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2 John 1:4-6 - Rejoices with the truth

2 John 1:4-6: “I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment to do from the Father. Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.”

So, John writes a letter to the lady. John, with gentle but firm resolve, clarifies to the lady what true love is. Scripture tells us that we're to teach the truth in love, but sometimes that's hard to do. I want to get the point across and once again, as Josh was so clearly stating, we don't want to compromise what the truth is. Sometimes in the zeal for truth, you're not too loving in the way that you convey it. This is a very loving letter. All the way through the letter, you can feel the concern that John has for this woman, for her children, and his love for them all. There's no doubt about it. Nevertheless, he's very strong in what he says, and what he's already established in 1 John is what this love and what this truth is all about, and where it begins. Really, as we went back to the first epistle in 1 John, we realize that it begins with being truthful. It begins with being transparent about who you are, and obviously about who He is; that God is the good one and we're not, and you have to admit that. You have to come to a place of repentance, thinking differently about it. If in fact there's not a genuine change, then there can't be real love, and so that's what we're looking at as we go in this.

Quite frankly, there are a lot of things that, I believe, make a mother happy. One of the things that make her happy is she has all of her kids around the table, and they're all together, and nobody's fighting. They seem to be happy, and if you were to ask the mother, “Does that make you happy?” She'd go, “It makes me very happy.” But John doesn't put it that way. He says, “Do you know what makes me very happy? To hear that your children are walking in the truth. That's what makes me happy.” He's trying to convey to her that this is what needs to make you happy because if you have the wrong things trying to make you happy, then you're never going to be happy. But if you focus on the right things, then you will find happiness. As my father oftentimes said, “Happiness is something you trip over on the road to obedience.” And you begin to find the happiness that we find is in doing what God tells us to do. It is interesting within this passage, some of the words that are repeated. One of the words that's repeated is “commandment.” You wouldn't normally think that the word “commandment” would actually be in a phrase of loving, and yet that seems to be at the focus of what this love is about.

As we look at this letter, what we begin to see is the gentle resolve that clarifies to this lady what true love is; and he begins to explain that truth. Corinthians tells us in 1 Corinthians 13, we've already stated a number of times, but just remind you, in verse 6, that love rejoices with the truth. In that phrase that is given to us, "the" is the definite article, which is telling us that there is only one truth. Jesus makes it very clear, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Now, we can put this another way, because we also understand that God is love, stated already in 1 John 4:8, and then you drop on down, and he repeats it again. So, the emphasis is that God is love, and the question is, "How do I know what true love is?" and you would have to go to Jesus. He goes, "I'm the way. I'm the way to true love. I'm the truth about true love, and I'm that which brings life out of the love of God." So, what we understand is that love is not defined capriciously by individuals, it's not a personal thought. Oftentimes, we think, "Well, let me tell you what love is." You have no idea what love is.

John makes it very clear, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us." So, we didn't know love, and we cannot know love apart from God. You can have your definition of what you think love is, but it's not love, it's not truth. The same thing is true with consensus and voting. People can say, "This is what we believe." But it doesn't matter what they believe. You don't define love, God does, and God is love. So, you can't know this truth without Him. We keep coming back to this fact because we all have programed within us what we perceive to be love, and you have to lay that down. Repentance is about changing your way of thinking, and you have to set this aside, and go, "You know what, I've been thinking wrong all along." Now, if you never said that, then I'm not sure if you've ever been saved because the requisite of salvation is you have to admit that you've been thinking wrong; and though your definition of love may be quite "loving," it's still not the love of God. If it's not the love of God, it's not love.

So, the clarity of this is actually brought out in the letter, and his great emphasis is in that. Now, I want you pick up with me in verse 4, as he talks about joy because here again, we start off with, "what makes you happy?" And the right things have to make you happy. In this phrase, he actually conveys, "I'm exceedingly joyful about this." But there is a caveat within the text, and that is it seems as if not all the kids are in. The way the phrase is, "I was very glad to find some," the Greek word that is interjected there is the word "ek," which means that there's a separation. There's some that are, there's some that are not; but he was very glad to hear that there were some that were walking in the truth. In fact, this is repeated, if you look in the 3rd epistle, he says in verse 4, "I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth."

Once again, the emphasis is going to be on the truth. So, his phrase in 2 John 1:4 is,

"I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth."

Now, another word that's going to be repeated in the passage is the word "walking." So, you'll see that in verse 4, you'll see it again towards the end. Of course, he'll bring it in throughout, but the emphasis is going to be that we walk, verse 6,

“And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments.”

