

Series: 1 John

Title: Hereby We Do Know

Text: 1 John 2: 3-6

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John is writing to believers declaring Christ the Word of Life, Christ our Advocate, Christ our Righteousness, Christ our Propitiation. Now, he deals with assurance.

1 John 2: 3: And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4: He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5: But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. 6: He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

A believer's chief desire is to know Christ and be found in him. We love true doctrine. But not simply for the sake of knowing doctrine. We love doctrine that makes us know Christ. It is Christ we want to know and be found in. Paul said,

Philippians 3: 8:...I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:...that I might win Christ 9: And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness [but his]...10: That I may know him,...

I want to be assured that I know Christ and am in Christ. Here, the Spirit of God declares that it is possible for believers to know that very thing. A few of my brethren struggle with assurance. We all at times lose our assurance. A sinner can believe God and not have assurance; so never question a fellow believer's faith simply because he does not have assurance or because his assurance wavers at times.

Some insist it is impossible for believers to have assurance that they know Christ and are in Christ. But Job said, "*I know that my Redeemer liveth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God*" (Job 19:25-26). The apostle Paul said, "*I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him*" (2

Timothy 1:12). One reason John wrote this epistle is because he wanted his fellow believers to have assurance.

1 John 3: 14: We know that we have passed from death unto life,...

1 John 5: 13: Those things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.

Proposition: Our text declares it is possible for believers to know that we know Christ and that we are in Christ; it is my prayer that the Spirit of God will give us assurance that we know Christ.

Divisions: 1) The way we know 2) By whom we know 3) The result of knowing

THE WAY WE KNOW

1 John 2: 3: And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4: He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

God declares the way we have assurance that we know Christ is, if we keep his commandments. What are his commandments?

1 John 3: 23: And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

The first commandment to those who know him is to believe on Christ.

John 6: 28: Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29: Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Those who know Christ, believe Christ is the Son of God, our Sovereign Lord and Savior. We believe he is the Alpha and Omega of our salvation, the Author and Finisher of our faith. True faith believes our acceptance with God is in Christ in whom we are complete, apart from anything of us. We believe the Son of God, Christ Jesus, is our Prophet, Priest and King. Faith believes Christ is our

Shepherd: we hear his Voice and he knows us and we follow him alone. We believe he is our Sanctifier and our Sanctification, our Redeemer and our Redemption. We obey him by believing on him and by confessing him publicly in believer's baptism and by partaking of his table in remembrance of him. And from the first hour to the last we walk by faith. We look to Christ, led of Christ, corrected by Christ, following Christ through the preaching of the gospel. "*We worship God in Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.*" As Romans 3:31 declares, through faith in Christ we establish the whole law of God because Christ established it on our behalf.

The second commandment to those who know him is to love one another.

John 13: 34: A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.35: By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Those who know Christ, first and foremost, love him, our Elder Brother, God's Firstborn Son. We do whatever Christ's word teaches us in the gospel because we are constrained by his love for us. We further his gospel out of love for him. Love makes us do whatever Christ commands us to do in love to our brethren for their good for his sake.

1 Corinthians 13: 4: Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5: Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6: Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7: Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8: Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.

Then the Spirit of God shows us the opposite as a solemn warning—"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Most everyone *says* they know Christ. Some say they know Christ *historically* by saying, "I believe there is a God, I believe Jesus walked this earth." Others say they know Christ *professedly*: many have made a profession of faith, been baptized, joined a church, many even go to church services regularly. Many say they know Christ *theologically*—many know the five points

of Calvinism and they can quote scripture and they say they know Christ. But there is a great difference between knowing *about* Christ and *knowing* Christ.

The difference is they lack the works which are the fruit of truly knowing Christ—"*He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments...*" The person who does not believe on Christ does not know Christ. He does not believe on Christ only, who looks to an experience in the past, to self-wisdom, self-seeking, or some spiritual experience. Nor does a person believe on Christ who thinks he is obligated *to* keep the law of Sinai or the traditions of men to add to Christ's work. A sinner does not believe on Christ who has a mercenary spirit, trying to indebt God for a better reward than others or who trusts in his denomination or who fits the worship of God and the fellowship of brethren around his life.

He does not know Christ who does not love Christ's brethren. The person full of self-love rather than love for brethren does not know Christ. He who thinks he is more righteous and looks down on brethren or who holds believers suspect does not have the love which God produces in the heart. A sinner who will not overlook sin nor bear the burden of erring brethren but is easily offended and makes a man an offender for a word does not have love. The sinner who separates himself in self-righteousness and forsakes assembling together with God's saints under the gospel does not know Christ. Faith in Christ and love for brethren are the works whereby many deny Christ.

James 2: 14: What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?...19: Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 20: But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

The Holy Spirit says in our text "*He is a liar*"—he does not know Christ; "*and the truth is not in him*"—he is not born of incorruptible seed through the gospel of Christ!

How do I know if I trust an experience or a profession from my past or am looking to something in addition to Christ? One way is if the word of God contradicts my experience or contradicts that work I am trusting in, yet I deny God's word to defend my experience and my works then I am trusting that rather than Christ alone. When the Spirit makes us know Christ, a believer renounces

everything that the word of God contradicts; it is called repentance, faith, and submission to God. Believer's baptism is renouncing everything we formerly trusted, confessing we are now Christ's, walking in newness of life from here on.

