

Sermon: We Know that We Know Him

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 04 October 2020

Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[illegible]

No, we're looking at the book of 1 John, which is all about strengthening our confidence in the faith and strengthening our confidence in Christ.

There are times we go through seasons in life where we question, we have doubts, and we deal with those kinds of things. And so we can come back to books like 1 John, which help us either be confident or convicted when it comes to our faith in Jesus Christ.

We are now in 1 John 2, and we're going to pick up in verse 3. 1 John 2 and verse 3. John is writing here under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

And he writes, And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says, I know him, but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

[1 : 59] But whoever keeps his word in him, truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him. Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

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.

At the same time, it is a new commandment that I'm writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

Whoever says he's 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. 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.

This is God's word. Pray with me and for me now, and let's ask God to teach us. Father, we thank you for this opportunity today to be in your word. Thank you for the book of 1 John and what you've already been teaching us and strengthening our faith.

[3 : 16] I pray once again that you would do that for us today. Holy Spirit, come and guide us. The Spirit of truth, would you guide us into the truth today?

Help us see what our eyes cannot see. And we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. Signs point to yes.

That's the answer I received, and I liked it. I was, I'm going to guess, around elementary or middle school age, and I had a certain crush on a certain girl, and I wanted to know whether or not she was interested in me, whether or not she liked me in return.

And so I decided that I would consult a very trusted and authoritarian source, and so I did to try to find out if she liked me.

Now, that trusted source was not one of her friends. It was not one of her parents. It was not even her.

[4 : 26] That source that I looked to for that answer was the magic eight ball. The magic eight ball. You remember the magic eight ball, right?

You would ask it a question, you know, like, will I get a bike for Christmas? Or will the Vikings actually win a game this season?

Or, you know, does she like me? You would ask the eight ball some kind of question like that, and then you would shake it up, and you'd turn it over, and you'd look at the answer that it would give you.

And it would usually give you something generic like this, concentrate and ask again. Or, cannot predict now.

Or, better not tell you. And you know what, you'd look at that and you'd be like, what kind of answer is that? So what would you do? You know what you would do.

[5 : 26] You would shake it up again. And you would keep shaking it up until you got a more confident answer.

Like, it is decidedly so. Or, you may rely on it. Or, my favorite, signs point to yes.

Now that's more like it. That's more confident. You know, faith family, you have probably not consulted the magic eight ball for confidence in your life, but make no mistake about it, you have a magic eight ball in your life.

You may not have consulted one for confidence in your life, but you have one in your life. What I mean is, everybody watching this today has something or someone that you look to in your life or you consult in your life to give you a sense of confidence.

Everybody does that. Now for some of you, it may be that you consult a financial advisor so that you can feel confident that you have enough.

[6 : 53] You may consult a doctor so that you can feel confident that you will recover. You may consult another parent, another mom or dad, to feel confident that your child is normal.

You might even go to a pastor or some kind of religious authority to give you confidence in the midst of your crisis. But make no mistake about it, faith family, every one of us is looking for signs that point to yes.

But what about when it comes to your faith? What about when it comes to your salvation? What about when it comes to your eternity?

Are you going to spend eternity with God? Are you going to go to heaven or hell? What about issues like this?

Where do we go for confidence with those questions? Where do we go to get the signs that point to yes?

[8 : 08] Well, the good news is, faith family, we have something far more authoritative than the magic eight ball. We have the Word of God to give us the confidence, the direction we need to be assured in our faith.

And that is exactly what the Apostle John is doing in the passage that we just read. He is giving these believers some signs that point to yes.

Now you'll remember, as we've talked about each week, how these Christians are struggling in their confidence. Many of them are doubting in their faith. They've been influenced by a group known as the Gnostics.

The Gnostics, among other things, have been teaching things like, God did not come in the flesh. Jesus was not physically and bodily resurrected from the dead.

That's because the Gnostics believe that the flesh, the body, was evil and only the spirit was good. And so some of these believers, because of the Gnostic influence, are doubting.

[9 : 24] And not only are they doubting, but they're slipping into disobedience. You'll notice this on the screen. You see, if the body doesn't matter, then it doesn't matter what you do with your body.

