

“Our Gospel Response”

1 John 2:1-11

This summer has been an incredible time of Ministry at Collierville First Baptist Church, from our backyard kids clubs and special needs camp to our children's and student's camps. We mentioned this past Sunday that we saw 15 middle schoolers make decisions to follow Jesus, and that's in addition to the eight kids who made the same decision back in June! Just last night, one of our students whose life was changed at camp led a prayer gathering at his school's ROTC camp, and a student came to him and a friend afterward and prayed to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Can we celebrate what God is doing in and through the young people of our church!

**I remember something our camp speaker said,
“Radical change is our response to the gospel”.**

We are truly witnessing a radical change in the lives of kids and students in our church. That change is the result of new life through faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many of you in this room have experienced the same response in your life when you placed your faith in Jesus and decided to follow

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him as Lord. This morning is going to be all about the Christian life. Us living out the change that God has accomplished in us as believers.

To my 23 new brothers and sisters in Christ, this means we will be answering the question, what next? And to my older believers in the room, we will answer the question, what now?

A phrase that God kept placing upon my heart this summer, was every time we hear the word of God preached, we must respond!

As believers, part of our response to the Gospel is obedience and love.

Our passage this morning will be found in the book of 1 John. I invite you to join me there. We will be looking specifically at Chapter 2. As you turn in your bibles, I want to give you some background of John's first letter. The apostle John wrote this letter to believers scattered throughout Asia Minor, which is modern-day Turkey. This letter was a response to a new false teaching that sought to convince Christians that Jesus wasn't really God and that believers needed to be enlightened by some special knowledge to be saved. In 1 John 5:13, the Apostle gives us his thesis statement. He was writing this

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letter so believers could know their salvation was real and that eternal life was their reward.

In 1 John chapter 2, John will give several tests meant to encourage believers that they are following Jesus and to answer the questions: How can you know if you have eternal life? And what does following Jesus really look like? This morning the Word of God will drive us to respond to the answers we find.

We Respond to the Gospel with Obedience and Love!

Read 1 John 2:1-11

Pray _____

1. The Gospel is our Starting Point

1 John 2:1-2 — 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 Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

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In verses 1-2, John brings us back to the starting point of our relationship with God. In fact, John always begins from the same point in his writings.

The gospel is our starting point in our relationship with God, in our obedience to his word, and our relationship with other people.

The gospel is always our starting point. John 1:1-5, 1 John 1:1-4, and 1 John 2:1-2.

The gospel is the good news that though we are all lost in the brokenness of our sin, living selfishly and in rebellion against God, God sent Jesus to be the propitiation for our sins and to provide life, new life, for all who would turn from their sin and follow him.

Romans 6:23 — For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Despite the pain we have experienced and the brokenness that we have caused, you and I can receive forgiveness and experience new life in Jesus. If that wasn't enough, verse 1 tells us that Jesus becomes our advocate with the Father. He is actively interceding for us, praying for us, and empowering us to live out that new life in him.

Our Advocate = The Gospel is for believers

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The gospel is not just the good news that we can be saved; it is the power by which we live out every day!

The Propitiation for the whole world = The gospel is not just for us, it's for everyone!

The gospel that Jesus has made a way for us to be made right with God, experience forgiveness, and new life is what 23 of our students and kids responded to at camp. But not just them. Dozens of other believers in our group encountered Jesus as their advocate too! As they opened up about their hurt, sin, trauma, and need for direction. So whether you need to place faith in Jesus this morning, or have been following him for a long time, church family, we never graduate from the gospel! And we must never deprive someone of this either.

Romans 1:16 — For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

The Gospel is always our starting point! For forgiveness, obedience, and how we love other people. What matters next is how we respond.

2. Obedience is our Response to the Gospel

Romans 12:9 — And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

In verse 3, John introduces the first mark of a believer: obedience. For those living in the 1st century, John was clarifying That you don't need some kind of secret knowledge or enlightenment to know that you have eternal life. As believers, we can know we have eternal life if our lives are marked by obedience to the word of God. Why? Because John tells us that people who have been changed by the gospel will keep God's words. In verses three and four, this is a black-and-white issue. It is the first test of assurance.

Remember, church family, our ability to live for God comes out of God's work in us. Obedience is our response. It does not earn our salvation; it is how we respond to the salvation God has given those who believe. For John, in verses three and four, the

genuineness of our faith is revealed by our obedience. This is what Jesus' half-brother, James, says in James 2:17.

James 2:17 — So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Look back in 1 John 2:5-6. Obedience doesn't just reveal our faith it grows our faith and completes it. The love of God is perfected by our obedience. This does not mean God's love for us. Remember, the gospel is that God has already done everything necessary to save us because of his love. It is our love for God that is perfected by our obedience.