When Christ declared, *"This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent"* the liars to whom he spoke proved they did not know him because they would not keep his word but went away. But the apostles said, *"Lord, to whom shall we go. Thou hast the words of eternal life and we believe and are sure thou art the Christ the Son of the living God."*

Do you believe on Christ as your only acceptance with God? Do you love him and your brethren in whom he dwells? The Spirit of God says, *"Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."* *"Faith is the evidence."*

BY WHOM WE KNOW CHRIST

1 John 2: 5: But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby we know that we are in him.

The word "perfected" means the love of God has brought him to its purposed end. The Spirit of God declares it is God shedding his love abroad in our hearts that we know Christ and keep his word. The end to which God's love brings his child is to make his child keep his word by believing on Christ and bearing all manner of trial out of love for his brethren.

Romans 5:1: Therefore being justified, by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3: And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: [including trials for brethren whom we love] knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4: And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

When the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts we behold God's great, everlasting, unchanging, sovereign love in Christ for his elect, wherewith he loves even me. For the first time, we behold his great love in making us sons of

God simply because the Father loved us and chose us in Christ in eternity without a cause in us.

1 John 3:1: Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:

When the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts we behold how Christ sent his only Son who laid down his life and made satisfaction to his holy justice for all his elect by his precious blood. And we behold he did this for us who did not love him.

1 John 4: 9: In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

When the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts we behold that we cannot even glory for believing on Christ and loving our brethren. We see that the only reason we love is because Christ sent the Holy Spirit who quickened us and created in us a new spirit and brought us to the purposed end of making us love Christ and our brethren.

1 John 4: 12: No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

When the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts God brings us to the purposed end of removing our fear of judgment so that we can approach God. He removes this fear by teaching us that as Christ is perfect and accepted of God so are we in this world.

1 John 4:17: Herein [is the purposed end to which God's love brings us when it is shed abroad in our hearts] that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

When his love is shed abroad in our hearts then we see in all of this that it was not by our will and our works first approaching God but by him first loving us.

1 John 4:19: We love him, because he first loved us.

So the Holy Spirit is not teaching us to seek assurance in our obedience itself. But rather our faith in Christ is assurance that we have a saving knowledge of Christ because the only way his people believe on Christ is by God making us to know Christ.

John 6: 45: It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

Likewise, the one cause that makes us keep his command to love Christ and our brethren is being born of God and knowing Christ by divine revelation.

1 Jo 4:7: Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

This is why the Spirit says in our text, “*if we keep his word, hereby we do know that we know him and hereby know we that we are in him.*” So to you my brethren who struggle with assurance, understand what the Spirit is teaching. Faith in Christ is the evidence whereby we know that we truly know Christ and are in Christ.

THE RESULT OF KNOWING CHRIST

1 John 2: 6: He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

The word “ought” means “from a debt of gratitude.” He that professes to abide in Christ ought himself, from a debt of gratitude, also so to walk, even as he walked.

As the Father’s servant, how did Christ walk? Christ walked by faith and love.

Christ walked by faith obeying his Father by establishing the law for his elect that it might be taken out of the way so we might live unto him. So we who abide in him, ought ourselves, from a debt of gratitude, also so to walk, even as he walk trusting that he established the law for us so that we can live unto him. We are under his light and easy yoke. We serve the law of God in our inward man. And would keep it perfectly ourselves, if not for sin our members. (Rom 7: 21-25)

But because we respect God's law as holy and because we are obedient to Christ, we confess that we only establish the law of God through faith in Christ, as he commands us.

Also, Christ loved his elect freely, without a cause in us, by laying down his life for his brethren. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought", from a debt of gratitude to him, "lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 Jn 3: 16) "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God", after this manner, "loved us", that is, freely, without a cause in us, "we ought", from a debt of gratitude, "also to love one another" after this same manner. (1 Jn 4: 10-11)

So in all of this we see that faith and love rules the believer with a far stronger, superior rule than law. We see it by the joy faith gives a believer as we wait on the Lord in hope to work in our brethren through the gospel. There is no joy with those under law. And we see it by the trials that love endures for brethren who are overtaken in a fault. Love will endure and forebear with great suffering for brethren while law judges and whips and separates from a fallen brother.

One says he knows Christ, who knows doctrine inside and out. But when a brother says or does something they do not understand or they do not agree with, instead of faith trusting Christ to make the fallen brother stand and instead of love forbearing and suffering long as Christ does with his people, knowledge puffeth up. He separates himself, forsaking the assembly of the saints and by his actions says, "*Stand over there, I am holier than thou!*" But the glory of Christ which he claimed to defend does not mean enough to him to pack up and move to where he can hear the gospel preached. Instead, he remains alone in the wilderness. His absence of faith and love speaks louder than merely saying he knows Christ. The Holy Spirit says "*he is a liar and the truth is not in him.*"

But another one who says he knows Christ sees a brother who, indeed, is in error, even worse than the first. But through faith in Christ, he says, "If you put all my knowledge in a thimble, it would rattle around like a peanut in a boxcar. Yet, God forbears with this poor, ignorant sinner for the sake of Christ. And Christ continues to teach me: here a little, there a little. So I believe Christ is able to teach my brother." And by his love he bears the burden of his erring brother and suffers long with him because he knows the longsuffering of Christ in perfect

love toward him. James said, “*Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?*” (Ja 2:22) “*He that saith he abideth in him ought*”, from a debt of gratitude, “*himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*”

Amen!