



9/2/25

In today's passage, John will speak to the little children in faith, the young in faith, and the mature in faith. What I love about this is that God has room for us no matter where we are in our faith... young or old. You matter to the Lord right now... no matter who you are. That is the beauty of God. I pray that you and I will not miss that wonderful truth today.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

1 John 2:7-17

I was thinking more about the title of Sunday's message, "I Am Free to Worship." My spirit gets that, but my flesh fights against it. If I'm being honest, sometimes I don't see worshipping God as a freedom. But it is! Yes, I serve someone no matter what. I either serve the flesh, which serves the god of this world in his domain of darkness... an evil slave master who makes empty promises but never delivers and always seeks to crush me... Or I serve the Most High God who is over all... who is the light, who became a servant for me in order to deliver me from my old slave master of darkness. Serving my new Master, my Lord Jesus Christ, IS serving in freedom. I am no longer held by chains. I'm held by choice. Praise His name! Jesus is the Light of the World, the Good Shepherd, the Wonderful Counselor, the God of all comfort. Our Lord is the Father of mercies who calls us into His light by His grace. I will love who I serve and serve who I love. God calls me to stop going back to my old slave master. He is a liar, and his motives are never good.

1 John 2 talks about this. The Apostle John wrote this letter so that I could understand what it means to be held by choice, to abide in the Lord. In this passage, he explains why he's writing, to whom he's writing, and the pitfalls of the traps that lure us into serving the wrong master of darkness. Let me not be deceived... As a believer in Christ, any serving of the old master is voluntary. His chains no longer hold me.

Why is John writing?

Vs. 7-11 ~ He's reminding me that the old commandment to love, which we had from the

beginning, is the same as the new commandment because Jesus IS love... and as I grow in Him, His love truly grows in me. There is no love in the darkness... not the unconditional, sacrificial love of God. The devil is a counterfeit. He disguises himself as an angel of light, but it's all a lie. He promises counterfeit love in his dark domain. But his darkness is on its way out. The true light, Jesus Christ, is already shining and His light will never fade away.

What is the evidence of a person chained in the domain of darkness vs. one set free who serves the Lord by choice? Love. Supernatural, sacrificial, unconditional love.

Some say the opposite of love is not hate, but indifference. Indifference is just a form of hate. The person who claims to be in the light while hating his brother is still in darkness. He walks in the darkness, and he's blinded by the darkness. He doesn't even realize how much he's stumbling around and causing others to stumble. Yikes.

Whoever supernaturally, sacrificially, unconditionally loves his brother doesn't just walk among the light, but dwells there. Truly, the only way I can have that kind of love is if I'm abiding with the Lord who IS light and IS love. His love has to flow through me to love like that. When I am so filled with God's love through abiding with Him that I love like He loves, I will not stumble in my faith, and I will not cause others to stumble.

This is hard! Is there any hope for me? I don't consistently love like that!!! I'm so thankful for what came before this passage in chapter 1 and what comes in the next few verses. In chapter 1, John said that if I claim to be without sin, I'm a liar and the truth isn't in me. If I claim to love perfectly without fail, I'm deceiving myself. But praise God... if I confess my sin He's faithful and just to forgive my sin and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Jesus is my propitiation, my mercy seat, whose sacrifice covers my sin. This is the great statement about sanctification... I'm not sinless, but as I grow in Christ, I will sin less. I will hate less and love more. The question is, am I letting the Holy Spirit transform me so that I'm growing in love from one degree of glory to the next (2 Corinthians 3:18)?

*To whom is John writing this need to love like Jesus loves?
Vs. 12-14 ~ He's writing to believers, no matter where they are in their maturity in Christ... little children in faith, young in faith, or mature in faith.*

To the children, John says, "I'm writing to you because your sins (of not loving well) are forgiven because of Jesus, and because through Jesus you know the Father. You know the one who is love! "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are" (1 John 3:1).

To the young, John says, "I'm writing to you because you have overcome the evil one and you are strong, and the word of God abides in you." How does someone overcome the evil one, the prince of darkness? 1 John 5:4-5 says, "For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" We overcome

the evil one through faith in Jesus Christ.

Who is strong? The one who stands firm IN THE LORD! "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of HIS might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil." Depending on God makes us strong. "Maturity grows submission" (David Powlison).

How are we strong in overcoming? We let God's word dwell in our hearts richly. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (Colossians 3:16). His word is our weapon that helps us overcome. His Spirit is the sword that empowers us to use the word wisely.

To the mature in faith, John says, "You KNOW Him who is from the beginning." You have grown from a baby to a mature follower of Christ, and you know Him by experience and in truth. "And this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

Are these believers perfect? No... but they know the one who is. They still need His mercy, just like I do. But they, like me, need to understand what it is to truly abide in the Lord, and how to recognize the pitfalls that lure us away from Him. What are they?

Vs. 15-17 ~ John says, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." He uses the same Greek word for love... Do not sacrifice yourself for love of the world. It's passing away. You can't love the world AND the Lord at the same time. As Jesus said in Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." You cannot serve God and the world. You reject the love of God when you embrace the world. Wow... I see this so clearly in the Old Testament. The Israelites continued to choose idolatry over God. Why???

All that is in the world is about SELF. It feeds the desires of the flesh, but the flesh is hostile to God (Romans 8:7). It feeds the desires of the eyes, but hope is not in the temporary things of what we can see, but the eternal that we can't see (Romans 8:24). It feeds pride of life, but God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 4:5).

These things are not from the Father. God makes no selfish decisions. He pours out no evil on us. It is the world who does that, and the world is passing away because the world is the domain of darkness. The world tries to define itself without God, even conjuring up philosophies and choices that make no sense. It's passing away.

"But whoever does the will of God abides forever." The will of God starts with faith. To do His will I start by acknowledging that I need His forgiveness... and then that I grow in faith and let His word be my strength through His Spirit... and that I grow in knowing God more and more.

From that faith and dependence on Him, my love will grow.

O Lord, I am no longer held by chains, I'm held in Your love and Your light by choice. Your choice to save me... my choice to respond to you in faith. Please help me to stand firm in my faith, to grow stronger and stronger in You, and to know You more and more. This is my freedom.