

1. Someone has said that the writings of the Apostle John are shallow enough for a child to wade in but deep enough for an elephant to drown in. A good analogy. He who reads the writings of John is impressed with two things: their simplicity but also their profundity.
2. Certain words occur with higher frequency in John's writings than elsewhere. For example, the word translated "commandment", which occurs three times in vs. 7, occurs eleven times in John and eighteen times in the Epistles. It does not mean the ten commandments. The verb "to love" occurs thirty-three times in John, thirty in the Epistles. The words for "light" and "darkness" are very frequent in John.
3. It has been said that a full realization of our sinful nature would kill us. That is true. The teaching of what we call original sin is a matter of believing what the Bible says. We do not experience the full extent of its magnitude. Unconverted man is spiritually blind, dead and an enemy of God. Read Rom. 3:9-18 which includes us too. Then Paul adds: "We know that what the Law says, it says to those under the Law so that every mouth might be stopped and the whole world become guilty before God, because by doing Law-deeds no person can be justified in God's sight, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin." Because of God's Law we've learned to know the awful truth about ourselves. From Rom. 3:21 to 5:21 Paul writes one of Scripture's most beautiful Gospel passages.
4. Our text begins with the word "Beloved." We are reminded immediately that God loves us. God is love and only His love can save us.
5. In vs. 7 the writer assures the readers that he is not coming with a message which is different from the one they heard previously. It is the same old message, the Word which you've heard. That is the Gospel, the good news which, like Jesus Christ, is the same yesterday, today and forever. We should always assure our hearers that what we are going to say is the same as we've always said. In this life everything temporal and secular is constantly changing. But the person, Word and work of Jesus do not change.
6. Then in vs. 8 John says that he IS writing a new injunction which is genuine both in Christ and in the Christians. What is that? The darkness, like fog, is passing away and the genuine Light is shining. What is he talking about? After Pentecost the Gospel was preached far and wide. Pagan darkness began to disappear. The Light of Christ and of the Gospel were beginning to shine. It was perceptible. That was new. The message was not changing. But man's sinful plight was fading. Christ and His Gospel do not change. But they can change sinful man.
7. Vss. 9-11 form a unit. Vs. 9 describes the self-deluded man who claims he is in the Light but is actually still in the darkness because he hates his brother. We are always living in danger of such a condition. On the other hand, vs. 10 is a comfort. The man who loves his brother is in the light and therefore is no danger to himself. To have an offense in one's self means to put **one's** self in danger also towards others. Vs. 11 returns to the thought of vs. 9 and amplifies it. The first part of the vs. is a repetition of the last part of vs. 9. But not only is such a person in darkness, he also LIVES in darkness. His whole life is spiritual darkness. He is actually blind spiritually.
8. Do Christians still need the Law? Yes they do. They are always in danger of falling back into the condition from which the Gospel rescued them. Read Col. 3:5-11. Paul warns us to kill the works of the flesh in our lives. We must put off the old man with his practices. We must constantly put on the new man. The Gospel restored the image of God in us, which image Adam and Eve lost. But there is always the danger that we fall back into sin. We must spend our whole life fighting sin in our lives. We must constantly remind ourselves that our citizenship is in heaven from which place we expect the Lord Jesus. Be thou faithful unto death! Fight the good fight of faith! Blessed are those who hear God's Word and keep it.

Introduction: St. John is known as the Apostle of love. Both in his Gospel and his Epistles he speaks about love more than do the other inspired writers. He says that God is love. He tells us often how God loved us. And he tells us often that we should love each other. Christians are like little children. Little children must be told frequently to wash their hands, eat their food, do their homework, get plenty of sleep etc. They forget so easily. Likewise, Christians must be told often how they are to live and treat each other.

Theme: JOHN COMFORTS AND WARNS US

I-John Comforts Us

- A-He speaks about God's Word. In vs. 7 John tells us that he is not writing a new message to us. It's the same message which we have had since the beginning. God and His Word do not change. He is the same now as He was when He created the world. The way of salvation is the same as it was when God first announced it in the Garden of Eden. It is a comfort for us to know that the way of salvation in the OT is the same as it is in the NT. At the time when John wrote this book there were false teachers who went about telling people that they could not depend on Christian teachers. But that was false.
- B-He speaks about what God's Word can do. In vs. 8 John tells us that there is something new. He says that the darkness is passing away and the genuine Light is shining. The sinful world is a dark place. Man has lost his way. He cannot find his way back. He is like a wanderer in a dark forest at night with no light. But that has changed. Jesus is the Light of the world. He has dispelled the darkness of sin, death and hopelessness. There is no Light outside of Jesus Christ. His Gospel is preached everywhere in the world. It brings forgiveness of sins and eternal life to sinners.
- C-He speaks about the blessedness of God's children. Vs. 10 reads: "He who loves his brother remains in the Light and there is no offense in him." Love for one's fellow man is a fruit of faith. Gal. 5:22. A believer is like a tree that is planted by the waters. It brings forth its fruit in season. Such a person's sins are constantly forgiven by God's grace. And he is no danger to other people. He is not offensive. People do not fall into sin because of him.

II-John Also Warns Us

- A-He warns us about self-delusion. In vs. 9 we read: "The one who says that he is in the Light but hates his brother is in the darkness until now." Satan and our sinful flesh are so wicked that they can deceive us into thinking that we can live in sin and yet be in the Light of the Gospel. Let such a person not deceive himself! John repeats this warning in vs. 11: "The one who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness." When a person is in darkness he is wise if he stands still lest he fall. But this person who lives in sin WALKS in darkness. To walk in darkness is dangerous.
- B-He warns us about spiritual ignorance and blindness. In vs. 11 John says: "He does not know where he is going." We feel sorry for non-Christians who tell us that they do not know where they are going. A Christian knows where he is going. A self-deceived man, one who lives in sin, does not know where he is going. In fact, we are told that darkness has blinded his eyes, the eyes of his soul.

Conclusion: How are things with you? Are you walking in the way of the Lord? Do you know where you are going? Do you love your brother? Are you an offense to other Christians? Repent of your sins and believe that your sins are forgiven. Now is the day of salvation. Now is the time to prepare for eternity. Do not wait!