

1 JOHN

The living One (1:1-4)

1 I want to tell you about the Word of Life. He existed before time began. I and the other apostles heard Him, saw Him with our eyes; yes, we looked at Him and even touched Him with our hands when He became a man and lived among us. ²The One who is Life itself appeared; we saw this Life and I can testify to what He did. We tell you clearly that He is eternal life; He was with the Father in heaven and He came and revealed Himself to us.

³⁻⁴So we speak to you of what we have seen and heard, for we are first-hand witnesses. We tell you these things so that you may share in His life with us. Yes, we share in the life of the Father and His Son Jesus Christ and it gives us great joy to tell you about these things.

Walk in the light (1:5-7)

⁵This is the message, the revelation that we heard from Him and now reveal to you: God is Light; in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we claim to share in His Light and yet walk in spiritual darkness, we only lie and do not live according to the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the Light, just as He is in the Light, we share in His Life together and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin, from everything we have done against His will.

Confess sin (1:8-2:2)

⁸This does not mean that we never sin. If we claim such a thing we only deceive ourselves and the truth does not live in us. ⁹Yet if we are honest with Him and confess our sins, He then forgives our sins and purifies us from everything that is not right in His eyes. He is always Faithful and Just to do this. ¹⁰But if we claim we have no sin, and therefore have no need of forgiveness, that is tantamount to calling God a liar and is evidence that the truth of His Word has no place in our lives!

2 I am writing this to you as my dear children so that you will not deliberately sin against Him. However, if anyone does sin, we have Someone who speaks to the Father in our defence, Jesus Christ – the One who is always right. ²He is the sacrifice that was offered to cleanse us from sin and restore us to unity with God. He offered Himself, not only as the punishment for our sins but also for the sins of everyone in the world.

Obey His Word (2:3-2:8)

³We are sure that we have really come to know Him if we obey His commands. ⁴The man who says, “Yes, I know Him”, but does not do what He commands is a liar and the truth does not live in Him. ⁵⁻⁶But if anyone obeys His Word, God’s love is truly expressed and fulfilled in Him. This demonstrates that we truly live in Him. Whoever claims to live in Him has to demonstrate this by walking as Jesus did.

⁷Dear friends, I am not telling you anything new. This is not a new command that you have never heard before. It is the same message, with the same command, that you have heard already. ⁸At the same time I am giving you a new command. The truth of this command is to be seen in Him and also in you, because the spiritual darkness of sin and disobedience to God is passing away and the true Light is already shining into our hearts and lives.

Love your brother (2:9-14)

⁹Anyone who claims to be living in that Light but has no love for his brother is still in spiritual darkness. ¹⁰On the contrary, whoever loves his brother is living in the light of God’s truth and there is nothing in him that will cause him to stumble in his walk with the Lord.

¹¹However, whoever has no love for his brother is truly in spiritual darkness and even walks around in that darkness. He has no idea where he is going, for that darkness has caused him to be spiritually blind.

¹²I am writing these things to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven because of Jesus, whose Name means Saviour.

¹³I am writing to the fathers among you because you have come to know the One who existed before time began.

I am writing to the young men among you because you have overcome the evil one who tempts and accuses you.

Dear children, I can write like this to you because you are in relationship with your heavenly Father.

¹⁴I repeat to you fathers, you know the Eternal One who lived before the beginning of creation.

One further thing I say to you, young men. Through your faith in Christ you are strong and God's Word lives in you. This is what has enabled you to overcome the evil one.

Do not love the world (2:15-17)

¹⁵Now I say to you all: Do not love worldliness or anything that the world offers you. If anyone loves and longs for the things of this world, he does not have love for the heavenly Father in him. ¹⁶For everything that the world offers, the sinful cravings of the flesh, lusting after the things you see, whether this be people or things, and boasting about what you have and do – all these things do not come from your heavenly Father but from the world. ¹⁷The world and all the desires it inspires are passing away; but the man who obeys God's will by putting His words of love into action lives forever.

