

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's turn our bibles to 1 John 3

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this very short but very personal and practical letter that the Apostle John wrote to the church – including us today.

And as we have been studying this short epistle –

John has reminded us of the reality of who God is

The reality of who Jesus is

The reality of what it means to have fellowship with God – which is only possible through Jesus Christ and the reality of what it means to have fellowship with one another.

Because John makes it perfectly clear that if we say that we have genuine fellowship with God – then that means that the fellowship will manifest in how we treat one another.

If we say that we love God – then that love will manifest itself on whether we love one another or we hate one another – and we looked at this in depth last week in our text.

John makes it perfectly clear that God's Children love God and love those that belong to God.

This morning, in our text – John is going to continue on the topic of love and dealing with condemnation and give us one more test to assure us that we are abiding in Christ.

Let's pray...

As we have gone through our study the last few weeks –

One of the questions that is asked and answered by the Apostle John in this short letter is –

How can a person know that he or she is truly saved?

How can we know if we have been redeemed?

How do we know that we have been forgiven?

How do we know that we have been reconciled?

Remember, there were make-believers (Gnostics) that had infiltrated the early church – who said that they were Christians,

yet they had no interest in fellowship with other believers,

they had no love for other believers, they had the opposite of love – they had hate

they had no interest in laying their lives for their fellow brother or sister in Christ -

They lacked compassion toward their fellow brethren in need.

So John writes –

that the confirmation that we are saved

The confirmation that the Holy Spirit lives inside of us

That person walks in the truth

That person walks in love

It begins with a heart of compassion that leads to a heart of assurance that leads to a heart of confidence.

Let's look at our text -

[1Jo 3:18-24 NKJV] 18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

Again, we see the phrase – my little children.

John is making sure that we understand that he is writing to genuine believers.

He is writing to those who know God and have a right relationship with Him.

And so what John points out here in our opening verse is that true Christianity is not just about having the right doctrine or saying the right things.

Do I believe everything that the bible says?

Yes –

does that alone make me a Christian?

Does professing that I am a Christian mean that I am a Christian?

No – that is what the gnostics were already doing.

John says that Christianity is about having the right doctrine, saying the right things but also it leading to action.

Anyone can tell someone “I love you”

Anyone can claim “faith”

But that doesn't make it true –

True love is expressed in action

And the fruit of living faith is what we actually do.

This is why John back in verse 17 – makes the point,

[1Jo 3:17 NKJV] 17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

The person who has the means to help someone else and is not moved to action –

John asks of that person – is he or she a real believer???

Read the parable of the Good Samaritan tonight –

Man was beaten and robbed

Certain priest saw did nothing

Levite saw – did nothing

The Good Samaritan showed compassion – he did not only feel sorry for the individual – he did something about it.

Jesus says at the end of the parable – be like that guy.

To love in deed and in truth means to demonstrate the authentic quality of our love with our actions, just as Jesus did.

The Apostle Paul echoes the same message to the church in Ephesus –

[Eph 5:1-2 NKJV] 1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

You see loved ones,

It is not enough merely to say with our words that we love one another; we must reveal the truth of our love by our deeds.

Jesus said, “I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other”

How did Jesus love us?

Jesus loved us in deed and in truth.

He didn't simply talk love – He demonstrated it.

Even while we were still sinners, Christ died for us as a sacrifice to take away our sin.

Jesus loved us like no other—with everything He had—giving up His own life so that we might live.

We have to grasp that Christian love calls for action.

That this type of love will often cost us something and may even hurt us.

[Mat 16:24-25 NKJV] 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

Jesus said that the highest form of love is sacrifice: “There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends”

The nature of God's love is sacrificial

When Paul gives us the definition of “biblical love” – in 1 Cor 13

Suffers long

Does not envy

Not puffed up

Thinks no evil

Bear all things

Never fails

All of it – sacrificial

John 3:16 – God didn't just say that He love you and me – He demonstrated it

But here is the thing church –

We cannot fully love in deed and in truth without the love of Christ dwelling within us:

When the pure love of Jesus resides in our hearts, we are equipped to love not with empty words or meaningless talk but with genuine acts of kindness and compassion.

