

**THAT YOU MAY KNOW FINAL MESSAGE**  
**That You May Know - I John Series - Week 11**  
**Dan Burrell and Brad Milks**

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**Dan:** Good morning Life Fellowship. It is good to be back home. I have been out of town for a couple of weeks. I went home to see my mother and my sisters in Missouri for a couple of weeks. When I got home I immediately got a bad case of diverticulitis, which I have fought off and on for several years. That was not a convenient time as I was looking forward to being back with you last week.

So it has been a busy time of the year and many of our folks are out on vacation. Pastor Ben is in Florida for a family reunion. Pastor Jason also happens to be in Florida for some family time, and several of our Praise Team members are on vacation as well. I know some of you are watching us right now on the Internet while you are on vacation, and we are glad that you have joined us for our live cast as well. And it is good to see you guys that are here as well.

These are unusual times - we say that every single week, but at the same time God is working and doing things all around us. Just last week we had three funerals in the church for instance. You know for about the first ten years of our church's existence I think we only had two funerals. And as our church has aged and broadened we expect we will have more of those.

One of the funerals last week was for a man named Michael Kruger who was very active in several of our ministries. I mention his name specifically because the last time I was up here speaking I mentioned that someone was on Hospice care and I did just kind of a call out to him. He immediately texted me from his bed and said, *'I just want you to know that I pray for the services every Sunday as they are going on, and I am praying for you. Who else can I pray for while I am lying here?'* And today he is watching this service from Heaven.

Those are the kinds of stories behind the scenes sometimes that we have that we don't always get to share, particularly in this season because of things that are going on, and there really are a lot of things going on. We have something coming up I believe on August 21<sup>st</sup>. Remember we addressed for a couple of weeks the issue of the body of Christ coming together across racial lines and so forth, and there is a group in the church that has taken that up and there is going to be a concert coming up. So watch your emails, watch Facebook and social media for the details on that. Obviously we still have social distancing in regards to the number of people we can have for that, but that is something that I hope not only you will participate in but that you will bring someone that doesn't look like you for that as well.

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Brad knows we are making plans in the staff meetings of what it will look like when we can re-open Kid Life, and how we can help the parents who are now in a position of home schooling. So we are just trying to look at everything a little bit differently right now, and we thank you for your patience and for your faithfulness.

We are finishing up our fiscal year this week, and I just got a financial report yesterday. And for a lot of ministries this is a really, really tough time. But it speaks to the faithfulness and the maturity of the folks that are a part of this church because you have made it possible for us to finish in the black this year. And quite frankly we just didn't anticipate that happening when the pandemic began in March. So thank you for your faithfulness in giving.

Now let's get to why we are here this morning as we are going to be wrapping up our series on I John Chapter 5. We have invited Pastor Brad to be with us this morning and we had Pastor Justin speak a few weeks ago. You know all of our pastors are teaching the Word of God throughout the week, sometimes it is here and sometimes it is online, and sometimes it is with small groups. And we want to make sure that you know that all of our pastors are engaged in ministry at a deep level.

One of the things that Pastor Brad, as the pastor of discipleship working with our Life Communities, has been doing since the pandemic began is on Thursday nights he leads an in-depth Bible study. And that is when they dig deeper into the passage that we have been studying on Sunday mornings.

When I grew up you went to church Sunday mornings for Sunday school and morning services, Sunday night for services, Wednesday night for Bible study, and Thursday night for visitation. We had something going on almost every day of the week, but today we have to be a little more creative because of the nature of our culture.

So one of the things that Brad has been doing is he gathers a group online and they break into small groups, they have Zoom calls, and they have different people come in and take the Scripture and break it apart even further. If you want to be involved in that please make sure that you see Pastor Brad and he will get an invitation to you that you can click on and download a little program. And then you will be ready to join in.

The themes of the book of I John are myriad, but we have been emphasizing only a few of them in this study. One of them has been that you can know Jesus Christ

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through your relationship to Him and the practical experience that relationship creates. You know that every cause has an effect, and the cause of loving God, the cause of being part of His family ought to be having a dramatic impact and effect on us in a practical level.

