

## Daily Devotions

Letter 1 John

### Day 1 (We have Seen With our Eyes)

**Reading:** “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us” (1 John 1:1-2)

**Message:** The opening of this letter begins by reminding us that Jesus was from the beginning he is above us, he is beyond us and yet we have seen it and testify to it. Though the things of God was beyond us and above us Jesus has clearly and unequivocally made the Father’s salvation plan known.

Now we might not have experienced and seen Jesus in the same way that the disciples did, but we have such a detailed and inspired and preserved account of Him in the Bible. None of us can say we have not had the opportunity to see Him for He has made himself known. Because we can know Jesus, we should have a easier and urge to proclaim the eternal life that is available, God has come down and that truth should

**Prayer:** Father we thank you that in the person of Jesus your salvation plan has been made known to us, we thank you for your clear description and revelation from scripture. We pray that you might help us to proclaim and speak the truth help us to share the secret to eternal life with our friends, family and neighbours.

### Day 2 (our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus)

**Reading:** “That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.” (1John 1:3)

**Message:** Because Jesus has been revealed to us, we can have a fellowship a great relationship and connection with each other. Christians should be a people who are united together in love for one another because of the love Jesus has for us. I wonder how often we stop to consider how we are helping and supporting the needs of the body. How often do we stop to consider other people above ourselves?

We need to have a strong and deep fellowship with one another. But why? Because more than this “our fellowship is with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ” however great our relationship with other Christians is how much greater is the knowledge that through Jesus we have a relationship with him and the Father.

**Prayer:** Lord we ask that you help us to be more focused on your church and the community of believers and we thank you that this deep fellowship can be forged because we have an even more rich relationship with God himself.

### **Day 3 (Complete Joy)**

**Reading:** “And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.” (1 John 1:4)

**Message:** Do you ever read something or look at a painting and wonder why that was created what is the idea and themes. We read in verse four the purpose and plan behind the opening verses of this letter.

Have you ever met someone so negative and that wherever they are they seem to suck the enjoyment and life out of any room they are in? People who are so negative they bring down the mood tone and enjoyment of everything. In many ways this is how many people view Christians, they assume we are those people who always say no are never any fun and generally very stern and miserable. This should be far from the reality for the Christian life and how we are to live.

Here we read in this letter that what we have previously looked at which detail the fellowship we can have with God himself because of what Jesus has done on the cross that has been written to make us joyful. More than just being joyful in a worldly sense we are to have a deeper more meaningful sense of peace and hope in our own lives because of Jesus. More than just being always happy and smiley we are to have a joy that may be complete there should be a fulness and abundance of our gladness.

As Christians are we known as a people of joy? Do we communicate to people the grounding and reason for our continued joy?

**Prayer:** We ask you to help us to realise and further indulge in the privilege and pleasure and joy which cannot be compared to that we can know in Jesus. We pray others around us would see and recognise our great joy and hope and through it come to a saving knowledge of you.

## Day 4 (God is Light)

**Reading:** “This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” (1 John 1:5)

**Message:** Have you ever woken up in the middle of the night and been thirsty and thought “I don’t want to disturb anyone else in the house, or I don’t want to turn the light on because it’s too bright and my eyes have not yet adjusted”. So, you make the often foolish decision to get up and try to navigate around your house without trying to turn on any lights.

It often not very sensible to try and navigate around our houses in the darkness, the New Testament understanding of light goes further. There is safety in the light the darkness is unknown and a mystery we do not know what is lurking in it.

The Light Jesus brings is a safety and security. Now If you leave a light on eventually the bulb will fuse or there will be a power cut, but the light that stems from God is eternal and never ending. Praise the Lord that through Jesus’ cross the light can triumph over the darkness of the world, the light present for eternity.

**Prayer:** We praise you Lord for you are light and though we have done things wrong there is a certainty and hope that your light can cast out all evil and provide us with safety and security in Jesus sacrifice.

## Day 5 (God is Still Light)

**Reading:** “This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” (1 John 1:5)

**Message:** In a time before electricity in largely an agricultural community light was life. Generally speaking, as it began to get dark you went to bed, and when it began to become light you woke up. Light was essential for life.

When you turn on the light instantly the darkness is expelled. You cannot have light and darkness residing next to each other. God is light, and in him is life. But because God is light there cannot be any darkness in Him because there is only light.

In the darkness there is often fear there is an unknown but, in the light, everything is exposed. God is Holy and in him there is no sin. However, the more we look at the light of God the more our own darkness (sin) is made visible and the more we should want to be filled with God’s light.

**Prayer:** We want to thank you that in you there is no darkness, you are perfect and Holy and everything we long to be but are not. However, we continue to sin and we ask that your Spirit would so fill us that

## **Day 6** (Walk in Darkness)

**Reading:** If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. (1 John 1:6)

**Message:** Have you ever ventured off on a walk in the late evening as the darkness is beginning to draw near? Perhaps you have decided to walk a longer route just to avoid the darkness. Walking in darkness is always more dangerous and threatening than when you can see where you are going, some of us are clumsier than others and might find it easy to trip over in broad daylight let alone during the night.

In this verse we have a reminder that even as Christians we have a binary choice, we can either walk in light or choose to remain and walk in darkness. If we are to have true fellowship with him then we should be striving to be more like him and reject the things of our old life.

It is possible to be a Christian and know the truth but in practice in our lives we still go astray. We must encourage ourselves and one another to have fellowship with him and walk in the light of his presence.

However, we are also to be so thankful that though we are so often unfaithful he is faithful, he is forgiving. So many Biblical characters constantly failed, messed up and went astray. Yet in Christ there is forgiveness, strive to remain close to him the God who is light and has no darkness in him.

**Prayer:** We pray that your spirit would convict us of our sin where we have begun to walk in darkness though that may be painful, we ask that you keep us near to your cross and to yourself. Help us in our lives to not live a lie and help us to practice and live out the truth.

**Day 7** (Cleanses us from all sin)

**Reading:** “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)

**Message:** How many times have you washed your hands over this pandemic period? As COVID-19 continues we told that a great way to beat the virus is to constantly keep washing your hands. Whenever we enter church or many public buildings, we all have to sanitise our hands.

Have you ever gotten your hands messy and had to try washing and scrubbing them for ages? When I was at school, I had an amazing ability to always choose to use the pen that would begin leaking. It would take me ages to get all the ink off myself, hours and hours of soap and scolding hot water.

The time, effort and energy it would take me to scrub ink off my hands is nothing compared to the cost to Jesus that was needed to wash you free from your sin. We are reminded in this verse that if you want to be cleansed if you want to be made perfect and clean it can only be achieved by the blood of Jesus.

Do you know what it is to be made clean not just on the inside but to know that deep down your deepest darkest shame has been forgiven and paid for. I love the hymn that says

“Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing pow’r?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”

“Are you washed in the blood,  
In the soul-cleansing blood of the Lamb?  
Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cNCuNPd9g0>

**Prayer:** We thank you that you cleanse us, though we are imperfect and unclean the blood of Jesus Christ washes us white as snow. Amen.

## **Day 8** (Is the Truth in You?)

**Reading:** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8)

**Message:** This verse should be fuel for evangelism in our lives as we look at the universal truth that connects and binds the whole of humanity, we have all done things we are not proud of.

When we look around the church often, we see warm, lovely, hospitable and kind people and you yourself might have never done. By the standards of the world you might be an upstanding citizen of the world, you might be well respected and thought of by many.

When I became a Christian at the age of ten there was not much, I had done wrong, many of you will remember that I was an absolute delight. I always said please and thank you, always said hello to people very rarely had any tantrums. But even at that age God revealed but you are not perfect. This verse reminds us that you might be lovely and kind and a joy to be around but even you have failed to meet perfection.

None of us have ever lived without telling any lies almost as soon as we were able to speak, we were telling lies or blaming our siblings for things we had done wrong. We have all done wrong.

God is Holy, he is perfection and he cannot bare to be around, near or associated with sin, we do not deserve to be near to Him or know God. In the next Devotion we will look at the only solution but know this no matter what you have done wrong there is good news in the person of Jesus.

**Prayer:** Help us to acknowledge that you are perfection and thought we might be undeserving of you we thank you that Jesus has provided a way to bring us salvation and to forgive us from everything we have done wrong.

## **Day 9** (Faithful and Just to Forgive)

**Reading:** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

**Message:** As we looked at in the previous message, we looked at how all of us are in desperate need because everyone of us have done wrong things. In today's verse we will be thinking about the solution to this problem.

We read here that we need to confess our sins it is always a positive experience to admit what we have done wrong and acknowledge how short we fall. However, all Christians must hold onto the reality that our God is faithful and just to forgive, in him you can be forgiven.

Why is it just that someone deserving of punishment should be set free and released? Jesus died on the cross to bear the penalty for the sin of every Christian because Jesus suffered the agony of the cross it is righteous and good and just when God pronounces his decree that you are forgiven.

If Jesus died on the cross in our place then justice is done when God forgives us of all of our transgressions, God forgives us even if we struggle to forgive ourselves.

**Prayer:** Thank you for providing an escape a release from the deserving punishment I have built up for myself. We thank you that despite us being sinful and undeserving of a relationship with a holy God. We thank you that you that by Jesus' work on the cross we might be cleansed from all unrighteousness.

## **Day 10** (His Word is Not in Us)

**Reading:** "If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John 1:10)

**Message:** If we claim that we are without sin, if we try to deceive ourselves into thinking "I'm alright, I'm not that bad, I've not really done anything wrong" then we are going against God's word. The Bible makes it clear that all of us have gone against God and none of us are without sin, none of us have lived a perfect life we must ensure that we understand and accept the reality of the Bible. We should never downplay or minimise the problem of sin in our personal lives.

