

## Service Overview

**Speaker:** Ben

**Sermon Series:** Learning To Walk

**Message:** Learning To Walk by Being In-Step

**Scripture Reference:** 1 John 2: 3-14

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## **Service Welcome** *Speaker: Worship Team*

Good morning, Parramatta Baptist Church. Welcome to church today. It is awesome to have you all and joining us, a welcome to anybody who is watching on the livestream this morning as well. We are going to stand and spend some time singing. We have three songs of praise and worship to begin our service this morning. So would you please stand, and let's worship God together.

## **Worship Singing**

**Song:** God So Loved by Andrew Bergthold, Ed Cash, Scott Cash, Franni Cash, Martin Cash

## **Mid-Worship Prayer** *Speaker: Worship Team*

Isn't that good news? Let's pray. Heavenly father, thank you that we can come to you just as we are this morning. We are flawed and sinful people. We have many failures, Lord God. But while we were still sinners, you died for us.

We thank you, Lord God, that no height or depth or anything in all of creation can separate us from your love. And so we come to you this morning, Lord God, in this place as your people who are saved, not because of the righteous things that we've done, but because of your mercy. Thank you, Lord God, that no matter the season, no matter what we're going through, no matter whether we come here today feeling refreshed and energised and excited, or we come this morning in a season of darkness and trial and difficulty, you are always God, forever holy, forever never changing. Always faithful.

Thank you that we can join as your people this morning to praise you. We invite your Holy Spirit here today, Lord God, into our hearts. Open our eyes to see you more clearly. Open our eyes, Lord God, that we may hear your voice. We thank you that we can praise you. Lord God, you are indeed holy forever. Amen.

## **Worship Singing**

**Song:** Holy Forever by Brian Johnson, Chris Tomlin, Jason Ingram, Jenn Johnson, Phil Wickham

**Song:** 10,000 Reasons (Bless The Lord) by Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman

## **Post-Worship Prayer** *Speaker: Stephen Bates*

Our God and our father, we come here and we worship you this morning. And father, we just want to thank you, that despite whatever has gone on in the course of this week, all the things that we perhaps fear or dread in the future, Lord, there is a hope that we have in you. Hope that is found in your presence, in the knowledge of your love, father. This is such a joy. And so, we come and we lift our voices to you. We lift our hearts to you. We let our minds be set on you for this time that we spend together. And we just ask that you would strengthen and encourage us by your word and by the worship, and by just the being with one another as we gather. But bless you. Amen.

## **Art Installation Promo** *Speaker: Jo*

Well, good morning everyone. Feel free to take a seat. It's so good to have you here at Parramatta Baptist Church. And welcome also to those who are watching online.

We have a couple events coming up, and one of them I know a lot of our kids and youth ministries get involved in. This year we are very proud to announce that it's our 10th anniversary of having an art installation here at PBC. Okay, put your hand up if you've ever put something into the art installation. Not that many people, but yet for ten years this has been going on. And this year our theme is, 'Lord of Heaven and Earth.'

Now, I believe that everybody is creative because God made us in his image and he is the creator God. So I would really like to encourage you to put something into this year's art installation, whether it be photography, illustration, painting, sculpture, music or writing. So I'd really like you to think about and pray about what you can put in for this year.

Also we are going to have a wall of photographs. So, I'd like you to also email me a photo from your phone that you have taken of your favourite season. Do you think you can do that? It's pretty easy. And also, if you can email me a little Bible verse to go with it, that would be great. I'll get them printed and we'll make a big artwork out of that.

I'd also like to encourage you to grab an invitation, because the art installation is just the perfect opportunity to invite our non-Christian friends and family and neighbours. It's just a great and easy way to just softly introduce them to who Jesus is. So make sure you grab an invitation and that you're around for those two weeks in October when the installation is on.

And because it's our 10th anniversary, we're going to celebrate. So we're going to have a big opening night. And that's going to be on Saturday the 5th of October, so keep that free. It is the long weekend and it is in the middle of the holidays, but I'm sure most of you will try and come, because there's nothing else to do. So we're talking mocktails, canapés, live music and an opportunity for you to buy artwork. We've got lots of artists putting their artworks up for sale and all the money that we raise is going to the new Hub 2.0 ministry centre.

So if you can remember four things:

1. Create something for the art installation. Come and talk to me about it. It has to be in by the end of September.
2. Send me a photo from your phone that you've taken of your favourite season.
3. Grab an invite. Invite someone to come with you.
4. Come to the opening ceremony with us.

