

February 23, 2020 – Elmont Baptist Church

Text: 1 John 2:1-6

Message Series: 1 John: By This We Know

Week 3: Counsel & Confidence

Introduction:

1. Remember, John is the last living Apostle when he writes this letter. His voice and influence are still very powerful as he lives out his last days.
2. This is most likely around AD 90-95, so somewhere around 60 after the resurrection of Jesus.
3. False teachers had crept into the church and brought with them dangerous teachings that John needed to address.
4. The most prominent teaching was that of Gnosticism. A teaching that said several alarming things such as: Jesus was not fully God and fully man – that He was a spirit but not human.
5. They also taught that salvation was obtained by “special revelation or knowledge”.
6. Gnosticism teaching says that the spirit is good, and all matter or physical is bad, so sin all you want and treat others however you want because the flesh is evil no matter what.
7. John writes to combat this false teaching, or heresy, in the church. He does this in very stark contrasts to say, “Christ-followers, members of God’s family, do this and not that”.
8. We may not call it Gnosticism today, but there are many that identify as Christ-followers but are not walking in fellowship-fueled obedience to Christ.
9. Throughout this Book, John will give four reasons why he’s writing...
 - a. That our joy may be complete – 1:4
 - b. That you may not sin – 2:1
 - c. About those that are trying to deceive you – 2:26
 - d. That you may know you have eternal life – 5:13
10. John describes God in two ways. He says, “God is light” and “God is love”.

11. Under those two categories, John gives three tests, or themes, of Christ-follower faith that he mentions over and over in these five chapters.
 - a. Truth or doctrine – what you believe
 - b. Obedience – how you live
 - c. Love – how you care about and for others
12. All three, he says, are essential evidence of being part of God’s family. We may still doubt at times, still sin at times, and still struggle in relationships, but grace rescues us and empowers us to pursue Christ.
13. The hope today is that we are encouraged as we hear the counsel of the Word meant to give us confidence in our faith.

Read 1 John 2:1-6

1. The more I read this text, the more I appreciated how John begins this passage. “My little children...” This isn’t with a sarcastic tone or angry tone because of some of the things they are struggling with.
2. He is writing with the heart of a loving father wanting to encourage his children to pursue the life they were rescued to have.
3. I’m only in my 18th year of fatherhood, but I’ve experienced a few things and have learned some things along the way.
4. I love being a dad of daughters and investing in them at a deep level. This is truly a source of joy for me.
5. From praying over them within hours of their birth, to praying for them every day since, to making sure we laugh more than we do almost anything else, to having very honest and sometimes difficult conversations.
6. I love sharing in their good news and success, but maybe even more I love that they come to me and their mom, with difficult things and even things they need to confess.

7. For me, this is a much better way to measure the depth of our relationship than just sharing surface level things or good news.
8. They know we don't expect perfection from them, and there is a safe space to fail and find grace and a path forward from there. They know I don't love them less and I'm no less proud of them when they fail than when they succeed.
9. This doesn't mean it's easy or even always right away that they come and share these things, but I love that it happens, and it motivates me to keep investing in them, and fuels my enjoyment as their father.
10. As a dad, I am far less interested in them just doing right by me as I am them becoming a person that wants what is right by Jesus.
11. John writes with this kind of fatherly heart. Not abusive or angry. Not distant or emotionally detached, but with a heart that says, "I've invested you as my children for a long time, and I so badly want you to want to know, love, and follow Jesus with great passion."
12. The little bit of what I feel as a father, and the fatherly heart that John writes with, doesn't even scratch the surface of the heart of God, our Perfect Father.
13. So, as we look at this passage, please know that God is not exhausted by you or your failures. He is not impressed by you or your success. Because in success or failure, His love is the same and His grace is sustaining you.
14. So, John writes with a fatherly heart to give us counsel and confidence to help us understand...

Our Loving Father Desires That...

1. We Take Sin Seriously – v 1-2

a. Because of the price of the cross

b. And the power of the resurrection

- i. Right away we get this reason for his writing, "so that you may not sin", and some of us may be like, "Well, too late!"

