

The Epistles of John 14: Keep from Idols

12/31/2023

Scripture 1: (1 Jn. 5:21 ESV)

Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Scripture 2: (Exod. 20:1-20 ESV)

And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

"You shall have no other gods before me.

"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

"You shall not murder.

"You shall not commit adultery.

"You shall not steal.

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die."

Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin."

Sermon:

We return now to the first letter of John where there is something of great import which was passed over the first time: the final verse, “*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*”. This verse is so important for us that it requires special emphasis. This verse is so important yet, within its context, it almost seems to be out of place, incomplete, or perhaps even unnecessary. But no word of Scripture, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is ever unimportant or unnecessary, thus this verse is no exception.

Please recall that First John lacks the common forms of a First Century letter and was composed more as a sermon or a theological tract than an ordinary letter. Throughout it, the Apostle writes concerning Who Jesus is, What Jesus did, Who Christians are and How we may recognize one another, and then finally he encourages us in our lives of faith: telling us to test the spirits in order to know what is true, to do what we ought and therefore *agape* one another, and to keep ourselves away from world's sin, so as to be pure and holy in our union with Jesus Christ.

John plainly told us the purpose for which he wrote “...so that our joy may be complete...” (1 Jn. 1:4 ESV). He wrote this document so that we would “...know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.” (1 Jn. 5:18-20 ESV). Therefore we,

- Know that we belong to God, even though the whole world is under the power of the “evil one”.
- Know that God the Son, Jesus, protects everyone else who is “*born of God*” and keeps us out of the “evil one's” clutches.
- Know, understand, and believe that God the Son, Jesus Christ, is both true and the truth, that we are united with and into Him, and that therefore we possess eternal life in Him.

Merely knowing and believing all of that, is surely sufficient to make out joy complete. If that was where John had concluded this document, then it would have been a sufficient exhortation. But however, John did not end it there. John wrote one more verse; a very important verse which has a silent, implied “therefore”.

John concludes this missive by saying, “{Therefore; on account of all of this that you now know, on account of all that you understand, and on account of all that you believe concerning Jesus Christ and your relationship with Him; in order that your joy would be well and truly complete} *Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*”

So yes, this final verse is not out of place because this command leads to the whole point and purpose for John's writing! This command leads to our joy!

It is a command and a word of encouragement for us. This is John's simple summation of God's Holy Law {like Paul's summary of “*For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*” (Gal. 5:14 ESV)} because it makes the clearest statement concerning what and who we **are not**. You would expect that for John, based upon all we know about him, his short summary of God's Law would be “Love”, *agape*. But remember, “Love” is not itself God's Law. Love is the practical effect of obedience to God's Law.

To understand how this can be John's simple summary we need to turn to the Gospel of Matthew where this other evangelist records for us an occasion where Jesus was asked, ““*Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?*”

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."' (Matt. 22:36-40 ESV)

Yet before we consider what Jesus meant by His answer, we must first remind ourselves of another earlier, definitive, related declaration by Christ concerning the Law found in Matthew, *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."* (Matt. 5:17-19 ESV).

Jesus did not rank or hierarchically prioritize the commandments and decrees of God here. Nor did Jesus elevate two obscure and disconnected commands above the "Ten Commandments" {the Ten "Words" or declarations of God, which are not ranked but they do possess an internal hierarchy as they build upon one another relationally} when He quoted from the Shema *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. **You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.**"* (Deut. 6:4-5 ESV), (something that is recited multiple times, daily by every devout Jew), and from a Levitical declaration condemning personal vengeance *"You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but **you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.**"* (Lev. 19:17-18 ESV).

Jesus took those verses and He explained the correct intentions of God the Holy Spirit, who had inspired Moses in writing them. Jesus demonstrated that they were given as practical applications and expressions of the Law, not merely as a list of rules and regulations. He explained them by describing the effect which the Law is meant to have upon and within people's lives.