## **Introduction, Announcements & Upcoming Events** *Speaker: Stephen Bates & Ben*

**Stephen:** Thank you everyone. I'm going to keep trying to get through some things, because we have a lot of exciting things coming up over the next few weeks. And so I want to run through some and encourage you to get involved. Firstly, thank you to those who came along yesterday to the women's retreat. Such a fantastic afternoon. And the team who put it together did a brilliant, brilliant job. So thank you to everybody who participated or everyone who was involved in yesterday. It was really good.

Also, a big welcome to those who are new to the of Parramatta Baptist Church. If we don't know who you are, we would love to get to know you and meet you. So try and grab one of us (anyone you see out front) after the service. If you don't get to do that, give us your details, as we'd love to link you in to our e-newsletter. It gives you all the information about who we are as a church and the things that are happening. And if you're not receiving that, we just need your email. So let us know. You can scan QR code up on the screen, or fill in a card or come and have a conversation with us. We would love to meet you.

Also, we have baptisms this afternoon at the 5:30 service. And you're very welcome to come and see that. This will be baptisms number 27 and 28 so far this year. So we're really, really excited by that.

And a couple of things coming up very quickly in the next few days. Tomorrow evening there's a prayer meeting here for Scripture in our local schools. We partner with Northmead Anglican, and every three months we get together with the teachers, both those who are employed and those who volunteer in our local high schools and primary schools. We hear what's going on in those schools, and then we pray for the schools and for our Scripture teachers. It'll be at 7:30, here at here at the church, in this room. And we always love it when people come and join us; there's normally about 12 to 20 of us. And so every person is really welcome. We're really encouraged as we get together and pray.

And then on Wednesday night, we have our worship evening. For those who have been to one of our worship evenings, you know what I mean when I use the word spacious. It's just this beautiful time, around about an hour and a half of just worship and prayer and listening to God. And I just encourage you to come along. If you're a small group that meets on a Wednesday night, come as a small group and engage with it. But it's open for everyone and I just encourage you to come and to worship, pray and just allow Spirit of God to minister into your life. It's just a really beautiful evening.

There are some things coming up that are a little bit further down the track. We've spoken about the Art Installation, and then we've got a young adult weekend away coming up.

**Ben:** Good morning, yes, we have our young adult weekend away or 'YAWA' coming up on October 11 to 13. I did come up a few weeks ago, and I think I mentioned it perhaps. If you're young adult, you're invited, so come and join us. Our registrations for that event are now open, but I just wanted to come and kind of plug it. Maybe you're not a young adult, but perhaps you are connected with people who do fit in that demographic or age bracket of life. And we'd love to have anyone who kind of fits into that range of life come and join us.

It's a weekend full of community, of connection, of fun, as well as loads of times of worship, opening the Bible and all that good, good stuff of community. Anyway, the invite is open, and the registrations are now live on our website as well as on that QR code on the screen.

**Stephen:** Thank you. I think we're almost there, which is really good. Over the last couple of weeks, we've been just reminding the church about our ministry centre. And you will be aware if you've come to Parramatta Baptist Church, that at times it does get squishy, and this service is not where the squish happens, really. The biggest needs that we have are actually on the Sunday mornings in our kids and our youth programs, as well as on Friday nights.

But we also find that throughout the course of the week, we are running out of space as well. So we as a church have grown steadily. You're probably aware of that. We're sitting just under the 800 mark in across our 3 congregations, and over 800 if you include our fourth congregation in Parramatta. So the demand on our facilities is really large. This has been a conversation that as a church we've had since in our church meeting since 2021. We've been speaking about this, canvassing different options, looking at the various options, and in that process, coming to the conviction and the understanding that really, the only appropriate solution in terms of actually providing the space that we need, is to actually make use of everything we have now, plus a new ministry centre which will replace the demountable buildings.

So we've been speaking about this, on and off over the last 3 years now, and we have encouraged people to give to our building fund. And thank you to everybody who's been doing that. I know many of you track that figure, and I even got emails and text messages from people when we cracked \$800,000, and there was such a level of excitement of doing that.

So thank you for everybody who's been giving. It is now 3 years, and so we need to keep moving and we need to actually be making some decisions. And in the coming months, we will come to the church with some proposals, and decisions will be made about the next step that we take regarding that. And so on the way in, you would have received a card, and I want to start with the one that just says, 'pray with us.' Please pray with us. This is just really important. We've given you some things to pray for and also to continue to pray for our ministries.

