

**1<sup>st</sup> John 2: 6-8; “To Walk as Jesus Walked”, Sermon # 6 in a series entitled –  
“Behold What Manner of Love”, A Communion Sermon  
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017,  
in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

There is an all-important difference between a “saying” faith and a true faith in Jesus Christ. A saying faith may not at all be a true faith. But if a person believes in the Lord Jesus and engages in good works, and goes about to keep God’s commandments from a heart filled with love for Him, they do indeed have a true faith. Verse 6 begins by saying – “The one who says he abides in Christ...” To abide in Christ is when we continue to take refuge in His finished work of fulfilling the law and suffering in our place upon the cross. As we continue to do this, we come to have and know the reality of assurance of eternal life. We find joy and peace in believing in Him. In Hebrews 6, verse 18, it speaks of believers “having fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us”. It is entering in to all that Jesus died to bring to us, by faith, that we find the power to live the Christian life to the glory of God. When we abide in Christ, we continue to trust in Christ and all that He has done for us. And we come to find out the reality of being sustained in our faith and strengthened in our faith; and we want to remain in that position. We would be found in Him, not having a righteousness of our own.

We would be strengthened by the Lord to do His will, as it says in Zechariah 10: 12 – “So I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in His name, says the Lord.” So to abide in Christ is to rest in Him, and remain in Him. And we learn to walk up and down “in His name”. It means that we continue to believe in Him and call upon Him for every good thing; every spiritual blessing, as it says in Psalm 84: 11 – “For the Lord God is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.” And so, as time goes by, we come to understand that since Christ lived a holy life, that we also are to follow in His steps. “He who says that he abides in Him ought himself to walk just as He walked.” There is an oughtness to the Christian life as a result of what Christ has done for us. Since He has lived the perfect life, and became obedient in all things to do the will of the Father, so we come to understand that we should pursue perfection in all of our obedience to God. It is the appropriate and holy response to what He has done for us.

Therefore, when we read here, that the Christian life is walking with Jesus, and walking as Jesus walked, we must ask ourselves this question: What does this mean? Well, our text shows us that it means 3 things. 1<sup>st</sup> – To walk as Jesus walked means keeping the old commandment which we have heard from the beginning. 2<sup>nd</sup> – It means keeping a new commandment because the darkness is passing away. And 3<sup>rd</sup> – It means keeping a new commandment because the true light is already shining. As I preach to you this message, I want you to consider all that the Lord Jesus has done for you in His obedience was designed to bring you to the place where you might keep His commandments by the grace which He supplies. And then as we gather around the Table to partake of the Lord’s Supper, I want you to remember that His obedience alone was perfect, but all of your obedience is established as acceptable because it is covered by the blood of Your Savior.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – To walk as Jesus walked means keeping the old commandment which we have heard from the beginning.**

Verse 7 says – “Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning.” “The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.” Let us rejoice to think about this fact this afternoon: Jesus walked in obedience to God’s holy law, in the Old Testament Scriptures, in every particular, and He did so for our sakes. Every aspect of what obedience meant, Jesus fulfilled it, and He fulfilled it on behalf of all of God’s elect people. Jesus took the greatest commandment, that commandment which summarized the whole of God’s moral law as it is found in the 10 commandments, and He fulfilled

it in perfect righteousness in his 33 years upon the earth. It is found in Deuteronomy 6: 4, "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!" "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart." By the wording of this commandment I hope that you will take notice of the fact that the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ could not have simply been an outward compliance to this commandment. It was essential that it would be an inward principle of heart obedience, first and foremostly of all. And this perfect obedience which took place in Jesus' mind and heart resulted in His actually doing and keeping each commandment of the 10 commandments in just the right way, in relation to both God and men. He kept each of these commandments, and all the commandments of God's law, out of His deep love to God His Father, and to the law of God itself, because it came from His Father.

