



Around the Word
BIBLE STUDY

Trinity, 2016

1 John 2:1-14

St. Augustine on the Nature of Love:

"In what sense then is it, that there is no scandal or occasion of stumbling in him that loveth his brother? Because he that loveth his brother beareth all things for unity's sake; because it is in the unity of charity that brotherly love exists."

(Homily on 1 John 1:1-2:11)

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Introduction: What does it mean to be in the light? John explores this theme in more depth in this text which describes the Christian life and how it looks different from the life of the unbeliever, who dwells in darkness. Isaiah spoke truly when he said, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone."

Opening: Psalm 119:41-48

⁴¹Let your steadfast love come to me, | O LORD,*

your salvation according to your | promise;

⁴²**then shall I have an answer for him who | taunts me,***

for I trust | in your word.

⁴³And take not the word of truth utterly out | of my mouth,*

for my hope is in your | just decrees.

⁴⁴**I will keep your law con- | tinually,***

forever and | ever,

⁴⁵and I shall walk in a | wide place,*

for I have sought your | precepts.

⁴⁶**I will also speak of your testimonies be- | fore kings***

and shall not be | put to shame,

⁴⁷for I find my delight in your com- | mandments,*

which | I love.

⁴⁸**I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, | which I love,***

and I will meditate on your | statutes.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*

and to the Holy | Spirit;

as it was in the be- | ginning,*

is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

¹ **My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.**

John referring to the readers as children is a common theme in his letters. John is not necessarily making a comment on his age, but rather is referring to his being their father in the faith.

Notice that he says that he is writing that they "may not sin." This is a conditional verb, one that does not necessarily mean that they will

not sin again. In fact, he knows that they will sin because he immediately shows them the solution to our sin problem.

Read Romans 8:34. How does what Paul says there support John's teaching here?

Read Job 16:19-21. Is this a new thing that Jesus does?

² **He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.**

The Greek word translated here as "propitiation" only occurs 4 times in the New Testament. It refers to the act of sacrificing something to remove sins.

Read Romans 6:23 and 3:21-25. Why was it necessary for Jesus to die?

Read John 3:16. How is that famous text reflected here?

³ **And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.**

What commandment did Jesus give his people? Read John 13:34.

What does Jesus expect of us? Read John 14:15.

Read Matthew 11:28-30. Does Jesus see himself as an exacting task master?

Again, John is making the connection clear between what we believe and what we do.

⁴ **Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵ but whoever keeps his**

word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him:

While we cannot judge someone's heart, their words and actions can reveal who they truly are and what they truly believe.

How is God's love perfected in us? Read John 14:21-23.

⁶ whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

Here, John resolves the tension that has been building as we reflect on our sinfulness.

When did you begin to abide in Christ? Read Romans 6:4.

How can we be sure that we still abide in Christ? Read John 6:56-57.

John is here urging us that we *ought* to live and act as Christ did. Can we do that perfectly? Refer back to 1 John 1:9.

What does God do for us when we fail?

⁷ Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. ⁸ At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. Is John putting unreasonable expectations on God's people?

Read Revelation 21:5-6. How has Jesus made the old commandment to love your neighbor as yourself new again? Look forward to 1 John 4:19.

Where does this true light shine even today?

⁹ Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. ¹⁰ Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

How does Paul describe the life of the unbeliever in Titus 3:3? Is this a life of darkness or light?

John calls the believers to whom he is writing children. His use of brother here refers to a fellow believer. With this in mind, do you think that John is encouraging us to see the Church as a family?

¹¹ But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Read Hebrews 1:8-9. Is it our job to hate people for their wickedness?



What does God desire of the wicked? Read 1 Timothy 2:3-4.

What does a life lived apart from God do to our ability to see the light of Christ?

Read John 9:35-41.

¹² I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.

¹³ I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.

I write to you, children, because you know the Father.

¹⁴ I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men,

because you are strong,

and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

These verses are written as chiasmic Hebrew poetry (Children, fathers, young men, children¹, fathers¹, young men¹).

Is he writing to people at different stages in life or do these apply to all Christians? Read Mark 10:15, Acts 10:43, and Ephesians 6:10.

Closing Hymn: The People That in Darkness Sat (LSB, 412)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Rev. Quintin Cundiff is pastor of Calvary Lutheran Church in Rio Rancho, NM (calvarylutheranchurch-lcms.org). You can contact him at pastorcundiff@gmail.com.