

(1Jn 2:7~11)

⁷*Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.* ⁸*Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shines.* ⁹*He that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now.* ¹⁰*He that loves his brother abides in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.* ¹¹*But he that hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not whither he goes, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.*

I want to continue in our study of 1John 2 this evening, picking up where we left off this morning, at verse seven. And as we do, we're going to find that what John says here is basically an explanation of what he has been talking about here about obedience to God, and how it results in walking in the love of God. It becomes the practical application of what he was referring to there in five, when he said, ⁵*But whoso keeps his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected:* In short, John is saying that "True obedience to God" manifests itself by the individual growing and maturing in the love of God. Not, in the sense of "Knowing" the love of God in the terms of "Knowledge," but rather experiential and application. Literally, John is saying that the "Very love of God" will dwell in that man, and manifest itself through his life. The one who is truly obedient to God, will manifest the very love of God in his life!

In affirmation of this, John points to the life of Jesus Christ...

⁶*He that says he abides in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

There's no question as to whom John is referring to here when he says that we ought to walk, even as He walked, right? He's referring to Jesus. And when you understand the context here, the point becomes clear. Christ is our example of true obedience! Where did John get this truth? By watching Jesus, as he walked in obedience to the Father. Jesus walked in perfect obedience to His Father, God, right? Absolutely. Therefore John points to Him as the *supreme illustration* of the truth he is sharing here of what defines "True Obedience" to God looks like. John says, in Christ, we learn what it means to be a true servant of the Lord, what it means to be faithful and obedient to God the Father...and that is, to walk in His love towards sinners. John says here, that's what Jesus did, and given that we are followers of Christ, doesn't it just stand to reason that we walk in the same manner? Sure it does. If we walk in true obedience to God, we too will manifest that same love for our brothers out here as Christ did.

This is exactly what John is referring to here in verses 7~11, and how that obedience to the Father results in loving our brothers... **Let's look at this...** ⁷*Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.* ⁸*Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shines.*

The way this is written, what John says here can be a little bit confusing. In verse seven he begins by saying that he is not writing a new commandment to them, but rather it's an old one, one they've had from the beginning. But then he turns right around and says in verse eight, "*a new commandment I give you...*" Given the way it's written in the King James language, it's a little confusing, is this a new commandment, or an old one, right? So which is it? Well, it seems to be both in a sense. What I mean is, he seems to be saying here is, that what he is writing here, is not anything new, but rather this is a truth that goes back to the very beginning. What he is writing here is not new, but it just seems new. It just appears new to us, because it is just now coming to light. This is a truth that we've only come to learn recently through Jesus Christ. Before He came, the darkness obscured this truth, but through Him, this truth has become crystal clear. You see that? It's like, "*What I'm writing may seem like "new truth," but it's not, it's actually an old truth, that which was from the beginning. It only seems new to us, because we didn't realize it until Christ revealed it to us.*" We used to be "in the dark" on this, but now this truth "shines bright."

What truth or what commandment is he referring to? The commandment of walking in love towards sinners... John makes this statement, in between two passages dealing with love. First we have the one that immediately follows this statement, where John declares that he that loves his brother, walks in the

light, contrasted with he who hates his brother, who walks in darkness. Reaffirming his point in verses 3~6, that he who walks in obedience to God, walks in love, whereas he who walks in disobedience is revealed in that he hates his brother.

Now don't miss this, this is crucial to understanding this whole letter. John is clarifying this because once again, this is not the case with the Pharisees and Scribes of his day. Listen, they claimed to know God, and walk with Him. They considered themselves to be obedient to God, by their obedience to His Law, His commandments. And if you know anything about these men, they were meticulous about serving the Law of God. By all outward accounts, these men were obedient to God, by all outward accounts they were these righteous men of God. BUT...the truth is, their anything but Godly! For they don't LOVE! You see the point?

Listen very closely, **their obedience to God was not true obedience.** These men may have said they knew God, and they may have considered themselves to be obedient to Him, but according to John, **by the way they treated their fellow man, by the way they treated their neighbor**, it bore witness that their claims were simply not true! The fact they were unloving towards sinners...clearly revealed they walked in darkness, and not the light. Which is exactly what John says next here in our text for this evening...

⁹*He that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now.*

¹⁰*He that loves his brother abides in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.*

It is John's statements here that we really begin to better understand John's opening statements there in chapter one, concerning the analogy of walking in light or darkness. Contrast these two statements here, with those two in chapter one...

The Revelation...God is LIGHT... ⁵*This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

(1:6) ⁶*If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:*

(2:9) ⁹*He that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now.*

(1:7) ⁷*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another...*

(2:10) ¹⁰*He that loves his brother abides in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.*

What John says here in our text for tonight, certainly makes his reference to walking in darkness and walking in the light here in chapter one, much clearer, doesn't it? A man may claim to know God, and have fellowship with God...but if he doesn't love his brother, than that reveals **he's walking in darkness**, and does not know God! This is contrasted with the one who loves his brother, who is described as walking in the light. Whether or not a man walks in the light or walks in darkness depends on whether or not he loves his brother.

