

1 John 2:3-6 By this will we know him

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On Thursday this week virtually the whole world will be celebrating the birth of Jesus on Christmas day. For many though, they have no idea of who they are celebrating or why?

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When we were in Spain in October this year we were staying with some Christian friends of ours, and one of them said to us that to the Spanish people Jesus is either still a baby or he is still dead on the cross.

I found this interesting because you can't have a relationship with a dead person and a relationship with a baby is with a person who is helpless and always needs assistance.

This probably explained why I felt that in Spain as in much of Europe, Christianity is a hollow shell of what it used to be and what it should be now. They only have half of the picture. They know something about him but don't truly know him.

Let's continue our study of 1 John this morning and find out how we are assured that we truly know him

1 John 2:3-6

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

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:

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

What is John talking about when he says "and by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments"?

Does he mean the 10 commandments or does he mean some other commandments or is it a combination of both?

Let's take a look at Matthew 5:17-19

Matthew 5:17-19

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them.

18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven,

but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

We know from the context of this passage that Jesus is talking about the Ten Commandments.

It's important to note here that he said that he hasn't come to abolish them but rather to be the fulfilment of them - He kept them perfectly.

He also criticizes those who would relax any single one of them.

So let's take a quick look at the Ten Commandments.

They are found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 and they can be broken up into two groups. The first four are about our relationship with God and the remaining six are about our relationship with our neighbour (which could be anyone and everyone).

Toward God

- 1) You shall have no other Gods before me.
(There is only one God and he is jealous for our love and devotion in the same way that a husband should be jealous for his wife's love and devotion. He cannot share her with someone else)
- 2) You shall not make or invent an idol of any kind.
(Don't let anything come between you and Jesus, not even your wife, husband, or kids. Keep Jesus first and He will take care of the rest)
- 3) You shall not misuse the Lord's name
(Don't use His name as a swear word)
- 4) You shall observe the Sabbath day and keep it for the Lord
(Don't work 7 days a week - keep one day per week for complete rest from your work and give this time to reflect and be with Jesus)

Toward our neighbour

- 5) You shall honour your father and mother
- 6) You shall not murder
- 7) You shall not commit adultery
- 8) You shall not steal
- 9) You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour
(Don't put someone else down or slander their name to make yourself look better than they are)
- 10) You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or house, or car or anything else.
(Stay free from wanting to keep up with the Jones's. You don't have to get a bigger LCD screen than your mate)

As I said to my brother a couple of years ago when we were taking a look at these commandments, "can you imagine if the whole world kept these commandments perfectly, how good a place the world would be", and I can remember the look of agreement on his face as he thought through logic of what I had just said.

They commandments are for our well being and protection. They are not there to make life hard for us. They haven't gone away for the Christian. We still need to live these out in our lives and the good news is that Jesus fulfilled them all perfectly on our behalf and still does as we abide in him.

In regard to these commandments Jesus was asked which one was the greatest and his reply is found in the gospel of Matthew.

Matthew 22:36-40

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

37 And he said to him, "You shall **love** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

38 This is the great and first commandment.

39 And a second is like it: You shall **love** your neighbor as yourself.

40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

As I said before the Ten Commandments can be broken up into two groups and what Jesus is doing here is virtually summarizing them into those two groups.

The first to love God with everything we have got and the second is that we would love our neighbour as ourselves.

The whole law can be wrapped up or summed up in these two commandments.

Now were there any other commandments that Jesus spoke of directly?

In my New Testament search for the word commandment, Jesus only mentions one other commandment.

John 13:34-35

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you **love** one another: just as I have **loved** you, you also are to love one another.

35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have **love** for one another."

Jesus says this is a **new** commandment and it is slightly different to the 10 where we are to love God and we are to love our neighbours but here in this passage Jesus is introducing a new commandment and that is to love our fellow believers.

It is this love for each other that will have an impact on the world as well as our own personal testimonies and the preaching of the gospel and will mark us as those who truly "know him".

What does all this mean for us?

- 1) First of all it means that we can have an assurance that we **truly know him** and not simply know about him like many people do as baby Jesus at Christmas time.

We know him by our continued obedience to all of his commands.

To **love** God with everything we have got
To **love** our neighbours as ourselves
To **love** our fellow believers so that the world will know that we belong to him

- 2) Secondly it means that in keeping his commandments God's love is perfected in us and we are truly exhibiting Christ likeness.

How do we apply this in our own lives?

Love requires action. We must show our love in deeds and words to really love. Love in word only is a false love.

Do we **love** God with everything we have - our souls, our minds our bodies? Or do we segregate our lives into God time and me time?

Do we keep our bodies healthy in our devotion and service to him?

Do we downplay the use our minds in spiritual development and elevate our spirits to show that we are truly spiritual or vice versa, or are we developing both mind and spirit equally in our love for God?

Do we **love** our neighbours, our work colleagues, people we meet on the street, people from different nations who eat different things than we eat and smell different to how we smell? Or do we bias our opinions based on colour, nationality, religion?

Do we **love** our fellow believers in the church or are we busy competing with each other, pulling each other down hating each other?

Do we desire to invite other people who don't know Jesus into our midst, on Sundays at parties, at BBQs, when we are out for coffee or meeting with each other during the week, where they can touch and feel Jesus through the love that we have for each other?

These are all good questions and we all have the opportunity to provide good answers by living, abiding and walking with Jesus daily by keeping his commandments.

Let's do this together as a church for his glory, fame and honour and for our complete joy, happiness and contentment.