One of the options for us is to not stifle growth. We're not trying to grow as a church. Can we just make that clear? None of our aims, none of our vision on the wall, says we want to be a big church.

That's not who we are. It's who we've become as God has been at work in people's lives, across all ages. We have just been blessed with people coming to us and growing, coming to faith, being baptised, and we're not going to get in the way of that. We're going to do whatever we can to accommodate that. And so this is part of what we want to pray for, that God will continue to be at work in our midst, but also that we would have wisdom as we accommodate and grow into our future and to provide a place, that for the next 20, 30, 40 years, people can continue to come and experience the life of God.

So please continue to pray. Like I said, there will be a series of meetings over the course of the remainder of this year, where this conversation will continue, along with an invitation to actually make decisions into the next step with that.

And the other thing you can do is to give. There are a good number of people in the life of our church who have been for the last 2 to 3 years giving very generously into our building fund, and we really appreciate this. If this is the first time you've heard about it, then we'd ask you to actually pray about how you might contribute to this. There are a number of ways in which you can give, such as on our website or through the regular offering. It all ends up in the same place, so there's no difference on how you do that.

That was all very much appreciated, but we would love people to actually commit to regular support because that's really helpful for us to understand not only what we have now, but also what we will have going forward. And it's most likely that we will go into debt to do this, but just knowing what level of support we have going forward is really important.

So, if you can give regularly, that's wonderful. If you'd prefer to give a one off gift, that's fine as well, but just allow God to lay it on your heart your response to do this. So that's why those little cards are here. I'd encourage you to take it with you. That would be great. Stick it up on your fridge next to your missionary, put it by your bedside table, or put it in your Bible as a bookmark to remind you that as you open God's word, to pray as well. Wherever whatever works for you, we would really encourage you to pray into this and to really consider what God would have you do in response.

### **Prayer** *Speaker: Stephen Bates*

So, father, this morning, we want to gather with a sense of gratitude. We thank you for all that has happened even over the course of this weekend. But Lord, as we look into the weeks to come, Lord, we thank you for what will take place. Father, we thank you for how over the last few years, we've seen many of our children and young people and young adults come to faith. And we thank you that over this past year, we've really been able to celebrate as they've stepped into the waters of baptism, the public declaration of following you.

And so, father, we continue to pray that lives would be changed, not just amongst our children and our young people and our young adults, but Lord, across all ages. We pray that people who come here seeking to know you, Lord, would find you. And I pray that for us that in our sent places, in our workplaces, in our friendship groups, in our neighbourhoods, Lord, in the conversations that we have with people, that there would be just that work of your Holy Spirit in our lives, speaking into them.

Father, we are so thankful for the way that your spirit has been at work in this place. We ask that we would continue to be so receptive to your work and obedient to what you call us to be and to do. Father, give us a vision for what we can be. Lord, we never want to get to a place of saying, "Well, that's enough. This is who we are." Lord, we constantly want to be stepping into your plans and your purposes. So, father, give us a vision for the future.

Father, we're very mindful, and, Lord, we want to be prayerful of those in our church for whom this has been a hard week or a hard fortnight. Lord, it just seems that for a number of people, this there's been a sense of loss, sudden or unexpected death and concerns around health. Father, we walk in a world that is broken, that is filled at times with sadness. And, Lord, we know that there are those in our church who at times experience that.

And so, father, we give you thanks for all things, and we give you thanks, that in the midst of loss and sadness and grief, that you are still present. And so we would ask for those in our congregation who grieve for those who perhaps feel anxious or lost, Lord, that your presence would be so strong with them now, and that you would fill them with your joy and with your peace.

Father, for each one of us, give us wisdom in the ways in which we lead our lives. Give us a generous spirit towards you and also others. And, father, give us an awareness of the needs around us. And, Lord, just to finish, we do want to pray for those from our church will be involved in Homeless Persons Week today in Parramatta. So just your blessing upon them as they prepare lunch, as they this time serve it to hundreds of people who will be there.

And Lord, I pray that their witness of your love to our community would be so evident. Bless them with the opportunity for conversations and interactions, perhaps with people who are homeless, who have particular needs. But Lord, also with conversations just with the general public as they come and engage in the activities around Homeless Persons Week.