The second thing is this - genuineness of faith or authentic faith is an indication that you are a believer. I John Chapter 5 and verse 13 says: “*These things are written that you may know that you have eternal life.*” Too many Christians live paralyzed lives of doubt constantly because they slip into this state where they ask themselves, ‘*Am I good enough that God still loves me? Am I doing it right?*’ And they look at God as their accuser rather than as their comforter. Satan is the accuser; God is the comforter. And He wants us to see the things in our lives that point out that we are His and He is ours.

The third thing is this - the by-product of a relationship with someone who loves us is that we love others. And loving one another, whatever the circumstances, is indicative of those who are part of the family of God. So those are the three things we tried to point out.

And Brad, since you are the discipleship pastor, I kind of wanted you to kick this off this morning as it is something that you do regularly. Virtually any morning of the week at the crack of dawn Brad is having breakfast with folks, he has people in his office, and he has all kinds of groups going on that he disciples. Brad, I know this is your passion so how do we effectively disciple people today to experience Christ personally and authentically? And in particular how does discipleship occur in light of everything we are going through right now?

**Brad:** Those are great questions. I think I need to take those things separately. So discipling the next generation - what does that look like? I think that with discipling the next generation there are a couple of things that we have to get right. The first thing of utmost importance is the gospel itself. The gospel is under attack around the world and specifically in the Western culture. And if we get the gospel wrong, it messes up everything else.

When we look at I Corinthians Chapter 15 Paul talks about what the gospel is. He says: “*According to the Scriptures that were written, we know that Jesus died for our sins, He was buried and then according to Scriptures He rose again from the dead.*” So we see from the gospel that Jesus died for our sins, He took the sin for us, and as a result we are able to have a relationship with God if we repent from our sin and follow Him as King.

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So when we see that happen we search to understand some of the things that the gospel is about. It is about Jesus, it is about the glory of God. It is not primarily about us but it is about the glory of God.

So with that when we look at I John specifically and in Chapter 2 I am going to read verses 24 through 27. John writes: ***“Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He made to us - eternal life. I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. But the anointing that you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as His anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie - just as it has taught you, abide in Him.”***

So this thing about our relationship with Jesus is about abiding in Him, and that gets to the heartbeat of discipleship. Discipleship - if we want to break it down into a sentence is about the intentional process of becoming like Jesus. It is intentional. We want to hear from God every single day through His Word and through His Spirit. So God is speaking to us through these things, but we have our part in which we respond to Him.

So that kind of brings us to the next generation. What do we want to get right? We want to make sure we get the gospel right and we want to make discipleship right. According to the Scriptures discipleship is not simply giving information, which is what we have done for the past 50 or 60 years. We gave people information and hoped they could figure it out. But with Jesus it was about obedience. With God it is about obedience to Him out of our love for Him.

Then I want to talk about it practically in our time of isolation. For those of you that are comfortable with meeting in homes, we can still do that. For those who want to meet online we can do that as well. And when we look at discipleship from a practical standpoint from the Word we realize that there are four strands of discipleship. We have our daily relationship with the triune God - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The second one that we are most aware of is our gathering where traditionally we have gathered together to glorify Jesus through worshipping with one another and submitting ourselves to the Word of God.

The third one is in groups where at Life Fellowship and in Life Communities we are pursuing Acts Chapter 2 and verses 37 through 45. And then the one that we don't know a lot about is theme gender with three to four people where we are

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diving into the Scripture really deeply and discussing what is really going on in their lives. And we are talking about that word that we don't want to talk about which is sin. *'What sin am I dealing with?'* and also *'What sin am I able to overcome and have victory through the power of the Holy Spirit?'*

And so I think if we get the gospel right with the next generation, if we understand that discipleship is obedience out of love for Jesus, then we can start flushing those things out practically. So if you have three or four of your close friends that you want to gather together to go into life deeper, let us know. We train people how to do that. Or if you are interested in starting a Life Community online or in homes, we can train people how to do that also.

