

29.10.23 am

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Date: 29 October 2023

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

- [0 : 0 0] Good morning. A warm welcome to the service this morning. And especially those who are visiting with us. I don't see any faces that I don't recognise, but there's a few who come from time to time and who are with us in Harris today.
- So it's good to see you. And at the end of the service, as you know, there's tea in this coffee served. So please stay if you're able, and let's enjoy a time of fellowship together.
- The notices have been on the screen. The evening service tonight is a Gaelic service at 6, and that's taken by the Reverend Dolan. So Gaelic service tonight at 6.
- And then the Praise Fellowship at 7. I thought I had a testimony for tonight, but it's not worked out. So anybody who feels that they want to take the opportunity to share the reason for the hope that they have, come and speak to me after the service.
- There's the opportunity to speak. The fellowship is very informal, and there's a chance to share a little for those who may have something on their hearts that they want to share.
- [1 : 0 8] If not, then be on your toes this evening. But do come. Community lunch tomorrow from 12 to 2, our monthly community lunch, so please come along to that if you're able.
- Ladies' Fellowship on Monday night as usual. Come in, Maria. Plenty of space is over on this side. And Little Fish is on Tuesday morning, and we've got Rota Recovery Tuesday evening.
- The Gaelic Playgroup on Thursday, and you've got the details there. Deacons' court meeting tomorrow, at half past 6. Good reminder for myself and for all the deacons.
- And the cleaning rota, you have details of there. The prayer meeting on Wednesday as usual, at half past 7. And a reminder as well about SU in school.
- I think these are all the notices. Kids Club as usual on Friday as well. Let's worship God, and let's sing to his praise.
- [2 : 1 0] We sing from Mission Praise 987. 987. And we'll just sing the two verses. I know there's a few verses in the database of different versions of this.
- But we've got two verses in the Mission Praise 987. Hear his love, vast as the ocean, loving kindness as the flood, when the Prince of Life, our ransom, shed for us his precious blood.
- Who his love will not remember? Who can cease to sing his praise? He can never be forgotten throughout heaven's eternal days. We'll sing the whole of this hymn, two verses to God's praise.
- Let's sing the whole of this hymn, His precious blood.
- Who his love will not remember? Who can cease to sing his praise? He can never be forgotten throughout heaven's eternal days.
- [3 : 4 2] On the month of crucifixion, He can never be forgotten and the Lord's eternal days. Through the packets of God's mercy, through the vast and gracious tide, grace above my mighty rivers, ward incessant from above, and death's reason, and perfect justice, Christ, the guilty world in love.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer together. Let's pray. Gracious God, our heavenly Father, we thank you for this, your day.

We thank you for this day that has been gifted to us, a day where we are called to stop work and to find rest in you.

And we thank you that we only truly find rest for our souls in you. We know the reality, Lord, and we confess the reality of how restless we can be when we spend all our time in this world.

We can look for satisfaction in many different places as we've been thinking about in the book of Ecclesiastes, but our souls find no rest until they find rest in Jesus.

[5 : 30] We thank you for the verse that we so often go to that says, Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, I will give you rest. We thank you for the peace that is not of this world, that Jesus promises to all who believe in him.

And we thank you for this day that's been set aside as a holy day, a day where we are able to take time to be still and to know that you are God and that you are with us.

We pray that in this hour as we sing and as we read and as we pray and as we meditate upon your word, we pray that we would know that you are with us.

We pray that we would know the blessing of God with us. We pray that we would know the experience of the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus who said that where two or three meet together in his name, that he will be here with us.

We pray, Holy Spirit, that you would be moving in this place and in our lives, that you would be opening our eyes, that we would see our sin and our need of Jesus as Savior.

[6 : 43] And we pray, Lord, for anybody who may be here this morning who has not yet trusted Christ as Savior or perhaps others who have decided not to come here but to watch at the distance.

we ask, Lord, that any who may be outside of Christ, who may not yet have confessed sin, who may not yet have come to Jesus, would even do so in these moments in this hour as we open your word.

And we pray for others who may not be here and who may have no thought of a service to tune into or to listen to but who are busy with whatever it is that fills their day.

And we ask, Lord, that you would break into the lives of those whom we love. We can think of those in our families. We can think of close friends. We can think of those that we work with who at this moment in time have perhaps no thought of you or who may be wrestling with the call of God to come and yet are resisting.