Father, I pray that our church, along with the other churches, as well as the the other organisations who are part of that, Lord, would be compassionate and generous and gracious to those on the margins. And, father, in all these things, we ask that your name would be glorified. Would make all glory be to you, father, son, Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Bible Reading: 1 John 2: 3-14 (NIV UK)**

<sup>3</sup> We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. <sup>4</sup> Whoever says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. <sup>5</sup> But if anyone obeys his word, love for God<sup>[a]</sup> is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: <sup>6</sup> whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

<sup>7</sup> Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. <sup>8</sup> Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.

<sup>9</sup> Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister<sup>[b]</sup> is still in the darkness. <sup>10</sup> Anyone who loves their brother and sister<sup>[c]</sup> lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. <sup>11</sup> But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.

### **Reasons for writing**

<sup>12</sup> I am writing to you, dear children,  
because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.

<sup>13</sup> I am writing to you, fathers,  
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men,  
because you have overcome the evil one.

<sup>14</sup> I write to you, dear children,  
because you know the Father.

I write to you, fathers,  
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men,  
because you are strong,  
and the word of God lives in you,  
and you have overcome the evil one.

## **Sermon: Learning to Walk by Being In-Step** *Speaker: Ben*

Good morning, it's wonderful to be with you this morning. I was just reflecting when Steve was sharing on the ministry centre. This is a good moment to be a part of the life of PBC. There's some really exciting stuff happening. I don't know if you look up there on the wall, when you get here on Sundays, but my quick count was around the 65ish mark of fruit that are on this tree display, which is also celebrating the ways that God is at work in transforming lives.

It's such an encouragement to come into this place, to serve and to know that God is actually doing some stuff here. I wonder what he has for us today. I wonder what he has for us in the coming months and years.



My name is Ben, I'm one of the pastors here, and, we are working currently through a series 1 John. John wrote this letter (probably not too surprising), and he was a man who knew, who ate with, who walked with and ministered alongside Jesus Christ himself.

Now, in the first century, the church faced a bunch of different challenges, and Steve has been unpacking a few of those over these past couple of weeks. One of the significant challenges they faced was people within the church who did not accurately understand who Jesus was, or didn't actually understand what it meant to live out discipleship. And so these people would be teaching false gospel teaching aspects of Christianity and the nature of Jesus that were actually wrong. The consequence of this is it could bring confusion to the church, and it could warp people's understanding of one of the most fundamental things of our faith, and that is who is Jesus Christ.

"And what does it mean," in John's words, "to walk in the light?" This is a theme throughout his book, 'walking in the light.' John uses a few different phrases throughout the book that are kind of synonymous with the concept of walking in the light. Walking in the truth. Disciples. Christians. These are the people who are seeking to live and love like Jesus. The disciples who want to walk in the light are those who want to walk their lives out with Jesus.

And so this letter comes in two different forms. One is as an encouragement and an instruction on how to walk. For those who are seeking to walk in the light, John gives really practical tips and ideas on what that looks like. But the letter also comes as a bit of a warning against those false teachers who would come in, John contrasts walking in the light with walking in darkness. So there's false teaching that is happening. And he does this because yes, it's important to know how to walk, but it's also important to know what it looks like to not walk in the light, because we need to be wary of the teaching that comes from this space.

And so in today's passage, John unpacks three kind of core yet stark contrasting aspects of what it means to walk in the light and walk in darkness. I'm going to pray and we're going to jump in, because, Heavenly Father, I'm really conscious of our need for you. And I can pen words on this paper and speak them at the front. but the stuff that we are going after is bringing ourselves before you and inviting you to form us. And so, Lord, whatever you have in this in this passage today, I pray you would illuminate it and drop it into our minds, into our hearts, into those places they're going to see an outworking that is honouring and glorifying to you. In Jesus' name, amen.

So what does it mean to walk in the light? Well, here are John's words to kick us off. *'We know that we have come to know him (being Jesus) if we keep his commands. Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them.'*

Now, knowing God is kind of synonymous with walking in the light. That's seeking to know God. And John is very quick to dispel any thought that knowing God is a purely cognitive brain kind of thing.

It's not just up here in the head. To truly know God actually requires someone to live in step with God's commands, to obey the word. It's more than just understanding. Obedience actually involves participation. Because when we take part, there's a bunch of things that happen. But I think one of the really important things that happens is we come to know more thoroughly and deeply and meaningfully the things that we are participating with.

So that makes sense. It's true of discipleship. It's true of knowing God. That's so true of life, right? I mean, watching the Olympics, right? Well, I've been watching a whole lot of the Olympics watch highlight reels when I feel like it, but I know there's a bunch of people who are watching Olympics right now, and you can watch the Olympics all throughout the length of time that it's on. You can watch people who are who are running faster than you could ever dream, and people getting gold medals and all of that.