Whoever **“keeps”** and whoever **“abides,”** these are words that speak to the habit or pattern of our lives. Abiding means to take up residence; it's where we hang our hats or kick up our feet. God is telling us that obeying His word needs to be a common part of our life. This is not a one-and-done, God told me 15 years ago to give up smoking kind of thing. **People who follow Jesus are known by their obedience to his word.**

What place does the word of God hold in your life? What command has God been calling you to obey?

If we are not careful, we will delay our obedience to God because it is uncomfortable, and before you know it, years have gone by, and you'll be complaining about how distant God feels. When the reality is, God never left, but your disobedience caused a wedge to form in your relationship. Remember the gospel. You have an advocate. Make it right today. Do not delay, but obey! **Growing my obedience grows my faith. My love for God is perfected by my response to his word.**

The Gospel is our starting point, obedience is our response and...

3. Love is our Demonstration of the Gospel

1 John 2:7-11 — **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. 8 At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. 9 Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. 10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. 11 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.**

Light and love are common themes for the apostle John. Oftentimes, John uses light as an illustration for the love of God. So this old command he's talking about and this new command are both about love. Loving God and loving others is an old command that's been around from the beginning. But it is also new because it has been demonstrated in Jesus, and now It is being demonstrated by us.

Look in verse 9. Why does John say anyone who hates his brother is still in darkness? Because the light of God is the love of God. There is either light or there is darkness. Light can be dim or bright, but there is no dark light.

When Jesus stepped into the world, he became the light of the world by demonstrating true love: **selfless** and **sacrificing love**. Love was God's demonstration...

Romans 5:8 — but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 4:10 — In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

God's love never shies away from confrontation or sweeps sin under the rug. Instead, it is the light that reveals the true source of our brokenness and pain. It is the light that guides us to something better, to hope, joy, and restoration. Notice, that

real love, demonstrated by God, means stepping into the brokenness and offering a way out. It doesn't cover up sin and shame; it offers forgiveness, purpose, and new life! This kind of love, perfected in us by our obedience, is a beacon shining into the darkness of our world. It is rescuing people caught in sin and brokenness. Offering everyone a new life and a new family of believers, loving one another with the love of God. Selfless and sacrificing.

In verses 9 through 11, John gives us two examples. Walking in the light versus walking in darkness. John tells us you can't be both. In verse 9, hatred marks those walking in darkness. In verse 10, love marks those walking in the light. The two can't coexist. Have you ever seen a hateful loving person? Listen to what Paul says about people who have responded to the gospel...

Ephesians 4:31-32 — Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Hatred equals bitterness, slander, and malice. Bitterness is when we cling to the hurt or negative feelings caused by someone else's actions or attitude. Bitterness is really unforgiveness. When instead of forgiving someone for what they've done

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and said, we cling to it and it literally changes the way we feel about them. The problem with bitterness, of course, is that it festers and never goes away on its own. Instead, it produces more sin. Because when bitterness is demonstrated, it leads to slander and malice. Slanders when you want everyone else to see that person the way you see them. And malice is when you want nothing good to ever happen to them. This is the progression of hatred. And it ultimately ends with our desire to withhold the gospel from them.

Why does hatred have no place in the life of a Christian? Because the gospel is our starting point! The offense of our sin and the sin of the whole world far outweighs the hurt you've experienced, and yet God demonstrated his love by confronting the issue and offering a way out.

John Piper once said: *the gospel contains not only the commandment to trust Jesus, but also the commandment, in the power of that trust, to be changed into a loving person.*

Love is our demonstration of the gospel that has changed our lives. **Does this kind of love characterize your life? What offense or hurt have you been clinging to for too long?**

We Respond to the Gospel with Obedience and Love!

CONCLUSION

John wrote to reassure believers that they have eternal life. He did this by giving us two tests that demonstrate our response to the gospel. Obedience and love. If these two marks are missing in your life, you should be asking, am I really a follower of Jesus?

What is God calling you to do today? What is He showing you in His word?

For a brief moment, I'm going to press this issue. Recently, God has been convicting me that in the American church, there is a lot of delayed obedience. People place faith in Jesus and then wait years before being baptized. Young adults avoid tithing like the plague, saying they'll do it after they pay off their student loans. Others say, once I'm retired, I'll start serving God, but then switch their tune to, I already served my time when I had kids.

I've been shocked by how many Christians struggle forgiving other people and choose to wallow in bitterness or get caught up in slander.

What I believe we all need this morning is to remember the Gospel and to ask God to do a real work in our hearts.

Teams come up for Invitation.

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