Just like He did.

I want you to think about this –

When Jesus commissions His disciples -

[Jhn 20:21 NKJV] 21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

How did the Father send the Son? To go and to die.

And in the same manner – Jesus is saying that He sends us

Die to self and live unto God and follow My example.

You see church –

It is one thing to be trained to evangelize

To know what to say and how to say it

It is another thing to go and evangelize yourself

19 And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.

This is how we know that we have a right relationship with God

That we are walking in the truth

And we have assurance that comes from loving one another

One of the things it takes to have confidence and peace in God's presence is to know that you are doing the right things.

One of the right things we ought to be doing is to love one another.

I had you make a note of the word assure –

And the reason is that the word that is used here in the Greek – is actually the word for tranquilize.

To sooth – to bring peace – to calm our heart

John is describing the heart condition that we can have

God doesn't want us to live in a constant state of fear and uncertainty concerning our standing with Him and with each other.

Because we can either have a heart before Him that is filled with assurance or we can have a heart before Him that is filled with accusations

And this really becomes important to you and me –

Especially when our heart tells us that we are a phony and that we are a hypocrite and that we are not a real Christian

Look at verse 20

20 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

Remember – John is addressing believers

And what he is addressing is the subject of guilt.

Guilt is the opposite of assurance

John is saying here –

What if we walk in love – but our hearts condemn us before God

John assures us that God is greater than our hearts.

He sees the big picture. He knows everything.”

And this reminds us that we cannot base our relationship with God purely on how we feel.

Because condemnation / guilt can arise from within and have nothing to do with our true standing before God.

[Jer 17:9 NKJV] 9 "The heart [is] deceitful above all [things], And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"

Who can know it? God can know it!

Sometimes we have to realize that we are our worst enemy – we are so hard on ourselves.

We walk in condemnation, condemning ourselves – even though Paul tells us - There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. (Rom 8)

Our hearts condemn us.

Church –

God knows and He hears our cries – especially when we are walking in that place of feeling condemned.

And He will deal with us and get us back on the right path.

And the reason is that God's love is greater than whatever our hearts are telling us.

Turn with me to Luke 10

I am going to show you the principle that John is giving us here.

[Luk 10:38-42 NKJV] 38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

When we study the text here –

Martha criticizes Mary for not helping out but she also criticizes Jesus for not doing anything about it.

But Jesus knew Mary's heart and He defended her – didn't He?

Mary has chosen that good part – she is doing what is right.

She was exactly where she had to be.

Another example is Peter –

After Peter denied Jesus three times

– that must have been a low point in Peter's life.

– especially after Jesus had told Peter that he was going to do it

And we know that the enemy messed with Peter's mind –

His heart condemned him

That is why at the empty tomb (Mark's gospel) – the angel tells the women to go tell the disciples that the tomb is empty – and don't forget to tell Peter, because he needs this right now

Jesus knew that he was remorseful of what he did, He knew that Peter had repented.

Peter's heart condemned him – but God's love is greater than our hearts.

When we fail Him – He will never fail us

We are sinners – saved by grace

And once we truly confess our sins (what is the promise in 1 John 1:9?)

He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And we forget this time after time after time.

“But you don’t know what I did?”

God’s promise is not specific to certain sins.

He just forgives.

And when God forgives – He forgets

An accusing heart will tell us that God’s grace isn’t enough, God’s mercy isn’t enough,
God forgiveness isn’t enough

And John says –

No, God’s mercy is as great as God is great

His grace is as great as He is

His forgiveness is as great as He is

In the Old Testament – I love the illustration of the Ark of the Covenant

Inside of the Ark of the Covenant were the tablets of stone containing with the 10
Commandments

And those stones were a reminder about their failure before God – because it
reminded them of their sin.

But on top of the Ark was a slab of pure gold – the Mercy Seat – where God met His
people.

It was as long as the Ark was long and as wide as the Ark was wide

And the reason for these dimensions is an illustration that no matter how long or how wide your sins were – there would be enough of the mercy seat available to you to wash you and cleanse you.