The whole of the Old Testament Scriptures is God's holy law. This is why Jesus said to His disciples after He was raised from the dead: "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." This is why John, when he comes to talk about love to the brethren in verse 7, that he says that it is no new commandment, but an old commandment which they had from the beginning. It was a commandment which they had from the beginning of the ministry of the Lord Jesus. But it was also a commandment which they had in the Old Testament scriptures and they had heard it before. Let's look at a few verses to confirm this. Turn with me to Leviticus 19: 16. In amidst some of the commandments of the law given to Moses and the children of Israel, we find this moral commandment. "You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him." "You shall not take vengeance, not bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord."

This commandment that we love our neighbor as ourselves, originated in the Levitical law but it is mentioned by our Lord Jesus as the second great commandment in Mark 12: 31. He says, "There is no other commandment greater than these." It was just as true in the Old Testament that an Israelite love his neighbor as himself as it is for the believer in the New Testament. The specific areas of concern in the Old Testament passage are just as real and relevant in the new. In the Leviticus passage it prohibits tale bearing, taking vengeance, and not bearing any grudge against the children your people. It is summed up by the statement that "You shall love your neighbor as yourself". Are these commandments still in force? Yes, they most certainly are, in their demand for our obedience to them. But the demand for our obedience to them is not a covenant of works. It is not that which we do, because we think that we are meriting God's favor in keeping them. The whole principle of our obedience is different from that. It is based upon our union with Christ in His death and resurrection. To walk with Jesus means that you will go about to keep all of the moral commandments of God's word; both Old Testament and New, but you will go about to keep them out of love for Him who died for you, and rose again on your behalf. You will keep them out of a thankful heart, realizing that you could never obey God as fully and as perfectly as Jesus did, but you want to obey as fully and as completely as Christ will give you the grace to do it.

**Now 2<sup>nd</sup> – To walk as Jesus walked means keeping a new commandment because the darkness is passing away.**

Verse 8 says: "Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away..." Let us remind ourselves again of this blessed truth; that the heart devotion of our Lord Jesus Christ, to His God and Father, was perfect every day of His earthly life. It was because He was the Son of God, that He knew what every day was going to bring, and yet He did not neglect prayer for the strength and help of God's Holy Spirit to help Him, as a man, to do and to accomplish all of what God had purposed, in regard to obeying Him completely and fully. Let me give you an example of this. In Mark 1: 35 it says, "Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place;

and there He prayed.” “And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him.” “When they found Him, they said to Him, ‘Everyone is looking for you.’” When it was still dark, Jesus rose up from His sleep, and went out and departed to a solitary place to pray. He prayed until the sun arose and the light came, illuminating the place where He was, and the disciples realizing that they must find Jesus, and when they knew that everyone was looking for Him, they searched for Him diligently. And when they found Him, they told Him the problem. “Everyone is looking for You.” The new commandment, we are told in verses 9-11 is that we no longer need to hate any brother in Christ. If you hate your brother in Christ you are walking in darkness, and you do not know where you are going, because the darkness has blinded your eyes. If you hate your brother, darkness has blinded your eyes.

Now, you can see from this that even though Jesus knew that it was going to be a busy day, and that “everyone was looking” for Him. I want you to see that He did not use that reality as an excuse as to why He could not pray. He knew that it was essential that He rise early. He deliberately arose early and went out and departed to a solitary place and prayed. If you and I are going to “walk just as Jesus walked”, we must learn by His grace to do the same thing. Our walk of obedience must begin with devotion in our hearts to God, on a more regular basis than we have given it so far. Perhaps there are some among us who are more mature in their devotion to God than others. Perhaps there are some here today who know what they ought to be doing in accordance with the word of God, and they are not doing it as they should be doing it. You find yourself being convicted by that verse in James 4: 17 – “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” No doubt you should confess this to be a sin in your heart and your actions.

