Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Certainty of Christian Assurance, The Part 2
Scripture: 1 John 2:4-6
Code: 62-12

Let's return to 1 John chapter 2...1 John chapter 2. We're actually looking at a text that is verse 3 through verse 6, a very important text, one that deals with the issue...How do you know you're a Christian? Comparing the imposters, the false claimants to Christianity with the real thing.

The question of who is a Christian and who is not is a huge question...it's a huge question. If you ask the general public, the general population, they would define a Christian as anybody who believes in the Christian religion. Somebody with a little more insight might say anybody who believes in Jesus. And then it would narrow down as you talk to people who understand more about what the Bible teaches. It would seem that the question can be simply answered, who is a Christian?, the people who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the people who believe that He is God, that He is the Savior, who repent from their sin and ask Him to save them by grace through faith alone which He is able to do because He has paid the price for their sin on the cross and risen from the dead is affirmation of that. Anybody who believes that and comes before the Lord and asks for salvation is a Christian, anyone else is not. And on the surface it seems that simple.

The issue becomes difficult because the outward behavior of people can be hypocritical. Somebody may be acting like a Christian who isn't one. And then on the other hand, somebody who is one may for a time demonstrate a kind of behavior that would make one wonder if that were true. Furthermore, as remarkable as it sounds, people who actually are Christians may not be sure they are. And so what we're talking about in this discussion is not just how do you know whether somebody else is a real Christian, as opposed to an imposter or hypocrite or somebody who is deceived, but how do I know that I'm a Christian? By what criteria?

Well, for the most part in the Christian world that we live in, if you were baptized as an infant, if you were confirmed at the age of 12, if you were certainly baptized as an adult, if you made a public confession of faith in Christ, if you prayed a prayer, if you went forward, if you signed a card, if you say you're a Christian, that's all it takes. Scripture is very clear, however, that what happens in terms of a superficial moment in time that may look like belief may not in fact be the real thing. Jesus, you remember, gave a parable about soils and He said there were people who received the gospel and their hearts were like stony ground, rock bed somewhere down under the surface and the seed of the gospel went in and they responded and there was a reaction and a plant grew up, but it had no root because there was rock underneath and so the roots couldn't go down and find any water to survive and when the sun came out it scorched the plant and it died. Those are the people who receive the

gospel with joy but are very short lived and when there's any difficulty, any tribulation, any pressure, there's no life there. It becomes manifest in that situation. There were other people who received the gospel but they never really dealt with the love of riches and the love of sin in their lives which Jesus characterized as weeds and they choked out the life of that good seed. And there are people, even John says it in chapter 2 and verse 19, that went out from us, they were here for a while, they stayed for a while but eventually they went out but they were not really of us. If they had been of us they would have remained with us. But they went out in order that it might be shown that they are not all of us.

There are going to be people who have a brief response, people who have a bit of a more prolonged response, but in the end, under the pressure, under the deceitfulness of riches, under the cares of this world, under the influences of sin, they're going to leave. There are those people like Demas who actually stayed around long enough to follow Paul and be engaged in some ministry with Paul and eventually he left and Paul said he left because he loved the present world. And John says if you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you. So sometimes it's hard to tell who's a Christian. You might think someone is but given enough time and enough pressure and enough exposure to the things of the world, you're going to find out that they disappear. So it's not easy to tell on the part of other people. And in all honesty, even Christian people struggle to be assured of their salvation. There's an entire segment of the Christian world that struggles with that because they have been told you can lose your salvation. And you can go from being saved to being unsaved, from being headed to heaven to being headed to hell. You can go from having eternal life to then having eternal death. And the fear of that and how do you get to that place and when do you slide down and trip the hammer where you're now out of the saved zone is enough to frighten any thinking person. Many people are taught that. But even people who believe that salvation is forever sometimes struggle with whether or not they have that eternal salvation. As I pointed out last time, the matter of assurance is not a minor issue, it's a major issue. If you didn't get the message from last Sunday night, get it on tape and listen carefully to it. This is a major issue so that we can have that assurance in our own lives, as well as be able to help other people to know their true spiritual condition.

