

The First Epistle of John

(Week 17 – 1John 2:12-14)

I. Encouragement For The Family of God

A. The apostle, John, was dishing out some strong words as he warns the flock of the false teachers (Gnostics) that were trying to deceive them.

1. He just said if you don't love your brother, you are in darkness.
2. And he is about to say if you love the world, the Father's love is not in you.
1. But before he says that, he inserts a short encouragement to those who may have been troubled by what he had written...

B. 1John 2:12-14

"I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake. (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. I write to you, children, because you know the Father. (14) 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. Verb Tenses:

- a. The verbs *"forgiven," "know,"* and *"overcome"* are in the Greek perfect tense
- b. The Greek perfect tense denotes an action as being completed in the past, with results continuing on into the present.

2. *"(12) I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake."*

a. Question: **"Who are the little children?"**

- i. Some say this is referring to newly converted Christians
- ii. But since the Greek word, *"teknion,"* is used both in 1John 2:1 and in verse 13, John is most likely addressing the whole Church.
 - Greek: *"teknion"* – an infant; (plural figuratively) darlings (Christian converts); little children.
- iii. Why do I think John is addressing the Church?
 - Because he addresses them as "little children (*teknion*)" in 1John 2:1, 12, 18, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21.
- iv. Those in Christ are forgiven.
 - Growth in Christ starts with forgiveness
 - Forgiveness is in the perfect tense because we start with forgiveness and continue with it into the present.
- v. Unlike the Gnostics, who taught salvation by way of "secret knowledge," it is the blood of Christ that propitiates, expiates and reconciles! (1John 2:2) and motivates us (2Cor. 5:14-15).

3. *"(13a) I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning."*

a. Question: **"Who are the fathers?"**

- i. Those faithful veterans of the faith!
- ii. These are the ones who, like John, have come to know (and continue to know) Christ by the love they exude and the lifestyle they lead.

- iii. These are men and women of Christian character, unlike the Gnostics, who were people of immoral character.
 - Trials produces character (Romans 5:3-4): these have learned to react in a Christ-like manner in all situations.
 - iv. These are the ones whom younger Christians look to as role models of Christian maturity.
4. *(13b) I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father.*
- a. **Question: “Who are the young men?”**
 - i. These are those who are younger in faith than the fathers and have overcome (perfect tense) the evil one.
 - ii. Since the tense is perfect, these have overcome, and continue to overcome.
 - iii. These are those disciples who chose (and continue to choose) to obey Christ in the midst of challenging trials as they continue to grow in Christ, unlike the Gnostics, whose lifestyle directly opposed the doctrines of Christ.
 - iv. These young men have gone from baby Christians and are on their way to becoming fathers (veterans in the faith)
 - v. Maturity comes from sustained victory over sin.
 - **Question: How are these young men overcoming the evil one?**
 - Because they are strong due to the word abiding in them! (verse 14)
 - a. *Psalm 119:9 (ESV), ““How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.”*
 - Jesus is our role model
 - a. He fought Satan off by quoting (and living) the Scriptures (Matthew 4:3-9).
 - If we forget to regularly wash our minds in the water of God’s Word, it gets cloudy and filthy!
5. *“(13c) I write to you, children, because you know the Father.”*
- a. **Question: “Who are the children here?”**
 - i. These are young, immature Christians
 - ii. The Greek word used in this passage is different than the Greek word used in 1John 2:1 and 1John 2:12
 - Greek: “*paidion*” – infant or a half-grown boy or girl; figuratively, an immature Christian; (little, young) child.
 - iii. Although these Christians need a lot of instruction and mentoring, like a young child who recognizes his/her parents, these young Christians know the Father.
 - iv. These very young Christians need to prepare for the battles that lie ahead if they are to grow into young men, then into fathers!
6. **Question: What did these three age-groups have in common?**
- a. They were saved: They possessed a knowledge of God: They were walking in the light: They were abiding in Christ: They were growing in their faith!