By ignoring and casting off the advice and truth God gives us ensures that his word is not in us. However, I want to focus on the concept of how do we accept and ensure that his word is in us? We must strive in every circumstance whether positive or negative to stand firm on the truth of the cross and its sufficiency to bring healing to the most broken and far off person.

We need to be reading and accepting and thinking on the great Bible truths that are revealed to us in Jesus. If the word of God is in our minds, we should know more about what is right and wrong and have a solid foundation in our theology and understanding of Christ our rock. If the word of God is in our heart then there should be a practical influence on us as we grow to love and follow after Christ our example.

**Prayer:** We pray that in everything we might stay close to you, learning and growing in the truth about Jesus and his great love for a broken world in need of him.

### **Day 11** (We Have an Advocate)

**Reading:** 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. (1 John 2:1)

**Message:** This verse begins with a reminder that we can be young in the faith, it is not something to be embarrassed or ashamed of, there should be a natural progression and growth throughout our Christian lives. If anyone does sin, if anyone does do something wrong – I think this is a message that applies to all of us. If you have ever done something wrong and if you ever do something wrong as a Christian this is a verse for us to hold onto.

What a joy and hope we can have that we have an advocate who is with the father, Jesus is our advocate who is righteous and without any sin. The word advocate is defined as someone 'who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy' or 'a person who puts a case on someone else's behalf'. It is truly remarkable that if we are a Christian then Jesus is pleading our case, he is supporting us he is on our side. The only reason we stand a chance of coming before a Holy and pure God is because Jesus has washed us clean and is advocating on our behalf.

Do you ever feel that you are not good enough or full of anxious worry that your sinned has weighed you down and made you unlovable? Remember that you have someone on your side, because of his death we have been washed us clean.

**Prayer:** We thank you that we have access to almighty God through our advocate Jesus Christ himself, though we do not deserve it your love abounds for us. Amen.



## **Day 12** (The Propitiation for our Sins)

**Reading:** He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2)

**Message:** This verse gives us some really fleshed out theology surrounding the state of our lives through and because of the victory of Jesus. We learn of the ultimate and final answer to our greatest need – which is our sins. The wrong things we have done wrong can be forgiven and dealt with. This is explained by declaring that Jesus is the propitiation of our sins, now this is really long difficult to say Bible word. Simply this long word is used to explain the connection between the anger of God and the love of God.

Because we have done so much wrong and God is perfect, he has a righteous anger. Have you ever watched the news and heard about some horrific act and become angry at how someone could do such a horrible act? In a similar way God is perfect and he cannot stand, bare or tolerate sin.

Despite this God loves, God loves us even though we have done so much wrong. If I can phrase it this way, we were objects of God's wrath (because we deserve it), and yet he loved us still. Such is the love of God that those who are undeserving of Him are wonderfully loved by him,

Famous preacher John Stott says that propitiation "Does not make God gracious, God does not love us because Christ died for us, Christ died for us because he loved us" this is a vital way to understand the love that Jesus has for us.

Christ's sacrifice in the cross is not just available to one or two of the best or most holy people in the world. The message of Jesus is not restricted to one or two people, but the imagery used here reveals the inclusivity of Jesus' death and love for his people.

Many of will be familiar with the passage of scripture found in Revelation 7 that speaks of "A great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb". This is the revealing power and true meaning of Christ as our propitiation for our sins.

**Prayer:** We are sorry that we have done so much wrong, but we are thankful that we have been forgiven and loved so fully. Amen.

### **Day 13** (And by This We know Him)

**Reading:** “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.” (1 John 2:3)

**Message:** Have you ever taken an instant dislike to someone, perhaps it was someone at work who you just could not get along with or a distant relative you have never been fond of? We all know the phrase ‘Never judge a book by its cover’ but when it comes to people it is so easy to do. What we read in this verse is that we can know Jesus, not just hear about him but come to know who he is and what his message is.

So many people hear bits and pieces about Jesus, but they never stop to take the time to consider, read and ask questions about who Jesus really is and why so many people have been changed by him and what he did on the cross.

I wonder if you know any celebrities, who is the most famous person you have ever met? The reality is that none can compare to the joy of meeting and knowing Jesus. As members and friends of Libanus Church we should have a real desire to want to introduce people to the life-giving Jesus. That people might be so touched by the positive message of the gospel that they would live differently, and their lives would never be the same again.

**Prayer:** We thank you that we can know who Jesus is for ourselves, we thank you that we as a Church can be a positive witness sharing your good news that Jesus died on the cross paying the debt that I owe towards God. We thank you that if Jesus died on the cross for me, I am forgiven and set free. We praise you for his glorious gospel that we can know Christ. Amen.

### **Day 14** (Truly the Love of God is Perfected)

**Reading:** “Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him” (1 John 2:4-5)

**Message:** As we look at these verses today, we see a continuation of the beginning of the letter, if we know Jesus our lives should be radically changed. As we live our lives we should be striving to be more like our saviour. None of us will ever be perfect in this life, but the impact of Christ and the reality of what he has done for us in his love and sacrifice for us should provoke us to change through the work of the Spirit.

We are to keep the words of God close to us and in doing so truly the love of God will be perfected in us. There is a famous saying you are what you eat, and in a similar sense the

people we spend time with and the more time we spend with them the more we begin to emulate and become like them. Whether we notice this or not.

In a similar way the more we rest in the arms of Jesus the more we fill ourselves with his thoughts and words and follow and live them out, the more the spirit is moving within us the more we should be filled with his love.

Do you know that Jesus died on the cross to bring you forgiveness in full? If so, are you allowing the love of God to be perfected in your life?

**Prayer:** We thank you that your great love has been bestowed to us, despite everything we have done we thank you that forgiveness can still be made available to us and your love perfected in us. Amen.

### **Day 15** (Walk in the Same Way)

**Reading:** whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. (1 John 2:6)

**Message:** If you are interested in history then you might have watched many documentaries or travel programmes that follow or detail the life of a famous historical figure or place. Often the presenter will say something like 'Not far from where I'm standing' or 'in this exact location' or even 'I am walking here they would have walked all those years ago'.

History can be really dry, dull and distant however, there is something that almost brings it to life as you walk down the same place as a great historic figure.

As Christians we are called to walk in the same way as our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ, this does not refer to just visiting the physical location where he lived. But imitating and emulating his character and moral walk as best we can through the Spirit, we should be striving to be more like Him.

I wonder if you have ever seen a tightrope artist walking on an incredibly thin and flimsy often it can feel like that, we are so far from the perfect standard of Jesus. This is the ongoing work of the gospel; we should strive to walk in his steps, but we are not forgiven based on how well we live. We are forgiven, saved and justified because of Jesus and his sacrifice on the cross and because we have been forgiven, we should want to walk in the same way which he walked.

**Prayer:** We thank you that you lived a life, walked a way which all of us have fallen short of, none of us have walked the way we should have. We have all strayed from the path, and yet you loved us so much you sent Jesus to redeem us. We pray that as we look to you, we might become more like you. Amen.

## Day 16 (No New Commandment)

**Reading:** 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. (1 John 2:7)

**Message:** This is a really important verse, it is a firm, clear and thorough reminder that the New Testament does not rewrite, change or contradict the relevancy of the Old Testament. There is a lot to unpack and understand about the purpose of the Old Testament and the genres included but we believe that the entirety of the Bible is relevant, God breathed and directs us to Jesus.

This verse reminds us that all of scripture is relevant to us, the New Testament does not ignore or reject the Old Testament. We should be very concerned as Christians whenever there is a new idea about God or new theology that emerges.

Our faith is grounded and rooted in the Bible, similarly we must hold to that as our final authority the never changing but ever relevant word of God. The message of Jesus, the gospel is not contradictory to the OT it is the fulfilment of it. God has not changed his mind; he has not reversed his salvation plan which was made and established before the foundation of the world.

Do we view the Bible as being our final authority? Or sometimes are we prone to being led astray with 'New Commandments'?

**Prayer:** We come before you, knowing that you are the God who planned, wrote and gave us the Bible. We know that that is the final authority and contained within it is the clear message of salvation you have for us. We thank you that you have not changed your mind about redeeming mankind and we worship you the unchanging Lord. Amen.

## **Day 17** (Darkness is Passing Away)

**Reading:** 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 John 2:8)

**Message:** The world can be a very dark place living in Wales I know that far too well. This world is filled with things we know are wrong and make us feel uncomfortable or depressed. All the problems in this world seem to be ever present and increasingly getting worse this world is in darkness. Life is hard, full of so many uncertainties and hardship.

What could possibly be the solution what could possibly bring about the end of the darkness that seems to consume? The one solution to the darkness in the world is the shining of 'the true light'.

Jesus even refers to himself using a similar term "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:5). In this world which is dark there is no hope other than the true light which expels the darkness. No darkness can ever overpower the light that Jesus has brought.

I don't know everything you have done wrong, but I do know that the light Jesus brings is enough, is sufficient to bring forgiveness and relief from it. Jesus saving work upon the cross means that we no longer have to dwell in this darkness, but it is passing away and we know it will be replaced by the light of Christ.

**Prayer:** Be with us we pray, through the difficulties, hardships and darkness of this life we pray we would find comfort, support and strengthening in Jesus who came to bring us light and an end to the darkness of this age. Amen.

## **Day 18** (Whoever Hates his Brother)

**Reading:** "Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling." (1 John 2:9-10)

**Message:** Here we read the vital importance of Christians reaction and response we should have to other believers. The phrasing does not just refer to physical biological family relationship's but is referring to the deep spiritual connection that Christians share.