If you listen to the contemporary evangelical attitude, they would say anybody who prays a prayer and makes a commitment to Jesus Christ should just forget the issue of whether or not they're truly saved and just accept the fact that they are and enjoy their assurance. So people are told you're saved and if you don't think you are, you're doubting the Word of God and so they are then told that they should be assured, they then profess that assurance. It becomes embedded in their minds and it may well be a deception. The conscience is where you experience real assurance or you don't. Paul says in Romans 2, the conscience either accuses you or excuses you. It isn't what somebody says to you, it isn't because of some external act. It's what's going on in your heart that is the source of your assurance.

One of the things which you see in the world around us, the evangelical world around us, is a strong anti-reaction to this kind of teaching. If you in just the normal evangelical realm speak of the fact that many people who think they are Christians may well not be, that is a very unpopular message. Because...and I'll say it the way John Owens said it...there are many in the world who have an ungrounded persuasion of forgiveness. It is...he says...a carnal boldness. It is a real despising of the true gospel. And when conscience accuses them and when God through the conscience convicts them and exposes the fact that they're not true Christians, false assurance rushes to their rescue to exonerate them. That's why John Owens said there are none in the world that deal worse with God than people with a false assurance. They actually turn the grace of God into licentiousness. Let them profess what they will, they're unsaved. They need to know that and those who are truly saved want to know that and to be assured. Those who are not don't want that confrontation. Their false assurance rushes to their rescue.

In 2 Peter chapter 1 Peter talked about precious, magnificent promises. But he says it's really important that you make certain about His calling and choosing you. Make certain. How you going to make certain? Well, he says, look at your life, do you see diligence, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love? For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ if those things are in your life. But the one who lacks these is blind and short-sighted and can't really discern whether he's been purified from his former sins. So there is a way to take an inventory but you have to be honest about your life. You can't use false assurance to push away the confrontation, or to push away the conviction. Real assurance comes from an honest heart evaluation, then you can enjoy the real thing, not a false notion.

Now this matter of who is a Christian and assurance is, as I've been saying, the theme of this epistle, and we're dealing with a lot of foundational things and once we get this sort of laid down we'll see how John cycles through it in the rest of the epistle. It's important for us to know the foundation. And in the epistle he gives several tests by which you can know you're a true Christian. The doctrinal test is concerning Jesus Christ. Do you believe the truth about Jesus Christ? Another doctrinal test we found in chapter 1, do you recognize your true sinful condition and having you confessed your sin? Now we come to what is essentially a moral or behavioral test in chapter 2 verses 3 through 6. This is the behavioral test. You want to know whether you're a Christian? You start by asking yourself, do you believe the true gospel concerning Christ? Then you ask the second question, do you know and understand that you are a wretched sinner and you don't deny your sin, you confess your sin? And now comes a moral or behavioral test and this one is manifestly visible.

Let's look at verses 3 through 6. "And by this we know that we have come to know Him." How do we know? "If we keep His commandments. The one who says I have come to know Him and doesn't keep His commandments is a liar, the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His Word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him. The one who says he

abides in Him, ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked."

Now with those words John sums up this very important behavioral test. First the test is stated...the test is stated in verse 3, "By this we know we've come to know Him if we keep His commandments...if we keep His commandments." Last time I told you there are three elements to assurance. There is an element of assurance in saving faith itself. Then there is the internal witness of the Holy Spirit who witnesses with us that we are the children of God. But here the third and most important verification of your salvation is manifest in your life by obedience...by obedience.

And we could leave it at that and say it's only a question of obedience. But I'm not about to do that because I want you to get a grip on what we're talking about when we talk about this obedience. It's a simple statement. We know that we've come to know Him if we keep His commandments. If we don't keep His commandments, then we know we haven't come to know Him, right?