We pray for those who even pass the window that we pass on the street as we prepare to come into your house and they pass by. Lord, we pray for them.

[8 : 00] We ask that you would draw them to yourself. We think of Zacchaeus who's up a tree and he's hiding away from the crowds and yet is called by Jesus to come.

We ask, Lord Jesus, that you would be calling many who we think of whom we pray for now that they would come to you and find that eternal life that is found in no other place.

We ask that you would help us to worship you in this hour that as we sing we would truly have hearts that are moved that we wouldn't just be singing words that we wouldn't just be thinking about the tune but Lord that we would be in worship.

We pray that we would be praying without ceasing that we would have a sense of expectation that you would speak to us through your word. We ask, Lord, that you would speak into our hearts and we ask, Father, that you would help us in this hour and in every hour that you give us in this world to glorify you.

Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. So help us, Lord, to be giving ourselves and our time and our talents and our resources to things that will adound to your glory and will not simply be cravings that we have to satisfy ourselves.

[9 : 23] We pray, Father, for those who are in need this morning. We pray for a world that's broken. We look on our news. We see so much unrest. We see so much that is not peace.

We see conflict. We see horror. Especially in the Middle East at this time. And we pray as we have been called to pray. We pray for peace. We pray for peace in the world that you've created.

We pray for the peace of Jerusalem as the psalmist put it. And we ask, Lord, that in these situations that look so hopeless and so complicated, we ask that you would break in and that you would hear our prayers and that you would have mercy upon these situations that come to our minds.

We pray for our own land. We thank you that we do enjoy peace. We thank you that we have the freedom to meet together like this to worship. But we confess that the spiritual temperature is way down on what it used to be.

We confess, Lord, that your word has been taken off the shelves and all the public places. We don't see it at the hospital bedsides anymore.

[10 : 30] We don't see it in waiting rooms. And we know, Lord, that that reflects where we are as a nation. Have mercy upon us, we pray. We pray for revival. We pray that you would touch our hearts.

We pray, Lord, that you would create the soul thirst among the whole nation that will cause us to look back to Jesus. We pray for those who are in hospital this morning. We've prayed for them over many weeks and months and we pray on for them, Lord, as we see them in our mind's eye.

We ask that you would bless them and that you would minister to them, that you would lay your hand of healing upon them. We pray for Shona. We thank you, Lord, for her being able to go home.

And we ask that you would bless her and that you would strengthen her and that her recovery would be steady. We pray, Father, for those who are waiting to go in for surgeries, for procedures this week, those who may be anxious about that, that you would be with them and that you would put their minds at rest.

We pray for those who are grieving and especially we think of Shawnee this week and the family with such a sudden departure of Mags from this world.

[11 : 40] We pray for your comfort. We pray for your peace. We pray that in the difficulty of this situation that you would be ministering to them, that they would come close to you.

We pray for the young ones. We thank you for them, for those who are in the creche this morning. We pray for those who go to Sunday school. We pray for all those who came through Jam and Connect and Rooted on Friday.

Speaking to these souls, Lord, we pray that they would remember that they would be trusting their creator in the days of their youth. And we pray for those who are coming perhaps towards the end of life, who are up in years and who feel the struggles of a body that perhaps is wasting away.

We pray for that inward renewal that comes from close walking with Jesus for them. So hear our prayers. Take away our sin as we confess it, Lord, and impress upon us as we've sang the great love that you have for us, the love that is spoken to us in your word, the Bible, and that love that is seen so clearly at the cross of Calvary where Jesus laid down his life so that heaven's peace and perfect justice could be given to us as we trust in him.

