

Week of Meetings 05 1 John 2:

by Svend Christensen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual progress, which is achieved through knowing Him, union with Him, and abiding in Him, and is evidenced by obedience, walking in the light, and love.

Duration: 48:26

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Holy Spirit Presence"

Description

The sermon transcript discusses the importance of keeping God's commandments as evidence of being a child of God. The speaker references a story from the Bible about Elisha raising a boy from the dead, highlighting the significance of the boy sneezing seven times as a sign of life. The transcript then moves on to discuss the contrast between genuine progress in faith and mere profession of faith. The speaker emphasizes the term 'beloved' used throughout the passage and the importance of love in the fellowship of believers. The transcript concludes by mentioning the evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence in believers and the victory over the world that comes from being born of God.

Transcript

Well, Mr. Christianson with us for this conference. You know, I was at a conference at Lookout Mountain on the last July, the Believer's Bible Conference. We had Brother Sven Christianson and Brother John Bramhall, you know, and they both got smiles right across here, and we ended up, well, I left early.

I think if I'd stayed the whole week, I'd have had one of those annual mouths, you know, churches from year to year, you know. Because they, their smile is really infectious. It's lovely to have people with us who really enjoy the Lord and the service of the Lord.

It's a joy to have you with us, Brother Sven, and trust the Lord will bless your ministry this morning. Michael. Thank you, Brother Willie.

It's a real joy to be here. Trying to, 1 John chapter 2 again, thinking about one of the reasons you wrote it, that the joy may be full. When a dear fisherman preached up in Tentheven Island, the Lord saved him on David 26.

I met him many years later. He used to study the word on his fishing boat when he was out fishing these real famous, what you call the Maine lobsters, but they're really good up there in Tentheven Island, North Scotia. And he used to study, he'd start at about three or four, about three in the morning, and he had an

old kerosene lantern.

He used to take and he'd study the word by the light of that kerosene lantern in his fishing boat. And you know, when he'd end up and he heard some of them talking, he'd go, these are the things I believe. Lord showed me those things on my knees up in the fishing boat.

And when he was first saved, his wife belonged to one of the churches that taught baptismal regeneration. And that being said, he used to sit down and play on the piano and he had a tremendous bass voice. Lou Harris, and you had him in an auditorium and all the people here, and since Walt filled with good singers, he'd be all the bass you'd need to hear him above all the others.

I never heard such a big voice, but he used to say to his wife, and she's still living, he just went to be Lord last April, but his wife is still living. He said, oh, said he, as he gets saved, and he'd stand at the piano, he said, I just feel like I'm gonna burst. You will know all the joy that I have.

And it so spoke to us that soon after his lovely wife was saved, they raised 11 children. It was an encirclement full of joy. That man certainly knew something about that joy in an experimental way.

I admit to me, last summer we were up there, he was with the Lord, and we certainly met this brother being among the saints up there. Now let's look again to the word of God, reading chapter two, beginning of verse three. And hereby we do know that we know him if we heed his commandments.

And he said, I know him, he that said, I know him, and keepeth 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 said he abided in him ought himself also so to walk even as he walks. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye have 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 passed, and a true light now shineth. He that said he's in the light and hated his brother is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abided in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

He that hated his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and all none whither he goeth, because the 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 is from the beginning.

I write unto you young men, because ye have all come the wicked one. I write unto you little children, because ye have known the father. I have written unto you fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.

I have written unto you young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abided in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. May the Lord bless to us the reading from his holy words. Now last night we spoke briefly about the spiritual adjustments that we need and the Lord Jesus gives him all, and how wonderful that is to have the Lord Jesus that can give us this adjustment.

We spoke about the need of cleansing in verse 8 and 10. We say that we have no sins. We all need it.

The sin is the root, and if we confess all sins, which is the fruit that that root produces. We have the need of cleansing. We have the method of cleansing.

If we confess all sins, and then we have the extent or the range of cleansing. He cleansed us from all unrighteousness. We spoke briefly about the advocate that we have.

Thank God for the Lord Jesus, and in contrast to many advocates today, and in attorneys, he is the righteous one, and he is for right now in God's right hand as the righteous one. Now we go on to a new section from verse 3 on in chapter 2, and we see spiritual progress through personal experience with the Lord Jesus. You notice here, you have the principle of spiritual progress in verse 3, to dict, first knowing him, then union with him within him, and then abiding in him, knowing him that the introduction to him were introduced to the Lord Jesus.

