

Meeker Christian Church

Pastor Jim Pelley

1-26-25

1 John 2:5 "New Obedience" Obedience Equals Love"

When we became a Christian it introduced us to a life of NEW OBEDIENCE, which prompts Apostle John's record for the purpose of 1 John 1:4 *And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.*

Obedience to disciplined righteousness is what we learn through our life experience on earth as joy and now add in is this verse, supernatural spiritual joy that John declares to us. The truly wise person is the one who learns those two joys as fully compatibility and identified their common source as heaven. We continue in this little letter of John's in NKJV1 John 2:1-8 *My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. 3 Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. 6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. 7 Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. 8 Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.*

John was the last living apostles when he wrote. At the time of this writing John had his Gospel book written. Following that with the writing of these 3 letters, and concludes with the book of Revelation. He is writing in the last decade of the first century. Do not confuse him with John the Baptist who lived and died in the first 1/3 of the first century and was an early contemporary with Jesus.

Now to our Apostle John, Picture with me the vision of a kindly old man, - the most respected old gentleman you can imagine, respected that is by fellow Christians. He was a man sought after because of his years of experience, wisdom, common sense, and spiritual life walk. Let's place him in a beautiful, secure place- perhaps a mountain cabin, a seashore camp, or a comfortable private home. Think of him as having been caught up in an extended time of prayer and meditation. His meditation results in the title of today's sermon "Obedience Equals Love" - In this serene setting the wise old apostle John picks up a quill, dips it in an inkwell and begins to write:

1 John 2:1 *My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin.* Can you almost hear John's voice as he rehearses the words before committing them to the scroll before him? "My little children," they are the words of the HEAVENLY FATHER inspired by the HOLY SPIRIT through the old apostle John - those adoring words dripping with emotion, compassion as embodied by the same love that permitted JESUS to die that we might live. And John continues still in verse 1... *And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

The desire of GOD, the direction of the HOLY SPIRIT, the death decision of JESUS, and now the declaration of the respected aging apostle is, that those children who have accepted and been baptized in Jesus' name - those who believe in JESUS should not sin. Note that HE does not ask the impossible. HE asks only that which should be a response to the sacrificial price of JESUS paid to defeat sin! HE does not ask for more than what JESUS in HIS humanity for 33 years on earth experienced, yet was totally without sin...

Can you see the expression on John's face change from a calm peace, to a tense grimace as he continues writing: 1...And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. Perhaps John is frustrated with the fact of his own sin, much less of those of others, knowing how foolish and harmful that sin ultimately is and the consequences that result.

Now the grimace relaxes as you can imagine he may have thought: "There, now they know - everyone who ever reads this will know that on the occasion of foolishness, those weak moments that result in sin --JESUS who knows the mind and it's every intent will become an advocate for the one who has repented and truly seeks the face of the LORD"... Perhaps John's old heart quickened with the understanding of the assurance that GOD loves each of HIS created people so much that HE actively seeks them - seeks to pull them away from sin to righteousness for their own good, for the fulfillment of their new hope during their new life, and their promised new eternal destiny...

Now that earlier grimaced face of John's bursts into a wide grin, as he writes as quickly as those feeble old hands, and dipping the quill in ink will allow: 3 *Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.* NIV translates it 3 *We know - that we have come to know him - if we obey his commands.* John quickly lays the pen down and claps his hands in a victory celebration! We can know that JESUS is our advocate. We can know because we are obeying HIS commands. My soul sings with that wonderful truth - I am HIS and HE is mine! But isn't it amazing how such a simple truth slides right out of the righteous life skillet onto the floor of satan's deadly, filthy domain?

If you love JESUS you will obey JESUS! Love equals obedience.

Therefore in mathematical logic if one number equals another, then they must be equal to each other. With the same logic: if love equals obedience, then obedience has to equal love! It then follows that if one is denying righteousness by the way they live, they really never committed their lives completely to GOD in the first place! Or to put it another more graphic way: they are splashing around floundering in the cesspool of sin when they should be bathing joyfully in the purified waters of their holy baptism. In John's second epistle he actually defines love as obedience 2 John 2: 6: *And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.*

Perhaps John was thinking, it's such a simple concept - why do people think they can fool GOD or negotiate with HIM. Again the quill quickly records: 3 *Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

Maybe John thought, surely that makes it clear, surely they will understand, surely sin on earth and in the lives of every Christian will be overcome by righteousness! Surely everyone who hears this truth revealed will choose obedience = love.

Now to encourage those who are determined and committed to be Christians John continues with a little self test: 5 *But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.* Obedience equals love. It is a self test, not a matter of judgement or condemnation, but a simple yes/no test. If one loves GOD, then obedience to HIS word follows. And if obedience is not apparent as displayed in daily living the fruits of the SPIRIT, Galatians 5:22-23 22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

And if obedience = love is not apparent as displayed in daily living the fruits of the SPIRIT, then love for GOD is incomplete, immature, or altogether absent.

The old head bows and rests on his gnarled old hands, tormented by the knowledge of those who never acknowledge JESUS and also those who never go ahead and grow up after making a decision that leads to salvation, and worst of all, those who pretend to be Christians on the one hand and continue to live in sin on the other.. You can almost hear the resigned sigh as John writes much more slowly and deliberately: 6 *He who says he abides in Him(Jesus) ought himself also to walk just as He (Jesus) walked.*

And then John lays the quill on the desk as he reflects on that statement: *6 He who says he abides in Him (Jesus) ought himself also to walk just as He (Jesus) walked.* John personally remembers:

- Jesus walked in obedience to all the scripture - Jesus read, studied and memorized.
- Jesus prayed and meditated, always being careful to do only and exactly the FATHERS will,
- Jesus worshiped and followed the 10 commandments.
- Jesus was baptized.

Thinking about JESUS took John's mind back through the many years of his own life, and the martyrdom of the others of his apostolic group. After a time of recalling his youth, then as a young man traveling with and being taught by JESUS, the now the weary old Apostle once again picks up HIS quill to illustrate and emphasize the point that obedience equals love... verse 1 John 2:7 *Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have heard from the beginning.*

[probably in reference to Matthew 22:36-40] *36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" 37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.*

Perhaps John was alluding to his earlier gospel book writing in John 13:34-35 *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

verse 1 John 2:8 *8 Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.*

JESUS has modeled the way of righteousness, obedience equals love. And that is the way HE created us to live.