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Christian Fellowship That is Genuine

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CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP THAT IS GENUINE

A STUDY OF 2 JOHN
NUMBER 2
2 JOHN 5-13

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2 JOHN 5-13 "And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen."

Quite often I can give you accurate doctrine and no one says one word, but once I make what appears to be a slight slip, and I really hear from all sides. In our last study, I referred to "Nympha and the church that is in her house." Some of our astute students turned to Colossians 4:15 and read, "Nymphas, and the church which is in his house." They didn't hear anything else for the entire period for they thought they had caught me in a slip and they couldn't wait to straighten me out. Nympha is the correct name for this wonderful woman, though I will go along with Nymphas if that suits you better. But it is not "The church that is in his house" as you have in the King James Version, but the Greek says, "The church which is in her house." The Greek word is autes and it means "her."

Verse 5 "And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another." "And now I beseech you, lady" and this is again referring to Nymphas. She was a magnificent Christian and had done a wonderful job in rearing her children. Her children had an amazing reputation for their spirituality. John was deeply devoted to all of them. The words, "I beseech" is not begging but rather is a command. Then he says, "Not as though I wrote a new commandment unto you." He isn't saying anything new, just the same old emphasis. What he is going to say is to emphasize the importance of the spirit filled life. "That which we keep on having from the beginning" refers to the beginning of their Christian life. The commandment to which he refers is 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."

There are two things in this verse. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and the other part is to love one another, which is made possible by the filling of the Holy Spirit.

A Summary Of That Commandment

1. This is God's commandment for the entire human race. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

2. The second part of that commandment is to love one another. This always depends on a filling of the Holy Spirit. This is a present, active, subjunctive of agapao and that subjunctive means that your volition is involved, and maybe you will do this and maybe you won't.

Therefore, we have this same old commandment given again here. The people who had brought disturbance in Ephesus had moved on to Laodicea and the Lycus Valley and were bringing the same kind of disturbance there. They weren't taking in doctrine and they weren't relying on the Holy Spirit, and therefore, they didn't have the capacity for loving one another. These were the false spirituality crowd. First John drove some of these people out because the doctrine in 1st John was too strong for them. They had gone to Laodicea Colosse and were causing the same trouble there. Love one another is always the command to live the spirit filled life.

Verse 6 "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it." In this verse John declares the function of the spirit filled life. "This is the love" and "the love" refers to the filling of the Holy Spirit. "That" introduces a purpose clause and the purpose is that "we keep on walking." This is the same form as in the previous verse and is a present, active, subjunctive of peripateo. The subjunctive means that it depends on your volition as to whether you keep walking in fellowship or not. We have the word "after" but it is from kata and it means according to the norm or standard of Scripture. We are to walk after the norms and standards of Scripture and not after the norms and standards of emotionalism. We are not to walk after the norms and standards of those who shout amen and wave their hands over their heads and pretend to be spiritual. They think if you moan and groan during your prayer, you are spiritual. The Australians will say, "Here, Here!" but that doesn't mean spirituality either. John wrote to this great woman because she was the greatest power to stem the tide against worldliness. "His commandment" refers to these two basic things we have studied above, namely, be saved and take in doctrine.

We now have a second purpose clause. "As ye have heard" means they were first saved, and then they heard doctrine. "Ye should keep on walking in it" is the same construction of peripateo we had earlier and it means the only way we can ever grow as believers is to keep on walking in doctrine every day.

In verses 7-10 we are going to see how John made an attack on these false pseudo-believers. Many in Ephesus and in Laodicea and in Colosse had gone after false spirituality.

Verse 7 "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-christ." The word "deceivers" is a little too tame to really describe these pseudo followers of Christ. They were actually goons and weirdos. Notice what they did--They confessed not that Jesus had come in the flesh. Now what does that have to do with spirituality? Well, it has everything to do with it.