Hear our prayers. Go before us, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please? how's everyone today Michael you've got some notes for me this morning no just was it good to get back to school was it good to get back to German Connect and Greeted good stuff good stuff well I've got something for you this morning that I want to show you and well I've got two things to show you and I want you to tell me the difference between these two things and you can see that there's lots of differences between these two things but I'm looking for one thing in particular so one thing that is different about these two things so what are we looking at here

[14 : 09] Lois a book and an iPad a bit more detail just any book no what is it it's a Bible what's the Bible it's about God it's about God it's how he speaks to us isn't it so we have the Bible here and we have an iPad here anything special about this iPad do you think not really not really no you can watch stuff about God on it you can watch stuff about God on it yeah it's true you can watch services on it and there's all kinds of stuff you can watch on an iPad do you think this is an old iPad or a new iPad why do you think it's old because I got given an old iPad you got given an old iPad to take apart that was the exact same thing to take apart that was the exact same thing so be afraid iPad might go maybe about to yeah this is an old iPad because if you look see these pictures that's a picture and you can see

Grace and Anna and Lois and it's a long it's a good few years ago now you never told me the difference yet what's the difference between a Bible and an iPad well because on a Bible there's pages pages yeah but on an iPad there's a screen there's a screen yeah so that's one difference yeah it's not the one I'm looking for but it's a good difference yeah Michael you were going to say something God's message what's the Bible God's message in the Bible yes and this can have God's message in it but it can also have a lot of bad messages too because we can go places we shouldn't go with iPads can't we yeah keep thinking difference between a Bible and an iPad some differences Fraser an iPad like like it turns on like you press a button to turn it on but with a book you put pages to turn it on so you don't need electric or anything for the Bible you just turn the pages but the iPad you need power to get it on so without power for the iPad you couldn't do anything with it keep going you're getting closer what do you think

I'll give you 20 more seconds to see if you can make the connection Michael I'm shocked this is the first children's address ever you've managed not to make the connection and preach it before I got the chance to hmm they're not talking come pardon they're different yeah they are very different in lots of different ways there's no connection to last week last guess because the iPad's flat and the book has a lot of stuff in it yeah one's much thicker than the other yeah how good do you think this is put in the password so how useful what do you think this needs what do you think this needs this needs this iPad actually is almost useless you know why it's almost useless because it's so old and what do iPads need and what do phones need and what do apps need that are going to be useful what do they need go on favor because they don't work very well and so when they don't work very well what do they usually need updates updates that's what we're getting to updates so iPads and apps and phones and all these things they're always needing updates and this one here is so old that it doesn't update anymore software is sold and this you can't update it anymore and so all these apps you want to use you go in to use them and it says please download the update you go to the app store you sign to the update it says this is too old go away this is useless and so this needs updates but you can't actually update it so it's not very much use but even new phones they're always needing updates how many updates does the Bible need none ever and that's the big difference that I wanted to talk to you about between the

Bible and an iPad these things are always needing to be updated they're always needing to be revised but the Bible is God's word and it's God's word for every time for every generation now you'll get people today who don't believe the Bible and who'll say oh you need to update this book this book's old this book it doesn't fit us anymore it needs to go away you should throw it away that's what some people say they say you should throw it away like an old iPad it's not for us anymore but is that true?

it's not true the Bible is God's word and it speaks into our lives every day some of the books in this Bible are thousands of years old and yet they're as fresh today as the first day that they were written so you don't need to update the Bible don't ever update the Bible don't listen to anybody who says to you we need to update the Bible what do we need to do with the Bible?

[20 : 29] you have to just read it read it believe it listen to God as he speaks to us through it and then go to your friends when you believe it and tell them as well because there's lots of people how many people are in church today?

100 or so? how many people are in Harris? 2,000? anything about that? not far off it we won't argue about it we won't argue about it too much there's lots more people who are at home than are in church and so your job boys and girls and my job is to tell people who don't know about the Bible who tell people who don't know about God's love that God loves them that he wants to know them and that they can have everlasting life in and through Jesus so let's pray Lord we thank you for your word we thank you that it's true we thank you that it never needs an update and we thank you Lord that as we read your word we learn that you are the one who loves us and you father loved us so much that you sent your son Jesus into this world to save us help us to believe to read and to share the message of the Bible with all the people that you put around us and we pray for the young ones here especially that they would believe that you would give them and us faith and that you would give them and us courage that we would tell people who don't know the good news the good news about

Jesus and we ask this in Jesus name and for his sake amen thank you for listening we're going to sing now to God's praise and we're going to sing about the Bible it's a prayer and it's a prayer speak oh Lord as we come to you to receive the food of your holy word take your Lord as we come to you to receive the food of your holy word Take your truth, plant it deep in us, shape and fashion us in your likeness.

But the light of Christ might be seen today in our acts of love as the deeds of faith.

Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us all your purposes, all your glory.