What he’s talking about within that word “walk” is a pattern or a way of life. So, “*peripateō*” is dealing with this is something that you decided to make your conduct of living. This is the way that you live life, and this is consistent with the character of Christ; you’ve made this a walk, a pattern. The point is that we all do “loving” things from time to time, but what he’s talking about is somebody’s pattern of life is like Christ in their walk. So, they’ve mirrored or imitated Christ consistently, this is the way they live. So, when you think a certain way, when you do a certain thing, it’s just natural to walk in love; or as Paul will say, “Do all that you do out of love.” So, that’s the way you live. That’s the lifestyle. It’s not just that you did a loving thing today, it’s that you walk lovingly.

(2 John 1:4) “I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment to do from the Father.”

Now, he makes it very clear that this love that we have and this truth that we’re following is not something that we’ve conjured up, but it’s something that actually has been commanded. It’s very interesting here again, to emphasize this word is referring to something that is commanded to do, an injunction that is given that is expected to be carried out. There’s a lot of commandments out there but God actually expects you to carry this out. So, when God tells you to love one another, for instance, He expects you to do it. It’s not an optional thing, and that’s what I think is interesting about the word “commandment” within the passage; that he’s really wanting to clarify that this is not an optional thing, this is something that you must do because your Father told you to. That’s where it really begins. Pretty interesting. Like children growing up, do we really know what love is? We tell our parents when we’re little, “we love you.” But we only love them as long as they’re doing something for us, or giving us something, or we get our own way; then, when we don’t get our own way, we don’t love them anymore. We tell them, “I don’t love you anymore.” Our parents looked shocked. It begins to display the surface mentality of a child. So, I think it’s great, the way that he puts it here, your Dad’s teaching you how to love. You don’t know how to love, but He’s going to teach you how to love, and you need to do what He tells you to do. You’re going to find this love by this obedience.

So, he’s going to emphasize “commandments.” In fact, if you look in verse 5,

“Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment...”

Now, he emphasizes the word “new” there in the sense of unfamiliar. You’re not unfamiliar with this. And let me emphasize this, that he’s going to use the word at the end of this verse, “beginning.” That “You have had from the beginning” is telling us that not only is this not an unfamiliar commandment, but it’s something that has been purposed from the foundation of the world. Of course, we know that God is immutable, He doesn’t change. I mean, “this is something new.” You can’t say that with God. This is something that has always been and is the truth of His love, and this is the way He’s always loved. Now, I know people go to the Old Testament, and go, “God wasn’t too loving in the Old Testament.” God was just as loving in the

Old Testament as He is in the New Testament, but the love of God was manifested through His Son on that cross. And now you go, “Now I know why He did what He did in the Old Testament. Now I understand why He did it the way that He did it, but He’s always loved me. He’s never ceased in that love.” So, he’s wanting to emphasize we’re not talking about a new fad, we’re not talking about a new way of thinking, we’re talking about a different way of thinking from you, and that which has always been established because it is God. So, nothing new here. You can’t come to God, and go, “You pulled a fast one on me.” He didn’t. This isn’t new.

(1 John 1:5) “Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another.”

Now, if in fact you are a believer, we are the “one another.” Scripture is not saying, “love the world.” In fact, it actually says, “do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world.” John has made this very clear, that the world hates you, he says that in 1 John 3:13,

“Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.”

We know that we live in hostile surroundings, and we know that to such a degree that there are going to be those that even perhaps act like they are one of us but are not. As John will say in 1 John 2:19,

“They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.”

So, what’s he stating? Well, obviously, His love is abiding, His love is continual, and where love is interrupted, you go, “Well, that wasn’t true love.” If it wasn’t steadfast, and it wasn’t continued, then it wasn’t real love to begin with. People can say what they want to, but once again, God defines what love is, and God is faithful and He’s true. Love is always according to the character and the nature of God. That is also true of righteousness. In other words, you can’t be unrighteous and say that you’re loving, and that’s what John emphasizes throughout 1 John again. One of the great signs that you are walking in the love of God is that you’re going to be doing the right thing for everybody around you.

So, back into 2 John, if you look in verse 6,

“And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.”