The Uniqueness Of Christ

To answer these deceivers in the Lycus Valley, we have to go back to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. First of all Jesus Christ is God, and as God, he is sovereignty, righteousness, justice, love, eternal life, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, immutability and veracity. This is the essence of his deity. And as God, he can't die and in order to die, he had to become a man. Therefore, to deny that he came in the flesh is to deny the cross and his atoning death for man. When Christ was on the earth, he called God "My Father" and this he always spoke from his humanity. In his humanity, Christ had no old sin nature and was sustained in his humanity by the Holy Spirit. So to deny his humanity was not only to reject the cross but it was also to reject the fact that the Holy Spirit sustained him. Denying that Jesus was a human also denies the idea that the Holy Spirit can indwell a human being.

An Anti-christ

Don't get disturbed and get this mixed up with "THE ANIT-CHRIST" who is to come in the last days. This is not referring to the Anti-Christ as described in Daniel and Revelation. This is not the Dictator of the Revived Roman Empire or the Dictator of Palestine. This term anti-christ is describing these deceivers who were teaching doctrine that is contrary to scripture. It means the people who were teaching false spirituality. Therefore, today when people come along and teach speaking in tongues and all such kind of emotionalism and call it spirituality, they are actually antichrists. But this anti-christ here has nothing to do with the Tribulation.

Verse 8 "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." In this verse John jerks them back to reality. They have been thinking about all these deceivers so he reminds them that it would be very easy for them to become a part of these same false things. He actually says, "Beware yourselves" and this is the present, active, imperative of blepo. It really means "Take a realistic look at these facts." This "that" introduces a purpose clause. Then he switches to the editorial "we" and includes himself in this admonition. This means that we must beware that we lose not the infilling of the Holy Spirit and that we lose not daily emphasis on Bible doctrine. "Which we have wrought" refers to the things that the Holy Spirit has produced in their lives. Believers must be on the constant watch that the old sin nature not be allowed to move in and crowd out the filling of the Holy Spirit. "But that we receive a full reward" is from apolambano and it means the accumulation of all the faithfulness of a lifetime and it will be lumped together and God will reward accordingly. Bible doctrine is the one and only sure guarantee that we will not slip into these traps.

Verse 9 "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." This is a fellowship verse and has nothing to do with losing your salvation. (Now I didn't write 2nd John but some of you will swear I did when you see what this verse says.) On the contrary, John wrote this to remind us that knowing doctrine is the central thing in every Christian life. "Whosoever" here is referring to the carnal believer. This word "transgresseth"

just doesn't occur here. The word is pro ago. Pro means face to face with, or to advance, or to be out in front of. Ago means to lead. So here these two words together mean to go beyond the limits of something, to get out of bounds. In football language, it means "to be out of bounds." You can cross the goal line, but if you are out of bounds, it doesn't count. So the amazing statement we have is this-- "Whosoever gets out of bounds and abideth not in Bible doctrine." This says the "doctrine of Christ" but it means the doctrine which belongs to Christ. We saw this in 1 Cor. 2:16, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." The Bible is the mind of Christ.

The Man Who Does Not Have God

What is the result of getting out of bounds and not having doctrine in the mind? It is simply this--"He does not have God." Does he mean that they are not saved? No, not at all. This is an idiom and it means they have lost contact with God and do not have any fellowship with him. It has nothing to do with the top circle. Once you are saved, you are there to stay. It has to do with the bottom circle and it means the believer has become carnal and is out of fellowship with God..

The Contrast Of The Spiritual Believer

John now draws a contrast with the believer who is in fellowship and who is filled with the Holy Spirit. "He that abideth in doctrine" and this is a present, active, participle of meno. It means to stay in the bottom circle so you cantake in doctrine. It means to live on intimate terms with doctrine all the time. This means you must have doctrine on the inside of you. The woods is just filled with religious legalistic people who do not abide in doctrine. This is the doctrine that belongs to Christ and it is called the Word of God. When we get to the book of Revelation, we will see that the Laodiceans didn't make it. They didn't have any spiritual men and that's why John had to write to this woman. You have to have people with doctrine in them in order to have a strong church.