Now let's talk about the word *keep*. It stresses the idea of observant, watchful obedience. Actually the word can mean to guard. The idea of guarding His commandments. It's not just the idea that you obey in the most marginal way, you know, just barely above the line beyond disobedience. It's not some desire not to sin, to avoid sin and so you do this. But rather it is this positive attitude toward guarding the commandments, observing that obedience because you revere the commandments. In fact, the Greek scholar Alford(???) says in his lexicon the word means to guard or watch or keep as in the case of some precious thing. That's important. It's in the present subjunctive which means it's continual. There's a continual sense in which you exercise a guardianship of the commandments because you consider them precious. It's the habitual moment-by-moment, day-by-day safeguarding of the Word. And therefore it's an attitude of the spirit rather than an act of letter or law. And by the way, the word *commandments*here is not *nomos*, it's not the word for *law*, it's *entole*which is a word looking at an order or an assignment or a precept or a command. And it's not talking about the Law, the Old Testament, it's not talking about the Law of Moses, it's talking about the commandments, the precepts, the orders of Christ. In the great commission Jesus said, "You go out and you preach the gospel, and you baptize and you teach them to observe all things whatsoever Moses has commanded," is that what it says? No, "All things whatsoever I have commanded you." It is the precepts of Christ that are in view here rather than the Law of Moses so that this is not an affirmation of ceremonialism or Judaism. We know, of course, that the precepts, the moral precepts, the spiritual precepts that Christ taught would be consistent with the moral and spiritual law of Moses, but it is the precepts of Christ that are in view. John uses the word *nomos*, the word for Law, fifteen times in his gospel referring to the Law of Moses. He uses the word *entole*at least 14 times referring to the precepts of Christ.

How do you know you're a Christian? Because there is a consistent guardianship of what Jesus taught. There's a consistent devotion to the mind of Christ. First Corinthians 2:16, a consuming desire that Christ's Word be honored, a determination that Christ's Word be guarded not only in my heart but

in my conduct. That determination is the continuing experiential verification that a person has truly come to the knowledge of God and Christ. Very different from approaching this thing legalistically saying, "Well, I prayed a prayer and I'm a Christian and I go to church and, you know, I just hope it gets over quick, I don't like long sermons. Not about to come to this church, I'm not going to listen to somebody drone on and on about things. You know, just give me a twenty-minute sermon, a Starbucks and I'm good for the week. I really don't want to get too deep with this deal, I don't want to get carried away, I don't want to be intruding in my life. Just tell me, you know, how I can make more money and tell me how I can be a better leader and a few tidbits about my marriage and I'm good." That's very different from what we're seeing here in this text.

When Jesus Christ is truly Lord and Savior, His authority is gladly embraced. His authority becomes precious. And if He is truly loved there is this guardianship of His truth and His precepts that causes us to love it in our hearts and long to manifest it in our lives. This is the real deal. The knowledge of God that comes by the gospel is not ineffectual, it is not inoperative. It is effectual and operative and obedience flows out of it. Not a legalistic obedience, not a superficial obedience, but an obedience from the heart.

"Well," you say, "who can keep all His commandments to satisfy Him?" Well all His people, all His true people. All of us who are true believers, listen to this, can keep His commandments to His satisfaction. He knows that we are incapable of perfection. That's not what He expects. We can keep His commandments to such a degree that He is satisfied and grants us by the Spirit that assurance that helps us know that we're His. If you just simply characterize in the broad brush the difference between non-believers and believers, I suppose most people would say, "Well the non-believers don't believe in Jesus Christ and the believers do." That's not it. There are plenty, the world is full of non-believers, that is non-converted, unsaved people who do believe in Jesus. You have to go somewhere else. It's just not a matter of the decision.

In Ephesians 2:2 the unregenerate are called "children of disobedience," Ephesians 2:2. The unregenerate are called children of disobedience. That is it's as if they inherited disobedience as their character from the parents. They literally are the offspring whose defining characteristic is disobedience. On the other hand, 1 Peter 1:14 says the regenerate are obedient children...obedient children. This is characteristic of true believers.