Now, this is what’s very interesting about this passage, that he’s wanting to clarify to the lady what love is. Why? Once again, because women tend to be more emotional, and they think in those particular realms. You want to be giving and you want to be caring and nurturing and all these wonderful things, which are all clearly a part of love, but love has to begin with what God says it is; and I can’t allow my feelings to define what love is. That would be unloving. So, his phrase in verse 6 is, “and this is love, that we walk,” that our pattern of life, the things that we

do, that the conduct in which we live in is according to His commandments. We do what He tells us to do. This is an act of love. "Oh, I love you, but I don't feel like doing the right thing." That's not love. You can call it whatever you want to, it's not love. Love is doing what God tells you to do because you know that God loves better than you do. And there are a lot of times that God is telling me to do things, and I'm going, "Ok, from my perspective that doesn't look loving." And I could just hear the gentle voice of the Spirit of God, "Do it." He's more loving than you are. I do it, and I go, "Wow, He's more loving than I am." I would have ruined that person. I would have caused havoc. I would have caused pain or suffering.

"And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it."

There's a lot of emphasis in this, but I want you to note the word "commandment" is peppered throughout this little paragraph which is making it clear that the commandment is the truth itself; that truth has to be the foundation of the relationship. What is very interesting to me, is that as you go into Scripture, truth is described as, well, I'll let you read it. Found in Ephesians 6, we've all read it, in fact, I remember with the kids, "*put on the armor of God,*" and one of the things that you put on is a sword. Do you have any idea what the "sword" is? Truth. It's a sword of truth. In fact, the way that it reads, "take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." You say, "It doesn't say truth in there." Oh, it does because as Jesus puts so clearly in John 17:17, "Thy word is truth." And by the way, John has already stated in 1 John 5:6, the Spirit is truth. So, the text is actually telling us that true love has a sword. Did you notice that? True love is actually wielding a sword. John doesn't want us to forget why Jesus came. If you'll back up into 1 John, he wants you to know in chapter 3 why Christ came; just mark it 1 John 3:5,

"You know that He appeared in order to take away sins."

Why did He come? Ok, so, yes, He wants to forgive you, but did you forget that He wants the sins gone? In fact, if you drop on down to verse 7,

"Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;

(1 John 3:8) the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to..." here's the sword, "destroy the works of the devil."

Why did He come? To destroy the works of the devil. With what? A sword. What's the sword? Truth.

Look with me in Matthew 10, Jesus clarifies this to the disciples as He calls them to, I would say in a way, pledge their allegiance to Him. Is it possible to know love apart from God? No. Is God the only way? Yes. Is that divisive? Yes! People are going to be very upset about this message. You're going to say that you have the message of love, and they go, "Well, I don't feel you're very loving because you told me I can't do wrong things."

Matthew 10:34 reads this way,

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”

“The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword.” (Hebrews 4:12) It’s pretty interesting the way it’s described there.

(Matthew 10:35) “For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW;

(Matthew 10:36) and A MAN’S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD.

(Matthew 10:37) He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

(Matthew 10:38) And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

(Matthew 10:39) He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.”

What is He talking about? Well, clearly, what He’s talking about is that love cannot be a selfish act, and by doing only God’s bidding, you’re acting in accordance with divine love. However, those that are selfish around you are going to perceive you as an enemy because you bear the sword of truth, and nobody likes truth when they’re doing the wrong thing. Nobody.

That’s the picture, if you look with me in John 3. Once again, what a wonderful passage, especially thinking that Jesus is talking to this pharisee, and he doesn’t have a clue what love is at all. And Jesus turns, and He says, “Do you know, Nicodemus, that God loves world?” Think about that, He’s telling this to a pharisee. A greater message couldn’t be given to a pharisee than that phrase. So, we read in John 3:16,

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

(John 3:17) For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world,” or “condemn” the world, would probably be a better word within the text, “but that the world might be saved through Him.”

So far so good, right? Don’t stop at John 3:16.

(John 3:18) “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged.”

We don’t like that word “judged.” The Greek word in the text is “*krinō*” which makes reference to “separation.” You get this interesting picture of a sword just cutting things and separating. That’s what judgement does. Judgement is when a decision is made, and it separates the truth from the lie, separates light from darkness; it separates fake from real, but it separates, and it is

that which makes the decision right. So that a jury comes together, and the judge says, "We want you to come up with a verdict." Well, verdict comes from "veracity," which means truth. So, what the judge is actually asking is, "We want you to discern what the truth is." You have to separate all the lies and all the darkness, and bring in light and tell me what the truth is; and that's what judgement does.