We are to be vessels that reveal and show off the light of God that is in us if we are trusting in Jesus. Christians can be very difficult people; I should know I am one. But despite this we have a deep connection with each other and there should be such a love for fellow believers. A love that encourages one another in the Lord, a love that contains no gain a love that is unconditional.

We should want to abide, be and live in this light we have been saved from darkness into light why would we ever wish to go back? These verses also highlight and testify to the doctrine of adoption, through Jesus' willing sacrifice on the cross we are brought into the family of God. The reason why we can call other Christians brother and sister is because we are all members of the family of God.

**Prayer:** We pray that you would help us to love other Christians because we know that you love us so much, we thank you that you loved us enough to die for us. We ask that you reveal more to us of the joy and privilege to be grafted into the family of God. Amen.

### **Day 19** (Do you Know Where You are Going?)

**Reading:** "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" (1 John 2:11)

**Message:** Have you ever been walking somewhere and gradually the day moves into evening and the light gradually but surely begins to dim? Each step you take the light grows ever faint until eventually you are walking in the dark of night. In the darkness it is so easy to get lost and lose bearings of where you are.

This is the imagery that this verse explores that if we have been blinded by darkness, we do not know that the darkness makes us unsure of where we are going. I wonder if when you were a child you ever attempted closing your eyes and trying to navigate around the house with your eyes closed. Even around the familiar settings such as your house it is hard to navigate safely around.

Do you know where you are going in life? Do you have a plan with your job, family future? We might think we can see everything clearly and have everything worked out but there are somethings none of us can plan for or expect.

As Christians we have a great hope that we are living in the light that Jesus has brought us and no matter what unexpected issues or problems arise in our lives we have a hope that we can never be separated from the love of Jesus. When life goes wrong or when things happen that come out of the blue that we were not expecting is your hope rooted in Jesus?

**Prayer:** We thank you that we can be forgiven by God and we no longer need to be lost or in darkness because Jesus died for us on the cross to bring us into light. We praise you that we no longer need to fear the future because we can be saved to an eternity with God. Amen.

## **Day 20** (Little Children)

**Reading:** “I am writing to you, little children because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake” (1 John 2:12)

**Message:** The good news about Jesus is so simple that it is even made accessible and available even to children. This gospel we have received from Jesus should be told to and made known to everyone, I commend and encourage you to share this devotional thought with your children and grandchildren. Because everyone should hear that Jesus is the one who forgives sins.

Even though you might be a good person, I know when I was younger, I was an absolute delight (I'm not sure my parents would always agree). I was hardly ever in trouble in school, always completed my homework on time never had detention. I was a fantastic well-behaved child.

But even though I was good I wasn't perfect, I might have been a pleasant boy to be around but sometimes even I was a little bit naughty, and as we grow older the more and more, we do wrong. None of us have ever lived our lives without telling a lie or being mean to someone but there is one person who lived a perfect life.

Jesus lived without doing anything wrong, ever and if we put our trust in him our sins (all the wrong things we have done and thought) they can be forgiven. Because he loves us, but more than that it pleases and glorifies him to forgive us. Have you ever done anything wrong? Then you need to trust that Jesus died on the cross to bring forgiveness for you. The gospel is so simplistic that even a child can come and know Jesus.

Do you know Jesus?

**Prayer:** Thank you that your good news is available for people who are very old and people who are very young. We thank you that though we are undeserving we can know your forgiveness and love for your name's sake. Amen.

## Day 20 (To you Father's)

**Reading:** "I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning."  
(1 John 2:13)

**Message:** We are exploring today the address to fathers that they know him from the beginning. The verses we are currently going through are addressing children, fathers and young people our God is relevant and accessible from people of all stages of life and walks of life. This is the great God we come before, the one who in Jesus has made himself known to us.

How blessed are we to have the privilege that we can know Jesus we do not just know about him; we do not just understand the history or the nature of this character, but we know who he is directly.

Who is Jesus? He is the one who from the beginning he is the Lord with no beginning and no end the one who created all and sustains everything. A being of such infinite power and might it should scare us. This Lord makes himself known to mankind. Today we have this God who has made himself known.

**Prayer:** We acknowledge that we do not deserve to know you, there is no reason why we should be able to have a relationship with the one who created all things. Yet we praise you the one without beginning and end for your overarching love which you have bestowed upon us. Amen.

## Day 21 (Overcome the Evil One)

**Reading:** I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one." (1 John 2:13)

**Message:** This is a statement to those who are young and if they are in Jesus, they have overcome the evil one. When you were younger, or if you are currently young what is the biggest thing you achieved when you were younger? Was there something which you were proud to have accomplished for someone so young?

Some of us might feel like we were not equipped or prepared to achieve or accomplish anything when we were in our youth and we needed to wait to build our character and personalities increasing and growing our skills.

This verse reminds us that we are known and are trusting in Jesus even from a young age we have done something vitally important. With Christ we can overcome the evil one himself. If we are in Christ then evil has not won over us, there is a very real sense that we need to be battling and resisting the temptation to do wrong.



However, eternally we are safe, sealed and secure and if we know Jesus, we can find forgiveness and a communion and fellowship with God. Remember this very same God will one day destroy the evil one but if we are eternally with Christ on the day the evil one is destroyed; we will be united with a loving God.

Do you know the peace that can come from knowing the evil one has been overcome through Jesus in you?

**Prayer:** We thank you that what seems impossible to do has been made possible by Jesus, we ask that you continue to be with us sanctifying us as we seek to resist evil and become more like Jesus. Amen.

## **Day 22** (Know the Father)

**Reading:** "I write to you, children, because you know the Father." (1 John 2:13)

**Message:** We not revert back to addressing children, now when I was a child, I thought I was incredibly independent and able to cope, function and live without relying or needing other people. In reality I think I was probably just very stubborn as a child, because there is something that is a necessity for children if they are to continue to live and thrive.

All children need parents or guardians to look after them and in a similar way if we are Christians then we can come to know God as our Father. The one who teaches us, looks after us loves and protects us. Children need someone to help them navigate life to help them thrive and grow in life.

There is also the wonderful intimacy with family, even a game of monopoly cannot break the deep-rooted natural family connections we have. The binding factor, the thing that keeps a family together is a deep love for one another. This is similar with us being brought into God's family and being able to know him as Father.

The one thing that binds us and keeps us in God's family is his great consistent love for us. Because of the love of Jesus, the father has been made known to us as we are adopted into his family.

The most important question for all of us is do we know this heavenly father for ourselves?

**Prayer:** We praise you that you can enter into your family and be called children of God bound by the love and sacrifice Jesus made for us. Amen.

## Day 23 (You are Strong)

**Reading:** "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." (1 John 2:14)

**Message:** The phrase used in this verse that jumped out to me is the reminder that "You are strong". Some of you might regularly say "I'm not as young as I used to be" you might not be as fast or mobile or able to concentrate for as you once were able to.

There is often an association (perhaps not in my case), that the younger we are the fitter and healthier and stronger we are. The strength described here is the strength is not the physical or emotional ability to endure great hardship, difficulty or pressure. What this verse reminds us is that the greatest strength we can have does not lie within ourselves instead there is great strength in the word of God which is to abide within us.

We must ensure that we do not just read our Bibles, but we let the news and message of Jesus transform us and abide within us. How many of us are captivated with the person of Jesus to let the Bible penetrate and fill us?

In times of difficulty and hardship do you struggle on your own? Or is your strength rooted in the word of God filling and bidding within you?

**Prayer:** We ask that your word may abide in us. During every situation and struggle we never want to be far or apart from your help and support. We pray that you might be with us applying the power of your word to our daily lives. Through you may we be strong in the faith. Amen.

## **Day 24** (Do Not Love the World)

**Reading:** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)

**Message:** This verse is a warning; however, it is not a commandment to be miserable or to practice abstinence from laughter. There is enjoyment to be found in this world however what is being warned against here is a move towards worldly living. We are not to be absorbed or obsessed by this world but taken back and staggered at how much Jesus loves us.

We should have a deep appreciation for people and creation because all has been planned, shaped and designed by God himself, however we must never lose the view that sin (the wrong things that we do) has polluted everything.

This world is filled with so much hurt, pain confusion and misery. We have not got to look very hard to see the pain of a world surrounded by the shadow of death. This world is a mess, there is no true hope or life to be found in it.

But Jesus died on the cross to bring life, to bring forgiveness from everything we have ever done wrong. The reason we are not to love the world is because we have someone greater who should be the focus of our affection.

Relationships are ruined when instead of loving the person you are currently with you love your ex, we should not be in love or obsessed by this world because Jesus is better. The peace, comfort and love that we can know in him is so much better than anything this world can offer.

Do you want something more? Do you long for better than just this routine repetitive life? I encourage you speak to a Christian friend, family member or a Church about how you can know Jesus and the forgiveness he brings.

**Prayer:** We thank you that in Jesus we can know something better than the pain, misery and fleeting pleasure that this world has to offer. We ask that you grow our relationship with you learning more about you and your great love for broken people. Amen.

## Day 25 (Desires of the Eyes)

Reading: “For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life —is not from the Father but is from the world.” (1 John 2:16)

**Message:** I wonder if you have ever been shopping armed with your list of items, maybe you have even said that from now on you are going to be god and careful with what you eat. So, you are prepared with your shopping list filled with healthy food and if it is not written on that list it is not going into your shopping trolley or basket.

However, if you are anything like me that does not last very long, your well-planned list system works perfectly until you turn down one aisle and you see the cakes, biscuits and chocolate all piled up. You had a desire to eat less unhealthy food, you even had a plan but it all goes wrong when your eyes see all the delicious treats, we know are bad for us but we want them anyway. I am certain I am not alone in this experience.