Jesus answered the question of, "What is the 'Greatest Commandment'?", by giving two examples that separately and together both summarize God's Holy Law: His "moral law" (WCF 19.3), the "law" which is written upon every human heart and is obeyed by those who believe God (Ps 40:8; Is 51:7; Ez 11:19-20; Rom 2:15). However, Christians commonly divide them and still consider them separately to try and help us better understand them by saying that they summarize the "two tables" of the Law. {The "two tables" is itself a misnomer and misapplied understanding of Scripture because the two tablets were not created to separate the rules. Under standard Near Eastern covenantal practice, two copies of the covenant were always made: one for each party to the covenant and given to them to be stored in their deity's temple. Since the Israelites did not (yet) have a Temple, the Ark was created as the storage place for their copy because it was then able to be kept "before the LORD". Meanwhile, since the LORD Himself was a party to the covenant (something unique in ANE practice because deities were invoked as witnesses to human covenants, only the YHWH, the LORD and God of Israel, is said to have entered into covenant with a people) the second copy was kept with Israel's, for convenience sake, in the Ark and thus in the Tabernacle/Temple and therefore, remained in God's possession.}

Ordinarily, we understand Jesus' answer of *"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."* as describing the "first table" by defining how we are to relate to God. This defines the vertical dimension of human worship and divine authority. Jesus' answer of *"...you shall love your neighbor as yourself..."* describes the "second table" and defines how humans are to relate to one another. This defines the horizontal relationship of human love and interactions.

These vertical and horizontal understandings are correct and this a valid interpretation of Jesus' answer. However, there is one more step which we Christians ought to take to best understand this, but we often do not through forgetfulness or ignorance.

What we often forget is **how** the horizontal dimension relates to the vertical. Our obedience and faithfulness in keeping the divine horizontal commands are meant to be acts of worship to God. We best and most truly worship the LORD by keeping His commandments. True worship is not found through any ritual, rite, or spiritual practice but through faithful obedience to our King, the Sovereign LORD (James 1:27). That is what John meant when he wrote earlier, *“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. **For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.** And his commandments are not burdensome.”* (1 Jn. 5:2-3 ESV).

Therefore, we worship God because we love Him. Our works of *agape* for our neighbors, our friends, strangers, and our enemies are all acts of worship to the LORD, God Almighty! Yet still, even by knowing and believing that, we have not taken or reached the final step of understanding, although we are getting closer.

To take that final step and understand what John understood and expressed in this final verse of First John, we must reexamine our understanding of the “Ten Commandments”. We need to reexamine our “understanding” of the organization and the internal relationship of the Commandments, not reexamine their “meaning”. We need to understand that the horizontal dimension is not merely one dimensional, but is two dimensional: both vertical and horizontal.

When we act in our human relationships with fellow image-bearers of God (Gen 1:26-27), with His earthly representatives (regardless of their faith and independent of their acknowledgment of Him), we must treat them as we would treat the LORD because as His Image, they all deserve and are warranted the same respect, honor, and consideration as Jesus Christ. This is why we are to consider all others as being greater than ourselves, because we should see them as representing God, our Sovereign King.

Commonly, a visual example of the cross is used to describe these directional relationships within the “Ten Commandments”, where:

- The vertical beam represents the “first table” and the two-way relationship between God and Man; and
- The horizontal beam represents the “second table” and the two-way relationships between ourselves and others; but,

However, I would say that a better representation would be as a broad column or a broad vertical arrow representing our human response to God's mercy going up, with a narrower arrow representing God's grace going down, and within the broad arrow many smaller horizontal arrows going in and out representing our relationships and interactions with other people. I say this because the relationships we have with others impacts and is impacted by ours and their relationship with God. Therefore, whenever we are loving our neighbors as ourselves, we are also loving God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. That is why I say that the horizontal dimension of our response to God's grace, is truly vertical.

Back at Mount Sinai, the LORD gave the Ten Commandments as part of His gracious, national covenant with Israel, His elected people. This covenant is also often referred to as the “covenant of works” and it is the same covenant to which Adam was bound, but whose known stipulations were expanded by this, God's further revelation to Moses.

This was given to us as a good covenant. This was a beneficial covenant. But it was not a covenant that offered or promised eternal life. There is no eternal hope for man found within it, yet still, this covenant did promise a good, and pleasant, and rewarding life upon the earth for those who kept it and remained faithful and obedient to God.

Moses, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, took what the LORD revealed to him up on Mt Sinai and then recorded it by using a common, human format, which he would have known well and would be recognized and understood by other neighboring peoples: the covenant format of a Suzerain-Vassal treaty.