[23 : 21] Teach us, Lord, full obedience, holy reverence, true humility.

Test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity.

Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see your majestic love and authority.

Words of power that are never filled, that the truth prevailed over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds. Help us grasp the heights of your rights for us.

[24 : 30] Truths and chains from the dawn of time, that will echo down through eternity.

And by grace we'll stand on your promises, and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.

Speak, O Lord, till your church is built, and the earth is filled with your glory.

Amen. Okay, boys and girls, if you head to Sunday school, please. And pray for them as they go.

And we can turn in our Bibles, please, to 1 John chapter 2.

[25 : 36] 1 John chapter 2.

And we read from verse 3 through to verse 27 of the chapter.

This is God's word. We know that we have come to know him. That's Jesus. If we obey his commands. The man who says, I know him, but does not do what he commands, is a liar.

And the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him. Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

[26 : 44] Its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.

He does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him. And the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

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We pray especially for Scalpy this morning as Stuart prepares to preach there. We ask that you would give him strength that you would put the words in his mouth and that you would help him this morning as we pray that you would help Duncan this evening as he brings your word there also.

Hear our prayers, help the young ones in Sunday school as well. We pray that they would understand the good news about Jesus, that they would believe and that they would be saved in their early years and we ask this in Jesus name. Amen.

[35 : 46] Well we're returning to 1 John this morning. This is the second in our studies in this book and there's a lot in this book, there's a lot in this little letter I want to go through at high speed, probably five sermons one for each of the chapters or the main part of the chapter but looking at the book of 1 John we can see right away that this is a letter in terms of the genre, it's a letter it's a letter from John who's a disciple of Jesus he's perhaps the disciple that Jesus knew best he was one of the inner three and as John writes this letter it's likely that he was an old man the commentators think that he was well up in his 90s and it seems that as John writes as the Holy Spirit lays this message upon his heart

John's great concern is that the believers that he was writing to would know that they have eternal life and so before we launch out into the text this morning can I ask the question of you as I have asked the question of me in the last few days is this your greatest concern?

Is this our greatest concern? that we know that we have eternal life greater than our work greater than our families even and the comfort that we like to have in our homes is the greatest burden to put it another way is the greatest burden that you and I have for our children and our grandchildren if we have grandchildren not that they be healthy and happy and settled with a good education and a good job and a nice home but that they would know that they have eternal life is that your greatest desire burden priority not the material things not the metrics of this world but that they be saved and that they know that they have eternal life because that was

John's concern that's what's driving this letter and in the course of this letter John he asks various diagnostic questions he sets various tests and as we answer these questions as we take the tests that John puts before us we can know we can have assurance and we can have the joy and the peace that comes with the assurance of knowing that we have eternal life so three questions today in the time that we have question number one is do you love Jesus question number two is do you love the family of Jesus and question number three is do you love this world so that's the structure these are the questions that John asks in this chapter so first of all point number one is do you love

Jesus and as we think about love love is one of these words that has become quite hard to define if we ask what is love or how can we discern that there's love shared between people there'll be many many answers given there'll be no shortage of answers given and responses to the question what is love that the more answers that are given the more confusing things actually become some would say love is a feeling it's just a really strong feeling it's a fuzzy warm feeling down somewhere deep in our stomachs the heart misses a beat the appetite goes that's love but when God speaks to us about love when we think about love within the framework of the Bible when we think about love in terms of a relationship with God when we think about love in terms of our knowledge our knowing

[40 : 28] God it's actually not difficult to discern whether someone loves God whether someone loves Jesus or not and it isn't actually all that much to do with our feelings not that it's disconnected from our feelings but it's not all that much to do with our feelings the way that our love for Jesus can be seen it's through our obedience to him and John starts off on that note in verse 3 he says we know that we have come to know him Jesus if we obey his commands we might ask well John where did you get that that teaching from and John got that teaching from Jesus because as we think about what John is saying there our minds go to the upper room our minds go to John chapter 14 and verse 15 where Jesus he has the disciples gathered around him in the privacy of that wee room and he says to them if you love me you will keep my commandments so our love for