Exploring what we looked at yesterday in more detail verse 17 uses a very interesting phrase to describe how we are so easily distracted from the things of God when we look “With the desires of our eyes”. As Christians we should know what is right and wrong but that does not stop us from ever straying or wondering off.

I don’t think it is any coincidence that we cannot physically see God with our eyes and so this is the part mentioned in connection with wandering and straying from God and his precepts.

There is a famous idea that states you will never have the strength or will power to stop doing something you enjoy or are addicted to, instead of trying to stop doing it you are encouraged to do something else more wholesome.

We are not just called to stop looking and indulging in the things of this world, but we are called to look to Jesus instead for he is greater than anything this world can offer us.

Prayer: Father help us to keep our eyes not on the things of this world but on our ultimate saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, may we be filled with him and know a beauty which surpasses all understanding. Amen.

## **Day 26** (The World is Passing Away)

**Reading:** “And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” (1 John 2:17)

**Message:** Those of you who have ever had a massive clear out in your houses will be all so familiar with the usual trip to the rubbish dump. After all the hard work and cleaning of the house there is always a lot of clutter that needs to be disposed often that we have been hoarding for many years. You do not need to get very far into the recycling centre for the smell to hit you of decaying, broken and or ancient items piled high. As many other people are throwing away things that have failed or older models of items.

Everything that is thrown away was one day brand new bringing joy, excitement or use. Christmas is one of the best examples of this, when you give children their presents it does not take them very long to break or get bored with some of their gifts. I wonder how many brand-new exciting Christmas gifts do not even survive the year.

Ultimately, we know very well this world and everything in it is not long lasting. What does this obvious but depressing thought mean for us? Well the Bible tells us that the world is passing away this world is not permanent or eternal.

This world is in fact passing away, there should be no shock or surprise when we things breaking and failing. The biggest question for us should be do we have a hope in someone or something which is lasting and eternal?

Nothing in this life can last and endure, so we need to ensure that our hope for the future is more secure and long lasting. God’s Kingdom through Jesus Christ is the only thing that we can depend on. Everything will one day pass away but those who are trusting in Jesus will be saved.

**Prayer:** We come to you with the knowledge that this world is passing away, but we can know and experience the eternal life that Jesus offers us. Amen.

## **Day 27** (God Abides Forever)

**Reading:** “And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” (1 John 2:17)

**Message:** Today we are looking at the clear difference between trusting in the world and trusting in Jesus. Yesterday we looked at the world that is clearly and before our eyes gradually passing away. Today in a stark contrast to a world that is passing away we look at the God who is forever.

This is why our faith transcends that of this world for our hope is rooted in one who is forever. Our hope and faith is not just rooted in the fact that God is forever but there is a personal relationship with him. That those who do his will those who are trusting in him, those who have been transformed by Jesus we will be forever.

We will be able to abide forever with him, because he is the Lord of life and so it stands to reason that those who are believing in him would escape the passing away and eroding of this world.

There is a very well-known hymn ‘Abide with me’ in that hymn it has the lines “Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory? I triumph still, if Thou abide with me”. This explores a similar theme that whatever the fate of the world, whatever happens to us if we are trusting in Jesus Christ then even death has no hold over us.

For Jesus is forever, do you know for certain that when you die you will triumph through what Christ has done on the cross?

**Prayer:** Thank you that though this world is passing away you offer us an eternity of life and hope, we thank you that we can abide with you forever. We accept we are not worthy of this calling; we do not deserve it and yet you love us still. Amen.

**Day 28** (Children it is the Last Hour)

**Reading:** "Children, it is the last hour," (1 John 2:18)

**Message:** Many of you will be able to relate, when I was younger, I hated going to bed early and wanted to stay up playing all night. As I have gotten older, I now appreciate an early night.

When I was younger, and I learnt to tell the time I would always watch with great sadness as the clock relentlessly ticked and got closer and closer to my bedtime. Similarly, my parents probably watched with excitement and gladness that my bedtime was rapidly approaching.

What the Bible says is very similar, none of us know for sure how long we have left in our lives, there is no clock that we can look at so when it comes to an hour before we can make the most of ourselves before we die.

For me the older I get the quicker time seems to go, each year comes around faster and faster. We might think we have loads of time left to enjoy ourselves and prepare for the future, but the truth is none of us know how much time we have left.

If reading this, you knew you only had one hour left to live what would you do? When I knew it was getting closer to my bedtime as a child, I would always try to make the most of the remaining time I had, if I only had one more hour before bed then I was going to make the most of it.

Because none of us know the future it is really important that we make sure we are ready to meet with a perfect God who does no wrong. All of us have done things we are not proud of, or we wish we hadn't. What all of us need is to know that we are forgiven. Put your trust in Jesus, for he loved enough to die on the cross to bring us forgiveness from everything we have done wrong.

Time moves so fast, there is nothing to be gained by putting off accepting Jesus into your life. I encourage you to not ignore this message but speak to someone you know is a Christian or get in touch with us at Libanus Church

**Prayer:** We thank you that even though we do not know the future, or how long we have left we can have a hope that goes beyond this life because Jesus died on the cross to bring us forgiveness and bring us into a relationship with God. Amen.

## **Day 29** (They Were Not of Us)

**Reading:** “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.” (1 John 2:19)

**Message:** This is a very difficult and blunt verse to look at, but as we go through the Bible we cannot minimise or downplay harder verses that we do not like. Here we see that people had left the church, had walked away from the truth and turned away from the Christian faith to follow in their own direction.

This must have been a very distressing time as people who had served and worshiped with them have walked out renouncing and turning away from the truth of the gospel. The Bible says that these people who stop following Jesus and break away from the fellowship were not of us, meaning that they were never truly part of the church.

This is often understood by many Christians as being a proof text for the belief of ‘perseverance of the saints. That simplistically means those who God has made alive in him will always be alive, commonly referred to as ‘once saved always saved’. Jesus’ work on the cross applied to our hearts by the Holy Spirit changes us eternally. In Jesus we are never the same again.

It can be very hard and painful to watch people leaving the church and seemingly leaving and rejecting Jesus and we are to continue to show love and pray after them. But it should also be a reminder to us that if we are in Jesus then we are part of God’s family.

We can never be removed; we will never be rejected if Jesus has died for us there will be forgiveness made available and that forgiveness is everlasting.

**Prayer:** We pray for those we know who have walked away from the good news of Jesus without being changed by the gospel and we ask that you might bring them back into the certain knowledge and reality of the saving power of Jesus. We also thank you that we can know eternal salvation through Jesus. Amen.



### **Day 30** (Been Anointed by the Holy One)

**Reading:** “But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.” (1 John 2:20)

**Message:** Following on from yesterday for those who are truly trusting in Jesus for those who are continuing in trusting in Jesus and have not and will not desert the Christian faith we have been anointed by God himself.

What is the relevance or significance to this anointing? One definition of an anointment is to “nominate or choose (someone) as successor to or leading candidate for a position. “If you are a Christian you have been chosen, you have been selected to receive this blessing.

More than just being chosen and nominated to receive this blessing, we have been anointed by the Holy One. When you receive a reward its lovely and special to be recognised for your achievements. But how much more is that award worth to you by someone of great stature or someone you deeply respect; it does not matter how small the award if a member of the royal family was presenting it there is an added value.

Not only do we receive the anointing from God himself we are also blessed with all knowledge, this does not mean that we will be able to go and win a game show. We have something far better than that, if God has chosen us then he has revealed all we need to know about finding salvation.

If you know Jesus then you have the knowledge of salvation, what more could we want to know?

**Prayer:** We don't understand why, but we thank you that you love, chose and anointed your people we thank you that through Jesus the knowledge of salvation has been revealed. Amen.

### **Day 31** (No Lie in Truth)

**Reading:** I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. (1 John 2:21)

**Message:** This is a very straightforward statement that we all know the truth, some of us might not want to accept it or believe it but just because we do not want to accept the truth does not mean it is not true.

The truth that is referenced here is that all of us have done things wrong, things we feel embarrassed, ashamed or wish we had not done. God is a Holy God he is completely perfect, and he cannot stand or bare imperfection that we have done wrong.

Yet he is a God of love. God loved us. Jesus (who is God) came to die on the cross to pay the punishment of what we justly reserve. Jesus died on the cross to bring us back to a perfect God. If we put our trust in Jesus we can know full forgiveness from everything we have ever done wrong.

This truth about Jesus you now know, and there is no lie or untruth about what Jesus has offered the question is what are you going to do with this knowledge? Are you going to accept what Jesus did on the cross as the only way for your forgiveness or are you going to ignore this reality and just hope for the best?

I encourage you to reach out to a Christian friend or Libanus Church if you have any questions about how you can know this great joy and truth for yourself.

**Prayer:** We thank you have made the truth about the good news of Jesus known to us, we thank you that you are a God who never lies and we can trust fully in what you say for there is no lie in this truth. Amen.

## Day 32 (Who is the Liar?)

**Reading:** “Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?” (1 John 2:22)

**Message:** When I come to a verse like this my mind instantly jumps to the old TV show presented by Jasper Carrot called ‘Golden Balls’. For those of you who don’t remember this ground-breaking game show the crux of the episode would come right at the end of every episode as the two contestants were faced with a very important choice. The contestants had to decide whether they were going to ‘split’ the money between the both of them whether they were going to try and steal all the money for themselves.

The thing that made it captivating viewing was people who had been so honest and open right at the end would surprise you and try to seize all the money. There was a staggering number of people looking the other person in the eye and reassuring them they would share the money only to take it all. It was so painful to watch someone lying and the consequences of their lie.