That's what the Gnostics were teaching. Since the body doesn't matter, it doesn't matter what you do with your body. And so because of this teaching, some of these believers in Jesus Christ were doubting the true faith and slipping into disobedience in their behavior.

And so John writes this to strengthen them and build up their confidence in Christ. It's why in chapter one, he's been reminding them, you know who Jesus is.

You know who Jesus is. Don't doubt him. And now what he gives in chapter two are, I believe, four signs of genuine faith.

Four signs that point to yes as a way of reminding them and encouraging them in the true faith. Here are the four signs that we're going to unpack today.

[10 : 39] Sign number one is an internal or a personal sign. Sign number two is a behavioral sign. Sign number three is a relational sign.

And then lastly, a doctrinal or theological sign. Let's unpack these one by one as they are signs that point to yes.

Verse three, John writes here, and by this we know that we have come to know him.

Now let's stop right there for a moment and notice just a few things. First of all, notice how John is saying, you can know.

You can know that you know God. That is really encouraging. That you can actually be assured.

[11 : 42] That you can actually have confidence that you know God. Listen, faith family, true salvation, true fellowship with God is not a, well, I hope so.

It's not a, well, I guess I'll find out in the end if I know God or if I belong to God. Salvation is not like being a contestant on The Price is Right where you just kind of sit around hoping that maybe your name will be called so that you can participate.

No, no, no, no, no, no. John is saying that's not the case whatsoever. As a Christian, you can have full and complete assurance that you know God.

As the old hymn says, blessed assurance, Jesus is mine. That's confidence.

And that's the kind of confidence that John wants these believers to have. It's the kind of confidence he wants you to have. So how do we have that? What are these signs that give us this assurance?

[12 : 54] Well, the first sign is a personal or internal assurance. It's a personal thing. Now you may be asking, well, where do you get this personal aspect here in the text?

Do you just kind of, you know, make this stuff up as you go? Well, no, there's a reason that I'm pointing this out and it's from the word no. In the Greek, it's the word ginosko, ginosko, which is the Greek word for no.

The Old Testament equivalent is yada, the Old Testament Hebrew for the word no. And this word, no, ginosko, or yada, yada is a personal, intimate word.

It's not just an awareness of or an intellectual knowledge about. It's intimate. It's personal. Let me give you a few examples.

First from the Old Testament, Genesis 4, verse 1. Genesis 4, verse 1 says, Now Adam knew yada, knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord.

[14 : 14] Let me give you another example. Very similar to that one, but in the New Testament, Matthew 1, verse 24. Matthew 1, verse 24. Now, when Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.

He took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son and called his name Jesus.

Let me give you one more example in the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew 7, verse 21. Matthew 7, verse 21. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

On that day, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do many mighty works in your name? And then will I declare to them, I never knew you.

depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. You see, faith family, clearly those examples are not talking about an intellectual awareness.

[15 : 27] The text is not saying, you know, Adam wasn't even aware of Eve or Adam all of a sudden became aware of her and she bore a son.

No, that's not what it's saying at all. The text isn't saying that Joseph didn't even know who Mary was until after Jesus was born or Jesus is going to turn to them and say, depart from me, I didn't even know you existed.

Of course not. In each of those examples, it's personal. It's a personal, intimate knowing. In the case of Adam and Eve and Joseph and Mary, it's a sexual and intimate knowing of one another.

Notice this on the screen. Knowing God is not intellectual, it's relational. Knowing God is not just intellectual, it's relational, it's personal, it's intimate, it's a real knowing of one another.

For example, let's say that you're working with somebody at a job. You've got a co-worker, you've worked with them for several years and your conversation has really never gone beyond the weather or who's going to win the game that weekend or, you know, just office stuff.

[16 : 53] But then one day, that co-worker says, I really would like to talk to you and you go off into the other room and all of a sudden, that co-worker of yours just begins to pour their life out on the table and you begin to talk about deep things and life things and things that go beyond just the surface.

You walk out of that conversation saying something like this, I feel like for the first time, I know them. I feel like, because of that conversation, I got to know them.

In other words, your knowledge of them went from just, I work with them to I actually know who they are. It became personal.