You can know what it's like to be in the Olympics, but let's be real, unless you're wearing a jersey that belongs to a nation and you're representing that nation, unless you're actually running down that track or pole vaulting over that bar, you don't know what it's like to be in the Olympics. It's one thing to be a spectator, but it's another thing to participate in it. Or, for example, knowing how to drive. You can have a theoretical lesson on how to drive a car, but you don't really know what it means to drive a car unless you're behind the wheel.

Yeah, and another one that jumped to my mind was paintball. Because when I was 15, I went and did paint ball, and I thought it was going to be awesome. And I thought I knew what paintball was, but I did not enjoy it at all, and I walked away from that experience going, "The guns don't shoot straight. So what's the point of that?" I could explain to you those things in paint ball, but in order to know what I'm talking about, you actually have to put on those overalls and grab those paint guns and run out into the field like that.

You have to participate in order to understand. Does it make sense? Like, actually participating helps us get a deeper, more meaningful understanding. And so when it comes to God and comes to our discipleship, there is a deeper level of understanding, a deeper level of intimacy that comes as we participate with what God is doing, when we walk in step with him.

A few examples of this. One is as we seek to forgive people around us, people who hurt us. When we do the forgiving, we have a greater appreciation for Christ's forgiveness of us because we feel what it means, what the cost is to forgive someone. How much greater is Jesus' forgiveness for us? When we go out and we seek to serve other people, we have greater appreciation for the service of Christ. Stepping out of eternity into creation and serving those who he made. Participating with God allows a deeper and more intimate knowledge of God. It's not just a spectator sport. It's not just up here, but it's in practice.

And so, as John focuses on what it means to walk in the light, that's part of what it means. And the Lord is inviting you very practically into a more intimate relationship with himself, as you continue to participate with him, or, in John's words, *"As you keep his commands and you obey his words."* Now

I'm conscious of the word obedience. It's often used in church and can carry different feelings. I don't know what comes up to you when you hear that word, but for me, sometimes I picture a slave who is forced to obey their master. It's kind of like some coercive control. But that's not at all what John is actually talking about here. This kind of obedience is as a worship, full synchronisation. The idea is that it's firstly worshipful, so obedience actually comes as a response to God. *"He loves me. He has saved me. And now is as a kind of a response, as an act of worship, now I'm going to be obedient to him in His commands."* So it's a response. It's worshipful.

But there's also this synchronisation element, that I actually want my thoughts and my actions, my ways and my words to synchronise with his. Not that we're finding a middle ground. I'm becoming more like Jesus. That's the point. And so knowing him in worship, fully lining up my life with him, I can't do in my own strength. He very much is needed to enable that. It's a heart of thanksgiving that finds its expression in an obedient life to God.

Compare that with the person who chooses (and now remember, John likes his black and white), not obey Jesus. *'Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person.'* There's an inherent hypocrisy going on to claim that you know him, which has this really deep and rich intimacy, and yet you refuse to allow him to shape how you live your life.

This part reminds me of a parable that Jesus told, a really probably well-known parable. But sometimes I wonder if we remember the stories Jesus told, and maybe less the ways he applied those stories. This is the story of two men who built houses each. One person found a patch of sand and built his house on the patch of sand, and another one found a bit of rock and built his house on a really solid foundation.

And so when the rains came, the storms came, it battered both houses the same. The house that was on the sand got completely demolished. Sand is not a good foundation, right? Not the point of his story, but I'm not saying he thought it was. But that's not the point of the story. The person who built their house on the sand might even know that. They might know that the sand is a bad foundation, but in the story, it doesn't matter what they know. It matters what they do. He chose to build his house on the sand.

Jesus calls that guy a fool, but he uses this story to illustrate how people were responding to Jesus himself. Jesus would draw crowds of hundreds of thousands, and many people would come and they would hear Jesus and what he's teaching about the way he's calling people to live. But they would then go away and like, nothing would change. They wouldn't do anything about it. They might know what they ought to do. They might know what life ought to look like.

They might know that sand is a bad foundation, but yet go and build on it, because they're not actually putting what Jesus is teaching into practice. The foolish person. Compare that with the wise who would come to Jesus here, learn, and then actually go out and live in line in obedience. Knowing God, walking in the light, walking the truth. It's all way much more than a mind game. It's an ongoing process of walking in step with the commands and with the leading in the ways of Jesus. It's obedience to him on the everyday. And this changes, I think, how we engage with church and all the different elements.