In this verse the question is asked who is the Liar but he who denies Jesus is the Christ? What greater lie can there be than to deny who Jesus is. Christians believe that Jesus was God who came down to this earth to live a perfect life. All of us have done things wrong but Jesus lived a perfect life without ever doing anything wrong. He then died for us, for those people who have made a mess of their lives.

Have you done something wrong that someone just will not forgive you for? In Jesus because of his sacrificial death for us you can be fully forgiven of everything you have done wrong before God himself. We must never devalue or reject the great truth and love that God has shown to us through Jesus. What a mighty and glorious truth we have, Jesus came to rescue and forgive people who have done so much wrong, people just like us.

Every single one of us is faced with a binary choice, there are only two options do you accept that Jesus is God, or do you deny the truth? Even as Christians we can so often shy away from telling people the great and glorious gospel about Jesus. Let’s actively make the choice today to tell the truth about Jesus to those we meet or speak to.

**Prayer:** We thank you for the great truth that my guilt, anxiety and wrongdoing can be forgiven by Jesus. We are sorry for everything we have done wrong and we apologise for those moments when we are not honest and upfront with people about who Jesus is. Thank you that by trusting in Jesus even I can be forgiven. Amen.

## Day 32 (Has the Father Also)

**Reading:** “No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. (1 John 2:23)

**Message:** This verse explains in part the complexities and mission of Jesus in a short and simple way. Because of the wrong things we have done, might currently be doing or will do we are separated from God who is in heaven. But God loved us so much he sent Jesus down to die on the cross paying the penalty for everything that his people have done wrong.

This reminds me of that very common scene as a toddler is just sitting on the floor playing as the parents talk and then subtly and slowly the toddler begins to move closer and closer to where they shouldn't be. Perhaps they are getting too close to an open fire or pulling on a table which would topple onto them.

If the parent does not intervene there would be terrible and painful consequences for the child. Then the moment someone notices what the child is about to do the parent or guardian will leap into action and snatch the child away from danger as quickly as possible. The parent driven by a love and desire to keep their child safe and secure from harm.

In a very similar way, our heavenly father who saw the mess we were living in who saw the pain and the problems and sent Jesus to intervene and save us. If we accept that Jesus is the only way to have our sins forgiven, then the Bible tells us that we are effectively embracing the father as well. The only way to come to know and understand God is through the person of Jesus.

If you deny Jesus then you are also denying who God is but if you accept Jesus you accept, have and know the Heavenly Father as well. Do you know Jesus, and do you know the Father?

**Prayer:** Thank you that while we were far away from you often unknowingly living a dangerous life, you sent Jesus who loved us, cared for us and died for us. We pray that more people will come to understand that through Jesus they can have a relationship with a great loving heavenly Father. Amen.

### **Day 33** (Abide in the Son and Father)

**Reading:** Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. (1 John 2:24)

**Message:** This verse is almost the opposite of yesterday's, we previously looked at how if you deny Jesus then you are denying God himself. Today the primary focus is if you accept Jesus then you will have God as well. If we accept God, the most staggering thing is that he will accept us even after everything we have done wrong.

Given the recent coronavirus restrictions many of us are feeling alone, cut off and isolated the one great longing we all have is that one day very soon we will be able to meet with people again. We just want to spend time with friends and family and be around those people we love to be in their presence to have them around us. Because we love them so much, we want to spend time with them and enjoy their company.

If we have accepted Jesus, then this love we have for him should drive us to want to be around and near to him. We are told in this passage that we can not only be near and dwell with Jesus but through accepting Jesus we can also know God the father.

In this period of separation and isolation we can take comfort and abide and rest in the presence of the Son and the Father.

**Prayer:** We pray for those who are feeling lonely and alone and ask that you would encourage and be with them. We thank you we can hold onto you in great times of trouble and difficulty and we ask that we will be able to rest, trust and abide in you more each day. Amen.

## **Day 34** (The Promise Made to Us)

**Reading:** “And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.” (1 John 2:25)

**Message:** What is the biggest or most longed for promise anyone has ever made to you? Perhaps someone has promised to take you to a country you have been waiting to travel and explore for years. What about a new car? Or the promise that one day you will be allowed to have a pet. Maybe you might have even been promised a promotion or pay rise.

My second question is whoever made this promise did they ever keep that promise? It is all very well and good for people to make promises, but the most important part of a promise is keeping or fulfilling it. You might know somebody who makes promise after promise but never keeps them.

However great and lovely a promise sounds it only has a meaning if it is kept, a promise is important but the person making the promise is also vital. The promise that is talked about here has been made to us by God himself. We can have such a comfort and confidence in the safety and security that God has kept every promise he has ever made. He has never broken his word and there are no unforeseen circumstances that can catch him off guard.

The Lord is trustworthy, so what is the promise that he has made to us? Eternal life, if we trust in Jesus then no matter who we are, what we have done we can be forgiven and presented eternal life. A life that does not end, a life with such great and rich joy and hope cannot be found in anything in this world it has to be found in Jesus.

We can give thanks that God keeps his promises, that his promise was made to us and his promise is eternal life – do you know the eternal life from Jesus?

**Prayer:** We thank you that we can ensure that we have life forever by trusting in you thank you for the assurance and certainty we can have knowing a God who keeps all his promises. We also want to thank you that you made your promise to us, we are underserving and yet you love. Amen.

### **Day 35** (Trying to Deceive You?)

**Reading:** I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. (1 John 2:26)

**Message:** Have you ever had somebody attempt to misled or deceive you something that was not true? If you are anything like me, you will have received many emails or phone calls promising you untold riches and hundreds of millions of pounds if you just send them your bank details.

There is something about scams that are so vile as people pretend to be from phone, insurance, utility companies all to try and wrongfully extract money from some of the most vulnerable and trusting people in society. It is a real shame that because of all these scams wherever you are you need to be on guard and alert, even if you are relaxing in your own home you must be watchful.

In a similar way as Christians there are always people and things that are trying to steal our attention and time away from God and his desire for our lives. We should always be a people who are searching and striving for truth, and we know that the ultimate truth can be found and rooted in the person and mission of Jesus.

Never let anybody deceive you, as Christians we are to be von our guard from things that distract us or take away our time and energy from resting, trusting and enjoying the gifts Jesus offers.

Are you holding firm to the person and victory Jesus secured on the cross or are you currently being deceived and living without the hope and good news of Jesus in yur life?

**Prayer:** We thank you that though there are so many things that can distract us and try to pull us away from you we are safe and secure in the work of Jesus on the cross. We ask that you make us wiser and more able to resist and detect deception and deviation from the life giving truth of Jesus. Amen.

## **Day 36** (What you Received)

**Reading:** But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him. (1 John 2:27)

**Message:** We read in our reading for today that we as Christians have received the truth of the good news of Jesus directly from the one who abides within us. Meaning we have received truth directly revealed to us by God himself.

Now I don't know about you, but I love receiving gifts, particularly if I am not expecting one, or if there is a surprise and I have to peel back the wrapping paper to uncover what gift someone has purchased for me. So many people say it is better to give a gift than to receive a gift, these people are what we call liars. I love receiving gifts, and so often these are given and received in

There can be no gift given that was emersed in more love than God sending Jesus to bring about forgiveness for our sins. Because of Jesus' we can abide in the Lord and the truth about forgiveness and salvation can be made known to us, revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

**Prayer:** We thank you that we can receive the truth and anointing of knowing Jesus, we thank you for the love you had which resulted in Jesus being sent and we praise you that we were undeserving of your love and yet you loved us anyway. Amen.



## **Day 37** (Are you Ready?)

**Reading:** “And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears, we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.” (1 John 2:28)

**Message:** I love that the Bible is inclusive and open, we find that in this verse as after constantly trying to press upon the reader the importance of abiding or being with God John then continues to offer the exact same message for children. There is no need for fear or worry about how undeserving or average we are before God anyone who trusts in Jesus for the forgiveness of everything, they have ever done wrong will be forgiven and accepted.

Have you ever been caught out by someone who arrives earlier than they said they would? Perhaps you have invited someone round and you foolishly think to yourself I won't clean yet I have ages until they arrive and then a little while later you hear the knock at the door, they are early. What surprise and dread fills you and you quickly run around the house making it look as presentable as possible.

That initial fear and panic often makes us want to shrink away and often for the ground to just swallow us up. The Bible tells us that one day Jesus will return to this earth and the question we have to think about is am I ready? If Jesus was to Return are you ready to meet him with confidence because you know he has washed you free of sin or would you be anxious, nervous and worried because you thought you would have more time?

None of us know when Jesus will return or when we might die, but if we come before Jesus repentant and trusting in him when we finally do meet face to face with God, we can be confident that we will be saved.

**Prayer:** Thank you that your promise of salvation is inclusive and open for all who will believe on Jesus. We are so fortunate that we can be confident and not shrink from our saviour when he one day returns if we know him. Amen.

## **Day 38** (Has Been Born of Him)

**Reading:** “If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.” (1 John 2:29)

**Message:** What do we know about Jesus? Well we know his name, we know the family he was born into, we know the circumstances of his birth, we know about his life and teachings. However, the one thing John draws our attention to about Jesus in this verse is his righteousness. This is a really important concept to understand, we must realise that God is righteous.

Has anybody ever said that you act in the exact same way as one of your relatives? Sometimes there are babies who pull a similar facial expression to their grandparents or parents. There is a strong sense that somebody born into a family will generally have similar facial, emotional or character traits.

The Bible says that those who practice righteousness have been born of Jesus. We must realise that Jesus has never done anything wrong, and the wrong things that we do are so counter to the message and teaching of Jesus. The Bible says that everyone who practices righteousness is born of him.