**Dan:** Excellent stuff. And I just want to double down on this and emphasize this - there are churches all over the country trying to figure out how to do church during this time and how to meet the needs of the body. The Summit Church under J. D. Greear over in the Raleigh area runs about 12,000 in all of their campuses, and they practically can't meet together in any meaningful way. So they just announced last week that all of their congregation, 12,000 strong, are going to be doing like a house church model, or a Life Community model where they come together in small groups.

And often you know there are unintended consequences that are a blessing, and I think Satan thought *'Aha, I'm going to go after the churches,'* and the unintended consequences now is instead of having one pastor preach to 12,000 people there are going to be hundreds and hundreds of people studying the Word of God so that they can teach to the people that gather in their homes. And that is going to be good for everybody.

And that would be good for us as well. So I want to say to all of you Life Community leaders that you need to get in there and dig deep. If you need tools we are here for you. If you need training we are here for you, so don't be afraid to ask. You don't have to have a degree from a seminary. I will let you in on a little secret - I don't have a seminary degree. I am just telling you that. I teach at a seminary, but I teach practical theology, not systematic theology. I am an educator by background, and if a country kid from Missouri can do it, then you can do it too. And you will probably do it far better, so don't be intimidated, and don't let Satan put doubts in your mind. You have the Holy Spirit and the Word of God and that is all you need. So let's gather together. If you are not ready to teach a Life Community then go and support another one. Ask questions, do your study, and watch what God does in your life.

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**Brad:** I think that is good. And when we look at discipleship we need to understand that your body is only as healthy as you are. So when we look at the body of Christ we all need to be spiritually healthy. And so it starts with us and it bleeds into the body at large.

There are two key words in I John. They are 'knowing' and 'loving.' So why are these words important for us to remember? And are there any special applications for them in light of what is currently going on in our world?

**Dan:** Brad, I think this is one of the things I hope that you will take from this study that we have been doing - knowing and loving. Knowing has to do with the head, and loving has to do with the heart. This is one of my favorite things of the New Testament, and one of my favorite things of John. We talked about abide, abide, abide and where else do we see 'abide' by the way? It is in John Chapter 15, so if you haven't studied John Chapter 15, you haven't really studied 'abide.' So these themes kind of jump out at us in Scripture, and in I John loving and knowing are the two key things.

Brad and the staff team know that I am the dude on staff that is constantly looking for clarity. I don't like surprises. I don't like unknowns. I need to know what we know, what we are to act upon, and what our foundation is. That is the 'knowing' part. The problem with people like me is that we will work on this part and fail in the other part. I know other people who neglect this part for the 'loving' part. All they think we have to do is just love. As long as we are sincere they think it is all that matters so let's just get out and love each other and it will all work out.

But you know there are a lot of sincere people who wake up in hell because they sincerely believed that their works were enough, they sincerely believed that if they did these religious rituals that is what God wanted, they sincerely believed all kinds of things that were incorrect. Knowing and loving, understanding the Scripture and applying it Biblically are essential parts of becoming more spiritually mature.

And here is the other thing - knowing inspires loving. And if you haven't ever done a deep study of Romans Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8, I have to tell you that of all the studies I have ever done in my life, those chapters are what brought me out of a really legalistic mentality. There are three words there that correspond here and they are - that we 'know' and that we 'reckon.' Now I like the word 'reckon' because in the country we used to say, '*You reckon so?*' And reckon simply means '*I have thought about it and reached a conclusion. I have reconciled it in my mind.*'

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In other words you meditate on it, which is a process to get to a conclusion. So there is 'know, 'reckon' and then 'yield,' which means to submit. Now here is the tricky thing, and Brad, you are far more spiritual than I am so you probably don't struggle with this, but sometimes I know the right things but I don't feel like doing the right things. So how am I going to do the right things - it is when I yield. And I need to yield to what I know, and to who lives within me. And when I yield to Christ, the Scripture says, "*The love of Christ constrains us.*"

And when it says 'constrain' don't think of it in a negative term. What it does is protect us from doing the stupid things that in our own wilful selfishness we sometimes are bent on doing. Getting people told, having our own way, expressing entitlement, these things that come out of a prideful nature or the hidden sins of our heart, the love of Christ keeps us from doing that nonsense.