Beware of opposition to the truth of Jesus Christ (2:18-29)

¹⁸My children, we are living in the end times. You have heard that the antichrist is coming, but I am telling you that many antichrists have already come. This is how we can tell that these are the end times! ¹⁹These people who oppose Christ actually left us because they were not truly saved and did not, therefore, belong to us. If they were really part of us they would have remained at one with us. The fact that they left shows that none of them truly belong to us.

²⁰By contrast, you have an anointing from the Holy One, God Himself. So all of you know and experience the truth for yourselves.

²¹So I do not write to you because you are ignorant of the truth, but because you know well what is true and right. You know that the truth contains no lies or deception.

²²Who is truly a liar? Whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ, God's anointed Son. Such a man is the antichrist, one opposed to the truth of who Christ is. He denies not only the Son but the Father as well. ²³And anyone who denies who Jesus is does not love Him or His Father. However, whoever believes and trusts in the Son has God for his Father also.

²⁴So ensure that the truth that you heard at the beginning of your Christian life continues to live in you. If it does, you will continue

to live in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵And He has promised His gift of eternal life to all who truly believe.

²⁶The reason why I remind you of these things is to warn you against any who try to lead you astray from the truth. ²⁷Remember, the anointing you have already received from Him continues to live in you. So you do not need anyone to teach you where the truth lies, for the anointing of the Spirit of truth teaches you about all these things. The anointing of truth is real; it is not like the counterfeit work of the enemy. So, just as the Spirit of truth has already taught you, continue to live in Him who is the Truth, Christ Jesus your Lord.

²⁸Therefore, dear children, continue to live in Him so that when He comes again you may stand with confidence before Him, unashamed of anything in your life that His penetrating light will then reveal. ²⁹Because you know that He is right in all He is and does, you can be sure that all of you who do what is right have received the new birth that He alone can give.

God's children (3:1-10)

3 The love the father has lavished on us is so great it cannot be put into words adequately. What a wonder it is that we should be called God's children! And this is precisely what He has made us. The world does not understand this, because those who belong to the world do not know Him. Therefore they cannot recognise us for what we are by His grace.

²Dear friends, He has already made us His children and it is still to be revealed what we will become when Jesus comes again. However, we do know this, that at that time we shall be like Him. Yes, when we see Him in the fullness of who He is, we shall be transformed into His likeness. ³Everyone who believes this wonderful truth keeps himself pure in the way he lives, for Christ Jesus is pure; we are one with Him and our destiny is to be united with Him forever. This is our hope.

⁴What a contrast with those who live lawless, sinful lives, who have no heart for God's purposes. ⁵How thankful you can be that when Jesus came for the first time it was to free us from our sins. You see, in Him there is no sin.

⁶Now you live in Him and those who continue to live in Him do not continue in a life of sin. Anyone who persists in a life of sin has clearly no personal knowledge of Him and does not see Him for who He truly is!

⁷Dear children, do not allow anyone to lead you away from the truth. You are to live in ways that please the Lord. This means that

you will do what is right, just as Jesus your Lord always does what is right. ⁸The person who walks in sin serves the devil, because it has always been the devil's nature to sin. The Son of God came to destroy the devil's work on the cross. ⁹So no-one who has received the new birth that God alone can give will continue to live in sin. No, he has the seed of God planted within him and that seed remains in him. So it is not possible for him to continue in a life of sin because he has received a second birth from God.

¹⁰This is how we know who have received that second birth and are God's children and who remain as the devil's children. Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who fails to love his brother.

Love for your brothers (3:11-20)

¹¹This is the same message that you heard at the very beginning of your life as a Christian: You are called to love your fellow believers and allow them to love you. ¹²So do not be like Cain. Because he belonged to the evil one, he murdered his brother. Why did he do such a thing? He was jealous because what he did was wrong in God's eyes, but what his brother did was right. ¹³So do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world is against you, hates you even.