So how is it possible that we can be born of him? If we are being honest, we are so far from the perfection God requires so how can we practice and live out something that is so alien and differ to us?

Quite simply everyone who has truly turned to Jesus sorry for what they have done wrong asking that Jesus to forgive them through his sacrifice on the cross is spiritually born again. Because we have been saved and adopted into the family of God we should gradually, slowly begin to follow the characteristics and traits of our heavenly family.

We are not perfect, that is why Jesus died on the cross in our place to bring about our forgiveness and adoption into God’s family.

**Prayer:** We ask that you show us more of yourself, more of your character and person so we might be captivated by the righteousness of Jesus. Thank you that even though we were far away from you, you loved us and have given us the chance to enter into your family through Jesus’ work on the cross. Amen.

## **Day 39** (What Kind of Love?)

**Reading:** “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so, we are.” (1 John 3:1)

**Message:** I’m not going to deal with the entirety of the verse today, instead I want us to be thinking about seeing and giving. It is lovely when you know that someone loves you, whether it’s a partner, family member or close friend. However nice it is to know you are loved every now and then you want to witness and see a demonstration of that love. As Christians we know God loves us, but more than just knowing this God shows us that he loves us.

Chapter three begins by saying see what kind of love the father has given to us. This very day you can know and see the kind of love that God has for you. We can see the love of the Father clearly because this love has been given to us, we know that God has sent Jesus, he has given us Jesus so that we might know, see and experience the love of God.

Have you ever received a gift and thought ‘What have I done to receive this?’ you might even have been given a gift that was so special it made your gift look tiny in comparison. Jesus is God’s love revealed to us and nothing can match it or compete.

When you give someone a gift you do not charge anyone or expect anything in return, similarly God has provided a way for us to be saved and there is no way we can pay him back or earn forgiveness.

But through the person of Jesus it is freely given, I encourage you today to accept and see the love the Father has given to us in Jesus.

**Prayer:** Thank you for being a God of such great love, a love that passes understanding a love that cannot be compared to. We thank you that we can know your love for us not just because we are told about it, but because you have clearly demonstrated it in the person of Jesus. Amen.

## **Day 40** (And So, We Are)

**Reading:** “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so, we are.” (1 John 3:1)

**Message:** Today we again think about this love which we can see through Jesus and we know that more specifically we are thinking about how through God’s love for us we have been made children of God. This is a topic that is often covered but it is vitally important to understanding the fulfilment and completion of God’s love is that we can stand before him.

Galatians picks this up in more detail emphasising that we are brought into God’s family, but we are also saved from something. “So, you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God” (Galatians 4:7). We were once slaves to sin; we need to remember where we once were to appreciate where we now are.

We need to appreciate that before we were welcomed into the family of God, we were undeserving of it, if we are being honest, I am sure that all of us would wish we could change some aspects or elements of what we have done. And yet a perfect God is so full of love that he loved us and as Christians Jesus died for us.

I love the ending and finality of the statement because God has declared us Children of God because through Jesus we can be brought into his family and into his presence “and so, we are”. This is so matter of fact, do you need reassurance or confirmation that you are a child of God? If God has given us the name, the title the privilege to be called children of God then we are children of God.

**Prayer:** We worship you because even when we were far away from you, when we were undeserving of your greatness and presence you not only forgave us but clothed us with your righteousness. In our selves we will never be worthy to be children of you, but if we are Christians you have called us that, and so we are. Amen.

## **Day 41** (Did Not Know Him)

**Reading:** “The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him” (1 John 3:1)

**Message:** Have you ever met someone for the first time, but they seemingly know everything about you, they might say oh I was very good friends with your parents or grandparents. Because they know your parents, they seem to have a very good understanding of you and your life, even if you have not spent much time with them. They know you because they know your parents.

In this verse we have the reverse of this, the world does not know us, it does not understand us because it did not know Jesus. Because we know Jesus as Christians we have been completely and radically changed. When we meet with Jesus and continue to follow, trust and sanctification begins to take effect we should begin to become more like him. We will never be perfect, and sanctification might be slower and harder for some.

As Christians we should never be shocked or surprised that the world might not understand who we are or what we are doing because they do not understand the mighty saviour. It reminds me of 1 Corinthians 1:18 “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” If this world does not understand the person and sacrifice of Jesus it makes sense that they would not understand us.

Life might not be always easy or straightforward and people might look at you funny, but we are not to be surprised if they do not understand Jesus or his work then why would they understand those transformed by him?

**Prayer:** We thank you that you never forsake us in the midst of difficulties, we pray that you might help and reveal yourself to others so that they can come to know you as the saviour of the world. Amen.

## **Day 42** (When He Appears)

**Reading:** Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:2)

**Message:** John begins this section by reminding us that we are beloved, for those of us who know Jesus we are greatly loved, this day we can know that we are immeasurably loved by our saviour. Because we are so loved by him, we will never be forgotten abandoned or left alone, his love for us is the reason why we will one day be in his presence forever.

There is an amazing promise here that when Jesus returns because he is coming back, we are not going to be alone or isolated or far away from him forever but one day he will appear. The hardship and loneliness some of us might be feeling in this lockdown is not permanent though it might feel like a never-ending cycle.

But I want to encourage you today that one day Jesus himself will be standing before you. If you are trusting in Jesus then this loneliness, isolation and social distancing will not last for when he returns, we will be with him forever.

He might not be present with us now in the same way, but he is always with us, he has not forgotten us or left us now but when he appears again, he will be with us forever without separation and in perfect unity.

**Prayer:** We pray for those who are struggling with loneliness and isolation during this lockdown period and we ask that you strengthen them and be with them in their moment of need. But we thank you that there is coming a day when we will be eternally inseparable from you. Amen.

### **Day 43** (We Shall be Like Him)

**Reading:** Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:2)

**Message:** Have you ever done something and instantly regretted it? Seemingly not even a second after you have done something the guilt floods into your body numbing you to the core. Maybe you do not even know why you did it, you just did.

Paul describes a very well-known and familiar experience when he says "For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Romans 7:15). We often know what is right and wrong and yet we all make mistakes and we all do things we wish we could undo.

This is why Jesus needed to come to this earth and die on the cross to pay the penalty for these things we have done wrong and even as Christians we still struggle to always do what is right. For those of you who are struggling with guilt and regret over past actions John has a message of hope when he declares "We shall be like him". This is the ultimate fulfilment of the work Jesus did on the cross, despite everything we have done wrong we can be forgiven.

When we reach heaven, we will have resurrection bodies, bodies that have not been marred or stained by sin. Even though I have done so much wrong and if you are being honest even though so have done so much wrong through Jesus' blood we can be forgiven and presented blameless before God.

We will not be like God in that we are all powerful or all present, but we will be like him in that we will have been forgiven of everything we have ever done wrong and will stand in heaven with everything forgiven.

We do not deserve the blessings offered to us through Jesus.

**Prayer:** We praise you that even though we have done so much wrong one day we can stand forgiven and perfected by the precious and valuable blood of Jesus.

**Day 44** (We shall see him as He is)

**Reading:** “Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2)

**Message:** In our final study on this verse we will be thinking about the great promise that has been made that we will see him as he is. Previously we have considered that he shall appear, and we will be made like him today we will be reflecting on how these two facts help us to understand the richness of seeing Jesus.

There is a very famous saying ‘Seeing is believing’ there is an element behind this saying that when you see something the depth and reality of it become clearer than when you cannot see it. As Christians we have faith in what we cannot physically see but one day we will be have the privilege of gazing upon our saviour.

Have you ever heard anyone say ‘I went to see it but I didn’t see it properly’ there is a real sense that we can sometimes see great sights but if it’s raining or if the visibility isn’t very good it can ruin or dampen the whole experience. Christians be encouraged that when we reach heaven because of the blood of Jesus Christ we will see him as he is.

When he appears, when he is present when he is near and when we have been perfected through his atoning power, when we have new resurrection bodies unmarred by the effects of sin, when we stand clothed in his righteousness we will see him, we will Jesus, we will see the fullness of the risen and conquering king.

Today do you know with certainty that you will one day see Jesus for who he is in the realms of heaven not because you deserve him, but because he loves.

**Prayer:** We thank you that we are undeserving and yet you call us near that all who are trusting in Jesus will one day see the beauty of you and there the reality of your sacrifice for us will become more precious to us. Amen.



## **Day 45** (Purify yourself)

**Reading:** “And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure” (1 John 3:3)

**Message:** This is a fabulous and simple verse that reminds us of the ultimate transformational, renewing power that we can find in Jesus. The word everyone is a very certain and inclusive, what we are about to read and think about ensures that nobody will be left behind or missed out.

When I was at school, we would always have a reward trip for Christmas and Summer and anybody who had been deemed to have been a good pupil was rewarded by being allowed to go onto the trip. However, for those few children who could not be trusted or had played up across the term would not be allowed to go on those trips. There was a very real sense that these reward trips were not for everyone there were some people who were deemed undeserving who did not make the cut.

With scripture there is a promise that everyone who hopes in Jesus, everyone who trusts in what he did and taught will be purified, nobody forgotten about or left behind but everyone who is trusting in Jesus has life. The question has to be asked why are we being purified? We are being purified because he is pure Jesus is without sin and through his sacrifice, he makes us clean. We are undeserving and unpure and he takes us and through his blood that was spilled he makes us like himself.

Everyone who is hoping in Jesus will be purified because our mighty saviour is pure.

**Prayer:** We thank you that the greatest difference between us and God, our own personal sin can be dealt with in Jesus and we thank you that we can become more like you. Amen.

