

Christ - Our Advocate, Our Assurance & Our Abiding

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Preacher: Mr Ken Douglas

[0 : 00] Good evening, it's a great pleasure to be back with you this evening in Calamish and looking forward to hearing from God.! Let's start with a call to worship. I'm going to read from Psalm 100 verses 4 and 5.

Word of the Lord. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise. Be thankful unto him and bless his name.

For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all generations. Let's begin our service by worshipping God in Psalm 32 from the first verse through to 5.

O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned all the transgressions he has done, whose sin is covered. Psalm 32 from verse 1.

O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned, All the transgressions he has done, whose sin is covered.

[1 : 30] Blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned, Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin, And in her sin there is no guile, nor the rock is found therein.

When as I did briefly in my speech, and silent was my tongue, my bones then waxed it all because I roared all day long.

For upon me both day and night, thine hand did hand me lie, so that my moisture turn it is in summer's drought live I.

I thereupon have unto thee my sin acknowledged, and likewise my iniquity I have no government.

I will confess unto the Lord, my trespasses said I, and all my sin love freely disforgive the iniquity.

[4 : 19] Let's turn to our Heavenly Father in prayer. Let us pray. Our gracious God and loving Heavenly Father, we gather before you this evening as your people, dependent upon you for every breath we take, and thankful that through Christ we can draw near to the throne of grace with confidence.

You are the eternal God, from everlasting to everlasting you are Lord. Before the mountains were brought forth, before the world began, you were God.

We adore you as the creator of heaven and earth, the one who formed us in our mother's womb, and who numbers the very hairs on our head. You know us better than we know ourselves.

Nothing is hidden from your sight. We praise you for your holiness and majesty. You are the high and exalted one who inhabits eternity.

And yet you are also near to us. You are near to the contrite and the lowly in the heart. You are merciful and gracious.

[5 : 43] You are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Great is your faithfulness, O Lord. Your mercies are new every morning.

Above all, we praise you for the Lord Jesus Christ, your only begotten Son, who came into the world to save sinners. We thank you.

We thank you that in him we see your love revealed. In his cross we see the price of our redemption paid. And in his resurrection we see victory over sin and death, secured forever.

We rejoice that he is now exalted at your right hand, interceding for his people, and that he will one day return in glory to make all things new.

Yet, Father, as we think of your holiness and of your great salvation, we are painfully aware of our sin. We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed.

[6 : 53] Too often we are careless in prayer. Too often we are cold in our affections and sluggish to obey you. We have failed to love you with all our heart, soul and mind and strength.

And we have failed to love our neighbour as ourself. Forgive us, Lord, for our pride and our selfishness. For our lack of patience, for words spoken in haste, and for thoughts that dishonour you.

Forgive us when we are quick to complain and slow to give thanks. When we doubt your goodness and when we seek satisfaction in things that cannot last.

But we thank you that if we confess our sins, you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We rest tonight not in our own merits, but in the finished work of Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us. Wash us afresh with his precious blood.

[8 : 11] Renew us by your Holy Spirit. Restore us into the joy of your salvation. And grant us hearts that delight in your word and in your ways.

So, Father, be with us now as we worship you. Help us to lift our eyes above the things of earth and to fix them upon Jesus, the offer and perfecter of our faith.

May our singing be sincere. May our prayers be heartfelt. And our listening be attentive to what you have to say to us. Build us up in our most holy faith.

And glorify your great name among us. And all this we ask with the pardon of our sins. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Amen. We're now going to sing again, this time from Psalm 19.

[9 : 24] Psalm 19 and beginning at the familiar verse, verse 7. Psalm 19 and verse 7, where we read, God's law is perfect and converts the soul in sin that lies.

God's testimony is most sure and makes the simple wise. The statutes of the Lord are right and do rejoice the heart. The Lord's command is pure and dark like to the eyes impart.

Down to the verse marked 11. Where over thee thy servant warn, and he his life should frame, a great reward provided is for them that keep the same.

Psalm 19 from verse 7 to his praise. God's law is perfect and converts the soul in sin that lies.

God's testimony is most sure and makes the sinful wise.

[10 : 40] God's law is perfect and makes the sinful wise. The statutes of the Lord are right and do rejoice the heart.