It became intimate. So when you ask, Pastor, how do I know that I know God? Well, the answer here is, have you had an internal, intimate experience with God?

Not do you know about Him? Not do you go to church? Not do you have knowledge of the Bible? But like Adam with Eve, like Joseph with Mary, have you gone past just an awareness that God exists to a personal penetration, if you will, of God in your life?

[18 : 22] Has that happened? Because if it has, then you know. You know God.

Now, keep in mind, I think this is a very important warning, so if you've zoned out, zoned back in. Keep in mind that just as with any relationship, you go through seasons of intimacy.

In other words, just because you don't feel intimate with God right now, just because you don't feel like God is close or things are as personal as they've been before, does not mean you're not a Christian.

Are you hearing me? That does not mean that you're not a Christian. I mean, after all, the Psalms are full of people that didn't always feel God's personal presence, that intimate presence.

Charles Spurgeon, for instance, once said, quote, I think when a man says, I never doubt, it's time to doubt him. To say, poor soul, I'm afraid you're not on the road at all.

[19 : 26] For if you were, you would see so many things in yourself and so many glories in Christ that you would be so ashamed of yourself as to say, it's too good to be true.

John Calvin, for instance, wrote, quote, surely while we teach, listen to this, surely while we teach that faith ought to be certain and assured, that's what John is doing in 1 John, we cannot imagine any certainty that is not mixed with doubt or any assurance that is not assailed by anxiety.

For unbelief is so deeply rooted in our hearts and we are so inclined to it that not without hard struggle is each one able to persuade himself of what all confess with the mouth, namely, God is faithful.

So here's the point. There are going to be seasons where you may not feel intimate with God. There may be seasons where God doesn't feel personally close. But the question is, have you ever felt that?

Have you ever experienced that? Because if so, then you know. If so, then you know.

[20 : 48] Signs point to yes. That first sign is personal. Notice the second sign that John gives us here beginning in verse 4.

John says this, 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. Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. Here's the second sign.

It's not just a personal sign. It's a behavioral sign. A behavioral sign. John moves here now from the internal that personal knowing gnosis to an external sign.

That is how we live. How we walk. And that makes sense. Because notice this, if you're changed at the root, you'll see change in the fruit.

[21 : 53] Now that may seem cheesy or whatever, but hey, it rhymes. You'll remember it. If there's been a change at the root, that is, you know him personally, there'll be change in the fruit. So one of the external signs is growth in obedience.

You will walk in his ways. You will conform to his character. You will grow in godliness. There may be a pattern where you go from being a really angry person to gaining victory over that anger.

Maybe it's you grow in contentment or you become less self-centered or you become more generous or you begin to experience a deeper level of peace.

But whatever that may be for you, you see growth in godliness as you walk with Jesus. And that godliness is a sign that points to yes.

It's a sign of assurance that you know God. Now two weeks ago we talked about the gospel balance that John addresses here.

[23 : 07] In fact, go back to chapter 2 in verse 1. Chapter 2 verse 1. He says, 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 the righteous. John's balance here, the gospel balance, is simply this.

If you say, I'm going to go do whatever I want. I'm going to do whatever I want. Well, John's going to come in and say, how can you say you know the light and walk in darkness?

And then if you say, oh, I don't have any darkness at all. I always get it right. I don't have any issues. I'm not struggling with anything. I don't commit any sin.

John's going to come in and say, liar. It's, there's a balance here between, I don't want to walk in darkness because I know the light.

[24 : 05] At the same time, I know that there is darkness in my life. And that's the gospel balance here. In other words, notice this on the screen.

Even though we know we will sin, we make it our aim to obey our Savior. That'll preach. Even though we know we will sin, John is clear about that.

We make it our aim to obey the Savior. Think of it this way. Even though you know there will be losses, the athlete still wants to win every game.

Even though life will at times be out of tune, the musician still wants to hit every note. Even though life is often out of balance, the accountant still tries to balance every penny.

In the same way, even though there will be times of sin, and times of walking in darkness, whether that's big or small, a Christian wants to obey every command.

[25 : 18] Do you see? There's a behavioral sign. We see a growth in our desire to obey and we see a growth in our obedience.

Even though we will still sin. Faith family, do you desire obedience?