Jesus my love for Jesus is demonstrated in my faithfulness to Jesus if we love Jesus we want to live in a way that pleases him if we love Jesus we don't want to allow sin and idols and things that cause a distance between us and Jesus to come into our lives we don't want to lose that intimacy we don't want to lose that closeness of walk that we have been called to as those who know him and profess to love him and it's a lot like marriage I suppose if we take it down a notch and try to think about this in ways that we can relate to when we get married we promise to be faithful to each other when a bride and a groom come here and they take their vows they promise to be faithful to each other and not to go running off into the arms of someone else to tell your wife that you love her whilst you run off with another woman that's it's incongruous it's to lie and that's the kind of logic that John is using here he says in verse 4 the man who says

I know him but does not do what he commands is a liar and the truth is not in him but if anyone obeys his word God's love is truly made complete in him so we see here the very strong link between love and obedience but if we think back to last Sunday when we were looking at the first chapter we know that what John is not teaching here he's not teaching perfectionism John is not saying to us if you disobey once if you struggle to keep the law if you sin then you can't love Jesus that's not what he's saying you come come because none of us are able to obey Jesus perfectly

Shona Davidson went to the occupational therapist this week she was telling me and she did the exercises she was set various tests and I said how did you get on and she said well the OT said this is the first time in her career that she's given out a 100% perfect score so we praise God for that but when it comes to obeying the word of Jesus there isn't a day there isn't an hour when I get a perfect score there isn't a single person in this world who has a 100% record of keeping the commandments but if we know Jesus if we are

Christians we want to keep his commandments don't we that's our desire we know we're struggling because we're in a sinful world and we're sinful broken people but if we're Christians if we love Jesus we want to keep his commandments we say with the psalmist in Psalm 40 and verse 8 to do thy will I take delight we mean it there's no more delightful place to be than in that close walk with God when we're obeying him we want to obey God's word and when we sin as we do it grieves us we lament that sin we confess it quickly we don't clear off and determine that we will persevere in sin it grieves us as it grieves the Lord and we repent of it so John is not teaching perfectionism he's acknowledging the fact that we struggle but if we're

[46 : 30] Christians if we have eternal life if we love Jesus we want to obey him that's our desire that's our determination that's what we're asking for strength to do John says in verse 5 this is how we know we are in him whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did so when we are Christians when we have eternal life when we love Jesus we walk in the way that he walked we live like he did we want to follow his example we want to be like him whoever claims to live in him verse 6 must walk as Jesus did and we often see that in families they walk the same I've got a friend in Inverness it's called Wee Grae and I discovered I've known him for years but I discovered after I moved to

Harris that he was related to Murdo Faracher and the second that somebody told me that he was related to Murdo Faracher it made perfect sense because they walk exactly the same they're identical in the way that they walk and if we are in the family of God if we know Jesus if we love Jesus that will be seen in the way that we walk it will be seen in the way that we live as we keep on trying to keep his commandments not because we think that will save us it's Jesus that saves us we know that it's the atoning sacrifice it's the fact that he's the propitiation that's verse two that's how we're saved but if we are saved we want to express our love for the saviour and we do that as we obey him as we seek to walk in the way that he walked of course there's days that we're going to be in Romans 7 there may be years when we find ourselves in Romans 7 saying to God in prayer the evil that I don't want to do

I keep on doing the good that I do want to do I've messed it up again Apostle Paul towards the end of his life he writes about the wrestle with sin the wrestle that there is to be obedient but if we are Christians if we have eternal life if we love Jesus we will wrestle we will strive to obey we will determine that in God's strength we will walk like Jesus walked I've met people over the years who claim to know that they have eternal life and the reason that they claim that they have eternal life is because their name is in a communion row that's how I know they say or I put my hand up at a Billy Graham meeting 30 years ago that's how I know they say or I've got a wee card in my bible and I read this card and I prayed the prayer in the card and that's how I know or I had an experience when I was 21 and it was overwhelming it was this spiritual experience it was really spooky it was really intense that's how

I know but today they don't attend church or very irregularly are they in church their lives look no different to the life of a non Christian they don't walk like Jesus they don't look like Jesus they don't strive to seek first his kingdom they don't seek to obey him and to such people John says your assurance if it's tied back to a hand up at a meeting 30 years ago or an insertion on a communion role he says your assurance is false Alistair Begg says verbal profession minus moral persistence is self delusion that's a sobering word for us we can be on the membership of