When you take everything John says here in chapter two to this point, and put it all together, we'll see there's a logical progression here. Verse 3~4, the one who truly knows God, is the one who keeps His commandments. In turn, the one who keeps His commandments, in him is verily the love of God perfected. A love that in turn is manifested towards his brother. So we see, there's a logical progression here. The opposite of that is true as well, as John declares. The one who doesn't keep God's commandments, reveals that he doesn't know God. And in turn, as proof of his not keeping God's commandments, he does not love his brother. They all go hand in hand... The end result is, the truth that John is declaring here is, what affirms a man of truly knowing God, and having fellowship with Him, and walks in obedience to Him...is that he walks in love towards his brother. If he doesn't, regardless of his claims, in spite of what he professes, even if he seemingly walks in perfect obedience to God in that he "lives right," and does right...in spite of all that, if he doesn't genuinely love his brother, then this man

doesn't know God. It's not possible John says. Knowing that "God is love" (Ch.4:7) if a man who claims to know him doesn't love, then that reveals he doesn't know Him! It is that simple...

Having said that, the question then becomes, who John is referring to here as "*his brother.*" Some have suggested that John was referring to other believers, speaking of our brothers/sisters in the Lord. Now, it is true, the scriptures do clearly teach, that believers are to love one another fervently. But I am completely convinced that this "brother" that John is referring to here, is not to that of a fellow Christian brother. When you consider the context of everything John says here, along with the general teaching throughout the N.T on this issue, and especially considering those whom John is making reference to here as those who walk in darkness, the Scribes and Pharisees, the only logical conclusion I can come to is that John is referring to our lost brothers and sisters out here, who are still lost in sin. I see this commandment to love our brother the same as Jesus' commandment to love our neighbor, which is a reference to our fellow man. Remember the lawyer who asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" He asked that because he was a Jew, and he hated his Gentile neighbors. Well, Jesus told a story there that clearly revealed He was talking about loving the unbelieving Gentiles. In that story, Jesus portrayed the Gentile man as the hero of the story. No doubt, this incited the Jewish lawyer. When you understand that story, Jesus was declaring that the Gentile man showed more godliness than the other Jews combined. The story was how he showed love to a complete stranger, whereas the two religious men, the priest and Levite...just walked on by.

In that story, our fellow man was referred to as our neighbor. Here John uses the term "brother," a more intimate term, which actually is a more accurate term to describe our fellow man...

Explain: Ultimately, we are all brothers and sisters, the children of God...

Explain: Mt.5:44... What reward have you if you salute your own...do not publicans do the same? There Jesus was teaching us that as "God's Children," we are to manifest the same kind of love that God has. We are to go beyond loving our own, beyond loving our friends and family. Sinners love with that kind of love. Jesus declares there, in order to be identified as the children of God, we would have to love with the kind of love that God loves. By showing love to our enemies, love to those who do us wrong, those who spitefully use us and so on...showing love to those who transgress against us. If we are called to love our enemies...that pretty much includes everyone, right?

And then finally here in John's letter, the final straw to me is, WHO John is referring to in those who claimed to know God and fellowship with God, but walked in darkness...the Scribes and Pharisees. It is in light of these men, that John's whole letter becomes clear. These men claimed to know God, they claimed to have fellowship with God, and they considered themselves obedient to God, by their obedience to His commandments, the Law of God. But given how they treated sinners revealed that they walked in disobedience to His commandments, and did not know Him as they claimed. ¹¹ *...he that hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not whither he goes, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.*

They may have considered themselves to be these great, spiritual men of God...but given how they treated their brothers, the truth was they were spiritually blind, and didn't have a clue who God was! Remember what Jesus said about these men...HE said, "*They are blind, leaders of the blind.*" He was saying that even though they claimed to know God and the way to God...they didn't. Matter of fact, He was saying they were completely spiritually blind, and didn't have a clue where they were going, and that anyone who followed these men...would end up in the ditch right along with them. That is the same thing John is saying here, ¹¹ *...he that hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not whither he goes, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.* John says they are as blind as a bat, and have no idea where they are going, because the darkness they walk in has completely blinded their eyes.

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that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now. ¹⁰He that loves his brother abides in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. ¹¹But he that hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not whither he goes, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

John says, what I'm telling you is not a "new truth," but rather an "old one" from the beginning. It only appears new, because it's only come to "light" recently in the life of Jesus Christ. He walked in obedience, He was faithful to God and fellowship with the Father. And what we've learned from Him is this...those who truly know God, and fellowship with Him, and Know Him...bear in their lives the very love of God towards sinners... If a man claims to know God, but hates sinners out here and wants nothing to do with them, judging and condemning them...know this, they don't know God. They don't have a clue who He is, they are "Spiritually blind" and walk in utter darkness...