And help them to shine as lights in this community. Father, we remember the back to church Sunday that Calamish recently had, and we pray that you would bless that, that people who maybe hadn't come along for a while and did return, that they would continue, that they would find their way back to you, that they would continue to consistently worship, and ultimately that if they do not know you, that they would come to know you.

We do. We pray that you would bless those recent events, and just that the church would be able to reach out to the community here.

Father, we pray for our denomination. We uphold those who preach and teach your word week by week.

[16 : 01] Be with our ministers, our elders and deacons. Give them wisdom, courage and compassion. Father, we ask that you would bless the training of future ministers and missionaries, and raise up labourers for the harvest fields.

We remember before you now those who are suffering. Draw near to the sick. Grant healing, relief and patience in their affliction.

Draw near to those that are lonely. May they know the presence of the friend who sticks closer than any brother. Comfort those who mourn with the consolation of Christ.

Father, we pray for the anxious, the weary, the struggling. We pray that they may cast their cares upon you, and know that you care for them.

We pray for our children and young people, that they may grow up to know and love the Lord Jesus, and not be drawn away by the empty promises of this world.

[17 : 15] Guard them, guide them, and make them strong in the faith. Father, we pray for our nation. Have mercy upon us in days when your name is often despised, and your word is ignored.

Grant wisdom and integrity to those in positions of authority. May justice be upheld, and may righteousness be honoured.

Turn the heart of many back to yourself. We pray that times of refreshing may come from your presence. Father, we also pray for the nations of the world, where there is war, bring peace.

Where there is oppression, bring justice. Whether it's famine or disaster, bring relief. We think of the recent earthquake in Afghanistan, and sometimes we just don't know what to pray, Father.

But we pray that you would be in that situation, that you would be glorified in everything. That ultimately, that even in the darkest time, people would turn to you.

[18 : 30] Father, in every hand, raise up faithful witnesses of Christ. May the gospel be swift and be glorified, until every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Father, hear our prayers. We don't bring them to you because of our worthiness in ourselves, but only because we come in the name of Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us.

To him be all the glory. Amen. Amen. Amen. We're now going to read our passage for this evening.

When I was with you previously, I spoke from 1 John 1, so I thought I would just continue in the first epistle of John. And tonight we're looking at the second chapter.

We'll be focusing on the first six verses, but I am going to read the whole chapter just for context.

[19 : 47] So, 1 John chapter 2. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.

And if any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins.

And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the world, the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

He that saith I know him, and keep if not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word in him, verily is the love of God perfected.

Hereby know, we, that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also, so to walk, even as he walked.

[20 : 57] Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word, which ye have heard from the beginning.

Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him, and in you, because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

He that saith he is the light, and hateth his brother, is in the darkness, even until now. He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is none occasion, of stumbling in him.

But he that hateth his brother, is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whether he goeth, because that darkness, hath blinded his eyes.

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven, you for his name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him, that it's from the beginning.

[22 : 09] I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, not because ye have known the father, I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him, that it's from the beginning.

I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If any man loves the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof. But he that doeth the will of God, abideth forever. Little children, it is the last time.

And as ye have heard, the Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists, whereby we know, that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us.

[23 : 27] For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. But they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.

But ye have an unction from the Holy Spirit, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.

But he that acknowledges the Son, hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which we have heard from the beginning.

If that which ye have heard from the beginning, shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

[24 : 36] These things I have written unto you, concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you.

But as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we shall have confidence, and not be ashamed, before him at his coming.

If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteous, is born of him. May the Lord bless the reading of his word to us all.

We will now sing from Psalm 119. I think I just said to 60, but we'll sing the whole of the eighth part, down to verse 64.

[25 : 45] So from verse 57. Psalm 119. Thou my sure portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord, I have resolved and said that I would keep thy holy word.

With my whole heart I did entreat, my faith in favour free, according to thy gracious word, be merciful to me. The whole of the eighth part, the whole of the eighth part, 57 to 64.

The whole of the eighth part, 57 to 64. OUOU Pan accessibility in verse 64. Thou mine should portion heart alone, which I did choose, O Lord.

I have resolved and said that I would keep Thy holy word.