Likewise, Jesus many times it's an absolute necessity to know him. These things are written unto you that know him, that you may know that you're eternal life. We know him.

Do you know him this morning? To know him is to have to possess eternal life. He's the grandest person in the universe to know, and if you do not know him, we'd like to introduce you to him this morning. He said, I've come that you might have life.

He wants you to know him. He says, come unto me. All you that labor and are heavy laden, and I'll give you.

That invites you. He says, and learn of me. I want you to come to know me.

And what a wonderful experience. You know, sometimes we talk about human beings, you get to know one another, and the more you know each other, the less you wish you knew each other. But that's not so with the Lord Jesus.

The more we know him, the more wonderful he becomes. And if it was the progress you have here, you start with knowing him, and those are two knows there, hereby we do know that we know him, a double know, K-N-O-W. And then it goes on to increase.

The union with him, in him, we increase in him. As we grow in grace, as we walk with him, as we talk with him, as we commune with him, and we realize our union with him. I'm seated with him.

I'm linked with him. I'm in him in the heavenlies. I'm airs with him.

I'm joint airs with him. Our union with the Lord Jesus. And as we get to appreciate him, and we appreciate our union with him, there's a continual progress.

And then as we grasp this, you might say, theoretically, as we grasp this doctrinally, it becomes experimental. Then we really come down to where the intimacy of this, it becomes an abiding. We are in him.

But God wants to work this out in reality, in our lives, and constantly we are walking with him. The truth of John 15, if ye abide in me, and in my words, if I am in you, and so on, you'll be a fruit. The abiding in him.

Then we get the word dwelling in him. Constantly realizing we are in him, we abide in him, and enjoying his constant communion. This is intimacy of the day.

This is spiritual progress. You come to know him. You come into realization of your union with him.

And then that union with him is made practical. We have that intimacy. John himself was a lovely example of that, wasn't he? The secret things of the Lord belong to them that fear him, says the psalmist.

You remember when the disciples wanted to know who was going to betray him, who did they ask? There's one laying in the bosom of the Lord, Jesus, wasn't there? They said, you ask him. John, you're closest to him. He'll tell you, John.

Oh, that we might be like that. That's why John is so qualified to write a book like 1 John, from the experimental knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Spiritual progress.

And then you have the proofs of the spiritual progress right here in verses 3 to 6. What's the evidence of spiritual progress? Verse 3, we keep his commandments. Verse 5, keeping his word. And then, the first one, then, is obedience.

In a sense, when we think of keeping his commandments, I don't think the old testament ten commandments are referred to here, but when we think about keeping commandments, it's often a sense of duty. And this is also Mark's progress, when we as believers, that keep his word, I think this has more the thought of we do so because we love to do so. Keeping his commandments sort of has the thought more of you do things because you feel a duty to do so.

Well, that's not high enough a motive. It needs to be the love of Christ constraining us, that we want to do this. I think it could be illustrated by the Lord's Supper.

The Lord Jesus says, let this do remembrance of me. Well, if we gather together on the first day of the week, you can do it every day as far as that goes, and you remember the Lord and the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup. You take the cup, the bread, you break it, you thank God, you do the same with the cup, and then go home, you have fulfilled what he asked you to do.

But then, we decide, well, here we are, a group of the Lord's people, we really love him. What's wrong with spending some more time in his presence and really worship him and tell him what we think of him? That goes beyond just what he asked us to do. And this is what he's hoping for, isn't it? If you love me, you'll keep my word.

It's not by obedience. We keep his word, not just his commandment, but his word. It's like a mother, she has different duties for her children to do.

And after they do these duties, they run out to play. But one of them realized the mother's not feeling very well. And he says, Mother, could I do this or could I do that? Is there anything else I could do for you? That's going beyond the commandment.

This is love, you see. Love goes beyond that. Spiritual progress.

Whoso keepeth his word in him, there is the love of God affected, do you see it? Hereby know we that we are in him the proof of progress. We not only just do what he asks us to do, but we love goes beyond that. We not only come to remember him and just go through the routine of breaking the bread and breaking the cup, but we swell all voices, all heart goes up in him to love.

We go beyond just what he asks us to do. This is when the love comes out. There he is.

In him there he is, with the love of God affected. Hereby know we that we are in him. And the second proof is walking.