And this is what John was saying. He said if we know God we are going to love people. And if you love people it shows that you love God. Over and over we see the connection between knowing and loving God and how we treat others. And I think in this period of what is going on we are personally being challenged in this area.

**Brad:** Yes!

**Dan:** It is forcing us to stop and to re-evaluate. I would just use this moment to encourage all of us to do that. I am a pretty strong headed, strong willed guy and I don't like people telling me what to do, and the older I get the worse it gets. So I have to tell you I am not a big fan of the mask. But I understand it, and I have determined that here is my opportunity to show that it doesn't have to be Dan's way all the time. And this calls me to account. I hate wearing a mask. I hate going in the store and having to wear one. My breath stinks so I don't know how you all put up with me. I never realized how bad it was. Plus my glasses steam up.

So that is how I can look at it, and frankly that is how I chose to look at it for quite some time. But then I stopped and thought about it and I said, '*I understand the constitutional issues, I understand we are Americans and don't want to be told what to do, but before I am an American I am a Christian. And before I am Dan, I am a part of the body of Christ.*' Now I am not trying to guilt trip anyone; everyone has to work out their faith through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and I am not lecturing anyone. I am just telling you what God has done in my own life.

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You have areas in your life that God wants to perfect you in as well. They may be different than mine because most everyone's is different. But when we identify those areas in which we resist the Word of God, loving Him and people, and putting things in proper priorities, when we study those things, God will refine us and knock off our rough edges. For me it is pride and self-will every time. For you it may be something else.

I am not trying to tell you what it is, I am just saying if you will study the Word of God, and love God first and best, what He will do is work in your heart as you love Him and take away your rough edges that will interfere with your testimony and authenticity before Christ.

So Brad, let's keep going. In the second chapter of I John there are four tests to check in our own hearts to see whether our faith is authentic. They are - obeying Jesus' commands, loving others like Jesus, not loving the world, and not falling away or abandoning the faith. Which of these tests is the most needed today, do you think, Brad?

**Brad:** I think the greatest, and the one we have always struggled with the most is obedience to Jesus. I think when we look at the Old Testament we see that God chose Israel out of love. Then He told them how they needed to live in His kingdom. So God in the Old Testament expected, because of His love relationship with Israel, they would respond in love to Him and live into His good kingdom.

And we see the same thing in the New Testament. In Luke Chapter 6 and verses 46 through 49 Jesus is finishing up the Sermon on the Mount and it says this in verse 46: *"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you."* And He said for those who do what He says they will have a strong foundation. That is a Brad Milks paraphrase. And those who don't do what He says will have a weak foundation in their lives.

So when we look at this I think obedience is the greatest thing we need right now, because we always view that a little bit as legalism, like God expects something out of us. But it is not because He is a horrible master, it is because He wants us to have a great love for Him.

Then if we fast forward a little bit chronologically we get to the Great Commission. And the primary command of the Great Commission is to make disciples. And we do that in three ways - we do that by going to the nations, we

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do that by baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and we do that by teaching them to be obedient to the commands of Jesus.

It is interesting when we look at that word for obedience it means to persistently, continually obey Jesus. So do we obey Jesus just because He told us to? Well, yes, but in reality we need to obey because of our deep love for Jesus because He took the wrath of God that was for us. He has taken our sins, and out of love we are to respond and live in obedience to Him.