I've been in church. I've had so many conversations around what is the purpose of sermons, particularly with young people. But, if we're actually seeking to obey what God is calling us into the way he's instructing us to live, then sermons aren't just about new ideas or just fresh illustrations or just clever, you know, acronyms or whatever. Sermons we enter in with a hunger for how we are going to live in response, what God is calling us to do in response. Does that make sense? It's not just about filling the mind. It's about, "What am I going to live out in response?"

It changes how we pick up the Bible and read it. Not for information solely, although information is good and important, not just for information, but for transformation into the likeness of Jesus. Every time I pick up my Bible in the morning, right, that is the question. "What is God calling me to live out?" Not just, "What is he calling me to know?" So I wonder, does worshipful obedience describe your life and your discipleship? Are you hungry to grow into being more like Jesus or is there a tussle with hungering for more information?

Because I think sometimes that's the more comfortable spot, because that doesn't require as much sacrifice or stretching or challenge. The information is still really important. It's really important to engage with theology and understanding who God is, and that is an act of worship and a powerful one. But if we follow God, then we must be obedient to his leading, which changes how we live.

And can you see how this is helpful in John's context? Remember, there's like false teachers coming in and misunderstanding who Jesus is, and so John is giving them a lens to understand who are the teachers that we should listen to and those that we shouldn't. We should be wary of the ones who come and teach, but we look at their lives and doesn't look like it aligns, right? They're not actually obeying the commands of God. And I think in our context, it's also important, not just the preachers who stand at the front, but being conscious of the voices that we allow to influence us in our life.

This is how we know we are in him. Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did. When I read that, I feel like that's so unattainable. Again, John's black and white. I think, "Yes, there are aspects of my life that look like Jesus, but I promise you, I can give you a list three times as long of things that are not like Jesus, John." He does like his black and white teaching, and I think it's important to know that living like Jesus is formed in us over time, over a whole lifetime.

And if you and those around you right now, you look at your life and to see elements that reflect the nature of Jesus, that's a really wonderful thing. If those sitting around you and yourself would look at your life and you would have fine parts of your life that don't reflect the nature or the calling of Jesus. I mean, it's not a wonderful thing, but it's a realistic thing. That's what it means for us to be growing. And that's the message of the gospel, that you aren't perfect and you don't have it all sorted. And yet, in our brokenness and in our shortcomings, whilst we're still sinners, Christ died for us. Salvation is freely given by the grace and the love of God.

And now obedience flows in relationship. And so, yes, the goal is that we do live perfectly like Jesus. But let's not pretend that any of us are doing that. Our brokenness is way too clumsy to let that happen. And yet the Holy Spirit is forming us into being more like Jesus. And he will. If only we posture ourselves willingly, he will form us.

So what does it mean to walk in the light? It means that we obey the Word of God. And John says, this is when love for God is truly made complete in them. And the Greek here is a little bit interesting and can be translated in a few different ways. It might mean they all work together, though, so it might mean, "God's love for us is complete when we are obedient to him, being that he loves us and he has saved us, and he transforms our life. And the fruit of that is obedience to Christ." So actually it comes down to fulfillment. Does that make sense? That's one way.

Another way is that our love for God is actually complete, and that's not just me saying, "I love God," but showing it because I'm actually living an obedient life to him. Does that make sense? We don't know necessarily which one that is, but either work together and they emphasise that there is a wholeness and a completeness and a rightness as we live lives obedient to God.

So, in today's passage (I actually go to 1 John 2: 27), if you have your Bibles, I'm just going to speed up a little bit, and we're going to move a little bit faster, because John does ground his teaching in both the eternal nature from the beginning of God, and then he also talks about the fresh revelation that comes in Jesus Christ and those who are now faithful to him. He then explores a really core command of what it means to follow Christ, and that is to love one's brother and sister, by this they will know that they are mine.

And this is likely talking to the context for John in that moment that when people teach false things, there's conflict that comes as a result of that. So loving one another is really important, but it's also just the heart of God for us that we live in love with one another. We also read out this portion where John goes and emphasises the reality of what the gospel actually means in the church, and there's a lot of encouragement here. There's a lot. It's not like, 'where do you sit' kind of stuff, this is John emphasizing, "this is true of you," and he's very repetitious, and he talks to the same people several times, and it gets a little bit confusing.

