firmly stated in verses 1-4 of chapter 1.

**1 John 2:24**

Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

In other words, you need to stand your ground. Abide, and continue in Jesus. This wasn't new information - he had previously recorded Jesus words in John 15:

**John 15:5-8**

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

We are to abide in Him. And why on earth would we not want to do that? For as John writes:

**1 John 2:25**

And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.

Wow, this should surely get our attention!! I like what J Vernon McGee notes in response to this verse...

The only kind of life that God offers is eternal life. If you lose it tomorrow or next week or next year, it isn't eternal life that you have. It is some other kind of life, but not eternal life.

**J Vernon-McGee**

This incredible promise changes everything. Which is why John wants us to *know* that we are saved, not merely *hope* that we are saved. And he writes this against a backdrop of those who were denying who Christ was:

**1 John 2:26**

These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you.

Very clearly speaking about those who teach false doctrine.

And so he writes...

**1 John 2:27**

But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

That is, we have the Holy Spirit to guide us in all truth, the Holy Spirit himself being the one who reveals the truth of His Word to us. And so John says, you don't need additional teaching to this - you don't need extra-Biblical sources, new revelations and the such.

What he doesn't say, is that you don't need Bible teachers. Because we do need those that will faithfully teach God's Word. Paul notes this in Ephesians 4:11-12, and in Hebrews 13:7. We see Godly men set over the early churches to teach them - and we see Paul's exhortations to Timothy to preach the Word.

John now closes this chapter saying;

**1 John 2:28**

And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

How do we abide in Him? By reading the Word. By prayer. By letting Him change us, mould us, and make us more like Him. Our aim should be the same as Paul's who wrote this to the Philippians:

**Philippians 3:7-11**

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

When Jesus calls His bride, the church, to Him - we should not desire that to be an embarrassing experience of those who spoke lots about abiding in Him, but in practice did little.

**1 John 2:29**

If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

A few folks have said that my son, Judah, looks like me. And if that be the case, then it's no surprise, because I'm his father. The question is though, do we look like our Heavenly Father in how we live? Do we practice righteousness? Do we do it?

Remember where we started this evening:



**1 John 2:3**

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

If you keep His commandments, that is a great assurance you can have that you ARE saved.

**Application questions**

This week, I encourage you to ask yourself these questions:

- Do you keep His commandments?
- Do you know what His commandments are? (how many of the 800 can you list?)
- Do you love the world? (if you spend more time checking social media than His Word this week, then I suggest something is wrong)

**Let's pray.**