It is interesting when we look at this word keep that Matthew uses. John uses this same word in the same way over twenty times in the gospel, in his epistles and in Revelations. So I am going to read a couple of those to you just out of the gospel of John. *“If you love me you will keep my commandments.”* Chapter 15 and verse 10, *“If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love, just as I kept my Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”*

Chapter 2 talks about this too, that if we keep His commands. Chapter 3 in I John says: *“Whoever keeps His commands abides in God and God in Him.”* Chapter 5 as well talks about keeping God’s commands. So I think when we look at all four of those tests, if we get the obedience right, if we are obedient to Jesus out of our love for Him, we are not going to fall away from the faith, because of how much we love Him. We will love one another, because our love that is from God going out into the body will help us to love one another.

Lastly, we will not love the world. John uses the world here as a world system. So we are not going to love the world system; we are going to pledge our allegiance to Jesus who is our King, Lord and Savior, and we won’t have an issue falling away from the Word. If we look at the banners on the stage behind us you will see they say, *‘God, let us hear from you today through your Word and through your Spirit. And help us to be obedient to you out of our love for you.’*

When we look at this aspect of obedience it is really driven by our love for Jesus. And I think if we can get that right, those other three will fall right into place.

**Dan:** Absolutely. I think we are afraid to talk about obedience sometimes because there seems to be almost an overreaction in our culture and in Christianity to the accusation of legalism. And you understand legalism is more about motivation that it is about obedience. When we obey God’s Word, we honor Him and we glorify Him and we invite blessings.

**Brad:** Yes.

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**Dan:** And that's not legalism. Legalism is when we are obeying God to set ourselves apart as holier, to earn our salvation, or to be pride filled. And having grown up in deep, dark legalism I can tell you those were my motivations. They absolutely were. They are ugly, but if I am going to be honest, those were the large part of my obedience.

Also the motivation was fear, because I viewed God incorrectly. I served Him out of fear, and yes, we should fear God, don't misunderstand me, but the greater motivation should always be love.

**Brad:** That's right.

**Dan:** We ought to obey God because we love Him. And loving Him makes obedience so much more wonderful, so much more joy filled, so much less of a burden as well.

**Brad:** Yes, out of our love. We see the apostles are dealing with their last days, and John is really getting at this. We see falling away, we see the mention of the antichrist and other end time things happening. So we are here now two thousand years later in the midst of a pandemic, and as every generation is dealing with what they believe is the end time. So what lessons about the end time should we be taking from I John in light of this moment?

**Dan:** This is an important aspect I kind of wanted to hit on this morning. If you look at I John Chapter 2 and verse 18 John says this: ***“Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.”*** And this Scripture was written two thousand years ago. So John was convinced that this was the last days. Well, was he wrong? No, because there is an important doctrine I want to make sure that you understand that we believe, as Bible believers, and that is what is called ‘The Doctrine of The Imminent Return of Christ.’

We believe that Jesus is coming again, and He can come at any time that He so desires and wills it. We know that none of us know the day nor the hour. And yet there is almost like a cottage industry of evangelical Bible believers who want to turn last days into this. I won't say cult, but it is like a groupie set. Since I am older than many of you, I have grown up in evangelical Christianity, and all my life I have watched people chase the antichrist. Back in the 70s it was Henry Kissinger. Some of you are old enough to remember that, but it was Henry Kissinger as the antichrist.

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And the antichrist system was Communism. Then we had the date setters. I grew up in a dispensational church that believed in the Rapture, and eschatology was something that was interesting to me in those days. But by the way, the older I get the lighter I hold my eschatology. I used to be a Pre-millennialist, now I am a Pan-millennialist. By Pan-millennialism it means it is all going to pan out whenever Jesus decides it is going to pan out. (*Laughter.*) So that is how I approach it.

While I may still lean one direction or the other, and I know some of you lean my direction, while others of you lean a different direction which is okay because it is not an essential doctrine, as long as we believe that Jesus is coming again. But with that in mind, I would just offer a word of caution to keep your eye on the prize, and the prize is doing the Great Commission until Jesus comes. Obeying the word of God until Jesus comes.

I am not saying this to be kind of cruel, or cold, or whatever, and please don't misunderstand me, but please stop sending me all these videos that you get off of YouTube about how the mask is the mark of the beast, and all of those things. God bless you, but I am not watching them. They just mess up my email. Literally, I have been getting dozens and dozens every week.