With my whole heart I did entreat Thy face and faith agree.

[27 : 01] According to Thy gracious word, be merciful to me.

I thought upon my former ways, and did my life well try.

Unto Thy testimony spewed, my feet then turned I.

I did not stay nor linger long as those that slothful are.

But instantly, Thy love's cookie, my self I did prepare.

[28 : 21] Bands of ill men be robbed, yet I thine beceptic not slight.

I'll rise at midnight, be to praise Him for Thy judgment's right.

I am companion to all those who fear and be open.

O Lord, Thy mercy fills the air. Teach me Thy love, I pray.

Let's turn back again to our passage for this evening in 1 John 2. And as I said, we're going to be focusing on the first six verses. And I'm just going to read them again to us.

[29 : 46] So 1 John 2. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

And he is the propitiation for our sin. And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the world, the whole world.

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that say, if I know him and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

But whoso keepeth his word, and in him, barely is the love of God perfected. Hereby know we that we are in him.

He that sayeth he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. As I said, when I was here with you previously, we looked together at 1 John chapter 1.

[30 : 56] Where John showed us what true fellowship with God looks like. Walking in the light, confessing our sin, and receiving cleansing through the blood of Jesus.

That message was both comforting and searching. Comforting because we were reminded that the blood of Jesus truly cleanses us from all sin.

There is no stain too deep. No failure too great for the cross of Christ to cover. But it was also searching.

Because walking in the light means being honest before God. It means our sins are exposed. Our hearts are laid bare.

And we can't pretend to be better than we are. And that leads to two questions which every Christian will ask at some point.

[32 : 04] The first is this. What happens when I stumble again? John told us to walk in the light.

But I know my own heart. I still sin in thought, in word and in deed. Does that mean that I am cut off from fellowship with God?

We live in an age that often tells us to define ourselves by our performance. If you succeed, you belong.

If you fail, you are out. John writes here to correct that way of thinking.

And to anchor us in something far steadier than our own performance. Jesus Christ himself. So the first question, what happens when I stumble again?

[33 : 20] And the second question is this. How can I know I truly belong to him? Many people claim to know God.

But their lives show little evidence of it. So how do I know that my profession is real? How do I know that my faith is genuine?

And this is a question that many Christians have struggled with. But let me encourage you. The hypocrite rarely asks it.

John writes here to such hearts.

So that we do not need to live in endless doubt. These are not abstract questions. They are deeply personal to us all.

[34 : 27] Perhaps some of you have come here this evening carrying the weight of your failures. You've stumbled again into sin.

And the accuser whispers. You can't really be a Christian. Maybe others have come with nagging doubts. Am I truly his?

What if I'm just deceiving myself? And still others come feeling weary in the Christian life. Wondering whether you can keep going.

And John speaks directly to these situations here in chapter 2. And he speaks with the tenderness of a spiritual father.

He reassures believers who are struggling. Notice he doesn't lower the standard. He still calls us to holiness.

[35 : 24] But he gives us the firm ground on which to stand. He shows us that the Christian life is not lived in sinless perfection. But in an ongoing dependence on Jesus Christ.

So in these opening verses. John gives us free anchors for our faith. Free truths to steady us when we stumble.

When we doubt. And when we feel weary. And these will form our free headings. For looking at our passage this evening. We're going to look at Jesus our advocate.

Christ defends us when we sin. We're going to look at the topic of assurance. Obedience shows we truly know him.

And we're going to look at our abiding. We are called to abide in him. We are called to walk as Jesus walked. So this is John's message to a church unsettled by false claims.

[36 : 33] But it's also God's word for tonight. Wherever you are in your walk with Christ. Here is solid ground. Christ our advocate.

Our assurance. And our abiding. So firstly we'll look at Christ our advocate. Let's hear again those verses.

Verse 1 and 2. My little children. These things write I unto you. That ye sin not. And if any man sin. We have an advocate with the Father.

Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins. And not for ours only. But also for the sins of the whole world.

John's words carry both tenderness and authority. He begins, My little children.