Scripture is telling us that when Jesus comes in the room, He's like a sword because He begins to separate. As you've done through the Gospels, you notice that there are some people that really, really like Him, and there are some people that really, really don't. Did you notice that as you were going through the Gospels? So, even to the point of towards the end, a lot of the people wanted Him dead. Why do you think that is? Well, Jesus explains why that is, if you look in the passage, it says,

(John 3:19) "This is the judgment," we'll put it another way, "and this is the separating."

This is the separating, "that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."

(John 3:20) For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."

Who wants to be convicted? Who wants the things that they're doing wrong to be exposed? Yet, Ephesians 5 tells us that we as believers, that's the way we actually live our lives. Christ will say in Matthew, "you're like a light set on a hill," right? So, what is it that caused people to be mad at us? Really, fundamentally, all you have to do is the right thing and people will be mad at you. Just keep consistently doing the right thing, and you're going to have a lot of enemies. So, it says,

(John 3:21) "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

The point is that we have this thing called truth, and if in fact you love it, then you're drawn to Christ because that's who He is. If in fact you hate it, you repel Christ, and He becomes a divider of such. See, this is why you go all the way back to Genesis, and the story of Genesis is actually a story of redemption because the earth was formless and void. So, "tôû bôû" making reference to our life was meaningless and empty, but when the Spirit moved in our lives and light and darkness were separated, then clarity came into our lives. And as Scripture says, the day star shown in our hearts. So, the act of creation is actually the Gospel being proclaimed and laid out. What we understand in this passage is that separation of light and darkness is that which Christ does, and it's what truth is all about; it's distinguishing, it's separating. The very act of separating then creates enemies. Anytime you distinguish; if you walk up to somebody, "That's wrong," "That's right," they hate that; and that's what we're talking about within the passage.

I really appreciate Josh, as we were going through the study in Mark. If you'll turn with me to Mark 8, I was reading, then at the end Josh says, "Is there anything that you want to say?" And

I'm going, "I'm still assimilating this." In Mark 8, the whole chapter is just a marvelous chapter, and I say it's marvelous because it starts off with the emotions of Jesus, and it says that He felt compassion. The initial question that I ask you is, what excites you? What makes you happy? Another way of putting it, what moves you deeply? John says, "Nothing moves me more deeply than somebody being truthful, and walking in accordance with the truth of God, not their own truth, which isn't truth at all. The truth of God, nothing brings greater joy. I've often seen this in my own family when I'd seen one of our kids, and they've really made a genuine decision, and I go, "Man, I just couldn't be happier about that." I mean, it's not necessarily a jumping up and down thing, but it's this joy inside that is irreplaceable. It is interesting that the word that he uses within the text deals with feeling so well off that you're extremely blessed. So, you just have that great feeling, that "I'm extremely blessed." How wonderful it is to know that our kids are doing the right thing. There's nothing greater than that. If I put anything in front of that, then I really doom them, and it's really, very unloving. In fact, quite frankly, it's very selfish, and one of the reasons why it's very difficult for us to see truth is because we're just so much in this selfish mode. Have you ever noticed that? So that when you're so focused on "what about me?" that God reveals something to you, and you go, "I can't see it. Don't see it. How's that going to affect me?" So, you miss the point.

This chapter starts off that way, Jesus feels compassion for the multitudes. The fact of the matter is these people have been following Jesus around for now three days, and they haven't eaten. Most of us could get hungry if we miss lunch, but we're looking at three days, and they've probably been walking in the hot sun and I'm sure there's a lot of factors involved. Nobody said anything. Not one of the disciples go, "Don't you think we ought to feed these people?" Not one of them, but Jesus did. Jesus says, "I feel compassion for these people." And there's just something in my heart that goes, "I think He really loves people." Now, the rest of us are going, "Can you just get rid of them?" and you look at us, and you go, "I don't think they like people." Because people can be pretty bothersome, and you look at a multitude in this setting, 4,000 people with all their kids and everything else. I mean, that's a mob. So, I'm not feeling the love, but Christ is, and His compassion is poured out. He says, "I can't send them home. They're going to faint on the way home." Now, He's actually thinking what their journey is going to be like going home. I'm just saying, "Get them out of here." "How?" "I don't care. Donkey, jet, doesn't matter to me," but here He is, and He says, "They're going to have trouble going home." Of course, the disciples go, "We're not going to find a place that's open this time of day or has the food enough to feed this mob." So, He turns, and He says, "What do you have?" And they go, "Seven loaves." He goes, "Ok, get them to sit down, and we'll feed them." So, He feeds them. Now, it's in the context of this that some Pharisees come out, and they begin to seek for a sign. They want to see a great sign, and really, they are an interesting picture of a self-serving, self-righteous people; that's who they are. So, they come demanding, and they're not seeing the wonder of the miracle. They're not caring about the wonder of the miracle. They could care less about the people. They only care about "how does this affect me," "what's the benefit in it for me," and "can I get more out of this?" Well, Jesus warns them

within the passage, He goes, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.” (Mark 8:15) Now, both of them are selfish and self-serving in different ways. Some on the self-righteous scale, and others on the extravagant scale; but the point is that they’re both very self-righteous and self-serving in thinking of themselves.