## **Day 46** (Sin is Lawlessness)

**Reading:** “Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.” (1 John 3:4)

**Message:** Here we see a reminder from John, about the importance of resisting and fleeing from what is wrong. I wonder have you ever told a white lie, or a little lie? You might have answered yes but the reality is none of us have ever told a white lie because they do not really exist. We use this phrasing to make it sound softer or less wrong or hurtful, but the reality is it is just as bad.

I’m sure you have heard the famous saying ‘practice makes perfect, however in this instance it seems to be the complete opposite. We are not to make a practice of sin, we should as Christians be resisting and trying to avoid the trappings of sin. The more we continue to sin the better we get at it, the less we feel convicted and the more it becomes normalised in our lives.

As Christians Jesus Christ died on the cross in our place to free us from sin, we should never be sucked back into the lifestyle that by his blood we have been freed from. I urge you to cling to Jesus and resist evil.

John says that sin is lawlessness, what images come to mind when you think of lawlessness it probably conjures images of a person or place where laws are not followed or obeyed? We might not think of ourselves as lawless just because we have done things wrong. But the truth is that God’s law is perfect, and all of us have broken his law, we might not have broken every law, we might not have broken as many laws as someone else, but we have all broken God’s law.

We do need a reminder of the destructive and deadly nature of sin, because when we realise sin is lawlessness, we then appreciate the love of Jesus’ saving work on the cross more.

**Prayer:** We thank you that though we were once trapped and defeated by the depth and weight of our own sin we thank you that restoration can be found in Jesus and Jesus alone. Amen.

## **Day 47** (Take Away Sins)

**Reading:** “You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.”  
(1 John 3:5)

**Message:** What single verses do you think summarise and encapsulate the entire gospel? Have you read one of those verses which summarises the complexities of the good news about Jesus into a single short statement?

In this passage of 1 John we have one of these verses which explains the whole gospel in just a few lines. Speaking to those who have accepted Jesus he says ‘you know’ there is an assurance and certain hope we can have that we can know God through knowing Jesus Christ. I have been taught many complicated maths concepts when I was in school, but by the end of the lesson I still did not know how to do these complicated sums. There are some things in maths I will never be able to understand, but Jesus can be made known.

We can know the one who has appeared, but why? Why did Jesus need to come to this earth and die? What was the purpose of his mission? Jesus came in order to take away sins. In essence that is the core of the good news about Jesus.

We were sinners, we were far off from him, yet despite everything we have done wrong he loved us, and he came to take away the penalty for everything we have ever done wrong. Why do Christians always talk about Jesus? Because there is nobody else who can take away the sins of the world except him.

**Prayer:** We thank you that we can know a way to have everything I have ever done wrong forgiven; we thank you that despite the cost you came to take away sins. Amen.

## **Day 48** (In Him There is No Sin)

**Reading:** “You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.”  
(1 John 3:5)

**Message:** Yesterday we considered the purpose and reason for Jesus to descend to this earth however we need more assurance that Jesus has the ability and power to overcome our sins. We do not just need someone to try and save us from our sins what we are utterly desperate for is someone to accomplish and achieve forgiveness.

Have you ever been to a school fete or a fayre and been tempted to try your hand at one of the carnival games in attempt to win a giant cuddly toy larger than you? Often the games are virtually impossible to win the top prize and require a lot of skill or a lot of luck. Now anyone can give it a go but very few succeed, very few have the ability to win the prize and complete the task.

Often when someone asks me ‘Can you do this for me’ I often respond by saying ‘I don’t know but I will give it a go’ because often when people ask me for help there is a very high chance, I will not be able to help them at all.

Jesus was able to take away our sins because in him there is no sin. What is the point of the end of this verse it is to demonstrate that he was able to fulfil this great task? He came to take away sins, that was his plan that was his mission and because he has no sin, because he is perfect because he has perfectly fulfilled the law, he is able to complete this task.

The one who is without sin is the only one who can remove our sin. He lived the life that all of us wish we could have lived.

**Prayer:** We thank you that Jesus not only had the will and the desire to save us, but you were also the only one who could bring about our forgiveness. We thank you that in your perfection shared with us we can be one day clothed in your righteousness through the victory you have won on the cross. Amen.

## **Day 49** (Keeps on Sinning)

**Reading:** “No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. (1 John 3:6).

**Message:** We should be different as Christians, there should be a warmth and joy and hope within us because our Lord is actively working in our hearts. The closer we are to Jesus the more it should change our lives, we will never be perfect, but we can begin to be sanctified as we lean and trust fully on him.

There should be a change and a rejection of sinning, because of the great personal cost to Jesus to make an end of our sin. If we have both seen him and known him then we should be radically transformed.

There is even truth that the more we become like Jesus the more we identify and notice things in our lives that are wrong and bring dishonour upon the name of Jesus for us to do as Christians. You might even feel like the sin in your life is increasing, when in reality you are just noticing what was already there. We should be an ever-changing people, growing in love, relationship and character after we have been irreversibly touched by the love of Jesus.

I am reminded of the great hymn “When He shall come with trumpet sound, Oh, may I then in Him be found; In Him, my righteousness, alone, Faultless to stand before the throne.” In Him, my righteousness alone, our righteous standing before God is not because of anything we have done but because of everything Jesus has done for us.

**Prayer:** We thank you that we can become more like Jesus and that we who are undeserving can see him and know him. We are eternally grateful that we are not the same as we once were, for he has changed us. Amen.

**Day 50** (Righteous as he is Righteous)

**Reading:** Little children let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous." (1 John 3:7)

**Message:** Following on from our devotion yesterday focusing on the righteousness that we inherit through Jesus; we are now told a big and bold statement that we can be righteous as he is righteous.

If you have a sibling, then you will be able to relate to this either this statement was said to you, or about you. Whenever you might have done something wrong or made a mistake your parents might have asked 'Why can't you be more like so and so?'. Often you might have thought I could never be like them; I could never act or do what they have done.

Well imagine how impossibly difficult it will be for us to emulate and act exactly like Jesus, how can we be as righteous as the perfect as God himself. An eternally holy being everything he does and is complete perfection.

How are we in anyway supposed to replicate or be anything like the very definition and standard of righteousness? By practicing righteousness is done only when we receive a new nature won for us through the victory of Jesus shedding his blood on the cross. We are given our new righteousness

If we are trusting in Jesus, we will one day be presented right before God, forgiven because Jesus has made us righteous just as he is righteous. The standard we could never meet has been made available to us.

**Prayer:** Lord I thank you that you love us as your children, even though we have done so much wrong against you. I thank you for sending Jesus and bestowing to us his righteousness. We thank you that we have his example to follow. Amen.

## **Day 51** (Sinning Since the Beginning)

**Reading:** “Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.” (1 John 3:8)

**Message:** The Bible not only reveals a lot about the person and character of God it also explores and explains a lot about the nature of the devil. This is a stark reminder and warning of what sin leads to and the destructive nature of it in our lives. The Bible says that those people who make a practice, habit or routine of sin in their lives are almost emulating and mirroring the works of the devil because he has been sinning from the beginning.

This reminded me of a very famous saying ‘Start as you mean to go on’ in many ways the Devil started how he meant to go on, his pride fuelled sin against God has continued to the extent that it is now intrinsic with his character and nature. We often see this in sports games, if I ever started badly in a game of chess and messed up the opening it was so hard to then win the game, often if I played badly in the beginning, I continued that and played badly all game.

You see many sports teams who have a terrible start to a season and then cannot emerge or overcome their rut. We need to make sure that we are not continuing in the same way we once were, if we have accepted Jesus, if we are holding onto him then we should be different to the one who has been sinning from the beginning and will never change his practice.

However tomorrow we will be looking at the glorious gospel centred second half of this verse, we need to be weary and aware of the dangers, trapping and deadly impacts of sins but we can also know there is an answer to this great problem.

**Prayer:** We thank you that though in our lives we began sinning from a very early age we thank you that is we desire and seek true forgiveness in Jesus that can be found. We thank you for the state of sin you saved us out of and we pray we would be holding onto you firmly as you hold onto us indefinitely. Amen.

## **Day 52** (The Reason the Son of God Appeared)

**Reading:** “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.” (1 John 3:8)

**Message:** Today we continue and expand upon what we read yesterday, those who practice sinning are in effect continuing and living in the way of the devil. Because the Devil has been emersed and drenched in sin from the beginning. That is the statement regarding the devil and evil, but we now read what happens in relation to this.

We are told in no uncertain terms that the reason Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil, this is why Jesus came and died on the cross. His sole mission was to defeat and destroy sin. This sin that we can become trapped by and entangled in he came to offer hope and freedom from it.

If the devil has been sinning since the beginning, then this is almost his life’s work. Have you ever heard someone say that someone is destroying their life work? That is exactly what Jesus came to do and has accomplished. He has destroyed everything the devil has done, desires and

Jesus has come to undo the great work, plans and purposes of the devil. But he has not come just to change or amend the work of the devil or make an amendment to it. Jesus has come to completely destroy the works of evil, the sin that burdens us Christ offers us complete salvation from it. Jesus’ work defeats the devil’s work.

This is the reason the Son of God appeared, to destroy the works of the devil.

**Prayer:** We thank you that no matter how much of a foothold sin has of our lives Jesus has the power to overpower and quash the powers and plans of the evil one himself. We thank you that we are set free because the son of God chose to appear. Amen.



## **Day 53** (Born of God)

**Reading:** “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.” (1 John 3:9)

**Message:** This is the reality of the radical eternal transformation that Christ came to win for us at great personal cost to himself. The practice of sin can be replaced by the life, hope and truth of Jesus' message of forgiveness. The bible makes the very firm statement that no one born of God makes a practice of sinning. There is a very real and powerful sense that we can be freed from the grip of sin only through Jesus.