- [37 : 33] A family voice. Full of love and care. He writes not to discourage. But to steady believers. And what is John's aim?
- That ye not sin. The Christian life is not careless about sin. Grace does not give license. God is light. And those who walk with him. Must walk in holiness. John will not lower his standard. Sin is serious.
- Yet he also knows the reality. When he says, And if any man sin. Notice he doesn't say, If unbelievers sin.
- But if any man. Any Christian. John has already told us in chapter 1. If we say we have no sin. We deceive ourselves.
- [38 : 38] Even those who walk in the light. Will stumble. So what then? Are we left in hopelessness? Are we left hopeless when we fall?
- No. For here is comfort. We have an advocate with the Father. Jesus Christ the righteous. The word advocate is a courtroom word.
- Picture the scene. God the Father. The judge of all the earth. Sits in holiness. The charges are read. And they are true.
- Our sins are real. Our consciousness. Our consciousness. Condemn us. And Satan the accuser. Points his finger.
- Left to ourselves. The verdict is certain. Guilty. Think for a moment what this means.
- [39 : 43] In the ordinary Christian life. When you pray after sinning. You are not approaching a father. Who rolls his eyes at you. Or sighs in frustration.
- You are approaching the father. With Christ himself beside you. Speaking on your behalf. Your prayers. Faltering and weak as they may be.
- Are taken up by the advocate. Who never fails. This is why the writer of the Hebrews says. We can come boldly. Unto the throne of grace.
- Boldness. Does not come from a track record. But from our advocate. But John says. We have an advocate.
- Not that we hope for one. Not that we once had one. But we have. Right now. In this very moment. Jesus Christ.
- [40 : 43] Stands before the father. On behalf of his people. And who is he? Well the passage tells us. Jesus Christ. The righteous. He is the righteous one.
- He has no sin of his own. His obedience. Was flawless. His righteousness. Is perfect. Our defense. Is not built on our records.
- It's built on his. But his advocacy. Rest not only. On who he is. But on what he has done.
- As the passage says. And he is the propitiation. For our sins. That word propitiation. Takes us back. To the old testament. To the mercy seat.
- Of the tabernacle. In Leviticus 16. On the day of atonement. The blood of the sacrifice. Was sprinkled upon the mercy seat. And it was sprinkled upon the mercy seat.
- [41 : 44] To turn aside. God's wrath. That blood. Covered the sins. Of the people. But all of that.
- Was pointing forward. Christ is not only. The priest who intercedes. But also the sacrifice. Whose blood. Makes atonement.
- As Paul says. In Romans 3. Whom God. Set forth. To be. A propitiation. Through faith. In his blood. On the cross.
- He bore the wrath. That was ours. Justice. Was satisfied. The punishment. Fell upon him. So when Christ.

Stands as our advocate. Before the father. He does not beg. For leniency. As if the judge. Must overlook. Sin. He pleads.

[42 : 41] On the basis. Of justice. Justice. That he is already. Satisfied. At Calvary. He points. To his own. Finished work.

And says. Father. Their debt. Is paid. And John adds. Not for ours only.

But also. For the sins. Of the whole world. The sacrifice. Of Christ. Is sufficient. For all. It's not limited. To one people.

Or one nation. As Isaiah. Forsaw. It is a light. That. Thou shouldest. Be. My servant. To raise up. The tribes. Of Jacob. I will also.

Give thee. For a light. To the Gentiles. That thou mayest. Be my salvation. Unto the ends. Of the earth. The gospel.

[43 : 35] Is as wide. As the world. All who believe. From every tribe. Tongue. And nation. Find in Christ. A perfect. Advocate.

So what does that mean. For us. First. Do not despair. When you sin. When you stumble. Satan will whisper.

There is no way back for you. But John says here. We. Have an advocate. Your hope is. Not in. What you can say.

In your own defense. But in what Christ. Has already done for you. You. So do not despair. When you sin.

But secondly. Do not take sin lightly. If Christ had to suffer wrath. As our propitiation. How can we treat sin.

[44 : 34] As if it were small. John writes. That you sin not. God. This grace. Calls us. To holiness. And thirdly.

Rest in Christ's righteousness. Your plea before the father. Isn't. I tried my best. It is. Christ lived. And died.

For me. He is your righteousness. He. Is your advocate. So here again. These words of comfort. We have an advocate.

With the father. Jesus Christ. The righteous. And he. Is the propitiation. For our sins. That. Is the solid ground.