The five distinct, necessary elements of this treaty format are easily identifiable across Exodus chapters 20-24:

- a preamble identifying the parties involved;
- a historic prologue describing why the Suzerain deserves allegiance;
- a list of witnesses to the treaty who are responsible to facilitate its enforcement {often a list of both parties' deities by whom both sides swear their oath of fealty};
- a list of stipulations imposed upon the vassal by the Suzerain; and finally,
- a list of the blessings and benefits which are promised to the vassal by the Suzerain for their continued obedience and faithfulness, and a list of the curses and punishments which are promised to the vassal by the Suzerain as judgment for disobedience, faithlessness, and for violations of the covenant.

Three of these five elements are found here in chapter 20: preamble, prologue, and stipulations {some parts of the stipulations are contained in chapter 20 and then continue in chapters 21-24}; the fourth and fifth parts are found in the rest: the “witnesses” are defined as the twelve standing stones which were erected to represent the twelve tribes of Israel and the altar raised by Moses at the base of Mt Sinai (24:4-8); while the list of blessings are outlined at the end of chapter 23 (23:20-33) {the lists of blessings and curses are expanded and more extensive in Deuteronomy's form of the covenant, which lends justification for the theories that suggest Deuteronomy being a later, Assyrian era composition rather than a reasonable expansion, due to progressive revelation, upon the occasion of the covenant's renewal}.

Meanwhile, the three elements defined here are the most important for us in understanding of the character of this relationship to God.

The preamble and the historical prologue are presented together in the first verse, “*And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."*”:

- defining the covenant parties as the LORD, YHVH and “you”, being the hearers of these words, the people of Israel who followed Moses out of Egypt along with their heirs; and
- the cause or justification for this Suzerain-Vassal relationship between YHVH and Israel is presented as because {The LORD, YHVH, brought them, Israel, out of Egypt and out from their slavery to Pharaoh.}

Then Moses begins to record the LORD's stipulations for His people to obey.

Now here is where we take that final interpretive step because truthfully, Moses records the LORD's one, single stipulation and obligation expected of His people, “*You shall have no other gods before me.*”.

But wait, “Are there not nine more stipulations and requirements in this list?”

Yes, there are; actually there are a lot more than just nine. However, although each commandment is important in and of itself and each regulation requires our absolute obedience; all of the other commandments of God are derivatives of this one. Every other commandment flows from this one, first command, including the solitary commandment which the LORD had given to Adam in the Garden, “*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*” (Gen. 2:16-17 ESV).”

- But, what does adultery, coveting, murder have to do with the first commandment?
- But, what does the “holiness code”, or dietary laws, or circumcision have to do with the first commandment?

Absolutely nothing **AND** absolutely everything.

Now we are finally able to reach the understanding of John; what he warns us about, commands us against, and teaches us through the whole of First John but especially as he concludes with the command, “*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*”.

Every sin is a form of idolatry, each and every one. Every violation and transgression of God's Holy and Perfect Law is an idolatrous act of worship, just as obedience and faithfulness in keeping His commands are righteous acts of worship. The difference is, with our every sin we worship ourselves instead of the LORD.

John spent this whole document trying to teach us to know Who the LORD is, Who Jesus is, and who we are in relation to them. They are God and we are not, period.

- The LORD is God. Jesus is God. The Holy Spirit is God. Three Persons, One Essence, One Triune God perfectly united in Will, Love, and Activity.

Mankind, people, the Elect, the “children of God”, and all of the Church are not God, yet by our every sin and in every transgression we act as if “We are God” while the LORD, and Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are not.

Idolatry is the core of every sin. Idolatry is the root of every evil {1 Tim 6:9-12; the “love of money” is an example of idolatry} and the reason why idolatry is such a recurring problem for all of humanity, is because we were created for worship and to worship. Worship is the point and purpose for our existence.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism asks us, “What is the chief end of man?” and then it answers, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.”. This is what we believe as Reformed Christians, that we were created to glorify God, to worship Him **and** to enjoy Him forever. This is precisely what John has been trying to teach us: to rightly worship God, through love, so that “...*our joy may be complete*” by our obedience to and worship of Him alone.

Humanity was created to worship God, not because He needs our worship but because He desired to have people in relationship with Him, and worship is the only proper response for the creation to have towards their creator.

We were created to worship the Sovereign of the Universe through active obedience to Him, as His appointed Regents within His creation, and for us to relate to Him as sons and daughters, thereby enjoying our relationship and enjoying the whole of creation over which He had given us dominion.

