



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Affirming the Agape Church Family

Bible Reading: 1 John 2:7, 10-14

1 John 2:7, 10-14

7 Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word that you have heard. ... 10 Whoever loves a brother or sister lives in the light, and in such a person there is no cause for stumbling. 11 But whoever hates another believer is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has brought on blindness.

12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven on account of his name. 13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young people, because you have conquered the evil one. 14 I write to you, 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 people, because you are strong and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. (NRSV)

I. John gives assurance and encouragement to the believers

- A. Could be that after the previous section, they might have had some uncertainty about their salvation
- B. No thought of examining themselves or testing themselves
- C. Addressing all the believers as children
 1. Including women even though they are not mentioned
 2. Affirming that their sins have been forgiven
 - a. Implies they confessed, were forgiven, have fellowship and hence are walking in the light
 3. They know the one who is from the beginning – Jesus Christ
 4. They have conquered the evil one
 5. They know the Father – implies fellowship with the Father
 6. They are strong
 7. They have the word of God remaining/abiding with them
 8. We need words of affirmation

II. Various Metaphors Describe the Church is Scripture

- A. Church as an assembly (gathering)
- B. Church as a community
- C. Church as a family
- A. Contrast between 1 John & 1 Tim. regarding leaders, authorized teachers,
 - B. Paul in 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus
 - 1. Hierarchical structures
 - a. Husbands as overseers in the family and the church
 - b. Men with teaching roles
 - c. Role of older women and widows
 - d. Role of younger men
 - 2. Appointment of positions – elders and deacons
 - 3. Setting up for the future
 - C. Johannine writings
 - 1. No social structures or roles
 - 2. No appointment to positions; no positions
 - 3. Women and slaves not mentioned – doesn't mean they are excluded
 - a. Women are given more prominence in the Fourth Gospel
 - b. Father's and young men – metaphors, not a gender thing
 - 4. Organic – shepherd (John 10), vine (John 15)
 - 5. In John 21 Peter is not given a position but told to shepherd and feed
 - 6. Believing community is like a family
 - a. John is to be the “son” to Mary
 - b. Believers are called “children”
 - c. Different ages are mentioned (fathers, young men)
 - 7. Egalitarian
 - 8. Is John reacting to hierarchical structures?
- D. Conclusion: There are two main models of the church – institutional and familial

III. The church in 1 John is like a family showing love to one another

- A. “Children” refers to all the believers
 - 1. Everyone has their sins forgiven – v. 12a
 - 2. They all know the Father -v. 14a
- B. Fathers refers to those older in age
- C. Young men refer to those younger in age
- D. Living in fellowship with one another and God, and loving each other – a sign of walking in the light

E. No thought of stages of growth

- 1. If “children” refers to all the believers, then there are only two categories (fathers and young men)
- 2. No thought of advancement
- 3. We need all ages in the church