[Psa 103:10-12 NKJV] 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, [So] great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; 12 As far as the east is from the west, [So] far has He removed our transgressions from us.

God's word tells us that there is a solution to guilt – it can go away.

By the way – getting back to the Mercy Seat

We know how long it was and how wide it was

But we are never told how thick the Mercy Seat was

And I believe the reason that we are not told – is because God's mercy is always enough.

It's thick enough to address whatever we go through – past, present, future.

He knows everything we have ever done, everything we will ever do, all of our thoughts, all of our doubts –

He knows every single moment of every single day of our lives

And that should terrify us or give us assurance

It should terrify us if we have never experienced His grace, mercy, love and forgiveness

But if we know Him and we have assurance of the forgiveness of our sin – the presence of Jesus in our heart is greater than all of the guilt.

No matter how great the guilt – God's mercy is greater.

21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.

22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

We have confidence in our relationship with God when we are learning to love others like He loves us.

That confidence translates into an effective prayer life...

Now – we must be careful here

Because we can miss the point of this verse –

John is not saying that if we obey God – somehow we earn the brownie points necessary for Him to answer our prayers.

That's not correct.

What John is saying is that answers to prayer come from a life that is in harmony with God.

[1Jo 5:14-15 NKJV] 14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

Getting the answers to prayer we are looking for comes from learning to ask for the things that God wants to do.

Prayer is not about twisting God's arm and persuading Him to do what I want, it's about me getting on board with God's desires and plans and learning to ask for the best things, His things.

Jesus put it this way:

(Jn 15:7 NKJV) If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

As we fellowship with Him, as we abide in Him, as we love as He loves us, as we obey Him, we will want what He wants and we will do what He wants.

So our prayer life will give us assurance before Him

We should ask ourselves – what is it that we want from God?

What have we always wanted?

Forgiveness

Hope

Peace

Cleansing

A brand new start

God will answer that prayer

“I just want to love you Lord” – I will answer that prayer

“I just want to love my brothers and sisters” - I will answer that prayer

“I want to walk in the truth instead of lies” – answered prayer

“I want to help someone who is hurting more than I hurt” – God will answer that prayer

I want to honor You, walk with You, I want to do Your will – God will answer that prayer

You know what are the things that hinders our prayer life?

The presence of guilt in our heart

The presence of unconfessed sin in our heart

Insincerity in our heart (Matt 6:5)



CALVARY
Santa Cruz

Trouble between husband and wives hinders our prayer life (1 Peter 3:7)

Unbelief

Unforgiveness

23 And this is His **commandment: that we should **believe** on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.**

The word commandment is singular -both times in this verse

And this commandment covers – loving Jesus, loving one another and believe Jesus.

The word believe means more than to simply acknowledge Jesus

It means more that even to confess

It means to trust Him and to rely on Him and cling to

It means to believe everything that has been revealed in the Word about who Jesus is.