But when Adam chose disobedience over faithfulness to God's commanded will, he stopped worshipping the LORD and began to worship himself. Adam elevated himself, his desires, his wants, his priorities, and his

preferences over and above the simple, clear, solitary command of the Sovereign LORD. So ever since, every child of Adam has followed in our “not-so-great” grandfather's footsteps because we have inherited a corrupted and flawed nature from him; a nature that is inclined towards sin and wickedness instead of righteousness and obedience. Our whole selves are corrupted and tainted {the Doctrine of Total Depravity} therefore, no part of us is untouched by sin and therefore, we require rescue, cleansing, redemption, regeneration, and the transformation which is found only in the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification.

Humanity's problem is sin and the problem of sin is idolatry. Idolatry is the sin which Jesus came to end. Jesus came to show us the Father (John 14:8-9), so that we would have no excuse because through our knowledge of Him, we would also know God. Idolatry and our spiritual adultery is why Jesus Christ was born, lived, died, was raised, and ascended into heaven to now sit enthroned as our Redeemer and Justifier; as our Savior. He has redeemed us from our chosen bondage to idols; from the sinful slavery of Satan into which Adam sold our whole race.

Sin is humanity's problem and idolatry is the one sin which is the heart of every other sin: our “idolatry of self”. That was Adam's fault and it remains the fault within each and every one of us. This is why John Calvin famously wrote, “From this we gather that man's nature, so to speak, is a perpetual factory of idols. ... Man's mind, full as it is of pride and boldness, dares to imagine a god according to its own capacity; as it sluggishly plods, indeed is overwhelmed with the crassest ignorance, it conceives an unreality and an empty appearance as God.” (Institutes Book 1.XI.8).

People are made to worship and if we do not desire to worship the true God, then we will either find or create a “god” to worship. That is the key to our sinful idolatry. We take the natural, divinely ordered arrangement of: God making man in His Holy Image; and twist it, corrupting it into the arrangement of: Man making god in his image.

- The Greeks and Romans demonstrated this principal best and most honestly because their gods: Zeus, Apollo, Athena, and all the rest; were all imagined to be “more human, than human”. They were not inspirational. They were not intended as examples for humanity to echo or aspire to. But each one exemplified a human ideal taken to such an extreme that every portrayed human good became a fault or flaw. These fantasies offered no possibility or encouragement of hope being found within humanity.
- Even the more obvious demons which are worshiped as gods, take on forms that resemble humanity: sometimes by shape, but always by character. They are never consulted or worshiped as paragons of righteousness, but as the justifiers of and encouragers in human sinfulness and depravity. Since they look like us, we will more gladly listen when they tell us precisely what we want to hear.

Sometimes I wonder if humanity could put Satan out of a job, because we do such an exceptional job at creating new perversities and sinful practices, that I do not know if it is possible to plumb the depths of human depravity. We do not even really need for Satan to tempt us into sin, because our own nature tempts us and leads us into a damnation that is far worse and does it far faster than even the “prince of this world” could imagine (James 1:13-15).

That is why John makes his ultimate point, “*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*”, because idolatry is the root of our sin. That is why the principal stipulation in the LORD's covenant is, “*You shall have no other gods before me.*”, and why every other stipulation derives itself from that one. Everything boils down to the simple fact that the LORD alone should be the object of our worship, devotion, obedience, and faithfulness.

So this is how John, and Jesus, and we understand God's whole Law in relation to honoring and obeying God.

- *You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them...*
 - Meaning that nothing in creation is to be worshiped in place of the LORD; do not worship stuff as if it were God.
- *You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain...*
 - Meaning that God's Name is not to be invoked for sinful purposes and that our oaths, whenever they must be made, when fulfilled they must bring ourselves and Him honor and glory instead of shame and disgrace.
- *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God...*
 - Meaning that we must trust that God always has our best interest as His intention, that His commands are for our continued good; that if the practice of “rest” is good enough for God, then the practice of “rest” is good enough for us; that by refusing to rest, we declare that we know what is good for ourselves better than the God who created us.
- *Honor your father and your mother...*
 - Meaning that we must honor and respect those with authority over us; to trust that they have our best interests at heart; to view our parents as authoritative representatives of God given to us, to lead us in worship, to teach and train us, equipping us for righteous obedience.
- *You shall not murder...*
 - Meaning that we must value the lives of other people as being greater than our own; to protect the lives of others and defend them as if they were God because they bear His image, just as God protects your own life.
- *You shall not commit adultery...*
 - Meaning that we must not break God's covenant; that we must remain faithful to Him and not worship anyone or anything else; that we must be faithful within our own human covenant relationships, like marriage, just as we are faithful to God's covenant.
- *You shall not steal...*
 - Meaning that we should accept God's good provision, that we first must be content with what He has given to us and secondly, that we must not deprive other image-bearers of what God has given to them.
- *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor...*
 - Meaning that God is true and speaks truly; that any falsehoods we might speak cannot replace or supplant God's truth; that we must speak truly to others as God speaks truly to us.
- *You shall not covet...*