¹⁴We know that we have passed through death with Jesus on the cross to the new life we have in Him, and the evidence of this is that we now love our brothers.

You see, anyone who does not love in this way remains spiritually dead. ¹⁵So anyone who has no love for his brother is a murderer like Cain. And you know full well that no murderer has God's eternal life in him.

¹⁶We have a way of knowing what true love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. That is true love. And we ought, therefore, to lay down our lives for our brothers in true love.

¹⁷I will give you an example of what this means in practice. If someone has financial resources and sees one of his brothers in need, yet he has no compassion on him and does nothing to help him, how can you imagine that he has God's love in him?

¹⁸Dear children, it means nothing to say you love others; it is only your actions that show whether you truly love them or not. ¹⁹⁻²⁰This is how you can be sure that you or anyone else belongs to the truth, and how you can be at peace with God when in His presence, without any condemnation in your heart. For God is far greater than our hearts and He knows and understands everything that is going on in our lives.

Anything we ask (3:21-24)

²¹⁻²²My dear friends, if there is nothing in our hearts to make us feel condemned, we can have confidence before God when we pray and so are able to receive from Him anything we ask. This is because we are living in obedience to His commands and are doing what pleases Him. ²³And this is His command, as you know well: first to believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son, your Saviour and Lord, and then to love others and allow them to love you, as He has commanded us. ²⁴Those who obey His commands show they continue to live in Him and He lives in them. We can be sure that He does live in us because He has given us His Spirit.

Test the spirits (4:1-6)

4 Dear friends, do not trust in every spiritual power. Test the various spiritual forces that want to influence your life so that you can determine what is truly from God and what is not. Realise that there are many false prophets in the world, inspired by false spirits. ²⁻³There is a sure way to recognise those inspired by God's Spirit: they acknowledge that Jesus Christ is God come in human flesh. Every person who does not acknowledge Jesus in this way is not under the influence of God's Spirit but is under the spirit of antichrist. You have heard that this spirit was coming and I tell you that it is already present in the world.

⁴However, dear children, because you belong to God you have overcome these false spirits and those influenced by them. The Spirit of God lives in you and He is far greater than this spirit of antichrist that is at work in the world.

⁵These other spirits that are at work in the world speak from the ungodly viewpoint of the world and those who belong to the world listen to them. ⁶But we belong to God, and so others who also belong to God listen to what we say. Those who do not belong to God do not listen to us. So this is how you can recognise who is motivated by the Spirit of truth and those under the influence of what is false: whether they listen to you when you speak God's truth, or whether they refuse to listen.

Living a life of love (4:7-21)

⁷Dear friends, it is essential that we love our fellow believers and receive love from them, for this love comes from God. Yes, this love is in every person who has received the second birth that God alone can give. Putting this love into action demonstrates to the world that you know God in your experience.

⁸Whoever does not put such love into practice does not have personal knowledge of God, for He is love. How did He reveal His love among us? ⁹By sending His one and only Son into the world that we might have God's eternal life through Him.

¹⁰You see, this is true love: not that we have loved God, but that He has demonstrated His love for us by sending His Son to be the sacrifice offered on the cross, to bring us back to unity with God through the forgiveness of all our sins. ¹¹Dear friends, I repeat, if this is the extent of God's love for us, then surely we ought to love one another! ¹²No-one has ever seen God as He is. Yet if we truly put our love for one another into action, His love is revealed and fulfilled in us and the world can see that love.

¹³We can be certain that we continue to live in Him and that He continues to live in us, because we have His own Spirit living in us. ¹⁴We have seen this clearly and tell others that God the Father sent His Son to be the Saviour of the entire world. ¹⁵So if anyone truly believes that Jesus is God's Son, God truly lives in him and he lives in God. ¹⁶In fact we can be sure of this, that we are able to depend completely on the love that God has for us.