In the midst of all this, the disciples then get together in verse 16, they look at each other, and they go, “Oh man, where’s the bread? We forgot the bread. We don't have any bread...Where’s the bread?” Now, Jesus had just done a pretty big miracle, but “the bread.” Now, they’re missing the point; and the question is, “Why?” And it’s because they are only thinking of themselves. Jesus comes back, and He goes, “You have eyes, but you didn’t see what was going on?” Which is telling us that the truth was evident; truth is self-evident, right? I mean, Lazarus comes up from the grave, “Is he alive?” Yes. Then He must’ve raised because he was stinking, and now he’s walking around. So, the evidence is there, see, and you can’t deny it; but the pharisees want to kill him. “We got to get this guy out.” I mean, He just fed 4,000 people, you can’t deny it.

(Mark 8:18) “HAVING EYES, DO YOU NOT SEE? AND HAVING EARS, DO YOU NOT HEAR? And do you not remember,

(Mark 8:19) when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?’ They said to Him, ‘Twelve.’

Correct, then He says,

(Mark 8:20) “When I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?’ And they said to Him, ‘Seven.’” He goes, “You don’t get it?”

(Mark 8:21) and a lot of us are going, “I don’t get it.” I want you to understand what “twelve” is, “twelve” is the twelve tribes of Israel, this is the twelve apostles, this is twelve men. He says, “Why do you think you picked up twelve baskets?” “Umm because you care for us?” Right! There’s twelve of you, right? How many baskets do you have? Twelve. Why do you think I did it seven the next time?” If you’re familiar with what seven is all about, and clearly if you’re not, you ought to go into Isaiah 58 starting in verse 13, and it will clarify to you what the sabbath, “seven” is all about. But this is what it’s about; you’ve got to stop thinking your own way.

You’ve got to stop pursuing your own selfish desires because if you do, you’ll see clearly; if you don’t, you’ll never get it. You would have to say, “Well, why should I see things clearly? Why should I trust God?” Because He cares for you. You didn’t see that He took care of you at the very beginning? What, do you think He’s not going to take care of you? Stop thinking, pursuing your own desires. The condition of your heart will always affect your receptivity to the truth. And if you’re focused on “what about me?” whether it’s a mother, “What about me? What are my kids going to do? Why don’t they love me?” or whether it’s about anybody, if your focus is on you, you’ll never get it, and you’ll never see the truth. If the truth is not in your life, there will never be any love. There will never be any comfort. There will never be any peace because

you're holding onto something that is a lie. But I tell you, if God is doing the work and your trust is in Him, you have an anchor for your soul and for your family's soul.

Now, the very next picture in this text just really opens everything up; and if you look with me, it reads this way,

(Mark 8:22) "And they came to Bethsaida. And they brought a blind man..." Now, why do you think a blind man at this juncture? "Having eyes, do you not see?" Right? Ok. They entreated Him to touch him.

(Mark 8:23) "Taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, 'Do you see anything?'"

Now, I just want to emphasize that spitting is never really a good thing. If you were to go back to Numbers 12:14, Deuteronomy 25:9, even Job will make reference to the fact that it's an act of shame. In other words, it's conveying shame. Now, I want to emphasize this point too, that if Jesus is doing it, it's a good thing, it's an act of love. So, the point is that Jesus is conveying to this man that there was something that he did that was shameful and he needs to come to terms with it. He needs to see whatever that is. Now, what's interesting about this is He then turns to the man, and He says, "Do you see anything?"

(Mark 8:24) "he looked up and said, 'I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around.'"

