**Walking in Christ**

**The Word**

Read together 1 John 2:3-11

**The Big Idea**

For John, true knowledge of Jesus involves obeying his commandments and loving one another. It is only as we walk in fellowship with Jesus over time that we become the kind of loving people God planned for us to be.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. If love is to be the defining mark of Jesus’ disciples (John 13:35), then an important question to ask ourselves is this: “am I becoming a more loving person?” But to answer that question, we must answer an even more fundamental question: what is love? Discuss together this question: how would you articulate a definition and/or description of love?

2. Consider the three inadequate types of knowledge of God that don’t necessarily transform us into more loving people (Point IV. A. below). Which of those three do you find yourself most often defaulting to? What would it look like to approach that one in a way that would be more transformative?

3. On Sunday, it was argued that our neediness is the thing that gets in the way of us loving well. As you consider your own life and others’ lives, what do you think is the primary thing that gets in the way of people loving well?

4. On Sunday, we talked about what it means to be “In Christ.” What about that idea was new to you or particularly impactful?

5. Practically speaking, how can a person pursue and experience their “in-Christness” throughout an average week?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction

A. John uses the process of “amplification” to make clear what authentic life in Christ is vs. inauthentic life in Christ

B. People can “claim” (see 1:6, 8, 10, 2:6, 9) all sorts of things, but it’s how we actually live our lives that reveals the quality of our faith

II. The connection between knowledge of Christ, obedience to his commands, and love for each other

 A. John 15

1. “I am the vine; you are the branches. Remain in me and I will remain in you. (15:4-5)

2. “If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love (15:9-10)

3. “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. (15:12)

 B. 1 John 2:3-11

 1. We have come to know him (v. 3)

 2. Obey his commands (v. 3-6)

3. Love one another (v. 7-11)v. 9-10: love

 a. Love is an old command (you heard it from the beginning)

b. Love is a new command (it is part of the new world/kingdom God is forming in Christ)

C. So an authentic life with Jesus rests on two pillars: obedience and love

 1. And in the end, it’s really only one pillar: Love

 2. Love sums up and fulfils all the commands (Gal 5:14, Rm 13:9-10)

3. “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (Jn 13:35)

III. What if the primary criterion we used to measure our knowledge of Jesus was our love for others?

 A. Am I becoming a more loving person?

B. “The journey with Jesus is a journey towards becoming people of compassion, people who forgive, people who care deeply for others and the world, people who offer themselves to God to become agents of divine grace in the lives of others and their world--in brief, people who love and serve as Jesus did.” –Robert Mulholland

 C. How would that priority impact how we approach everything in our spiritual lives?

IV. What kind of knowledge of God turns us into more loving people?

A. Inadequate knowledge of God that doesn’t necessarily turn us into loving people

1. Theological knowledge

= a mere intellectual pursuit of theological ideas

Consider the Pharisees

2. Cultural Christian Practices

= going to church, small groups, prayer before meals, tithing

 Consider Old Testament Israel

3. “Spiritual” experiences

= Mountain top experiences, emotional highs

Consider the Corinthian church

B. A more adequate knowledge = Walking in fellowship with Jesus over time (v. 5-6)

 1. Walking “in Christ”

 a. Analogy: walking “in Mickey”

b. When we put our faith in Jesus, we are united to him, we are “in Christ” which means that we enjoy the benefits of all that Christ is and all that he has accomplished because we are in him.

c. Consider the spiritual blessings we enjoy because we are in him: chosen, adopted, forgiven, given grace, made alive, seated in heaven, objects of God’s kindness for all eternity (see Ephesians 1:3-14, 2:1-9, 3:14-21)

d. We have been given “fullness in Christ” (Col 2:9-10) and it is that fullness that changes us into loving people

1) Our neediness is the thing that keeps us from being loving (needing to be right, acknowledged, in control, accepted, secure, respected, etc.)

2) When we are living in fullness in Christ, we are freed from neediness, free to love well and focus on the other’s needs.

2. Walking “as he walked”

 a. Observing Jesus’ life closely

b. Stepping into the kind of life he lived, but doing that not independently but in dependence on Christ and “in Christ”

c. As we step into his kind of life, we discover his ways are truly best

V. Conclusion

 The journey is about accepting Jesus’ invitation to “come and see” (John 1:39)