Of a Christian life. Christ. Is our advocate. Let's look now. At verses. Three to five.

[45 : 34] Where we read. And hereby. We do know. That we know him. And if. If. We keep. His commandments. He that say.

If I know him. And keep. If not his commandments. Is a liar. And the truth. Is not in him. But who so. Keepeth his word. In him. Verily. Is the love of God.

Perfected. Hereby. Know we. That we. Are in him. If our first comfort. Is that Christ. Is our advocate. Here.

John gives us. The second. Christ. Also. Gives us. Assurance. Not a vague hope. Not a wishful thought.

But the solid ground. That we. We may know. That we know him. That we may know. That we know him. That phrase.

[46 : 33] Is worth pausing on. John is not content. For Christians. To remain. In doubt. And uncertainty. The Lord.

Doesn't want his people. To live. Their whole life. Saying. I hope I am his. But I cannot be sure. This is a letter. Written.

To troubled believers. And John's aim. Is not to unsettle. But to steady them. Yes. He is realistic. About sin.

Yes. He calls us. To obedience. But he writes. With this pastoral purpose. That God's people. Might be able to live. With confidence.

In Christ. And not. With endless doubt. How then. Do we know. Well. John's answer. Is plain.

[47 : 29] If we keep. His commandments. Now. We must be clear. John is not teaching. Salvation by works. Obedience.

Does not earn us. A place. In God's family. But obedience. Is the evidence. That we already. Belong to him. To know God.

Truly. Is to be changed. By him. When the spirit of God. Writes his law. In our hearts. As it says. In Jeremiah. Then obedience.

Is no longer. Just an external duty. But an inward. Desire. I will put. My law. In their inward. In their. In their. In their. In their.

Hearts. This is what. John is describing. And that is why. He draws the contrast. So starkly. In verse 4.

[48 : 26] He that. See if I know him. And keepeth not. His commandments. Is a liar. And the truth. Is not in him. It is possible.

To make a false claim. It is possible. To say. I know God. And yet. Live. As though his word. Carries no weight. In our lives.

And that kind of profession. Is hollow. Isaiah condemned Israel. For this very thing. This people draw near me. With their mouth. And with their lips.

To honour me. But have removed. Their heart. Far from me. John's words. Are sharp. Because he wants. No one. To rest.

On empty words. But at the same time. We can't miss. The encouragement. Of verse 5. But who so keepeth his word. In him. Berily.

[49 : 21] Is the love of God. Perfected. In other words. When a person. Treasures God's word. When they seek. To shape. Their life by it.

However imperfectly. That is the evidence. That God's love. Is truly. At work in them. His love.

Is perfected. Not meaning. That they are perfect. But that God's love. Has reached its goal. It has produced. Obedience.

From the heart. That. Now let me speak. To our own tradition. Here in the free church. Church. It's no secret.

That there are many. Among us. Who attend worship. Faithfully. Year after year. But stop short. Of professing faith. Sometimes. They are. They are. Sometimes.

[50 : 17] Sometimes. This is because. They fear. Being hypocrites. Sometimes. It's because. They feel. They're not good enough. And sometimes. It's because. They're waiting. Waiting.

Waiting for some kind of. Overwhelming. Experience. That will give them. Certainty. And so. They wait. And year after year. Always attending.

Always listening. But never resting. In Christ. Friends. John's words. Are meant to help.

Precisely. In that situation. Assurance. Does not come. By waiting. Endlessly. For a sudden. Moment of light. Assurance.

Jesus grows. As we look. Honestly. At our lives. And we see. The evidence. Of God's work. Do you love. His words.