How To Have The Father And The Son With You And In You

John says that if you keep on abiding in doctrine, you will have the Father and the Son in you. Please notice the Holy Spirit is missing. Why? The reason is this. When you are in fellowship, you have fellowship with the Father and The Son, and the Holy Spirit is the one who is furnishing the power for this to be a reality. It isn't necessary to mention the Holy Spirit. His function is to magnify Jesus Christ. In a very definite sense, there is no such thing as having fellowship with the Holy Spirit. He is the one who is giving the power and is the one who always gives life. JOHN 16:14 "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." This is the function of the Holy Spirit, to stay in the background and to magnify Jesus Christ.

REVELATION 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Before we close this study, I want us to look for a moment at this amazing verse which has been so abused and so misused. This is a picture of Jesus standing and knocking at the door of your mind.

He is already your Saviour but he wants to control your life and your thinking. PLEASE NOTICE THAT NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT YOU INVITING HIM IN. The thing that is said is "Open the door." The opening of the door is volition expressing itself in faith. All you can do in salvation is open the door and that's equivalent to faith in Christ. All you can do to have fellowship is open the door, and that is equivalent of having faith in the Word of God. Please notice that this is a fellowship verse, not a salvation verse. The result of opening the door to Christ is "I will sup with him and he with me." This is fellowship. The Holy Spirit is the one who makes this fellowship possible and that's why the Holy Spirit is not mentioned here. Who is the one who gave me the right to sit down at the table with Jesus Christ and have fellowship with him? It is none other than the Holy Spirit. You have to be in that bottom circle in order to have fellowship with God. This is exactly what this verse says. The first part of 2nd John, verse 9, is the carnal believer, out of fellowship, with no regard for doctrine, and he is out of fellowship with God as long as he refuses to confess hissin. But the last half of this verse pictures the spiritual believer and he is filled with the Holy Spirit, and therefore, has fellowship with both the Father and the Son. Volition opens the door and Christ walks in for fellowship.

False Teachers Knocking On The Laodicean Door

So these false teachers knocked on the door of the Laodicean Church. What do you suppose they did? John is trying to get them ready to meet this test, and the only way they can meet it is to have doctrinal truth in their minds. Please take this question to yourself personally for a moment. When people with false doctrine walk up to your door and knock, what are you to do? Are you to be sweet and let them in? Absolutely not. This scripture is going to tell us to slam the door in their face and have no fellowship with them. When the Jehovah Witnesses, the Mormons, the Mind Benders called the Unification Church, The Way Group, The Local Church Crowd, The Transcendental Meditation Group, the Divine Light Mission Group, knocks at your door, slam the door in their face and don't listen to them. I can hear you say, "Preacher, don't you think we ought to be polite and nice to them?" Well, just listen to what John has to say in these next two verses.

Verse 10 "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." This "if" is a first class condition and it means they will come. Please notice John says two things.

First, don't let him come into your house. That is equivalent of slamming the door in his face.

Second, don't wish him well. Wishing him God's speed is equivalent of agreeing with him. The Greek says, "Do not speak--Rejoice!" This means do not speak to him in a nice way. Chop them off short and get rid of them as quickly as you can. Do not say, "Hello." Just chop them off and show them the street.

Verse 11 "For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." You have been taught to be polite, but I ask you to listen to what John the aged preacher is saying. This verse means that if you are sweet to false doctrine, then you are agreeing with it. The principle is separation from apostasy. Slam the door hard. False doctrine is evil and you are not to have anything to do with it.

Look what the Bible says about separating yourself from apostasy.

1. Separate yourself from apostate believers. (2 John 10-11)
2. Separate yourself from troublemakers and emotional believers. (Romans 16:17-18)
3. Separate yourself from the carnal believers. (2 Cor. 5:9-11)

This is a very wonderful little book. Now look at the epilogue.

Verse 12 "Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full." John had some personal and intimate things he wanted to say to Nymphas and her children, so he will save those things for private conversation. So the principle is this--love all the brethren, but be personally and intimately involved with only a few.

Verse 13 "The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen." The sister of Nymphas and her children were in John's church in Ephesus so he sends greetings to Nymphas from them. He includes greetings from them in this closing verse.