The sixth, he that hath said he abided in him ought, and the word ought here suggests the thought of a debt or moral responsibility. Ought himself also so to walk even as he walked. How did the Lord Jesus walk? He walked in the spirit.

And Paul in Galatians says, walk in the spirit and so on, you'll not fulfill the lust of the flesh. How did the Lord Jesus, I think when he spoke about to walk even as he walked, he didn't, he intended to us that he met, now you can out there walk on the water. But as a walk of progression here, the Lord Jesus as a boy, he was obedient to his parents.

And then as he progressed into adulthood, the early steps there, I should say, we read in Acts 10 38, the Lord Jesus was anointed the Holy Ghost, he went about doing good. He progressed in his walk and then later on, as he thought about the purpose of going to the cross, the purpose of the walk, of being a savior, the saviorhood of the Lord Jesus, he set his face at the cliff, Isaiah says, and he set before him to go to Jerusalem. Progression of walk.

And this is what you get later on in the chapter too. You have the little children of the young lambs, then you have the more, the young men, the growing lambs, and then you have the full grown ones and the mature ones, the fathers. There's a progression with a walk, even if he walked.

Paul also speaks about the walk of many, many times, of the believer. One of the things he speaks about is walking circumspectly so everyone can view us. I remember David Long, years ago, when he was at Emmaus, he said, did you ever see a cat go across a yard on a wet day and it takes its steps? That's a good illustration of people, of the believer also walking circumspectly.

Walking in the Spirit, walking with our eyes upon Christ, walking very carefully through this filthy world where we are looked, where people sin. With a walk, even as he walked. Now in verse three again, hereby we do know that we know him if we keep his commandment.

Now there are at least seven, and there's more. I think it was George Goodman, I read years ago in that little book, one of the little books, there's 70 lessons, or familiar lessons, one of these that George Goodman wrote. He wrote about the Elisha raising the widow's son, not the widow's son, but the boy that took the son's out in the field with his dad.

And remember when he stretched himself on this boy, and the boy came back to life, he sneezed seven times as the evidence of life. And George Goodman points out very suggestively there are certain things that should mark the children of God, and here is one of them right here. But just look very briefly at these seven here in John, and I want to point them out to you now that we have come to them.

Hereby we do know that we know him if we keep his word. This is the mark of a born-again believer if you really are one that desires to keep the word of God. This should be the mark of a believer.

It's a most unhealthy sign when a believer says these things and he has no real desire to do God's word, or to keep God's word, or to do God's will. Look at chapter 1, verse 7, we'll just turn back a page here. For if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we are fellowshipped one with another.

We not only desire to keep his word, but it will come out as any man deemed Christ is a new creation. That new light should mark us. We walk in the light.

We are children of the light. That should be the evidence. You can teach a parent to say, I'm saved.

But oh, I tell you, it's only the fruit of the Holy Spirit that will produce a love for the Lord. So you keep his word, and so you walk in that newness of life. You walk in the light.

Verse 29 of this same chapter, you have the third one. You know that he is righteous. You know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him.

A person that doeth righteousness is born of him. Chapter 3, verse 9. Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin. He does not practice sin.

His life will be a life consistent with his Christian testimony. Verse 14. We know that we have passed from death unto life because we tolerate the brethren.

That's not what it says, is it? We love the brethren. This is another evidence, another piece. Aren't we in a wonderful family? With a grand family.

You know, the world has its fellowships. But it's nothing like the fellowship of saints, is it? Whenever you meet a brother, and you meet him on the trail of Bosch, and you find out he's a brother of the Lord, there's a kindred spirit there. There's a bond.

We love him. That's what he says later on, we love. Because he first loved us, that divine love has come in there, and love begets love.

And we love those that he loves, and those that have been begotten of him. Verse 24, chapter 5. The last part of it. Hereby we know that he abides in us by the spirit which he hath given us.

He that keepeth his commitment against dwelleth in him, and he in him. Again, the evidence keeping his word. The spirit of God is evident in this verse.

Then in chapter 5, verse 4, it is mentioned in these seven particular verses, whosoever or whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. Seven sneezes he had mentioned. Now going on with the progress here, from verse 7 through to verse 12, I think is really where this section ends, and then it comes and picks up the three different ones viewed, the fathers, the young men, and the little children.