North Harris Free Church or any free church or any church or any denomination we can have had all kinds of spiritual experiences but if we are not persisting in seeking to live holy lives if we are not persisting in seeking to obey Jesus we can have no assurance that we have eternal life we can only know that we have eternal life we can only have real assurance if we love Jesus and that love is expressed day by day by day by day in our obedience to him so do you love Jesus and can that love be seen in your obedience to Jesus that's the question that I must wrestle with and you must wrestle with too question number two that John poses is do you love the family of

[52 : 18] Jesus verse 7 dear friends he says I am not writing you a new command but an old one which you have had since the beginning this old command is the message you have heard yet I am writing you a new command its truth is seen in him and you because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining so this is a bit cryptic it's a wee bit riddle like and we're left asking the question what is this old command that's also a new command and the answer is it's the command to love each other and we could rewind all the way back to Leviticus chapter 19 and verse 18 to read this old command it says in Leviticus 19 18 do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people but love your neighbour as yourself I am the Lord so that was the old command it was possibly written 15 years previous but the truth of the old command was seen in him it was seen in Jesus and as the truth of the old command was seen in Jesus it became like a new command

Jesus spoke in John chapter 13 and verse 34 about the new command he says a new command I give you he's speaking to the disciples a new command I give you love one another as I have loved you so you must love one another and the disciples saw the extent of that new command in him and Jesus he spoke these words in John 13 to them as he has a basin and a towel wrapped around his waist and as he takes the posture of a slave remember the scene disciples are in a room their feet are dirty and smelly and when they go into the room their feet are supposed to be washed so we can imagine the scene disciples saying who's going to wash the feet well it's not me why should I have to do well I'm not going to do it what about you why don't you do it I did it last time and then

Jesus God the son steps forward with the water and with the towel and he washes the feet of the twelve Judas was there and as he did that the extent of his love was seen for them he washed their feet with water but the full extent of Jesus love for them was seen not in his washing of their feet with water but in his washing of their hearts and our hearts with his blood that's where we see the vastness of the love of Jesus here is love he sang it vast as the ocean loving kindness as the flood when the prince of life Jesus our ransom shed for us his precious blood who his love will not remember and John had seen that love

John had experienced that love that Jesus had for his brothers he'd he'd seen it in high definition and he's writing about that love and he's writing about how that love changes our relationships those who know Jesus those who trust Jesus those who have been washed in the blood of Jesus we are all bound up together in the same family so we love each other don't we we love each other as he loved us John goes on verse 9 anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness whoever loves his brother lives in the light and there is nothing in him to make him stumble but whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness he does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded him so the question that we come to as we apply verse these verses and as we as we think through these tests is do we love the family of

Jesus do you and I love the Lord's people do you love these times of fellowship where we speak about Jesus and where we pray together and where we sing praises to Jesus do you love these times do you feel that connection do you feel that affection that family bond with the Lord's people even though they're completely different to you different age different interests and yet you know there's this bond do you feel that do you know that because if you do John is saying that's a strong sign that you have eternal life on the other hand if we don't love the family of

[58 : 38] Jesus if we can't get out the door quick enough after the benediction is pronounced for no good reason if we have to be dragged along to church if we were wrestling this morning thinking do I have to go if we do all that we can to avoid the fellowships and if we just try to get away with the minimum there's a problem so what's the problem well it might be that you're not part of the family of God because you've never come to Jesus never trusted him if that's the case do it now confess your sin now ask for forgiveness now trust Jesus now ask him to bring you into the family don't wait another moment but it might be that you are in the family of Jesus and yet still there's a problem so what's the problem well the problem might be says John that you have allowed yourself to hate a brother or a sister and that hate that infection is the problem that's the root of the problem you hate a brother and of course we we'd never say that we'd never even think that that we hate a brother or sister in

Christ but it does happen so let's just take a moment and let's just think about this is there another Christian is there someone who's in the family of Jesus maybe in this fellowship maybe somewhere else in a fellowship far away but they're a brother they're a sister and yet you're avoiding them just now and truth be told you just can't bear to be near them is there someone when you think of them there's a sense of bitterness there's a quiet anger that kind of knots away in the stomach is there someone and that's how you feel when you think about them because if that's the case if we can think about people who we have that kind of feelings towards and their brothers and sisters these are danger signs this is not far fetched because