- [51 : 12] Do you grieve. Over your sin. Do you seek. To walk. In his ways. These desires. Are not natural.
- To the human heart. They are signs. That the spirit. Is working. And here. Is where. The fellowship. Of the church.
- Is such a gift. Sometimes. We are the worst. Judges. Of our own condition. We either. Excuse. Too much.
- Or perhaps. More commonly. We condemn. Ourselves. Too harshly. But others. Can see. What we do not. Elders.
- Who have walked. With you. Friends. Who know your life. Fellow believers. Who observe. Your manner. They cannot.
- [52 : 06] Testify to you. That I see. God's grace. In you. That shouldn't. Be ignored. If trusted.
- Christians. Tell you. That they see. The fruit. Of God's work. In your life. Don't. Dismiss. That. As empty. Flat. Vain. It may be.
- That the Lord's. That may be. The Lord's. Own means. Of giving you. The assurance. That you are seeking. John's point.
- Is not. That assurance. John's point. Is that assurance. Is not found. In perfection. But it is found. In direction. None of us.
- Keep his commandments. Without stumbling. But when the heart. Is turned. Towards obedience. When the word. Of God. Matters.
- [53 : 00] When sin. Becomes a grief. Rather than a delight. Then we can say. With John. Hereby. We do know. That we know him. This is like.
- Walking up a hill. On a misty day. Sometimes you go out. And the fog. Is so thick. That you cannot see. The top. And you may even doubt. That you are on the wrong path. That you are on the right path.
- But if you stop. And you look back. You can see the trail. That you have already covered. That backward glance. Assures you.
- That you are indeed. On the right track. In the same way. Assurance grows. When we look back. And see. And see.
- How God has changed us. The old sins. We once loved. Now grieve us. The word of God. Which was once dry. Now draws us.
- [53 : 59] And love for his people. Now takes root. Where once. There was indifference. These are the signs. Of his spirit's work.
- And they give us confidence. That we are his. So let me press this gently. If you are one of those.
- Who sits under the word. Week by week. Perhaps for decades. But you have held back. From professing Christ. Because you feel unworthy. Or unsure.
- John is calling you. To not. To despair. But to examine yourself. Honestly. Look at your life. Consider what others have seen.
- And above all. Ask this. Do I desire. To keep his word. If so. Then that. Is the fruit of God's love.
- [54 : 59] At work in you. The devil. Would have you live. In uncertainty. Forever. Christ.
- Would have you live. In the assurance. Of his grace. Don't confuse humility. With unbelief. True humility.
- Receives. What Christ has done. And true assurance. Is found. Not in saying. I am good enough. But in saying. Christ. Is my advocate.

And I see his word. Shaping. My life. God. So. John. Give us assurance. Hereby. We do know.

That we know him. If we keep. His commandments. Our advocate. Gives us confidence. Before the father. Our obedience. Gives us confidence.

[55 : 55] In ourselves. Now. now John takes it further if we say we abide in him then our whole walk must reflect his we must walk as he walks and that is our third heading our abiding we read again in verses 5 and 6 hereby know we that are in him he that sayeth he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk even as he walked here John is not simply speaking about outward obedience but about union about being in him to be a Christian is not merely to admire Christ or to follow his teachings at a distance it is to be joined in him to share his life

Jesus himself uses that language in John 15 abide in me and I in you as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine no more can ye except ye abide in him John takes that picture and says if you claim to abide in Christ then your life will show it and what will it show he ought himself also so to walk even as he walked this is perhaps both the simplest and most searching test the Christian life is a walk a daily step by step a daily step by step in Christ again not sinless perfection for John has already told us no man may say that he is without sin but the direction of life is Christ shaped his obedience to the Father his humility his self-giving love these mark the road we are to walk think of how scripture describes his path in Psalm 40 and 8 these verses are fulfilled in him it says

I delight to do thy will O my God yea thy law is within my heart that was his walk delighting in the Father's will Isaiah 53 in verse 3 portrays him as a man of sorrows humble and rejected yet steadfast in his calling Paul sums it up when he writes walk in life as Christ also has loved sorry walk in love as Christ also has loved us and has given himself for us to abide in Christ is to have his law written upon our hearts his humility shaping our spirit his love moving and directing our hands and feet this is both a challenge and a comfort a challenge because it will it will not do to make claims of being in Christ while our lives bear no resemblance to it if we abide in him likeness must appear but it's also a comfort because the one who calls us to walk as he walked is the very one who abides in us by his spirit the promise of Ezekiel comes to life a new heart also will I give you a new spirit will I put within you and cause you to walk in my statutes we're not left to copy