Now you say, "Okay, we are obedient children, but you mean we're obedient enough so that the Lord is satisfied with our obedience and the Spirit of God then can sort of vouch safe to us the reality of our salvation and witness with our spirit that we are the children of God?" That's right. But in order to come to that understanding, and this is important, you have to make a distinction between legal obedience and gracious obedience...legal obedience and gracious obedience. If God was looking for legal absolute conformity to the precepts of Christ, or for that matter to the law of Moses, if God was looking for absolute perfect obedience without a single failure, we're all doomed. That's...that's not

going to happen. That's not going to happen. It's not the kind of legal obedience measured against the covenant of law by which we're all condemned. We're not talking about that. We're talking about like what I'd like to call for lack of a better term "gracious obedience." And it's related not to the covenant of law but it's related to the covenant of grace which is the New Covenant...the New Covenant. And listen to what I say. Under the New Covenant a loving sincere obedience full of defects is accepted by God. That's gracious obedience. Did you get that? If you're living under Law, if you're living under the Mosaic economy and trying to earn salvation by maintaining obedience to that Law, there's no tolerances. That Law demands an absolute perfect obedience without a single failure. If you break one law, you're dead. That's not what God is asking. That's not what it means if you keep His commandments.

On the other hand, gracious obedience under the terms of the New Covenant means that God accepts our obedience, a loving, sincere obedience though full of defects. How can He do that? Because all the defects have been paid for by the death of His Son. And now by grace God looks at the heart. And when Paul or you or me says, "I don't do the things I want to do, I do the things I don't want to do. O wretched man that I am," that's reality. We all fall short of perfection. But God is not asking a perfect legal obedience. He's simply asking that we do by His grace and under His grace from the heart the best of which we as fallen people are capable. And God looks at the heart...God looks at the heart.

The most important preacher in the early church was Peter, right? The first twelve chapter of Acts, he's the star, he's the preacher. Now you would think if God was going to choose somebody for that most noble of all responsibilities, He would choose the best of the best. And I don't mean just the best speaker, the best with natural giftedness, the best most dynamic personality. But He would choose the holiest instrument. However, if God was looking for a preacher who could conform perfectly to the precepts of Jesus Christ, it wasn't Peter. And the most remarkable occasion in the twenty-first chapter of John is that Jesus comes to Peter, it's after the resurrection, Jesus comes to Galilee. The Lord said, "Go to Galilee and wait for Me."

Well Peter went and decided he, you know, being impatient, not only perhaps impatient with people around him, but being impatient with himself, feeling inadequate, feeling like a failure. After all, he denied the Lord at the crisis moment, feeling horrible about himself, probably feeling that he was unworthy to be a representative of Jesus Christ. And so he's up there in Galilee, Jesus hasn't shown up and so it says that Peter and his buddies went fishing. Peter says, "I'm going fishing." Well he was a leader. Everybody said, "We're going with you." And they went back to their own profession. And so Jesus showed up on the shore. Of course they couldn't catch any fish cause the Lord rerouted them all. They weren't going to succeed at that. And you remember that He made breakfast for them and then He looked at Peter. And do you remember the conversation? He didn't ask him, "Peter, have you disobeyed Me? Peter, have you broken some of My precepts?" He said this, "Peter, do you...what?...do you love Me?" See, He was going for the heart of the issue. He was going for that

internal attitude that yields obedience in a gracious context. "Do you love Me, Peter?" Boy, he must have had a lump in his throat the size of a grapefruit. GULP....I love You.

"Peter, do you love Me?"

"Yes, Lord, I love You."

"Peter, do you love Me?" Three times, once for each occasion of betrayal.

Peter said, "Lord, You know what's in me. You don't even have to ask the question, you know I love you."

And in effect, Jesus said, "You're My man. Feed My sheep. That's all I can ask. I can't ask perfection out of fallen people." And what the Lord wants out of us is not a legal obedience, in the sense that we're perfectly subscribing ourselves to the Law of God, or to the precepts of Christ, but rather a heart attitude of obedience. That's that gracious kind of obedience where the Lord looks at the heart. And on the other hand, there are people, you know, who want to conform to all the rules on the outside, like Israel. And their heart is far from God. It's a determination to please Him. It's a determination to guard and protect His Law, not only in the heart but in the conduct.