I've experienced it many times over the years they're danger signs to hate a brother or sister in Christ that's how the devil brings darkness into a soul that's how the devil brings darkness into a church and John is saying to us if you have that going on in your life repent of it if there's that anger if there's that bitterness towards somebody this morning God is saying through John repent of it ask for his strength to put that to death and we might respond to John by saying well you don't know what that person did to me my anger is justified you don't know what that person said to me you don't know how that person treated me you don't know what that person did to me or those whom I love you don't understand how that made me feel and all these things may be true but they're not reasons to keep on hating and if we want perspective and the help to know how to love we have to look again at the cross when I think about what I have done to Jesus when I think about all the times that

I have grieved the Holy Spirit and yet Jesus still loves me and he doesn't hate me how can I hate and not love a brother or sister in Christ no matter what they've done do you love the family of Jesus it's difficult just like every family there can be seasons when it's difficult to love do you love the family of Jesus John goes on in verse 12 I write to you dear children because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name I write to you fathers because you have known him you have it's what's

John doing here it's a strange kind of shift, even in the structure of the text, that looks different. So what's John doing here? Well, what John is doing here is he's speaking to and showing us, probably using the form of an early hymn, he's showing us the different kinds of people in the church family.

[64 : 40] He's looking at the family of God, he's looking at the family of Jesus, and he's seeing all these different people who are at different stages. And he's showing us what they look like and where they are in this early hymn, I think.

He speaks about the spiritually young, those who are children, new believers. He speaks about those who have been on the road for a wee while and are growing strong, the young men, he uses that title for them.

He speaks to those who are mature and wise and have been walking with the Lord for years as he speaks about fathers. He's giving us a snapshot of the family of Jesus, all at different stages.

And what's the message? Well, I think the message is as simple as this. He's saying to them and he's saying to us, be a family. Don't be individual believers locked away in your own wee caves.

Don't run in and spend an hour together and run out and have nothing else to do with each other for the rest of the week. Be a family. Love each other. Care for each other.

[66 : 01] Help each other to walk closely with Jesus. Do you love Jesus? Is that love seen in obedience to him? Do you love the family of Jesus?

And can that be seen as we look into our fellowships and think about the relationships that we're involved with today? And the final thing John asks is, do you love the world? And it's another diagnostic question.

And John, when he asks us the question, do you love the world? He's not talking about the world in terms of God's creation, the beautiful creation that we see all around us.

He's not telling us to despise the creation that God has made for us to enjoy. He's using the world in terms of the world system that is opposed to God, the world that is anti-Jesus.

And he's saying, do you love the world that is anti-Jesus? Do you sign up to? Do you buy into? Do you give yourself to a world that is against Christ?

[67 : 02] He says in verse 15 to 17, do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For everything in the world, the cravings of sinful man, the lust of the eyes, the boasting of what he has and does comes not from the Father, but from the world.

The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. I saw a picture on social media the other day.

I don't think it's on the screen. But it's a picture of a guy who was walking down the street in Glasgow. It was pretty much a death wish to do this, some social media experiment.

But this man, he's walking down the main street in Glasgow and he has a top on. It's a football strip. It's actually two football strips. Half of it was Celtic, half of it was Rangers.

[68 : 04] And he walked through the centre of Glasgow and there's people taking photographs of him and footage of him as he walks down the centre of Glasgow. And there's all kinds of looks and all these looks, before they probably exploded into violence, were saying, you can't wear that.

You can't have both teams on your shirt. You have to choose. It's one or the other. And John is saying, you can't love Jesus and love the world.

You can't love Jesus and love the world. You can't love God the Son and God the Father and yet spend your life loving everything that they hate.

You can't have eternal life. And yet devote all your time and talents and energy in this world to everything that's just passing away.

It makes no sense. John is saying to us, be real. Think about the way that you're living. You can't love the world and love Jesus.

[69 : 14] You have to make a choice. So how can we discern what is of the world in that negative sense? How do we know what to avoid and resist?

Well, it's actually very simple. There's a whole lot of detail, but we're not going into any of it. I think we can simplify this down to the application that we are not to love anything that will take us away from Jesus.

Don't love anything. Don't give yourself to anything that will take you away from Jesus. John talks in verses 18 to 27.

We're finishing. About many antichrists. So what does an antichrist do? Well, an antichrist seeks to take us away from God's word, the word of truth.