- Meaning that because the whole earth belongs to the LORD (Deut 10:14) and we are only His Regents and Stewards in creation (Matt 25:14-30), we are therefore charged to wisely use what He has given us and be content with His provision; refraining from being envious of other image-bearers and their provision and gifting; trusting in God's wisdom rather than our own understanding.

Can you now see how these and all of the many other divine commandments written in sacred Scripture all boil down to this one, *“You shall have no other gods before me.”* and *“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”*

- Making statues or images and worshiping anything that is created, as if it were the LORD, is idolatry.
- Misusing God's Name or suggesting that your own word or that you are more dependable and reliable than the Almighty is, is idolatry.
- Choosing to work seven days a week (not out of need, but from pure voluntary choice) instead of only six and thereby not worshiping God as He commands is idolatry; worshiping work and preferring your own goals, preferences, and desires to the LORD's is idolatry.
- Despising the authority of your parents is despising the authority of God; believing that your authority trumps God's sovereignty is idolatry.
- Despising the life of another person and killing them proves that you value their life and person-hood and the Person-hood of the LORD, whose Image they are, as being less than your own is idolatry.
- Breaking covenant, being unfaithful to others and to the LORD, prioritizing your own selfishness over the needs of others, over your relationships with others, is idolatry.
- Theft declares your belief that God has not given you enough; it proves that you are dissatisfied with what you have, and shows that your desire for someone else's stuff is greater than your desire for God or your love for Him and is therefore, idolatry.
- Lying creates and propagates false understandings about reality, so that when your lies are believed as truth, you call God a liar and every absolute and all pretense at objectivity becomes subject to the human mind and understanding rather than the Sovereign Will and decree of God, and thus becomes idolatry.
- All coveting is as theft, but covetousness is constrained within the heart as an active, sinful desire rather than sinful action, but nonetheless it is still idolatry.

So, once you see the Law in this light it becomes easy to see how every sin committed by man may be reduced to the lowest common denominator of idolatry. However, there is good news for us!

Ever since God entered into covenant with His chosen people; ever since Jesus Christ came into the world and lived a sinless life and died as an atoning sacrifice for us, we now may turn away from our idols in repentance and turn to the LORD in faith to be forgiven and therefore, saved.

Whereas before the Holy Spirit's regeneration, we did not love the LORD (much less with our heart, soul, or mind) and we never truly loved our neighbors, now we can. Now we do love God as well as our neighbors, and with the Spirit's help we will do it more every day and we will do it better daily.

Although our heart will still fashion idols to tempt us, we now have a great High Priest who is able to sympathize with us; who has been tempted just as we are, yet Who Himself refrained from sinning: Jesus Christ. He who saved us, is also our advocate before God, and He is the help of our strength to persevere until

the end. He is the LORD, therefore He is the object of our worship and He will preserve us and keep us from our idols.

Although we are still tempted by the many idols of this world: fame, fortune, sex, drugs, power and influence, ourselves, our family, or the church (because if the church, as a building or as a social body of people, is raised above faithfulness to Christ, even the church may become an idol that needs to be toppled); we are no longer subject to them. They no longer rule over us or our lives, because we know that God the LORD, that Jesus Christ is the Sovereign LORD, and we know that He is over all things, and that He alone is worthy of worship and praise because He alone is the source of our joy.

So finally, humble yourself before God, “...*keep yourselves from idols.*”, and have “...*no other gods before [the LORD]...*”.

Believe that the Son of God, Jesus Christ has come and will come again; believe that He and His Words are true; believe that He is the true God and the fountainhead of eternal life for His Elect people.

Therefore, keep yourselves from sin by loving God through obeying His commandments and His alone.

Believe this and know this “...*so that our joy may be complete.*” (1 Jn. 1:4 ESV); so that our joy and the LORD's joy, the joy of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit would be made complete through our union in Christ and the *koinonia* which we all now share.

Forever and ever, AMEN.