I told the students on Friday in a message I gave at Chapel at the Master's College that when all is said and done and you're looking at your own heart and you're pursuing holiness, what is the compelling thing? People ask me all the time to whom are you accountable? I'm accountable to a lot of people. You know, people think that you need external accountability to kind of keep your life right. And certainly that's a wonderful thing to have that accountability. But, I mean, I'm accountable to lots of people. I'm accountable to a church, you, to live my life in such a way that doesn't scandalize the gospel. I'm accountable to the elders of this church. I'm accountable to the pastors that work around me and have through the years. I'm accountable to a faculty at The Master's College, The Master's Seminary, students in both places. I'm accountable to friends. I'm accountable to my children and my grandchildren. I'm accountable to my wife who is close enough to know everything there is about my life. I'm accountable to all those people. And that has an impact on me because I don't want to disappoint you, I don't want you to lose confidence in me. I don't want you to be disillusioned about my faithfulness and devotion to the truth and to the Word of God which I've taught through all the years. And I feel that way about everybody around me. But the bottom line for me is simply this. I don't want to disappoint anybody but mostly I don't want to disappoint Jesus Christ. And that's what it means to love the Lord. That's what it means. It's not about sentiment. It's not about emotional feelings induced by certain chords. It's about...it's about being such a guardian of the precepts of Jesus Christ that your heart is compelled toward only doing that which you know pleases Him. That's love for Him.

We obey Him partially, in a sense, whether the command is agreeable or disagreeable. We obey cheerfully knowing that the reason He gave us the commands was because He wanted them to bear fruit in our lives. I'm not reluctant to obey the Lord because He promises to bless if I do, right? And we obey constantly out of love and gratitude to Him. First John 5:2, the last line, "We love God and observe His commandments." That's why we do what we do. We love Him. Sometimes people will say, "Ah, I can't take Grace Church, it's just, you know, too many demands, too many demands, too narrow, too legalistic."

Well, that's a problem, not with us, that's like openly saying, "I guess I don't love the Lord very much because His commandments are grievous." That's quite an admission. Obedience is really connected with love. That's why, listen to this, if you could love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and then your neighbor as yourself, you would fulfill the whole Law, right? People think, "Oh, the Ten Commandments, brutal. Ten Commandments, stringent." Ten Commandments is simply a list of ways you can demonstrate that you love God and your neighbor. You love God so you don't make an idol. You love God so you don't worship anybody else. You love God so you don't take His name in vain. And you love your neighbor so you don't covet what he has, or his wife. And you don't kill, and you don't steal, and you don't commit adultery. That's all about love is what it is. So the test is to say what the psalmist said in Psalm 116:12, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me? How can I find ways to give my love back to the One who first loved me? Show me how I can do that."

You know, the measure of someone is that they rush into the place where the precepts of Scripture, the precepts of biblical truth, the precepts of Christ, where the commandments of God are continually delineated because the truer one's love for Christ, the stronger the longing is to be obedient. And if you really long to be obedient, then you're eager to know at what point you should be obedient. "Please teach me more of what God requires" should be the attitude. This is not new in 1 John. The gospel of John, John heard it from Jesus. John's gospel chapter 14 verse 15, Jesus said, "If you love Me you'll keep My commandments." That's that simple. Jesus introduced the thought right there. If you love Me, you will keep, you'll guard as a precious treasure My commandments.

Down in verse 21 Jesus continuing to talk in the Upper Room that night said, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father and I will love him." What a statement. Do you want to be loved by God and loved by Christ? Love the Lord and the love obviously comes back. Verse 23 Jesus said, "If anyone loves Me he will keep My Word, My Father will love him, will come to him, will make our abode with him." How do you know that Christ lives in someone? Because they obey His commands. They love His commands and that's evidence that He loves them and has changed their hearts. John 15:10, Jesus said it again, "If you keep My commandments you'll abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you'll abide in My love just as I've kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."