**Brad:** That must be why you are not answering my email. (*Laughter.*)

**Dan:** That is why I am not answering your emails. People ask me when is Jesus coming back and my answer is when He is good and ready. However, I want to say this. The Scripture speaks of the antichrist and the Scripture speaks of antichrists. And those ought to be something that we are paying attention to. And what are antichrists in terms of a person or in terms of a system? It is anything that runs contrary to the Word of God. It is anti-Jesus, anti-Christ, anti-truth, and it is everywhere. And it is not in just one political party, it is not in just one nation, and it is not in just one generation. John saw it and we can see it too.

And what we need to make sure is that we view things that are happening around us through a Biblical worldview that is based in Scripture. So are these the end times? They are every bit as much the end times as they were for John in that the antichrist, this spirit of deceit that is Satan, is alive and well and active and tries to distract us right now. And we need to see it, and we need to respond to it by teaching truth, living truth, obeying truth, sharing truth and not being rattled.

Again I am old enough to remember that 1979, 1980, 1983, 1987, 1990, 1993, 2000, 2007 and 2208 were all specific years in which Christ was supposed to

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return. You know what my concern is? It is that at some point we hear these dates over and over again and then we are not ready because we think it is just another date being predicted. He may come before we finish this service. He may come in a thousand years, but whenever He does come let us be found faithfully sharing the gospel, knowing the Word, and obeying the commands of Jesus. We will never regret that.

What are you going to do if you know the date? You are going to repent of your sins if you know He is coming back this afternoon. I have a good idea - let's repent of our sins anyway. Are we all going to sell our stuff and move to a mountain? You show me that in Scripture, but every once in a while there are a bunch of kooks that do that, but it is not from Scripture. He is not going to just come to one area or whatever.

Let's step back and know that God has been very clear on the things He wants us to do, while on other things He has left us with a shroud of mystery. So those are interesting and they are mysterious, and because they are mysterious that makes them even a little more interesting. And sometimes it is easy to get distracted by mystery and then we neglect the concrete. And the concrete is this - we need to be people of the Word, sharing the Word everywhere we go with anyone that we can.

We are out of time already. I hate that, but here is what we are going to do. Brad and I are actually going to sit down and do another podcast this week and we are going to continue this conversation a little bit further. I hope you are listening to our podcasts, as we have a good time with those. We are also getting a lot of feedback from across the country and even around the world. So I hope you will listen to Life Talks.

I want to ask you one last question. I have been watching a lot of stuff on the internet since the internet has come alive with all the church services and I have seen a lot of bad doctrine and I have seen a lot of false teaching.

**Brad:** Yes!

**Dan:** I see a lot of people who I think their hearts are in the right place but they are teaching things that are wrong.

**Brad:** That's right.

**Dan:** So how do we respond to that? What do we need to be really careful of as we are digesting a lot of the stuff that comes our way?

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**Brad:** I think that is the biggest thing John talked about as well. We need to be testing the spirits. And the way that we test the spirits is with the Word of God. So if we are hearing things that might not sit well with us, we need to look at the Word of God and ask if this aligns with His holy Scripture. And then from there allowing the Word of God to penetrate into whether it is false doctrine, and to reinforce correct doctrine so that we can live out what is true and correct with the love of Christ's help. I think that is the best way to do it, to allow the principles from Scripture to guide our life.

**Dan:** And the way that you know when a line is crooked is to have a straight line ---

**Brad:** A plumb line.

**Dan:** --- to have a plumb line. And that is why this Bible is called 'The Canon.' In fact one of the doctrines is a 'closed canon.' In other words it means that we have all the Scripture in one place, and it is closed. We are not to add to it, and we are not to take away from it. The word 'canon' literally means 'plumb line.' It is how we discern.

So how am I supposed to discern the coming election? It is through the Book. How am I supposed to know how I am to treat others during a pandemic? It is through the Book. How am I supposed to discern when I lose my job and my finances are a mess because of something that was completely out of my control. It is through the book. How am I supposed to treat others who may see the world differently, or look different, or act different? It is through the Book. That is our plumb line.