But here you have a contrast between processional progress and that which is only professional. The professors. And that's what you get.

You get this terrific contrast in this next section. Now the word brethren in verse 7 should be beloved. And that word beloved is found five times in this epistle.

It's a very endearing term. I love to hear someone say beloved. And John uses that.

Peter, of course, uses it too. But instead of saying brethren here, it should be beloved. If you turn over to chapter 4, or chapter 3, verse 21, that is again beloved.

Chapter 4, verse 1, beloved. Verse 7, beloved. Verse 11, beloved.

Here the beloved. What a term of endearment. Now here you have the commitment.

He said I don't write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye have heard from the beginning, which ye have heard from the beginning. It was all with that commandment that ye love one another. This is an old commandment, a new commandment, love is ever new.

When I saw McPherson going back to Genesis and others, just back to the beginning of when the Lord Jesus came in. But this is not, it's an old commandment and yet it's ever new. We don't love one another.

Not as Cain, he said later on, who hated his brother and murdered his brother. God is love. He that loveth is born of God.

This is a, here's the commandment, is that we love one another ever new. But this you may know when you're my disciples, how? You love one another. Such a badge of Christianity, love.

Behold how they love one another. Isn't it glad to be loved by the Lord and loved by his people? Love. Oh, that's a, that's a tremendous word.

And oh, when everything else fails as Paul the 1st Corinthians chapter 30, love never fails. If you get in an assembly where the Lord's people are really in love with the Lord and in love with one another, what an atmosphere. What a place for God to work.

What a place that's ripe for the blessing of God. John, you know, he speaks so tenderly and so sweetly, but he can also speak so plainly and so strongly, can he not? John in his writing has tremendous contrast here in how he talks. Talks such endearing terms to Christians, and yet he talks a straight language.

He talks a straight language against false teachers and against false professors. So you have the commandment, then you have the empty claim here. The claim in verse 9. I might say before we go into that, that word, the last part of the chapter, verse 8. Because the darkness is passing and the true light now shining.

He says there's a new commandment. Again, a new commandment, I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light now shining. That true light that's now shining is what came in through the Lord Jesus.

And because that light's shining, the darkness is passing. And that light has shined into our hearts. And the love of God has been shed upon in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

But here's the false claim now in verse 9. He that said he's in the light and hated his brother is in darkness even until now. Let's jump down to verse 11. For he that hated his brother is in darkness and walked in darkness and knoweth not whither he goeth because that the darkness hath blinded his eyes.

He is in darkness. Notice the progression here. Because he's not saved, because he's still a child of Adam's fallen ways, he is in darkness.

He that said he is in the light and hated his brother, he is in darkness even until now. He is in darkness. I believe this is a false profess a man that's never been saved.

Furthermore, he walks in darkness, verse 11. And he walking in darkness. A person not saved, he's in darkness.

He's in darkness intellectually. He's in darkness every way you take it. Some people think that education is light.

Education is not light. Some of the people that are in the greatest darkness are all intellectuals today or scholars and all these. These men are in terrible, dense darkness.

They're in the dark. They're walking in the dark. They're living in the dark.

Because a man is in the dark, he is there, he lives there. Think of the awful darkness we play in. Think of the darkness we were in before the grace of God reached us.

Oh, I can look back at my own life and think of the awful darkness. People can't understand. It's so difficult for them to.

How, how do you get saved if you can't understand it? It's just so difficult to look. What is it? Taking their mind as their mind. They're in darkness.

All this darkness that people live in and that they walk in. But that darkness progresses. When you profess to be in the light and you're not really in the light, that darkness increases.

And then it says, now in verse 11, he's stumbling. So, verse 10 it speaks about there's no stumbling for men in light, but in contrast, a man that's in darkness, he's stumbling. He's groping in the dark.

He's walking in darkness. He knows not where he's going because the darkness has blinded his eyes. He's groping around in the dark.

He can't find his way. Did you ever really get lost in the dark? You're groping around there. You're trying to feel your way around.

It's an awful feeling. You really get into a dungeon where you back something in the cave and all the lights go out and you lose all sense of direction. And you're groping around in the dark.

It's a terrible feeling. And some people that dive for a kite when they're dying, groping. And then the last one is, he knoweth not whither he going.

What a terrible progression downward. He is in darkness. He lives in darkness.

He walks in darkness. He's groping in the darkness. And he doesn't know where he is going.