But the crux of it is your sins are forgiven through Jesus. You know him who is from the beginning. You have overcome the evil one through Jesus. You know the father through Jesus. You are strong through Jesus, and the Word of God lives in you through Jesus. It doesn't say exactly 'through Jesus', but it's kind of innate with what he's saying. He's unpacking the gospel and the grace of God revealed in Christ Jesus.

Now we're going to push on to verse 15. 'Do not love the world or anything in the world.' This might be a bit of a shock at first, especially if you know John 3:16, as we're being told to not love the world. But in John 3:16 it says, 'God loves the world.' How did those two marry up together? Sounds like a bit of a conflict. But, once we come to understand it, it actually does work together.

So, in John 3:16, the love of God is a redemptive kind of love, because his love moves him to self-sacrifice and that brings people into eternal life. But here in this passage, the love we are warned to avoid is quite different. It's a selfish kind of participation. Don't love it so that you take part in it. John isn't saying that we are superior to everyone who is in our world, and our spheres, our workplaces. That's not what he's talking about. When he uses world here, he is very much referring to the wickedness and the evil and the darkness as a part of our world. That's what he's talking about.

And John's specific examples are, 'lust of the flesh, the hunger and the longing, the cravings of our body, the lust of the eyes, the longing that we have for things that are around us, that we just want, and the pride of life. It's the kind of self-worship and self-praise and self-adoration. Each of these three things rejects Jesus as Lord. And so John says that we can't call Jesus Lord and then devote our attention and our pursuits and our love toward these things. He puts them in opposition to each other. 'If anyone loves the world, love for the father is not in them.' John's saying these two things are just not compatible. This is as black and white as he gets.

Depending on what your affiliation is, it's like wearing a sports team jersey. It's claiming to follow one team, but wearing the jersey and cheering for another. Yeah, it's being in New South Wales, but showing up to the State of Origin wearing a maroon jersey for Queensland, right? It's incongruent. It doesn't make sense. There's a division of loyalty that's going on there, loving the world *or* loving the father. It's a matter of allegiance to whom and to what we're actually desiring to attach ourselves. Because you can't have both. And in Jesus words, *'No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate one and love the other, or you'll be devoted to one and despise the other.'*

So what does this mean for us? Well, it means to walk in the light results in us being obedient to the word of God, as well as serving God first in our lives. And there's no better master than God. What does it mean for him to be the master? What does it mean for him to be the one that we serve? First, it means that his voice holds more weight than any other. It means that it means that his truth and his light is going to guide my life. It means that I give my hopes and my dreams over to him. It means my morals and my standard of good aren't defined by my feelings or by the world, but are

defined by God. It means I serve him. That's where my time and my energy goes. He is a good king. No better king exists. Absolutely gracious, enduringly kind, profoundly esteeming of people.

So, who is your master? The world? Yourself? Or God? If we were with our youth, we'd be asking 'Who's wearing the crown?' Who's making the calls? What do you do with your time? That's up to you. What you do with your body is up to you. What you decide to pursue is in your control. The master of your life is going to probably dictate much of this, though. It's yours to decide.

But if you do desire to walk in the light, I wonder if John's words ring out. *'Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the father is not in them. For everything in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life comes not from the father, but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.'*

Walking in the light results in obeying the Word of God. It means we serve the master God first. And as we read on, John starts talking about the Antichrist, which feels like a little bit of a left turn, but it's not random in the context because, in 1 John, we've been talking about the different people who are part of the church and who were a part of the church splintering off. And John says, *'The antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come.'* In other words, there is one Antichrist figure that seems to be coming at some point, but in this moment, there are antichrists already here.

This is John talking in his time. And so these people, not as much pretending to be Jesus, even though that might be the case, but at the bare basics, they are sharing a false gospel. These people are perpetuating lies. You know, global myths today and very much in the church of John's time. And yeah, like as I read this, John doesn't seem too anxious. Like that's the feeling I get. He doesn't seem too anxious.

He does share about the anti-Christians and how they came from the church. And he does seem to be like a bit of heartache there for him, but he does share a little bit of his confidence though in response to this. And such confidence comes in this part down here where it says (he's talking to the followers, the faithful, those walking in the light), *'You have an anointing from the Holy One, from God, and all of you know the truth.'* This anointing, it's mentioned a few times there, and the Greek word used for anointing here is 'chrisma', and it's referring to not the process of anointing, but the object used in the anointing process.