Jesus said, "I do what the Father tells Me to do, that's how I love Him. That's how I show My love to Him." I mean, you can see that in a family, right? What is a child...what is a disobedient child saying to you? "I don't love you...I don't love you." That's what a disobedient child is saying. "I love myself more than I love you," or, "I love my friend more than I love you," or "I love this activity more than I love you, you are not at the top of my love list." Any level of disobedience is manifestly a confession that you love something more than the person who has commanded the obedience. So when your sin manifests itself for that moment in that time, you can say I love my iniquity more than I love my Lord. But that is the exception to the rule so that when it does happen you say, "O wretched man that I am, Lord, please deliver me from this, this is not what I want to do." That's the test stated.

The test is applied...back to 1 John 2...it's applied in verses 4 and 5. Pretty simple. Verse 4, "The one who says I've come to know Him, doesn't keep His commandments is a liar." John is really straightforward. You remember what his nickname was? He and his brother? Boanerges, which being translated means "sons of thunder." You remember when they met some people they didn't like and James and John came to Jesus and said, "Just give us the word, we'll call down fire from heaven and consume them." He was a tough guy. And it wasn't good on that occasion but when it shows up in his epistle, you sometimes think as John as this passive kind of wimpish pale guy lying around on Jesus' shoulder and.... No, he loved Jesus, of course, and he manifested that even in his posture. But when you get to the core of the heart of John, he is very, very confrontive and very straightforward. He says, "If someone says I've come to know Him and doesn't keep His commandments, he's a liar and the truth is not in him," that is saving truth is not in him. It's not what you say...go back to chapter 1 verse 6...if we say we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. You can say you have fellowship, you can say you've come to know Him, both the same, but if you walk in darkness which means you don't keep His commandments, you're a liar. It's a claim to fellowship that has no basis. It's a claim to knowing the Lord that has absolutely no basis. You're just a liar. Strong language and rightly so because so much is at stake, self-deception is obviously damning. Jesus said to Pilate, John 18:37, "You say correctly that I'm a King, for this I've been born, for this I came into the world to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

People who are of the truth, that is people who are in the Kingdom, hear His voice. And He meant that, that they hear it with affirmation, with eagerness, and with obedience. If you say you know Him and you don't keep His commandments, you're a liar and the truth is not in you. Contrast verse 21, "I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie is of the truth." The contrast is the people who are in the Kingdom know the truth and they obey it. In the third chapter and verse 19, again he mentions being of the truth. And that's simply another way to say you're in the Kingdom, you're a part of the people of the truth.

So bottom line. John allows for no real fellowship with God when there's walking in darkness which is disobedience, sinful living. John allows for no knowledge of God where there's no love for the precepts of Christ and heartfelt longing to obey them. Simply said, a claim without a life of obedience is a lie...it's a lie. So John exposes the vain pretense of those people, particularly the ones he was directing this at when he wrote it who thought they ascended to the high knowledge. We talked about that a few weeks ago. They were on a higher level, higher level than the common people, they had reached the ascended knowledge. In fact, they had become so spirit-oriented that they disdained the flesh, they became duelists and said that this knowledge of theirs superceded, transcended all fleshly matters therefore morality and behavior meant nothing to them whatever it was. They were sort of antinomians who under the idea that they had reached the true knowledge had no interest at all in moral conduct.

So easy to say "I know God, I know Jesus, I know the Lord." James in chapter 2 deals with this. He says, "Faith without works is...what?...it's dead." It doesn't exist. Then verse 5, and verse 5 follows along, and verse 4, the test is applied. Verse 5 says the same thing in a positive way. Verse 4 is a negative. "The one who says and doesn't keep is a liar." Verse 5, "Whoever keeps His Word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him." Whoever has that loving heartfelt obedience that guards the Word and longs to obey it, in him the love of God...I love this phrase...has truly been perfected.

What do we mean "the love of God"? Well I think it's best to see it technically as an objective genitive in the Greek, but it's best to see it as the person's love for God...the person's love for God. If a person keeps the Word, in him the love that he claims for God is genuine, is another way to say it. It's the real thing. It's mature. It is truly, it is *alethos*is the word in verse 5, truly mature, truly the real thing. So that the true love of God is not manifest in sentiment, it's not manifest in a decision, it's not manifest in a mystical experience, it's manifest in obedience, obedience, obedience. And the love that obeys has been perfected. As much as we are capable of perfection, it is perfected in those who are truly in the Kingdom as manifest by their actions.

