

1 John 2:3-17  
Feilding Baptist  
21.7.24

### Call to Worship

Welcome to worship at Feilding Baptist!

We begin this morning by remembering Hannah, the Hannah of the Old Testament. Which book of the Bible do we read about her? Who was her husband? And there was another wife... Hannah wanted to get pregnant, but just couldn't. There was no IVF to help her, so she cried out to God. And God did bless her in this way, and Samuel was born. Hannah dedicated Samuel to God, giving him as a trainee priest. Hannah prays a prayer that we have in the Bible's Old Testament book of 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel chapter two. Here's part of it;

1 Samuel 2 New Living Translation  
[Hannah's Prayer of Praise](#)

2 Then Hannah prayed:

“My heart rejoices in the Lord!  
The Lord has made me strong.[a]  
Now I have an answer for my enemies;  
I rejoice because you rescued me.  
2 No one is holy like the Lord!  
There is no one besides you;  
there is no Rock like our God.

May that be our prayer too.

Father, thank you for your strength, thank you that nothing is impossible for you. Thank you that you are a great God, a compassionate God, our Rock. Thank you for your love for us, for Jesus, for the Holy Spirit. Thank you for breaking the powers of sin and death at Easter. Thank you for your mercy and grace, and for offering us such a positive future. Thank you for this time to worship, please bless this time and this space. Amen.

### Message - Abiding with Jesus

Our response to the love of God, given for us, is to be reflected in our attitude and love for others.

A couple of weeks ago when we were in Dunedin, I was really keen to see the main street, George Street. It has had a major revamp, \$104 million dollars, similar to the Library next door, without the zero. George Street now has traffic down to one lane for two blocks, considerable planting and sculptured concrete. I was impressed, a first class finish.

What I didn't expect to see, and I don't think I've seen anything like it anywhere else, was this see saw. Actually, I think there is more than one. The longest was, I don't know, maybe 15 metres? It was huge! This street side playground, was part of the development.

The see saw, up down, up down...

It's this that I see in the passage we're about to read, love & hate, light & dark, God & world. John is wanting the best for the people in these churches he is writing to. He wants them to stay up, not to seesaw. And up, not in a sense of being happy, more in the sense of being faithful.

Having personally experienced Jesus, seeing Him, touching Him, hearing Him, as we read in chapter 1, may we not now be seduced, lured away by the world. The temptations that the world offer us can and do distract us. So, let's read;

1 John 2:3-17 (NIV - UK)

Love and hatred for fellow believers

3 We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. 4 Whoever says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. 5 But if anyone obeys his word, love for God[a] is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: 6 whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

7 Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. 8 Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.

9 Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister[b] is still in the darkness. 10 Anyone who loves their brother and sister[c] lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. 11 But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.

Reasons for writing

12 I am writing to you, dear children,  
because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.

13 I am writing to you, fathers,  
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men,  
because you have overcome the evil one.

14 I write to you, dear children,  
because you know the Father.

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 lives in you,  
and you have overcome the evil one.

On not loving the world

15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father[d] is not in them. 16 For everything in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives for ever.

Footnotes

a) 1 John 2:5 Or word, God's love

b) 1 John 2:9 The Greek word for brother or sister (adelphos) refers here to a believer, whether man or woman, as part of God's family; also in verse 11; and in 3:15, 17; 4:20; 5:16.

c) 1 John 2:10 The Greek word for brother and sister (adelphos) refers here to a believer, whether man or woman, as part of God's family; also in 3:10; 4:20, 21.

d) 1 John 2:15 Or world, the Father's love

v3-6 Love

These are strong words! If you say you know God but don't do what He commands, v4, you're what? A liar! Ouch! Be gentle please! The truth is, you can't say you know God and live opposite to what God expects. That's what v6 makes clear, we must live as Jesus lived. Or as the NASB puts it, walk as Jesus walked. Which is the literal translation, but we get the point.

How do we do this walking or living like Jesus? Verse three for a start, by keeping His commands. Doing what He commands. Well, that's far easier than the Old Testament ten, Jesus only gave one command, to His disciples, to love one another (John 13:34).

And that does lead into verse six, the living and walking the way Jesus did. Considering the character of Jesus, we should also be generous, kind, accepting, as well as loving others. This is the expectation of us, as followers, apprentices of Jesus. Living and walking like Jesus, not living a lie.

#### v7-11 Light

John continues to unpack this from verse 7, reminding us of the darkness that the world was in. Because of Jesus there is now light, Jesus has brought light. We think things are bad now, but imagine before Jesus, they were so much worse.

How does the darkness play out? Well, in this case here, it's with hate, hate for brothers and sisters. This isn't the brothers and sisters in our families, these are the people in the church. Hating people in the church is bringing darkness into the church. This is how the rot of darkness spreads. Love and light belong together.