Do you desire obedience? If so, then you know. If so, then you know.

Signs point to yes. The first sign is personal. The second sign is behavioral. And now notice the third sign that John gives in this passage.

Look at verse 7. Chapter 2, verse 7. Beloved, I'm writing to you no new commandment but an old commandment that you had from the beginning.

[26 : 18] The old commandment is the word that you have heard. At the same time, it's a new commandment that I'm writing to you which is true in him and in you because the darkness is passing away.

And the true light is already shining. Whoever says he's 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 of stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness and does not know where he's going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Here's the third sign that points to yes. And that is the relational sign. First is personal. Second is behavioral. And now it is relational.

Now I'm not going to say a whole lot about this now. And the reason that's the case is because when we get into chapter 3 John is going to take this topic of loving your brother, hating your brother, light and darkness, and he's going to expand on that even more.

So we're going to come back to this down the road is the point. But let me just say a few things. First of all, this is clearly an extension of the previous point.

[27 : 26] That is, the previous point was behavioral. You obey the commands that Christ has given you. Well, what was one of those commands? Love.

And so the relational sign is in many ways an outworking of or an extension of the behavioral sign that John has already addressed.

And why would John need to mention this? Why would John need to remind these believers to love one another, to love your fellow believer in Christ?

Well, let me break it down this way. The Gnostics were clearly influencing some of these believers based on their teaching.

They were doubting and they were disobeying. They were doubting the true faith because of the false teaching of the Gnostics and they were disobeying because of the outworking and the implication of that false teaching.

[28 : 31] Well, let me ask you this question. If you've zoned out, zone right back in. How many of you have ever noticed that sometimes the meanest people toward struggling Christians are other Christians?

Christians, how many of you have ever noticed that sometimes the meanest people towards struggling Christians are other Christians?

Christians, so they say, that lack any compassion. Christians, so they say, that look down their doctrinal noses without having any love.

Christians, so they say, that think they are the final judge and jury over your life. Oh, faith family, it has happened far too many times and it is sad.

Well, that's what's happening here. It's exactly what's happening here. I can't believe you're doing that. I can't believe you're struggling with that.

[29 : 45] I can't believe you're listening to those Gnostics and their false teaching and how could you let somebody like that influence you? And it's just beating them down, beating them down, beating them down.

It has been often said that many times Christians are the ones that shoot their wounded. And so that's happening. Not only do you have some Christians who are doubting and disobeying, but now you have the other group of Christians that are being unloving towards them.

And John writes to remind them of this. Look at it on the screen. That one of the signs you walk in the light is you walk in love.

One of the signs that you walk in the light is that you walk in love. Trust me, faith family, hypocrites are not those who have sinned.

Hypocrites are those who act like they have no sin. That's the hypocrite. Look at what he says in verse 9 again. Look at this. Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.

[31 : 05] Oh, faith family, there are people and there are churches who will say they are in the light and they will say things that sound spiritual and they will quote their Bible verses and yet their attitude and actions towards other Christians, towards struggling believers, does not reflect the love of Jesus.

Listen to me, according to the authority of God's word, they are not in the light, they walk in darkness.

That's a powerful word that John is writing to these believers. And I'm hoping that you're seeing the context here. He's writing things that are going to lift up the doubting and convict the arrogant, the prideful, the ones that are refusing to love, to remind them all where their salvation is ultimately found.

Now, what does John mean here just quickly with this whole old versus new? This command to love is an old commandment, it's a new commandment, is John contradicting himself here?

What is this? It's actually rather simple, at least to understand, not so much to apply, but it's simple to understand. Do you remember when Jesus is asked, what's the most important command that is in the Old Testament?

[32 : 31] And Jesus replies that you love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus summarizes the whole Old Testament law with those two commands, love God and love others.

You remember that, right? So, in one sense, the command to love goes back a really long time. It goes back to the Old Testament. It's what the law was all about, was to love God and to love your neighbor.

And in that sense, it's old. But in another sense, it's entirely new. And you say, well, how is that new? It's new because it's new in Christ.

It's new in Jesus. It's new in Jesus in that you're commanded to love. This is so important. Listen, you're commanded to love not based on a law but on the basis of a life.