And an antichrist seeks to lead us astray and put a distance between us and Jesus. So what does an antichrist look like?

[70 : 26] Well, for John, as he wrote, part of the reason that he wrote was that there was a cult called the Gnostics. And they were in the church. They'd actually gone out from the church.

There'd been a clash. But there was a tension between the Christians and the Gnostics. And the Gnostics of that day were trying to say to the Christians, You don't need to worry about the Bible.

You don't need to worry about God's word. Set that aside and just do what feels right. And they were taking Jesus and they were demoting Jesus. They were saying that Jesus is not God.

They were taking their eyes off the cross and all that Jesus had to do. And that cult was seeking to be antichrist and take them away from Jesus.

Now, in our day, it's not so much likely that we're going to be vulnerable to a cult, but we're highly vulnerable to various movements. And take the LGBT plus movement for one example.

[71 : 29] That's a movement that is constantly trying to persuade us to set aside the Bible and what the Bible says clearly. And embrace our lifestyle.

It's not pleasing to Jesus. It's an antichrist method, strategy.

But it can be much more subtle than that. It can be just about anything. Many antichrists, John speaks about. It can be anything.

From a new relationship. To a new box set that we're about to watch. To a new project that we're about to take on that's going to consume all our time. To a new leisure interest that we take up that's just going to take our whole focus.

All these things can have the effect of leading us away from Jesus and deeper into the territory of this world. So John is saying, don't drift into loving the world and giving all your time and energy into what is passing away and pulling you away from Jesus.

[72 : 44] Rather, he says, verse 27, remain in him. Remain in Jesus. It's John 15.

It's my key verse for life. It's John 15. Remain in him.

Don't drift from him. Don't love anyone or anything else more than him. Remain in him. Love him. Obey him.

Be part of his family. And as we do so, we can have the assurance and the joy of knowing that through him and all that he has done for us, his life, his death, his resurrection, through him we can have the assurance and the joy of knowing that we have eternal life.

So do you know that you have eternal life? How can we know we love Jesus? That love is not a feeling. It's a lifestyle.

[74 : 02] It's a discipline. Because we seek to obey him. Do we love the family of Jesus? Can that be seen?

Back in these days the world looked down at the church and they said, see how they love each other. Must be real. What's the world saying as they look into our fellowship today?

See how they love each other? I hope so. Because it's an evidence of the fact that we have eternal life. And do we love the world?

And not the influence of many antichrists that seek to take us further into the world and away from Jesus.

These are the tests that John gives us so that we can know that we have eternal life. We'll pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word.

[75 : 09] We confess that it's challenging, it's unsettling, and yet it's also reassuring. We thank you for the simplicity of the message that we're called to love Jesus.

We pray for strength to obey Jesus, hour by hour, decision by decision. We're called to be part of the family of Jesus and to love that family. Sometimes we struggle with that, Lord, we pray, that you would help us, that you would give to us your love and your forgiveness and your perspective, that we would see and recognize brothers and sisters, and even where there are sins and even where there are hurts and grievances.

Help us to see that these are sins that Jesus has paid for with his blood, sins that have been forgotten by those who have repented of them.

So we have no right to hold these things against each other. And help us, we pray, as those who are in the world, yes, to be in the world, but not to be of it.

Help us to recognize and resist the many antichrists that would seek to take us away from Jesus. Help us, we pray, to remain in him, to abide in him.

[76 : 27] And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll sing to finish about abiding in Jesus. Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide, when darkness deepens, Lord, with me abide.

When other helpers lay un comforts free, help of the helpless and so abide with me.

Stay to his soul and suffice this little day, earth's joys throw in, its glory's paths away. change and decay, in all around I see.

[78 : 12] O, all our new changes, Lord, abide with me. party, Lord.

■. May I play stone through the tentative home run through like thy soul My guide and stay on me To cloud and sunshine O abide with me I hear, O who With thee I'm to rest Is that no weight And tears no bitterness With mercy Where may thy victory

I triumph still Let thou abide with me Hold on thy cross Before my rosy eyes Shine through the glow And joins me To the skies And storming waves Undesperate shadows free In thy faint death O Lord Abide with me Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

The love of God the Father And the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit Be with us all Now and forevermore Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Remember You Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen