

**Christ Community Covenant Church**  
**The New Command: Love and Live in the Light**  
**Pastor Dave Scherrer - February 23, 2014**

**Announcement re land sale**  
**Baby Dedications**  
**Claudia Smith**  
**Andrew McCargar**

**1 John 2:1-11**

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. <sup>2</sup> He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. <sup>3</sup> And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. <sup>4</sup> Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, <sup>5</sup> but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: <sup>6</sup> whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

<sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because<sup>[a]</sup> the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. <sup>9</sup> Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. <sup>10</sup> Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

<sup>11</sup> 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.***

***"Darkness has blinded his eyes"***

I believe that Vince had his eyes blinded by darkness. This event on the SLHS campus has the sense of evil about it to me. I believe in evil, I see it active in our world today and to me Evil is a being. The Bible says evil has a name and that Satan is real and I believe it. It says that he is a liar and a thief and a murderer.

**John 8:43-45**

<sup>43</sup> Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. <sup>44</sup> You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup> But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.

**John 10:10**

<sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

I know that the newspaper says that Vince took his own life but I can't help but believe that the evil one is the one who stole his life from us. Somehow Vince believed in the lies that the evil one whispered in his ears. The thief stole his joy and then in a moment of true evil Vince lost his life. It was never supposed to be this way. You know that don't you, you can feel it in your soul. There is something about this world that is broken and has gone all wrong.

We see this evil happening too often to our young people. They are listening to the lies told to them. And the lies find a way of getting imbedded into the mind and heart and impacting how we see ourselves. You middle and high school aged people are most susceptible. You hear things like:

- You don't matter, at least you don't matter enough,
- You will never amount to anything,
- You aren't smart enough or tall enough or skinny enough or sexy enough or funny enough and so you don't get the same amount of love as another person more talented or more attractive,

In middle and high school, you see it all the time as you move from homeroom to math to PE to the walk home. People judge you based on what you look like not on the character of your walk.

And these lies kill. National teen suicide rates have been on the rise for the past ten years and is now the third leading cause of death among 15 to 24-year-olds, accounting for 20 percent of all annual deaths in that age group. For even younger children, between the ages of 10 and 14, suicide is the fourth leading cause of death. It is not the fault of the video games maybe, but the death and killing that happens in so many of those games gives evidence that there is a culture of death and violence that infiltrated our movies and music and entertainment and has made us think that death and violence is simply the norm.

How can this be, that a young person so full of life somehow comes to the conclusion that death is easier than life? Since Vince's death the newspaper reports that there have been 4 deaths and a suicide pact discovered at Douglas County High and I am told that there was another incident at Standley Lake. It is an epidemic of evil. And society seems powerless to stop it.

If it is true what they John the Apostle says about God and I believe it is, that God loves us so much that he sent his only Son to save us from the evil one and the consequences of his lies and deadly ways - then there is some very good news for us this morning. It means we have a rescuer.

If what the Bible says is true (and I have invested everything I am and have to this truth) – that the reality is that God has come in the form of Jesus to defeat death and to save us from ourselves, then we have life giving hope in a lying and senseless world. There isn't enough truth and love and life being breathed into the lives of teens today. We live in a world of lies and these lies kill.

***"We live in a world of lies and these lies kill"***

The letter we are looking at this morning, 1 John, tells us that there is a truth and a life and a light that saves us. But too many teens and I should say their parents and grandparents, have no idea that there is an amazing grace that can open our eyes to this love. And this is not some kind of perverted conditional, "I will love you if" love but the realist form of love – an abundant love that says "I love you unconditionally" – and an "I love you anyway, just the way you are" kind of love that truly saves lives.

Let's get to our study. If ever our morning study had a practical application it is this one.

***A New Command***

John tells us that we have a new command but really it is an old commandment with a new face on it. Let's read it again:

***1 John 2:7-8***

<sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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.

- 1. What is the commandment referred to in both verses?***
- 2. In what sense is it old?***
- 3. In what sense is it new?***
- 4. Why does John go out of his way to stress its oldness and newness?***

***1. What is the commandment referred to in both verses?***

Verse 7 begins, "Beloved I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment." And verse 8 says, "Yet I am writing you a new commandment." What is the commandment?

The fact that John begins to talk about love and hate in verses 9–11 suggests that the commandment in view in verses 7 and 8 is the love commandment from **John 13:34** where Jesus said, **"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."**

But the unmistakable evidence that this is the case, and that John is talking about one commandment and not two, is 2 John 5. There he quotes the "new commandment" and says it's not new: "And now I beg you, lady, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning, that we love one another." The language is very much like verse 7 of our text, but here in 2 John 5 the commandment of John 13 is quoted. So we know that the commandment of 1 John 2:7–8, which in some sense is new and old, is the commandment of love which Jesus gave to his disciples, namely, "Love one another as I have loved you."