So it's not talking about the fact that you were anointed, but it's more what was used to anoint you. And so commonly oil would be used to anoint. That's what it's talking about. But John's probably talking about something slightly different here in light of what Jesus actually experienced when he was anointed. And we can read in Acts 10, or even just go look at the gospels, like Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit. And that's what John is probably referring to here. That every believer,

everyone walking in the light, has received an anointing. Everyone shares in the anointing that is the presence of God through the Holy Spirit in each of us.

And the role of the Holy Spirit is to reveal Jesus to us and to transform us into the likeness of Jesus. Why would John mention this anointing here in this moment? Because of the impact of truth. Remember, there are false teachers happening and in the church at the moment. And for John, this knowing that the spirit is in the believers, those who are walking in the light is an assurance and a hope because the people will not be so easily led astray. They have what they need to discern what is truth from God and what is lies from people.

And I like what Romans 12 picks up on in this. It feels like an increasing ability to discern what is true. It's talking about, *'you will be transformed (these are Paul's words) by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and to approve what God's will is his good, pleasing and perfect will.'* You'll be able to test and approve what God's will is. You'll be able to see truth from lie. It becomes clearer as we walk in step with the spirit.

So what does that mean for us? John tells us this at the end, *'But as his anointing teaches you about all things, remain in him.'* The Holy Spirit will reveal truth, will unveil lies, what they are, and will transform us into the likeness of Jesus. And yet we have the decision of how we remain in, how we live, in how we walk with God.

I wonder how willingly we offer ourselves to him. How quickly do we bring our questions and our concerns to him? How often do we offer our decisions that we have to make to him? How often do we ask the Holy Spirit to be forming us because we need him? What does it mean to walk in the light? It means obeying the Word of God.

It means serving God first, and it means remaining in God. Each of these is a really big life decision that we have the power to make in everyday situations. And that's where the test will be if we will seek to walk in the light, not just conceptually, but actively in the everyday. May we be those who walk in step with the truth and the light of Christ Jesus, with his empowering.

### **Post-Sermon Prayer** *Speaker: Ben*

Thank you Jesus that you desire for us to know the truth, and that you give us the means to discern what is from you and in what is from the world. Lord, I pray your blessing over everyone here. Would our affections, our gratitude and our thanks be to you for all you've done for us. Lord, thank you for revealing Christ Jesus in our lives. Thank you for what Jesus has done on the cross and is continuing to do today. We invite you as your people gathered in your presence, in your name, to come in to form us. Show us a little what it means to live obedient lives to you. Show us what it means to live in step with you, not just in the big things, but in the everyday. There is no better king than you. And so we worship you with our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.



## **Worship Singing**

**Song:** King of Kings by Brooke Ligertwood, Jason Ingram, Scott Ligertwood

### **Post-Worship Prayer** *Speaker: Stephen Bates*

Father, we praise you. Father, son, and Holy spirit, thank you for your presence with us. Thank you for all you show us. Reveal yourself to us Lord, just the challenge for us now to walk this week in worshipful obedience, to walk this week with this knowledge of your lordship over our lives, our submission to you as Lord and Savior.

Father, thank you for the promise of your spirit given to us, just that reminder that we remain in you. Lord, by Your Spirit, enable us to walk this week out well, bringing you glory not only in what we do, but also in our thoughts, our priorities, the way that we use all that you give to us, that they may glorify you. Amen.

### **Conclusion** *Speaker: Stephen Bates & Reuben*

We bless you. Thank you everyone so much for being here. Thank you, Ben, for unpacking God's Word to us. Thank you to everyone involved in the service today. You guys are amazing.

We always pray at the end of our service. We love praying for people. And so if there is something that you would love prayer for, maybe it's something difficult that you would love God to intervene in, but maybe you just want someone to pray God's blessing and just the richness over here. We'd love to have that. Also, if you if you struggle to hear from God and to receive from him, I just really want to invite you to come up for prayer this morning to hear God and to be led by his spirit, to be filled with him. That's what it requires to walk in step. You have to be able to hear God. So if you struggle with that, please come forward for prayer.

### **Online Outro** *Speaker: Kathy Bates*

Hey, thank you for joining us online today. We pray that you have been blessed and encouraged. And if there is something from today that you would like us to pray into with you, don't hesitate to let us know.

If we haven't met you, we'd love to hear from you. And you also welcome to come and join us in person as well. To know more about our church, please go to our church website and you can also find more details about who we are through our newsletter. And you can subscribe to that through our website as well.

God bless you and may you have a great week.

*\*Names have been changed to protect privacy.*