All those terrible steps downward. Do you know where you're going today? Do you know for sure that you're saved? Do you know for sure that you've been brought into the light? Are the seven sneezes true of you? Have you passed from darkness into light? From night into day? Are you a child of the day instead of a child of the night? What a lovely contrast, we have in verse 10. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light.

And there's no location of stumbling in him. I write unto you little children, to these he wrote that were in the light, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I'm writing to you.

Your sins are forgiven you. And you've been brought into his marvelous light. You've been brought out of darkness into the kingdom of his dear son, into his marvelous light.

Oh friend, let's bask in that light. Let's walk in that light. Let's enjoy that light.

And how communion you have when you're in this light. Now I just want to introduce the next section very briefly here. From verse 13 down to the end of verse 28.

Here you have spiritual progress, degrees of progress. Fathers, young men, children. First about the fathers.

I want to develop the next time Lord with me. But you know as you labor in the Lord's work, you can realize now why he didn't say old men. He said fathers.

Not all old men are fathers. Both physically and spiritually. Paul said to Galatians, Oh Galatians, we have regarded you through the gospel.

He says you may have 10,000 instructors, but you haven't got many fathers. Fathers are scarce. Paul says to the Thessalonians, he had not only been like a nursing mother to them, but he's also been a father to them.

How we need the fathers. Men of spiritual maturity. Men with the authority that goes with being fathers.

Men that will take responsibility. He's writing to the fathers, those that take responsibility. And I just want to say this in closing.

It's been a great joy at Orlando. I think especially of one man now, as you know him, Ed Scott. They came to the opening of the chapel in 1961.

The reason they came, his wife had her C.E. Tatum in the Bahamas. And as a girl, she was brought up in the assembly there. But after she got married, she got away from the assembly.

She married this fine young man, Ed Scott. But when they got the news that Mr. Tatum was going to build or speak at this new chapel on Highwater Road, they came just to want to hear Mr. Tatum. And they signed the gift book.

So as a result of them signing the gift book, I followed them up, and followed them up. There's no exaggeration. It takes a tremendous amount of invitation sometimes to get one person.

But then on Ed Scott, gradually, he went to another group, and he was active there. But gradually, through visitation and talk, talk, talk in the home, doing all the different things of God, he started coming to the chapel. And from then till now, we can see this man is just a progress, all the time up, up, up.

He's a man, I'd say, around 40 now, not quite 40. But he is a considerably young man. But he's developed to be a real father, a spiritual father.

All the depth of this brother now, the pastoral heart he has. I hear, when Mr. Hoffman, when Scott was in to see me, Mother Mary said that Brother Scott was in to see me every day I was in the hospital. The old lady who had widowed, Brother Scott was down here to see if everything was all right.

And Brother Scott arranged for the brethren to come and painted my house for me. And he's there, he's there. You don't hear things from him about it, but you hear from these others.

Brother Scott, he was here to visit us and talk to us, a shepherd. He sees things to do and he does them. He's continually going ahead, a real father, a spiritual elder, a man of ability, and vision, oversight.

Thank God, you see, these men coming from young men going into maturity, becoming a spiritual father. But we'll have more about that next time. Put me in reprograms.

We never get too old. You never get to that place, none of us should ever get to that place where we say, well, I'm alive. There's no more for me to learn.

I'm just as mature as mature can be, as mature as you can make me. We're in a bad state spiritually, but we're there. May God keep us humble and may we see steady progress, continually going in grace, going up, up, up, from little children, young men, into adults who are in maturity as fathers.

May the Lord bless us. We're a teacher for a home. Let's return to hymn number 287.

287. I am thine, O Lord. I suppose we can all say that.

I am. I am thine, O Lord. I have heard thy voice and it told thy love to me, but I long to rise in the arms of faith and be closer drawn to thee.

287. We've just got 15 minutes or so to get down there, so we have plenty of time. Then I'll ask Mr. Christensen to close the meeting.

O loving Father, we thank and praise thee for thy marvelous grace. Thank you for that fellowship into which thou has brought us. Truly our fellowship is with the Father, with his Son, and with one another.

Grant that while we're here these few days, that fellowship might be deepened and sweetened, and all of us may have a real mountaintop experience together, the things of God. Bless each one of thee, and grant each of us may be a blessing one to the other. Bless us now as we go on our way.

We pray in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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