You're commanded to love not on the basis of a law but on the basis of a life. Notice this on the screen. Christians are not commanded to love based on the law of God. We're commanded to love based on the life of Christ.

[33 : 45] That's radically different. Jesus said love not because the Old Testament says so. That's old. Jesus says love as I have loved you.

That's new. The command is old but in a sense it's new because it's new in Christ. Our motivation to love our brother to love our sister to love one another is not based on a law it's based on a life.

So faith family I ask you have you experienced the love of God to the point that you love others? You say I refuse to forgive that person.

Do you know how much you've been forgiven? You say I refuse to serve those kind of people. Do you realize how much you've been served? I'm not going to sacrifice my time or money for that.

Do you know how much Jesus has sacrificed for you? In other words you have a life not a law and that life if you're a professing believer has changed you and therefore one of the signs that assures you of your faith is the expression of love.

[35 : 07] Do you express love to others? If so then you know signs point to yes.

We have the personal sign we have the behavioral sign we have the relational sign and John gives us one more in verse 21 chapter 2 and verse 21 and we'll close with this John says 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 who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus this is the antichrist he who denies the father and the son no one who denies the son has the father whoever confesses the son has the father also and again we're going to we're going to get more into this in the weeks to come but here's the point and it's a very important one listen listen if you've zoned out zoned back in here it's it's a doctrinal sign or a theological sign you can have an internal personal experience and you can live externally in a way that follows the commands of

Jesus and you can express a love and a care and compassion for other people and still not be a Christian you can have all those things and still not be a Christian you see the final sign here and this is so important listen faith family is you must have a true confession of the real Jesus you're not a Christian if you don't know who Jesus is if you don't get Jesus right you're not right with God that's what John is saying if you don't get Christ right you don't have Christ or the father but if you get Christ right you have Christ and the father don't you see notice this on the screen salvation is more than right theology yes it's more than right theology but there is no salvation where there's wrong theology yes salvation is more than just getting your theology right a hundred percent but you don't get salvation if you get your theology wrong specifically as it relates to the person of

Jesus Christ if you ask me is salvation personal or theological my answer is yes yes it's theological you got to get Jesus right and it's personal it can't just be mere head knowledge it must penetrate your heart faith family a Christian is the one who confesses Jesus is the son of God Jesus is God in the flesh Jesus is fully God and fully man Jesus is the only way to the father Jesus is the mediator between God and man Jesus is the ultimate and final sacrifice for our sins Jesus died was buried and on the third day physically walked out of the grave Jesus ascended on high Jesus is our great high priest you have to get Jesus right if you're going to be right!

with God So, let me ask you do you confess Jesus as the Christ? If so, then you know.

[39 : 05] If so, then you know. Signs point to yes. Faith family, do you know that you know God?

Do you know? Do you really know that you know God? Because the Bible says you can know.

You can know blessed assurance Jesus is mine. You can know that you know that you know God. The signs are simply have you had a personal internal experience with God?

Do you want to obey his commands even though you know you fall short at times? Do you really love others based on the life of love you have seen in Jesus?

And do you confess Jesus as the Christ? If those things are true of you, you have every reason to be confident in your faith.

[40 : 21] God is God the signs most assuredly point to yes. Let's pray together. God, thank you for the time in your word today.

It is either a confidence builder or a conviction in our life. And that's a good thing. So Holy Spirit, speak to us.

I pray that we would know that we know God. But maybe through these signs it has been convicting for some that they do not know God.

These signs have exposed areas where they're not a Christian. Well, the good news today is that if they will confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in their heart that you raised Christ from the dead, they can be saved.

They can know that they know! God pray that you would do that work in our lives in Jesus name. Amen.

[41 : 24] Hey, thanks so much for worshiping with us online and being a part of Faith Family and our study in 1 John. If you need prayer or if there's a decision that you need to make for the Lord you would like to just talk to somebody shoot us an email here at Faith Family at For the Gospel Gatherings For the Gospel Gatherings at gmail.com Let us know how we can pray for you Let us know if there's a decision that you would like to make let us know if you'd like to speak to someone so that we might minister to you wherever you're at in your walk Thank you for worshiping with us today