

WEDNESDAY 19 October 2022 "Stay the Course"

1 John 2:24-27

Hello, my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

I wonder if someone has ever given you the advice to **"Stay the Course"**? *What did you understand that to mean, especially if you were in a particular turbulent, difficult time of life?* As you look around the world and especially at the place where you live, do you see the need today for wise, God honoring people, to stand firm on what is right and moral and holy, and *'stay the course', as they are led by the Holy Spirit of God?*

In the past few days, you and I have been witnessed to the apostle John writing his first little letter to Christians all over the known world in the latter part of the first century. *Times were very difficult for those people as they tried to understand how to live as followers of Jesus Christ* with only a few fragments of the New Testament completed; a rapidly decreasing number of the apostles and others who had personally known Jesus; and growing persecution against Christianity. John is now nearing the end of his second chapter. Let's watch and listen as John writes: **"See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what HE promised us - even eternal life."** (1 John 2:24,25)

Do you hear John making clear that the TRUTHS about God, given all the way back in the past to Abraham and Moses and Samuel and David and other great Jewish heroes of the faith, *are unchanging truths because God doesn't change!* We see that important truth in Malachi 3:6 & Hebrews 13:8. Jesus affirmed those God truths in His teachings and the apostles were now doing the same. John challenges his readers to not abandon, nor distort, nor 'update' those foundational truths about God and the foundational moral truths God has laid down regarding the human life experience. *So, I ask you my friends, are you building your life and your family on God's unchanging, foundational truths even though many modern voices are seeking to re-write those foundational truths upon which life is built?*

I'm talking about the 10 Commandments; and God's clear design for human gender identity of male and female as permanent; and marriage being a lifelong, covenant love relationship between one man and one woman; and human life begins with conception; and all life is sacred. I'm talking about the truth about our sin nature separating us from God and our inability to fix our sin problem thus our need for a Savior and that only Jesus can be that Savior because only Jesus provides the sinless atonement sacrifice of His own death. And of course, there are so many more foundational life truths. *The question is, 'are you and I building our lives on those truths?'*

Did you notice John uses the same phrase Jesus used **"remain in"**? John challenges us to be sure God's truths REMAIN IN us. *That means they permeate our minds, our hearts, our choices, our attitudes, our words, our behavior.*

John challenges us to understand that IF God's truths "**remains in you... you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.**" Once again, I think John was remembering and quoting Jesus, for in the upper room that night before His crucifixion, Jesus had said to John and His other disciples: "**I am the true vine and My Father is the gardener....Remain in Me and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing...**" (John 15:1-8)

Grapes and vineyards were very important to life in that part of the world at that time, so everyone understood the importance of tending the grapevines. The vine is that woody stalk, rooted in good soil, that year after year produces '**branches**' from which the clusters of grapes will grow. Those '**branches**' have virtually no strength to support themselves, so they naturally droop unless they are tied up to a trellis. Then with proper sunshine, pruning of excessive leaves, the right amount of rain, oh my, the beautiful, luscious grape clusters which will naturally be produced from a healthy vine & branches. *But it all depends on the vital connection between vine & branches!* That's why the phrase '**remain in Me**' was so significant. Can you and I make the application to our lives and our connection to Jesus? *Is your life producing good fruit because your connection to Jesus is so healthy, as you 'remain in Him'?* If not, what needs to happen to either establish or prune your connection to Jesus, so you do 'remain in Him' and Jesus does produce good fruit in your life?

Finally, did you notice John's reminder of Jesus' promise... **eternal life!** Remember the main question John is seeking to answer in this little letter is "*How can I be sure I am really a 'born again' Christian and heaven in my eternal destiny after death?*" Jesus spoke a great deal about our eternal destiny and specifically eternal life in heaven with Him hinging on one condition... an authentic 'born again' relationship between any person and Jesus. *So here John is again confirming that if you and I are living in that close, genuine, 'vine-branches', 'remain in Him' relationship with Jesus, then YES we can be certain that His promise is true and we will spend eternity with Jesus in heaven!*

John is picking up his stylus again to continue writing: "**I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you received from Jesus remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as His anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit - just as Jesus taught you, REMAIN in Him!**" (1 John 2:26,27) *Who or what is this 'anointing' John is writing about?* Well, of course that is the Holy Spirit of God whom God sends to live within any person as they trust Jesus Christ to be their Savior!

As John writes, he is remembering again that in the upper room that special night Jesus had taught John and the other disciples about the Holy Spirit when Jesus said: "**I will ask the Father and He will send you another Counselor to help you and be with you forever - the Spirit of Truth.... He will live within you...**"

This Counselor, whom the Father will send to you in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:16,17,26) May I ask my friends, *are you sure you have the Holy Spirit living within you?* Is the Holy Spirit of God counseling you, guiding you, teaching you God's truths and reminding you of what Jesus said? If so, then YES you can be certain you are authentically a 'born again', Holy Spirit indwelt, 'remain in Jesus', Christian who has eternity in heaven awaiting you when you die!

John was clear. He was frustrated that false teachers were trying to confuse these first century Christians and draw them away from the foundational truths they had learned; draw them away from Jesus; and lead them into confusion about the wonderful work of the Holy Spirit. I love John's statement that ***"as His anointing [the Holy Spirit] teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit - just as Jesus taught you, REMAIN in Him!"*** There is no counterfeit with Jesus and certainly not with the Holy Spirit. *As you and I "Stay the Course" in our growing, authentic relationship with Jesus, led and taught by the Holy Spirit, we will live stable, fruit bearing lives in our turbulent, confused, conflicted world!* I hope that is your certainty today my friends... if not, please write to me and I'll try to help you.

I'm including a special old song today, that I just urge you to close your eyes and listen, or sing along if you know it... It's a tender call to "Stay the Course" with Jesus my friends...

Today's Scripture is 1 John 2:24-27.