Scripture is telling us that the law, truth is good. If somebody's doing something wrong, they need to be told that they're doing something wrong because it's very destructive to them and to everybody. To say, "Oh, I didn't see it" or "it didn't happen," there's no healing there. You've got to call wrong "wrong," and say, "that's wrong." And you need to feel shame over it. The beginning of salvation is repenting, and repenting, as you go back to 1 John 1 is admitting that you've sinned. So, you come before God, and you say, "Ok, I've sinned." Now, if you don't say you've sinned, you're lying; but if you will admit this, that's where salvation begins. It begins with shame. I feel ashamed of myself. Oh, I know it's a "terrible" word to use nowadays but people need to feel ashamed of themselves, and that's an act of love. Every time my parents corrected me, they said, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself," That was an act of love; that wasn't cruelty. For them to disregard what I did, and say, "Well, it's no big deal," that would have been cruelty. Shame is a part of love, otherwise Christ wouldn't have done it.

If you continue to read, what does shame do? Shame gives you the ability to visually see. In other words, "I now see, I now understand. I did something terrible; I did something horrible," but it can't change the heart by itself. So, it opens our eyes to the things that we've done. The way we interact with just living in the world of guilt and shame is "I see people, but I see them as inanimate objects; they're hard, indifferent, cold, there's no relationship." All that shame can do is bring you to that point. That's why Christ came, and said, "I came to fulfill the law." So, it wasn't the law that's going to be put aside. There's two sides to the sword, you have to admit that you did wrong, that's shame; the other side of the sword is grace.

If you look at the passage, it reads this way in verse 25, "Then again He spit in his eyes." It didn't say that. Does your say that? Mine doesn't say that.

(Mark 8:25) "again He laid His hands on his eyes..."

Now, that's forgiveness and that's grace. That's not something you earned, and if you come to Him realizing that "I have not any merit to come before You. There's no reason why you should be forgiving." But He will, He'll touch you at that moment, and He'll open your eyes.

If you look at the text, "Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and began to see everything clearly."

It's a two-edged sword. We like to say, "Well, you only use this part of the sword." Use both parts of the sword, that's what love is. You were wrong, but there is forgiveness, there is peace, there is hope.

It is interesting by the time you get in chapter 9, Elijah and Moses are appearing with Jesus. Scripture says that Peter was kind of nervous about the whole ordeal, and he goes, "We're going to build tabernacles for all three." The unfortunate thing is that they saw the law in some way just as superior as the grace of God, but it's not. Oh no, Christ is the one, and how wonderful it is because He brings that true healing that helps you see everything so magnificently clear. But if in fact, you are just thinking about yourself, and this is the way the chapter ends in verse 35,

"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it."

Isn't that what it says? What was the problem with Peter? Why was it that Peter told Jesus, "You cannot go to the cross"? What was the problem? If you look at the end of verse 33, "you're not looking after God's interest, but your own Peter." If you think about it, when Peter takes Christ aside, and he says, "You're not going to the cross," and you go, "What a loving guy that is." And Jesus goes, "That's not loving, that's Satan." That's Satan saying that something that you have to suffer for is not good, and that's not true. There are times that you're going to let your kids suffer. There are times that they're going to have to suffer for doing what is wrong. But it is in that that good will come. Satan will say, "No suffering! No hardship! No pain! No getting after anybody! Don't use "shame." Don't use that word!" But it's part of the sword; and that sword is truth. Did you do something wrong? Yes. That's truth. Is there forgiveness? Yes. That's truth. Look, I know it begins to separate, and people go, "I can take part of it, I can't take the other," and people begin to separate. It's going to do that.

"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it." (Mark 8:35) For what does it profit a man if you gained whatever you want to gain, whatever you think you're going to gain but you lose your own soul? (Mark 8:36)

(Mark 8:38) “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words,” that’s truth, that’s the adulterous generation. I can just hear him with the lady, “If you really want to love, keep them in truth, don’t compromise truth. And let them hear the second part of that truth, God’s grace forgives, but you have to admit your sin.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your word, and we give You thanks for truth that speaks to our hearts and convicts our souls, and most of all brings us Your wonderful salvation. How wonderful it is that we can proclaim this truth. For God so loved the world, and this is what judges the world. How terrible it is, Father, that we think that we’re the loving ones and how that separates us from You. But the truth is You’re the loving one. We did wrong. We come before You, and we find forgiveness.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed, that’s what I want for you, just to find forgiveness. Forget about saving face, forget about looking good, forget about what other people are going to think, forget about all of that. Let’s just talk about what’s true. Do you have sin in your life? Confess your sins. Admit it. Let the word of God separate this darkness out of you. There are going to be things in your life that have to come out in very painful ways, but don’t try to dodge that. Embrace what God is doing because He is saving your soul, and realize that in the midst of this, He’s your Savior. You can turn to Him, call upon Him, and He’ll answer you.