The reality here is that John writes that we are to understand that there is no excuse or reason to continue in our sin as Christians, we should and must be different, we should be changed. But how do we escape from the stream of wrong things we often do, the things we do and then regret for days, weeks, months and perhaps years afterwards.

The key thing to note is this removal of the baggage and sin we carry with us can only be done if we are born of God. We are not to try and defeat our own sinful wants by ourselves, but we must go to him. God is to be alive in the believer, and the believer is to be of God. There should be no way for someone to be born of God to be stuck, trapped and living in evil if they are of God.

Now unfortunately this does not mean that all Christians become instantly perfect anyone who has ever visited a church will know everyone there isn't perfect by any means. But as we continue to grow in our faith as children of God we are to reflect and mirror the characteristics of our heavenly father.

As we struggle with the sin in our lives, we need to focus and rely constantly on our true father in heaven, in him we can be born again and one day completely freed from sin.

**Prayer:** We come to you Lord knowing we are not perfect, but we thank you that if we are trusting in you, we will one day be freed from the pains and sins of this world. We are sorry that we so often sin against you, but we ask that you help us to grow in the likeness of you. Amen.

## **Day 54** (One or the Other)

**Reading:** “By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.” (1 John 3:10)

**Message:** Here we see a very stark reality that there are only two families we could possibly be part of. You are either one of the children of God or the Devil we have previously looked at the actions of both of these groups of people.

Have you ever been presented with two dramatically different ideas before and just wondered surely there must be a Middleway, there must be something in between these two positions? We are presented with a reality of two options, there is no middle way, there are sometimes only a binary option.

There are only two options all of us are faced with are we with God or against him? Many of us might like to compromise or meet someone in the middle. But we have to accept the eternal reality we are either inside the family of God or outside of it.

If we are not part of God’s family then obviously, we are outside of it, what is marvellous is the knowledge that if we are trusting in Jesus as our only way to be saved then we can have certainty that we are part of his family.

There are only two options, either you are part of God’s family or you are outside of it, I wonder which one are you? Do you know that Jesus died for you?

**Prayer:** We thank you that when we were all once outside of your family and far away from you, Jesus came and died the great price was paid and we were adopted in love into the very family of God. I praise you that if I know Jesus, I am a child of God.

## **Day 55** (Love your Brother)

**Reading:** whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. (1 John 3:10-11)

**Message:** If we have an inheritance and inclusion in the family of God, we should be different. More than just different the way we should treat other people who are children of God. If we have been loved and saved at such a great personal cost to Jesus himself then those people who have been saved in the exact same way, by the same sacrifice who are just unworthy as we are should be loved by us.

Who are we to act in an unloving manner towards people God himself has chosen to set his love upon? For if Christ has died for us and them, we are eternally linked and eternally welcomed both undeserving by our own standards into his family.

John emphasises that this message is not a new teaching but the existence and command of love if something that we have heard from the beginning. This should be a truth and a doctrine that we often repeat and champion.

If God is love, then it only makes sense that his children would be a people defined and noticeable because of their love for one another.

**Prayer:** We thank you that you loved us at such a great cost, we ask that you help us to show such concern and love other believers. We pray that your love would fill us so that we are recognised as a people of love because of Jesus' great love for us. Amen.

## **Day 56 (Do Not Be Surprised)**

**Reading:** “We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not be surprised, brothers that the world hates you.” (1 John 3:12-13)

**Message:** Have you ever met someone who instinctively does not like you? Or perhaps you know someone who for some reason you have taken a dislike to, not because they have done anything wrong or against you but just because you have taken an irrational dislike to them.

You might be surprised that someone dislikes you or is not fond of you however as a Christian we are warned to expect for people to dislike or be weary of us. We are not to be surprised when the world hates us. The example given is of Cain and Able, and John says that Cain killed Able because his deeds were evil and his brother's deeds were righteous, there are large overtones of jealousy and a hatred for holy and good. If we have been saved from the sin and wrong of this world then we should be different from what we have been saved from.

For anyone who is struggling with this rejection they are experiencing because of their faith in Jesus Christ we are given a stark reassurance which is exemplified in John 15:18 where Jesus says, “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.” This world hated the holy and perfect God who showed them their errors and mistakes and they rejected the salvation he was bringing.

That means that the life that Jesus brings is so different and alien from the world that we should not be shocked when those without Jesus hate and reject followers of Christ. More importantly we were once people who rejected Jesus.

The power of the gospel, the good news of Jesus is enough to change someone who hates Jesus into someone totally captivated and devoted to them. However dark the world seems we must always remember Jesus' death and resurrection is the solution to the curse of this world.

**Prayer:** We thank you that while we once hated and rejected Jesus, he loved us still. We pray that you would help us to deal with unfair criticism because of our faith. We also pray that you will strengthen us giving us boldness to share the antidote of Jesus Christ with the lost world that is desperately need of a saviour. Amen.

## **Day 57** (Passed out of Death)

**Reading:** “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.” (1 John 3:14)

**Message:** This verse is such an encouragement for those of us who know Jesus it stands as the ultimate reminder of what has been accredited to us. So often life can be filled with so many issues and problems that we seem to lose sight of the great joy we can have in our faith.

Have you ever been asked by someone if you have ever been to a particular village or town and your honest response is well, I have driven through there? I haven't stopped or walked around the shops or done anything in the place, but I have passed through it. We have might have passed through somewhere, but we have not interacted or had any involvement with a place we have just used it as a way to get to where we are travelling to.

We have similar language here as John reminds us, we know that we have passed out of death into life, we have not experienced true death or an ultimate end but instead through the life Jesus Christ has given to us we have passed death by and we have been presented by life instead.

Today let me remind you if you are a Christian that you have inherited life in fullness and completeness because of Jesus' work. Let me also challenge you if you are not a Christian then you have not passed through into life. This verse gives a very important warning that if you do not know the love of Jesus then “Whoever does not abide in love abides in death”.

Either you have passed death by and been given life in Jesus or you are heading to an eternal death, why not ask Jesus to forgive you of everything you have ever done wrong this very day?

**Prayer:** We thank you that all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved; we thank you that we will never have to experience a lasting continuous death if we have found eternal life in Jesus. Thank you that we have passed death by and we are on our way to life everlasting because you, our mighty saviour loved us. Amen.

## **Day 58** (Eternal Life Residing in Him)

**Reading:** “Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.” (1 John 3:15)

**Message:** Sometimes when I read the Bible, I feel like Jesus makes things harder for me. When I read that I am not allowed to murder someone I’m happy with that so far in my life that is something I have kept. However, Jesus extends this and says if you hate your brother then you will be under judgement just as a murderer is under judgment (Matthew 5:21-22).

This gives us such a great insight into what it means for Jesus to be holy. This verse repeats this great standard that we are called to, that if we hate a brother or sister, we have committed murder in our hearts. We who are clinging onto the given perfection of Jesus should be seeking to put aside and live in a way pleasing to our suffering saviour.

We have been changed from a murderer into someone who has eternal life residing in us. Nobody who truly meets Jesus can ever be the same again because eternal life has been accredited to them. I love the personal nature of this that this life can reside in you, in everyone who is trusting in Jesus.

If you know Jesus then you have been given eternal life, however if you do not know him then you are still under this judgement, have you been forgiven?

**Prayer:** We confess that we all need to keep on perusing holiness, we ask that you help us to walk in the light and not darkness. We ask that you reveal to more people the wonderful joy and certain hope that is found in the eternal life that we can know so personally. Amen.

## **Day 59** (By This We Know Love)

**Reading:** By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. (1 John 3:16)

**Message:** Today we are reminded by a beautifully Christ centred reminder as John mentions that we ought to love one another enough to lay down our lives for our brothers. This is a very challenging passage, but John says by this we know love.

Many of us can barely be bothered to ring our friends or offer any help or support we don't really like putting ourselves out if we can avoid it. We want to help people, but we do not want it to be too much of an inconvenience. There is no greater expression of love and concern than to give everything, to give it all to give up your life itself.

Making this sacrifice is an expression of great love. We are to follow Jesus' example and love how Jesus loves and the greatest act of love Jesus has ever and could ever do it lay his life down. When Jesus was nailed to the cross he was not overpowered or defeated but he lay down his life. It was his life and he actively chose to lay it down why? Because of his great love for his friends. This is the love of God that he is willing to lay down his life because of his great love. To bring security, to bring protection to bring life he had to die.

By Jesus sacrifice for us, his life was not taken but he lay it down for us, because of the cross we can know and experience this true love and we should be affected by its richness.

**Prayer:** We pray that we might love others because you have first loved us, we thank you that you willingly gave your life up so that we could be forgiven by a perfect and Holy God. Amen.

## **Day 60** (Closes His Heart)

**Reading:** “But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? (1 John 3:17).

**Message:** Has anyone ever annoyed so much that you have just stopped engaging or going out of your way to be friendly with them? Maybe after months or years of difficulty you have just not been able to take anymore of their negativity or difficulty caused by this other person.

Perhaps you might be guilty of doing what John describes as closing your heart against someone. On a human level it might seem like a sensible thing to not want to help or support a brother or sister and wish to just enjoy your life instead of spending your free time supporting someone else. However, if we have been touched by the goodness of Jesus, we should be different to the standards of this world.

We all need to remember how thankful we should be that Jesus when he looked us, he did not close his heart against us, he could have and in many ways that would have been what we deserved. Jesus has loved us beyond what we deserve and so we should love in such a holistic way.

Do you know what it means for Jesus to have opened his heart to you?

**Prayer:** Thank you for loving us when there was no reason to, we can never fully understand the depth of your bountiful love with which you have loved your people even to death on a cross. Amen.