Christ in our own strength but we are enabled by his indwelling presence so when John says we ought to walk as he walked he's not driving us into despair but he's trying to draw us into dependence upon Christ our daily walk halting though it may be is lived in union with Christ and every step that shows his likeness every choice of obedience every act of love every posture of humility is evidence that we truly abide in him here then is the test and the encouragement are you walking as he walks not perfectly but truly do you see however faintly the footprints of Jesus in your own life if so it's because his spirit is at work in you and his abiding presence is real the advocate who pleads for you before the father the Lord who assures you through obedience is the same

Christ who abides in you and shapes your walk and he will not cease his work until the day when we are all made like him and walk with him in glory abiding is not about dramatic moments but about steady presence think of a marriage what proves love is not only the wedding devours but the daily acts of kindness of patience and of sacrifice that follow in the same way our union with Christ shows itself in ordinary daily choices opening the Bible when we are tired offering forgiveness when we are wronged serving when it costs us these small steps of faith are not wasted they are footprints of Christ in our lives so as we draw to a close let us remember what John has shown us in these verses he began with a word of comfort if any man sin we have an advocate with the

[63 : 05] Father Jesus Christ the righteous that is our first anchor we do not stand alone when we fail the righteous one stands for us and his blood has already satisfied the judgment of God when conscience condemn when the accuser whispers when we stumble yet again our hope is not in ourselves but in Christ our advocate from there John moved to assurance hereby we do know that we know him if we keep his commandments the evidence that we belong to God is not in our words only but in obedience that is our second anchor true knowledge of God bears fruit in keeping his word and though we stumble there is a new desire to walk in his ways a new love for his law and a new grief when we fall short these are the marks of the spirit's work within us and then John raises that I still hire he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk even as he ought and that is our third anchor the

Christian life is nothing less than a Christ shaped walk to abide in him is to have his life in us so that obedience humility and love begin to mark our steps not perfection but direction not a flawless record but a living likeness so here in just six verses John has steadied us with a gospel that is both realistic and reassuring realistic because it takes sin seriously and calls us to holiness but reassuring because it tells us that Christ is our advocate that his love is perfected in our obedience and that his spirit abides in us to make us walk as he has walked let me leave you with this encouragement

Christian life may feel fragile but the anchors John gives us in this passage are immovable our advocate will never lose a case our assurance is grounded in the work of God himself and our abiding is sustained not by our grip on Christ but by his grip on us you may stumble doubt or grow weedy but Christ does not stumble Christ does not doubt and Christ does not grow weedy so I ask you as we close do you know this advocate do you rest in his righteousness rather than your own do you find assurance not in your claims but in a growing desire to keep his word do you abide in him and is your walk however faltering beginning to resemble his if not come to him even tonight confess your sin trust your advocate and abide in him for the one who speaks for you before the father who assures you in obedience will also keep abiding keep you abiding in him until the day you see him face to face him let's just close with a word of prayer before we sing again our gracious

God and father we thank you for the word that we have heard this evening we praise you for the Lord Jesus Christ we thank you that he is our advocate with you we thank you that he has made the atoning sacrifice for our sins we thank you that in him there is pardon and there is peace and there is assurance help us Lord not only to be hearers of the word but doers also grant us grace to keep your commandments and by your spirit enable us to walk as Jesus walked in humility in love and in holiness father send us from this place with renewed faith with deeper love for Christ and a desire to live for your glory in all that we do keep us in your care through the week ahead and bring us together again with hearts full of praise and we ask all this in the name of our

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Amen we're going to close now saying the very familiar words of encouragement that we read of in Psalm 23 Psalm 23 The Lord's my shepherd I shall not want He makes me to lie in pastures green he leadeth me the quiet waters by my soul he doth restore again and me to walk doth make within the path of righteousness e'en for his own main sake may we go forward walking the path that Christ has made for us Psalm 23 3 The Lord's my shepherd I not want

[69 : 41] He makes me come to lie in pastures green he lead me the quiet waters by my soul he doth restore again and me to walk doth make!

within the path of righteousness he for his own make sake!

Yea, though I walk in death's dark veil yet will I fear none ill for God with me and I rose and thou help me come for still my table love hath furnished!

in presence of my souls my hand of dust!

with oil and rise and rike up home and close goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me and in stars forever more my dwelling place shall be Let's close with the benediction may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the

[72 : 48] Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more Amen Thank you.