Proverbs 4: 19 says, “The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.” But brethren do not stumble so as to fall finally, like the wicked. Instead the Lord lifts them up to behold His glorious new commandment. You can see a practical application of this in Galatians 5: 13-15. “For you brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” “But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!” You see, that is walking in darkness! And we need to understand how difficult it is for a church when brethren use their liberty, not being under the law’s condemning power, to turn a critical eye upon other brethren. Some Christians do not know what makes them stumble, when it is this very thing. They become tale-bearers and grudge-holders; they become conceited and envy one another. They bite and devour one another, and they do not know why they do not have joy and peace in living the Christian life. This is the reason. They are walking in darkness by hating their brother. They do not know where this will lead. It leads to the Lord’s discipline. But when we finally let go of all these fleshly sins and learn the way of love, how much we do appreciate it and see God’s blessing in our lives.

When Jesus came into this fallen world and took up His earthly ministry, the darkness began to pass away; just as the darkness passed away that morning as He prayed, knowing that the disciples would be seeking for Him; knowing that many people needed Him. The true light was already shining. As you grow up into Christ, this is what is going to be happening with you and I as well. We will be tempted to walk in darkness. We will be tempted to not think about the needs of other people around us. We may even be tempted to think and to act in unloving ways towards our own brethren. But the true light of Christ is already shining in our hearts, and by seeking for greater grace to be imparted to our hearts, we shall see the darkness pass away, and we become light in the Lord. This is what I want us to think about now as I invite you to come down to the front with me and partake of the Lord’s Supper. There may be sins to confess, but the Lord will forgive them all by the application of His precious blood. You may be tempted to exhibit an unloving spirit, but if you will confess it as sin, He will cleanse you from all your guilt and stains.

### **3rd – To walk as Jesus walked means keeping a new commandment because the true light is already shining.**

You can see this in our text in verse 8. “Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.” And verse 10 – “He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.” We have seen that being in the light of God’s purity and holiness is not compatible with hatred of one’s brother. But now that Christ has come, the full light of grace and truth has been revealed, and this produces a greater tangible result in the church and in individual believers. This is seen, for instance, in verses like Proverbs 4: 18. “But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.” The path of the just shining brighter and brighter relates to the progress of truth and righteousness with the gospel among the nations. But it is also true with regard to the progress of truth and righteousness in the heart of each individual believer. Christ has come to our hearts and He has given us light.

The question that we must ask ourselves as we sit at the Table now is this: Am I living up to all the light, all of the truth, and the illuminating influences of the Spirit that have been given to me? Each one of us must ask ourselves this question as we sit in the presence of our Master. Ask yourself if you are contributing to the forward progress of truth and righteousness in this church and in the community that you live in. Ask yourself whether the light of truth has brought about a sincere love of the brethren in your heart. The verses that we are looking at this afternoon are showing us that there is a progress which should be taking place in every local church, and in the Church at large, when God’s people realize that love is the more excellent way to see truth go forward in the minds and hearts of people. The church must “speak the truth in love”.

In speaking about gifts in the church, in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12 and showing how needful that various parts of Christ's body are, the Apostle Paul realized that there would be a tendency in the church to focus on the gifts that seemed to be the most public and the most impressive. Surely this is how the church would grow and flourish, by the great gifts given to her by the Holy Spirit? Paul says in the last verse of chapter 12, “Earnestly desire the best gifts.” “And yet I show you a more excellent way.” What is the more excellent way to see the church built up and the gospel to go forward? It is the way of love. And he describes it in chapter 13. “Love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy; it does not parade itself, it is not puffed up; it does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, think no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” “Love never fails.”

But remember now, this text is also saying that you should let the example of Jesus be your guide and your motivation. You are to walk as Jesus walked. Ephesians 5: 2 – “Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.” His life is in your soul, as a true believer. And are you willing to give yourself for others, in His service? This life of His in your life will either be cultivated in a good, and faithful, and true walk on the path of righteousness, or it will be stifled by the poor decisions that you will make. Christ will not cast you off if you are poor learner, but He will teach you. Your devotion to God will best seen in relation to your going about to keep all the commandments of the Word of God by the grace of Christ, having love in your heart for your Savior, and for all men.