God is love. So if love is your way of life, it is clear that you live in God and that He lives in you. ¹⁷This is how God's love is revealed among us, and it is this obedience to Him that will give us confidence on the Day of Judgment. Such love shows the world that we are like the One in whom we believe.

¹⁸There is no fear in this kind of love that comes from God. His love is perfect and it drives fear out of our lives. The one who is afraid fears that he will be punished by God. Such a one does not have this perfect love operating fully in his life.

¹⁹We love because we are responding to His great love for us. ²⁰Listen, if someone says, "I love God", but you see that he does not love his fellow believer, it is obvious that he lies. For anyone who does not love his brother, who is right in front of him, cannot possibly love God, whom he has never seen with the naked eye. ²¹And, anyway, this is the command that God has given us: whoever truly lives in love for God must also live to love his fellow believer. This is a simple matter of obedience.

Believe in the Son (5:1-15)

5 Everyone who truly believes that God is the Christ, God's Son, has received the birth that comes from God. He is your Father. So if you love Him, you will love His children as well.

²How can you tell for sure that you love God's children? Because you love God, you obey His command to love others. ³The only way to express true love for God is to be obedient to what He has told you to do. If you really love Him, those commands are not a burden to you.

⁴Everyone who has received the new birth that God gives overcomes the spirit that influences the world around him. It is our faith in Jesus and what He has done that gives us victory over worldliness. ⁵I ask you, "Who has really overcome this worldliness?" Obviously only he who believes and trusts in Jesus as God's victorious Son.

⁶He is the One who came as a man into the world, completely identified with our need in the water of baptism and shed His blood for us; Jesus Christ, God's sacrifice! He not only shared our humanity; He shed His blood for us. God's own Spirit testifies to this and He is certainly the Spirit of truth.

⁷⁻⁸There is common agreement between the Spirit, the water and the blood. All three are in agreement and bear witness to the truth.

⁹We readily accept what others tell us. Should we not all the more readily accept what God says, for His testimony is far greater than that of any man. And God has given us this revelation about His Son. ¹⁰So the one who believes in Jesus as God's Son believes in his heart what God Himself has revealed. But anyone who does not believe what God says calls Him a liar. Such a person only does this because he or she has refused to believe what God has revealed about His Son.

¹¹What is this testimony that God has given us? Simply this: that God has given us eternal life and this life can only be received through Jesus, His Son. ¹²So he who belongs to Jesus has this life; but he who does not belong to Jesus does not have this life.

¹³I write these things to you because you do believe who Jesus is and what He has done for you; and so I give you this assurance, that you possess His eternal life. ¹⁴So you can have great confidence when you come before God in prayer. You can be sure that if you ask anything according to His revealed will, He certainly hears you. ¹⁵And if you are confident that He hears what you say, no matter what you ask, you can be sure that you have whatever you have asked of Him!

Look out for one another (5:16-17)

¹⁶If you should ever see a fellow believer commit a sin that does not lead to spiritual death, you should pray for him, asking God to forgive

him and restore him to His way. I am speaking of those sins that do not lead to spiritual death. Yes, there is a sin that leads to death and I am not saying you should pray about that.

¹⁷ Whatever is not God's will is sinful, and there are plenty of other sins that do not lead to such dire consequences.

Worship only Him (5:18-21)

¹⁸ We can be sure that anyone who has received the birth that God gives does not continue to sin and so grieve God. He lives in God's Son who keeps him safe from the power of the evil one so that he cannot be harmed.

¹⁹ We are certain that we are God's children, even though the rest of the world is under the control of the evil one. ²⁰ We are also sure that God's Son has come and has revealed Himself to us so that we can know and understand Him, the One who is the truth. Yes, we continue to live in Him who is the truth: Jesus Christ, God's Son. He is both true God and eternal life.

²¹ So, dear children, keep yourself from the worship of anyone or anything else. Worship only Him!