#### v12-14

And then we get to the most unusual three verses to the children, fathers, and young men. What about the women?! These are no misogynist verses, following on from the verses above that address brothers and sisters in the church, little children addresses everyone in the church. This is how John often addresses people in the churches. So, we should all take notice of those two sentences.

The fathers, far from being men with children, it makes far more sense that John is referring to those who are mature or senior in their faith (Burge, 113). The young therefore, are those who are new to faith. And it appears that it is these people who are being affected by the trouble makers, with whatever it was that was going on in these congregations, that caused John to write. These newer people to faith, younger ones, were being knocked around, and overcome by pressures that were reducing Jesus to someone with less relevance, or even no relevance.

So these six statements, firstly present tense, and then past tense, are actually great reminders to the people, and to us, about what we believe. Because of Jesus, we're forgiven. Remember Jesus, who was from the beginning. Remember we have victory over evil through Jesus. We know the Father, and the word of God remains in us. We have overcome the evil one, the powers of darkness and death, through Jesus.

#### v15-17 Lust

And here, with three verses to go, I usually have a closing statement, and if we were going to lunch at St Johns today, we'd all be on time! But look at this;

Here in these verses from verse three to 17 we have hate twice, and darkness three times. Two plus three is five. And it won't be a coincidence that love appears five times, as a direct see saw contrast to darkness and hate.

Now, as has been said plenty of times before, in English we have one word for love. In Greek, there are various words, even as many as eight words, to define the type of love you are referring to. The main four are:

- Eros is for sexual passionate love, intimate love really.
- Storge is affection, like seen between parents and children. It includes empathy.
- Philia is for love between equals, friendship, loyalty to friends, family, community.
- And then there is agape love. This is for God's unconditional love for us, and our love for God. I describe agape love as a bend over backwards sort of love. It's the love that God has for us, sending Jesus to die on the cross, sacrificial love, putting others first love. This is the love that God, that Jesus expects of us.

So if we look back to v5, where it says, in him the love of God has truly been perfected (NASB) or NIV the love of God is truly made complete, which of the Greek loves do you think it is?

When we get to v9, some claim to be in the light but hate their brothers and sisters, remember, that's our fellow believers (adelphos), not those in our natural families, but we, we are to love our brothers and sisters in the Lord. Which Greek love does John use?

Well, it would be so much easier if it were philia. It's agape. Unconditional love between each of us. Sacrificial love between each of us. Wow!!!

And we get to v15 where love is mentioned three times;

[15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.](#)

Surely this love is storge, affection for the world? Then we can have a little bit of the world here, and a little bit of faith there. Mix it up a bit. But like a seesaw, we're either one or the other.

A chaplain was doing some pre-marriage counselling at a military base. The young lieutenant in front was unwilling to stop seeing a former girlfriend despite his engagement and the objection of his fiancée! He remarked, I didn't think marriage was just more rules chaplain. Sure I'll love my wife, but I don't want love taking away my freedom (Burge, 104).

What sort of love is going to be in this marriage? Not agape! Here in this passage, five times we have agape love. The point God through John is making couldn't be more strong. Especially in v15.

Agape for the world, what sort of love are people having for the world? Bending over backwards for the world! Sacrificial love for the world?! Verse 16 says, love for the world is about lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, boastful pride - none of which is from the Father - do you get the point - none of this is pure agape love, love of God. It's adulterous love. It's replacing love for God with love for the world. May that never be!

We are being called to be faithful. And that's how the last phrase in v17 makes sense. Because it is peculiar in our Bibles. Words have been added in, which help us miss the point. See the difference in translations;

[whoever does the will of God lives for ever. \(NIV\)](#)

the one who (AO)does the will of God continues to live forever. (NASB)

The one who does the will of the God continues to live forever. In the NIV it doesn't have continues, that is life now and later. In Greek it doesn't have lives... but does have continues... which actually does make a difference.

Continues happens to be 'meno'. We've seen this before, in fact, we know it well. It's from John 15, the secrets of the vine. I am the vine, you are the branches, if you - how does it finish?

John 15:4 New International Version - UK

[4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.](#)

Remain, stay, abide in me. Continues is abide. No one can produce fruit if you don't abide in Jesus - ah - in the light, in love, walking as Jesus walked, loving as Jesus loved, now and into eternity. But not alone, abiding, with Jesus. The one who does the will of God abides forever.

So to conclude, this passage is challenging us with the contrasts of love - hate, light - darkness, new - old, Father - world, lie - truth, to not seesaw up and down, to not pretend we're up in the light when we're really down in the darkness. This passage is challenging us to stay fully faithful, faithful full time, being weary of the distractions of the world.