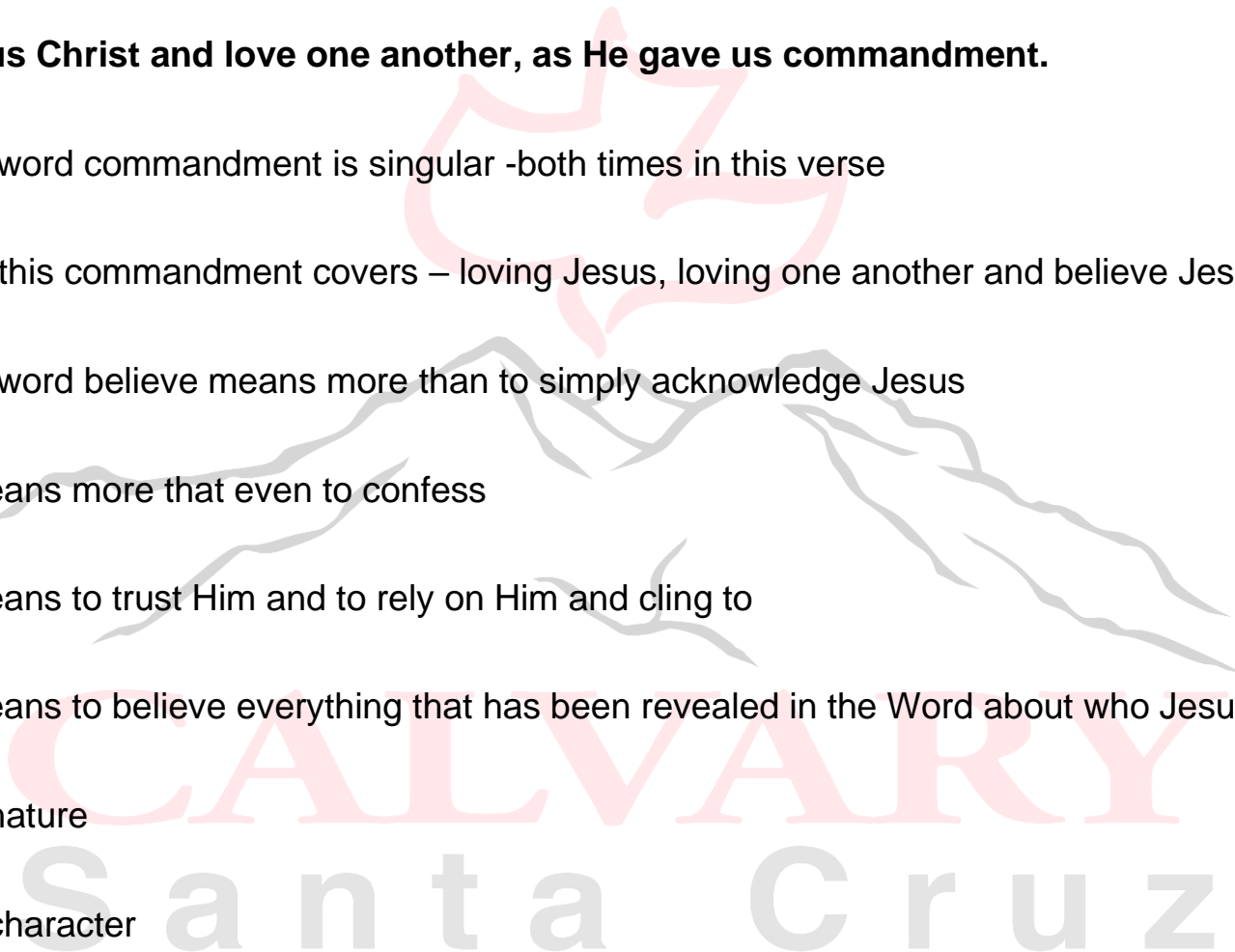
His nature

His character

His mission

His death

His resurrection



His return

So what we have here is the combination of faith and love joined together in an inseparable singular commandment

24 Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

John returns to the subject of abiding – and remember what abiding means –

It means to dwell - to remain

It means to be in a particular place

And it has the idea that this abiding isn't a temporary place where we are staying

This is the place where we were meant to be forever

We live and move and have our being in Christ

We have confidence in Him

And here is the best part –

We live in Him and He lives in us.

[Rev 3:20 NKJV] 20 “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

This is what abiding means –

It means fellowship

In Luke 24 –

Jesus walks with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus –

Jesus gives the bible study ever as He explains to them how everything pointed to Him

At the end of the day – they invite Jesus to abide with them (they still didn't know it was Jesus)

And Jesus goes in – at their invitation

and He breaks bread with them and immediately their eyes were open and they knew who He was.

The guest became the host.

Have you ever invited someone to your house and said, “Mi casa es su casa?”

And immediately they take over the remote and they start eating everything in the fridge.

Everything that was yours became theirs –

That is what Jesus does when we invite Him into our heart.

He comes in and He takes over.

He addresses our past

He addresses where we need work

He addresses our guilt

He equips us for the work He has called us to do

He transforms us from the inside out to be more like Him

And we begin to walk in the truth and in righteousness

We have a love for God and a love for the brethren

This is how we know we abide in Him

Let's pray...