- ii. But it's like he knew that may be the response and so he immediately follows that up with this incredibly wonderful and deep encouragement of what is happening at the right hand of the Father when you sin.
- iii. Jesus is there as your advocate. When you sin and the enemy accuses you before God, Jesus is there to plead your case. He is not saying, "but look at all the good they've done.", but rather, "Look at whose they are! That's your son or your daughter purchased by my blood."
- iv. This doesn't make sin no big deal, but helps remind us that it is such a big deal that God the Son died for us, for our sin, to make forgiveness a reality.
- v. But it wasn't out of obligation, or with a begrudging heart that God did this was it? We know what John 3:16 says about why God gave His only Son. "For God so LOVED the world that He gave His only Son..."
- vi. But the Son didn't stay dead! He rose again defeating sin and death! And because of the resurrection, we have power to overcome sin.
- vii. And when we say sin, what are we talking about? One definition from John Piper says, "Sinning is any feeling or thought or speech or action that comes from a heart that does not treasure God over all things."
- viii. The ones that Jesus spoke against the most are ones that keep us from loving God and loving people. Selfishness, pride, unbelief, hypocrisy, greed, unforgiveness, hatred, a critical spirit, and impurity.
- ix. Yes, we will sin, but we don't have to sin. For us the question is, do you ask for empowering to put your sin to death, or justify your sin to give it life?
- x. And it's not just a "don't want to sin" issue. It's a "want to know Jesus" issue, because our loving Father desires that...

2. We Understand What It Means to Know Him – v 3-4

a. Obeying His commands

b. To love God & love people

- i. John doesn't leave anything to question in these verses. There is a positive reality of the truth here, and a negative reality at the same time.
- ii. There is great confidence in and confirmation of our salvation when we are walking in obedience to Jesus.
- iii. But then the negative. We are liars, and the truth is not in us if we claim to be in Christ while refusing to battle sin and just walk in it.
- iv. Now we can take on unnecessary stress when we read verses like this and the things that Jesus says about obeying Him in John 13-15 if we start to worry about whether or not we've obeyed ALL the commands of Christ.
- v. "What if there is something I forgot about or didn't know about?" But it's almost like Jesus knew we might stress over that, so He helped us out by teaching us that obedience isn't just about fighting sin.
- vi. In Matthew 22 Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with every fiber of your being, and second most important is to love your neighbor as yourself. Love God and love people.
- vii. And then in verse 40 He says, "On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." All the commands are wrapped up in two commands.
- viii. In other words, He is saying, "When you are loving God most and loving others first, you're going to avoid so many sinful situations and tendencies."

- ix. There is major shift in relationships when the motivations move from asking yourself, “What can I do to not make this person upset?” vs “I love this person so much that there are things I want to do out of love for them!”
- x. There is a mindset change that needs to happen where we move from just trying not to sin to instead wanting to closely follow Christ. This is why our Loving Fathers desires that...

3. Christ-Followers Follow Christ – v 5-6

a. Live on mission

b. Care as family

c. Draw near to Christ

- i. We were never meant to bogged down by rules. How many rules did God give Adam & Eve?
ONE. ONE RULE.
- ii. When Jesus taught us to obey Him, He made it as simple as He could. His teaching took the focus of obedience off rule keeping as much as possible. He gave us two rules. Love God and love people.
- iii. And then he showed us during His ministry what that looks like as a regular pattern of life. We talk about these things rather often as they are the only things that the gospels record Jesus doing while on earth.
- iv. And John, having watched Jesus do these things, tells us that if we say we are Christ-followers then we have to do the things that Jesus did. If we claim to be Christ-followers, then we had better to following Christ.
- v. We have adopted these three things as our Elmont Essentials. Living on Mission, Caring as Family, and Drawing Near to Christ.
- vi. Jesus lived on mission – He brought hope into hopeless situations through His words and actions.

- vii. Jesus took time away from mission to spend time in biblical community with those He described as His family – to encourage them and teach them.
- viii. And then He took time away from that to draw near to the Father in time alone in prayer. This was His recharging time that fueled everything He did, and what He enjoyed most.
- ix. If we say we are Christ-followers but not following Christ, then where does that leave us?

Closing

1. Couple or three responses.
 - a. Realizing we don't know Jesus and need to trust Him today.
 - b. Realizing that we have forgiveness in Jesus and need to rest in that today.
 - c. Rejoice in what God has done in us to grow us in love and obedience to Jesus.
2. Remember, John writes with a fatherly motivation to remind us that we have a loving Father who has given us His Word to tell you that He is not exhausted by you or your failures, but rather to give us counsel and confidence to help us understand that He has taken everything into consideration in saving you and will not change His mind about loving you.
3. Great ways to respond
 - a. Does the price of the cross and the power of the resurrection help you take sin seriously?
 - b. Does the way you love God and people give you great confidence that you know Jesus?
 - c. Does your regular pattern of life involve doing the things that Jesus did?