

WEDNESDAY 12 October 2022 "Evidences"

(1 John 2:7-11)

Hello, my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

You and I live in a world where NEW is highly valued. New ideas, new ways of doing things, new technology, new discoveries, new medications, new information. So quickly we discard the old in favor of something new. But once in a while what is presented as 'new' is actually a fresh version of something very old. Have you found that as you try to navigate your way through life, sometimes what's 'new' is not nearly as helpful as some much older, maybe even 'ancient' ways of doing things, ways of relating to each other?

Let's look at one of those today my friends. We're again with the apostle John, the very good friend of Jesus, many years after Jesus had ascended to heaven, and John is writing his first letter to Christians all over the known world. John is trying to answer a question which has troubled "Christians" since the days of Jesus: *'How do I know for sure that I really am a 'born again' Christian who will be in heaven with God when I die here on earth? How can I know if God has done all the life transforming work in me that He promised He would do if I fully trust Jesus to be my Savior?'*

Down through the years, even the centuries, many people have proposed a wide range of answers to those questions. Some of those answers have developed into sophisticated religious systems. Some have been very fluid, personalized, spiritual faith journeys. Look, the apostle John is picking up his stylus to write again, now in his second chapter: ***"Dear friends, 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 Jesus and in you, because the darkness is passing, and the true light is already shining. Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them."*** (1 John 2:7-11) Do we understand what John is saying?

What is this **'old command'** which we humans have had from the beginning, which John is referring to? And why does John claim he is writing this **'old command'** in a new way because its truth is seen in Jesus? Do you remember what happened in the first family in the Garden of Eden as two brothers, Cain & Abel, found themselves competing for God's approval? *That competition developed attitudes which awakened emotions of anger and even hatred and eventually terrible action with one brother actually killing the other!* (Genesis 4) Regardless of the family you grew up in or where in the world you call home, I'm sure hatred, anger and murder are without question unacceptable attitudes and actions in your family, right, especially if the overall objective which caused the violence was seeking to please God and honor Him?

As we saw in John's first chapter, he made **a clear distinction between "light and darkness"** when he wrote: **"God is light, in Him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with God yet we walk in the darkness we lie and do not live by the truth."** (1 John 1:5,6) Jesus used the term **"light"** to describe purity, truth, things which are God honoring. Remember, Jesus said **"I am the light of the world, whoever follows Me will not walk in the darkness."** (John 8:12) Jesus said, **"I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except by Me."** (John 14:6)

This is why John is writing, in his first little letter, that an old command, well known to all people, is presented in a new way through Jesus. What is this **'old command'**? How about this: *God is love, God is holy, God is pure and anyone who seeks or claims a relationship with God will not live in hatred or anger or murderous violence that is so widespread in our dark world. An authentic relationship with God will result in attitudes and behavior that are God honoring, not evil or wicked.* John is challenging us to look into the mirror of our attitudes, our behavior. Loving or violent? Light or darkness?

What do you think John meant when he wrote **"...the darkness is passing, and the truth light is already shining. Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them."** (1 John 2:8-11) You and I know we live in an evil immersed world, and it has been so since those days of the garden of Eden. In some places, at some times, it is much worse than at other times, but it is a world-wide condition in every generation, isn't it? *But John seems to be saying evil is dispersing, dissipating, as the light is shining brighter. Is that true? If so, where and how is it seen?*

Yes, my friends, I believe it is absolutely true! It's true in any person who trusts Jesus Christ to save them from their sin condemnation, for *as Almighty God does His life transforming work in that person, God breaks the stronghold of evil within that person and then cleanses them from the wickedness in their lives.* The light of God's truth and God's purity replaces the evil which had been contaminating them, controlling their thoughts, their attitudes, their words and their actions.

Have you experienced that my friends? Do you see it as the tangible evidence of what John was writing? And when a married couple are living in this powerful spiritual experience, can you see the dramatic difference Jesus and His evil defeating power makes in their marriage? And when parents and children are all experiencing this dramatic spiritual change can you see the difference it makes in the family relationships and even the entire culture of that family? And when many people are living in the power of this relationship with God can you see the difference it can make in a community? That my friends is what John is talking about here!

Yes, with several hundred million authentic Christians, who are experiencing God's transforming work in their lives, the evil darkness is being pushed back and God's light is prevailing in people, in families, and even in communities! Can you see it where you live? Are you part of this movement of God's light around the world?

John was writing that these people who experience the life transformation available in Jesus should be able to discern the difference between living in the light of God's truth, God's holiness, and living in the darkness of the devil's evil and deception. When John speaks of **'brothers and sisters'** he's not talking about human siblings, but rather all those people who have experienced the salvation transformation God offers in Jesus. *These people have been adopted by God into God's family and they are therefore 'spiritual brothers and sisters'. There is a natural love for each other which God places in His people.*

We supernaturally experience this God given love when we encounter another genuine Christian! There is no logical human explanation. If you are a genuine Christian, when you discover a person, you are meeting for the first time is also a follower of Jesus Christ, there should be a positive, sometimes enthusiastic emotional response inside of you, for you are meeting a 'brother or sister in Christ!' You can't fake it; you can't control it. *It is the Holy Spirit of God alive in both of you who is drawing you together in celebration of your common experience in Jesus!*

This my friends is yet another of the evidences which John says prove the transforming work of God in a person as the Holy Spirit awakens in them a new spiritual nature which celebrates and feels God's love for another authentic Christian, even if that other person has a different skin color or speaks a different language! So once again you and I can ask ourselves an important question... **Is John describing me?** Do I have that experience of feeling the Holy Spirit draw my heart, with a holy love, toward other Christians? If yes, that is a work of God in me! If NO then I have every reason to wonder why not?

Now once again I think we'll pause right here as John sets down his writing stylus. John has been writing in a very practical and personal way. *That's because the difference God makes in our lives, when we trust Jesus to be our Savior, and the Holy Spirit comes to live in us and transform us into God honoring people, is both very personal and individual, but also the results are seen in very practical ways in our lives.* I hope you are celebrating as we walk through these chapters of John's letter. Celebrating John is helping you see the practical evidence of the Holy Spirit alive and at work in you, my friends. Thank Jesus right now, and here's a song to help us praise Him!

Today's Scripture is 1 John 2:7-11.