And then he closes the verse by saying this, "By this we know we are in Him." I wish we had time to take the phrase "in Him" and develop that, that's the heart of Christianity. We are in Christ, that massive important truth.

But let's go on to the third point here, the test stated, the test illustrated, now the test exemplified, verse 6. You're saying to yourself, "Well I...can you sort of give me a model to follow when you're talking about this heart obedience, this consistent devotion, give me a model to follow." So John gives you one, verse 6. "The one who says he abides in Him," which is the same as saying in verse 4, "I've come to know Him," which is the same as saying in chapter 1 verse 6, "We have fellowship with Him," it's all the same. Having fellowship with Him, knowing Him, and abiding in Him, it's all the same.

Here's the example. "The one who says he abides in Him ought himself ought to walk in the same manner as He walked." Oh you say you're in the fellowship with God. Oh you say you know Him. Do you? Oh you say you abide in Him.

In other words, literally you're drawing life from Him, like branches in the vine. Remember John 15, the branches that abide. You're literally drawing life from Him, He's the source of your life. You're saying that, are you? You're saying you're a true branch connected to the vine and His life flows through you. Another translation of the word "abide" is remains. So you say this isn't superficial, so you say it's not temporary. You say this is a permanent remaining in Christ. You're the real thing. You're continuing in the faith. You're holding fast and not letting go. You are...to put it in the words of Paul in Colossians 1...you are continuing in the faith firmly established and steadfast and never moved away from the hope of the gospel. You're the real thing, you are abiding. You're not like the disciples in John 6:66 who walked away and said, "We don't want anymore to do with this." You're a real believer, you're not a Judas branch, superficially attached, no life, no fruit, cut off, thrown in the fire. You abide. You're the real thing.

If you say that, then it couldn't be any clearer, you ought to walk in the same manner as He walked. What does that mean? What does that mean? You ought to walk in the same manner as He walked, what do you expect out of me? Christ likeness? I mean, I already know from Philippians that I can't be like Him in this life, but that's the goal I pursue, forgetting the things that are behind, pressing forward to the goal which is ahead, which is the mark which is Christ's likeness, the prize that we're going to receive when we go to heaven. I'm pressing toward that, I'm doing my best. I'm.... But what do you mean we're supposed to walk...daily conduct is the metaphor...what does that mean?

Well I'll show you what it means. It's a term for conduct. But let me take you back to the gospel of John and this will kind of wrap up our look at this and they we'll come to the Lord's table. But John 6:38, verse 38, Jesus' words, wonderful words, "I have come down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me." What is that? That's obedience, isn't it? He said, "I'm only here to do what the Father tells Me to do. Whatever He tells Me to do, that's what I do." John 8 verse 29, "He who sent Me is with Me," Jesus said. "He has not left Me alone..." and then I love this, "for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." I always do the things that are pleasing to Him. Chapter 10 verse 18, He says, "No one has taken it away from Me," that is His life, "I lay it down on My own initiative, I have authority to lay it down, I have authority to take it up. This commandment I received from My Father." And again He says, "I do what My Father tells Me to do." Chapter 14 of John and verse 31, "But that the world may know that I love the Father and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do." And there are more, those are just a few. I even read one earlier. Jesus obeyed...He obeyed. He obeyed the Father. That's the pattern.

Obviously our obedience isn't going to be perfect, but the example that He set is an example of obedience. His loving obedience is our pattern. So if you say you abide, you say you know Him, you

say you're in the fellowship, then it's going to show up. You're going to walk in the light and that's the realm of eternal life and righteousness. You're going to keep His commandments, gracious obedience from the heart with a passion and love for the truth and the Lord of the truth. And you're going to have as your goal Christ's likeness. "To be like Jesus, this is my plea. Just to know Thou art formed fully in Me." That's the cry of the heart.

How do you know you're a Christian? You believe the gospel. You understand you're a sinner. And from the heart your deepest longings are to obey the precepts of Christ and to live the way He lived, to walk the way He walked. Therein lies your assurance and the assurance of your salvation to those around you.

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