### **2. In what sense is this commandment old?**

Verse 7 stresses the oldness of the commandment. "Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard."

John says that the commandment of love is old in the sense that you have had it "from the beginning". From the beginning of what? The next phrase says, "The old commandment is the word which you have heard." So "the beginning" in view is the beginning of their Christian life when they first heard the word. In other words, the commandment that believers must love one another was part of the original gospel message. It is so clearly implied in the basic truth that "God is light" that John can simply say at the end of verse 7, "The old commandment *is* the word which you heard."

This is a very remarkable rebuke to some typical church people bashing that is so popular today. When you become a Christian you are commanded to love your fellow Christian and you cannot do that while pouting about them and gossiping about them and spreading rumors about them. It is not an optional stage two in Christian growth. The gospel contains not only the commandment to trust Jesus, but also the commandment, in the power of that trust, to be changed into a loving person.

So John says, "When I require of you that you must obey the commandment to love in order to maintain assurance (2:3–4), I am not requiring anything new." It is an old commandment. It is part of the word which you heard from the beginning."

### **3. In what sense is the commandment new?**

As I said before there is a new face on this commandment. We know that Jesus is Light, that God is light. And that Jesus the True Light is already shining. But this so called new expression of an old commandment - What does that mean? It must mean that a light that was expected sometime in the distant future is no longer merely a hope. It has already begun to shine. I believe it is you and I filled with the Holy Spirit now empowered to be the light of the world. The next expression of the old understanding of the love and light of God is that we are now that love and light in the world. It is an amazing thought to the first century believer and I think the reality of it should take our breath away as well.

#### ***Illustration: Nett's trying to find a church***

If we say verse 8 of our passage in reverse: **"Since the true light is already shining, the result is that the love commandment has come true in Christ and is coming true in you."**

Picture a sunrise. The Day of light is going to dawn over the whole world. The first rays of that light are the love of God in Jesus Christ. The glorious kingdom of God peeked over the horizon, and one beam of light shot into the darkness—Jesus of Nazareth. He formed a church and said, "You are the light of the world." Or to put it in other words, he said, "Love one another as I have loved you." The love commandment is new because it is a commandment to become mirrors of the new age, which is shining over the horizon in the love of Jesus Christ.

#### **4. Why does John stress the oldness and newness of the love commandment?**

I think he stresses its oldness (in verse 7) to distinguish his teaching from the new teachings of the false prophets. The group that had left the church (2:19) were evidently dissatisfied with John's old message. They had some new things to say about sinlessness (1:8, 10) and assurance (2:3–4) and about the incarnation (4:2). According to 2 John 9 they "went forward and did not abide in the doctrine of Christ." They were "progressive" in the worst sense of the word. John's admonition to the church, on the other hand, was to let the original message abide in them (2:24).

So he stressed that the new commandment of love was the same old new commandment which they had heard from the beginning. It was part of his original presentation of the gospel, not some later adjustment.

The reason John goes on to stress the newness of the commandment (in verse 8) is that if the church doesn't understand how the commandment of love relates to the newness of the light that has come in Christ, they will be no more successful at keeping it than the Old Testament saints were. In fact, they will turn it into legalism the same way Israel turned the law into legalism.

#### **Applying the Test of Love**

##### **1 John 2:9–11**

<sup>9</sup>Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. <sup>10</sup>Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. <sup>11</sup>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.

In verses 2 and 3 of our passage we saw a moral test and later in this chapter we will see a belief or better put an obedience test. But the test before us this morning is the love test. Verses 9–11 apply the test of the love commandment in two cases: a person who loves and a person who hates. John doesn't seem to recognize any middle ground. Like Jesus in Mark 4:4—he comes into the synagogue, stands by the man with the withered hand, and says to the Pharisees, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" He offers the Pharisees no place to stand between saving and killing. If you don't want to save, you are in the class with killers. And John would say, "If you don't want to love, you are in the class with haters."

Hate is the evidence of blindness to the light of God. Love is the evidence that sight has been given to the blind. This is the miracle of the new birth. This is the true light that is already shining. This is the fountain of love in every believer. The streams of living water that are promised to flow out of you not just God.

There is much, much more to say about love in 1 John and at 4Cs. So let us continue to study and pray together. But for today let us rejoice in the amazing grace of God that though we were once blind and in the darkness, now we see and walk in the light.

***Amazing grace! How sweet the sound!  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost but now am found,  
Was blind but now I see.***

#### **Love and Live in the Light**

**Prayer**

**Benediction**

Isaiah 60:19–20

The sun shall be no more  
your light by day,

nor for brightness shall the moon  
give you light;<sup>[a]</sup>

but the LORD will be your everlasting light,  
and your God will be your glory.<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Your sun shall no more go down,  
nor your moon withdraw itself;  
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,  
and your days of mourning shall be ended.