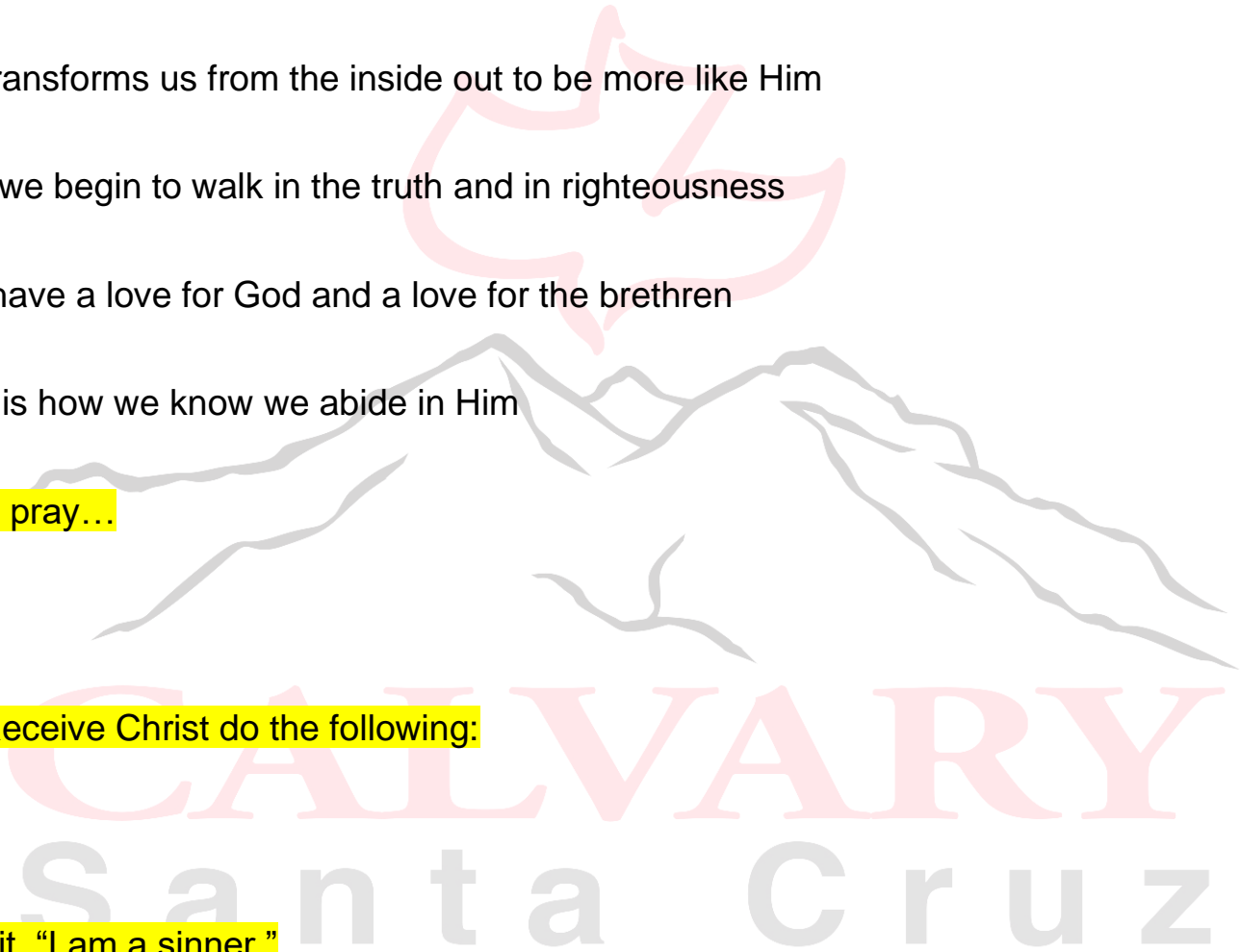
To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.



Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

God doesn't desire believers to live their Christian lives wondering about their salvation.

He wants us to enjoy complete victory and liberty through Christ.

We are indwelt with the Spirit and can have absolute confidence in salvation and our eternal destiny.

We need to stop worrying and start resting in His abundant grace.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