I hope that is always the message you get out of every series that we do. I hope that when we share teaching that you don't see that as the main course; you see that as the appetizer. We can't do it all in thirty or forty minutes a week and for it to be enough for everyone. That is where you have to get in the Word yourselves. Study your Bible, get in your Life Communities, and dig deep.

If you ever need additional resources please contact Brad, Justin, Louis, Jason, Ben or myself - any of the pastors. I hope I didn't leave one out but I usually leave someone out, but any one of the pastors will be glad to help you. Or Kristin Milks, Rebecca Peters ----

**Brad:** Chuck of Life.

**Dan:** --- Chuck of Life. Chuck Shallish is our Men's Director and we call him Chuck of Life and there is a big joke behind that. So you can contact any of these

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people, and our elders as well. Our current elders, or elders who are on sabbatical would also be glad to help you with resources. Our prayer and our hope is if you would like to get involved on Thursday nights that you will contact Brad. Listen to our podcasts and go back through and read I John again. I did that this week just to be reminded of what I had already studied, and I found another series of sermons just looking for a place to happen just by re-reading it again. You can never go back and come away empty when you read the Scriptures.

We are going to dismiss here in just a minute and I want to say a couple of things as we do. Again, I know this feels weird to have church this way, and it is weird, but hopefully it will feel more normal. And about the time we get back to feeling normal it will change again. I am so frustrated, because I am a planner and we usually have our sermon series planned out twelve to eighteen months in advance, and none of that is possible during this time. So the Lord is stretching me and teaching me some things. And at the same time He is also telling me to shut up and trust Him, to be faithful in the small things and in the daily things.

And I urge you to do that also. Go back to your spiritual disciplines. Will you pray? Will you study the Word of God? Maybe you haven't taken communion since the pandemic began. We have communion available right over here and there is another station set up out in the lobby.

If you would like to pray with someone just ask someone to do that with you. Some of you are going through some tough stuff and maybe you want to pray with someone. Pastor Louis is going to be up here and he has a prayer team. They will always be available out front as well. Call us during the week and we will come to your house, or you can come here. We want to pray with you.

Maybe you are here and you are not a regular Life attender but you want to know what it means to have a real authentic relationship with Christ. Please come by and talk to Pastor Louis, or see Brad or me after the service and we will be glad to share with you what the Bible says about knowing Christ, obeying His Word, and understanding what it means to have the security that comes with being a part of His family.

Maybe something else is going on in your life and we want you to know that we are here. We may not be as visible because of the pandemic, but we are here and we love you, and we miss you big time. And we can't wait until we can interact again more normally. Until then don't let that keep you from being around God's people and around God's Word because we are here for you and we love you. Let's pray together.

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*Father, we thank you for your Word. We thank you for this series in I John. Next week we begin this powerful topic of spiritual warfare and what that looks like for the believer, breaking it down into practical topics and sections and covering your Word on how we can be prepared to stand up against Satan's diabolical plans to separate us from you. Father, we just pray that you would use this season to deepen up in your Word, to show the love of Christ to our neighbors, to absolutely obey you as your Spirit applies your Word to our lives.*

*Knock off our rough edges, give us faith where others feel insecure, give us focus when life is confusing, and Father, help us in the midst of uncertainty and chaos and cloudiness as a nation. Give us the opportunity to be clarion lights of the gospel, confident in you and in your Word so that when others see us they might know that our trust is in you. Father, as we walk out of here, help us to do so with a fresh commitment and a fresh confidence in the surety of your Word, the promises you made, and the hope that lies within us. Thank you, Father, for giving us this foundation in times such as these. For it is in Christ's name I pray, Amen.*

*The preceding transcript was completed using raw audio recordings. As much as possible, it includes the actual words of the message with minor grammatical changes and editorial clarifications to provide context. Hebrew and Greek words are spelled using Google Translator and the actual spelling may be different in some cases.*