

So That You May Know

An Expositional Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 13- The First Line **1John 3:4-10**

109. Distinguishing Between Sin and Righteousness- Part 8

WAOY Tuesday 11/6/07

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about "The Distinction between Sin and Righteousness. So, let's read **1John 3:4-10** again together:

4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

5 You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

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

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 destroy the works of the devil.

9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

Now on the last broadcast, we were going over verse 6 and today I want to continue to examine what this verse actually means, so let's read verse 6 again:

No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

Now as we learned on the last broadcast, this verse was written in

the present participle tense so what John was actually saying here is that:

No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.

Now John was not saying here that saved people do not sin at all- because John has already told us in **1John 1:8** that all men sin and have sin present in their lives. But what John *is* saying here is that precisely because saved people now have the new divine nature within themselves- they do not dwell continually on an ongoing basis in sin.

So, it is true that saved people sin. But it is also true that when saved people sin- they know that they have sinned, and they quickly repent because they do not *want* to sin; they are not *trying* to sin; they do not love sin anymore- so they quickly repent and learn from that mistake and do whatever it takes so that they will not continually repeat that sin.

And this is true about saved people- not because they are brave or because they have a strong will power- no, no, no, saved people act this way about sin- because they are saved; they have a new nature; they have been born from above; they are no longer by nature the children of wrath and the divine nature has changed them so that they now love God and they love the things of God!

So, the proof, John says that we have been saved; the unmistakable sign that a person has been born again is the way that he views sin and the way that he lives pertaining to sin. So, John simply and matter of factly states a truth about saved people- about all saved people- they simply do not dwell continually in sin.

In fact, John even goes further than this and says that if a person is dwelling in sin on an ongoing basis; if a person loves his sin and seeks after it; if a person lives in sin as a continual function of his daily life- the Apostle John says very clearly here that this person has not seen Jesus Christ and does not know Him. In other words- John says that this person is not saved.

Now many people in the modern Church view statements like this as being judgmental or harsh or mean spirited or unloving or cruel or even unchristian. But I would remind all of us- me included- that *these* Words are not my Words; and they are not even John's Words; these

Words are different Words; they are special Words; they are inspired Words. They didn't just come from John. They came off the end of John's pen alright- but these words come right out of the Mind and Heart and Mouth of the Creator and Owner of the Universe.

So, because that is true- because these Words come from God- we are forced to deal with the reality of these Words. We must come into confrontation to these Words and then either obey them or reject them.

Now let me say something here. You may disagree with what I have said that this verse means, dear friends. And you are free to do so. But if you disagree with me about what this verse says- you can't stop there. If you think that I have wrongly interpreted what John says here in **1John 3:6**- then you have the obligation to show me what they *do* mean- because we must agree that they mean *something*.

I mean John didn't write these Words because he had some space left on the bottom of his paper. He wrote these Words because he was moved along by the Holy Spirit to pen down these God breathed Words. But I understand how many of you may respond to the reality of what John is saying here because I had a similar response when I first saw this.

If John is saying that save people do not dwell continually in sin- if that is the correct interpretation of this verse- then we have two immediate responses to that:

- ✓ There are a whole lot of people who think that they are saved who are really not saved
- ✓ We all have looked at sin way too flippantly and we all need to examine our own hearts and begin to look at sin the same way that God does

And I will tell you quite honestly that I believe that both of those statements are true because I believe that this is exactly what John was saying here.

John is quite bold here to say that people who have no love at all for God; people who have no desire whatsoever to get into the Presence of God; people who have no love for God's Word; who are bored with Bible study; who don't enjoy Prayer Meetings or godly Fellowship about the things of God; people who have no burden to partake of the Lord's Supper and who are rebellious about Baptism; people who believe that

submission to the Authority of Scripture is bondage; people who do what is right in their own eyes- these people should never think that they are saved. They should never take comfort in their Salvation; they should never hope to go to Heaven- because John says here that these people those who dwell continually in sin have not seen Jesus and do not know Him.

Now I also need to address another aspect of modern Church life that relates to this that we all know about, and all believe- but which is not true.

When a person is first saved- that person of course doesn't understand many things about the Bible and about God and about the Christian life. So, it is understandable that that person who just recently trusted in the Savior's Sacrifice may not comprehend the Doctrine of the Trinity or how you reconcile God's Sovereignty with Human Responsibility; or why evil is in the world or why babies die or why a good God allows suffering. Those are deep theological issues that take time to learn, and which involve strong biblical training.

But even though they may be babes, as it were, about Doctrine and about things pertaining to life- these people- if they are truly saved- have still been transformed. They still have been born from above and they possess the new divine nature that is created in righteousness and true holiness. And at the very instant that they were saved- God has given them both the will and the power to love and serve Him. And both of those things are gifts from God that God gives to every single person who is genuinely saved, and He give it at the very moment they were born again.

So even though these new believers may be babes in knowledge- they are still redeemed and so they will still hate sin and they will still have a desire to serve and love and follow after God rather than the world. At the very instant they were saved- they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise, and they received inside their bodies the infilling of the Spirit. So, God, the Holy Spirit is leading them, and He will convict them and He will deal with them about those things that are in their lives that displease the Lord- even though they are babes.

So, these people- even though they have much to be taught and much to learn- still change. And they change dramatically; they change radically and even now- as babes in Christ- they no longer desire to sin- even though they periodically do sin.

And we are to be patient with these souls and be tender with them and merciful to them and we are to lead them and guide them and teach them. But we must be careful that we do not expect less of them than Jesus does. And we must take heed that we do not demand less of them than Jesus does. Being a new convert means a lot of things- but one thing that it absolutely does mean is that they are in Christ and because they are in Christ- they will hate sin.

So, while growing in Grace is a process that take time- in fact their Sanctification will extend over their entire lifetime- but hating sin and not dwelling continually in sin is not the same thing as growing in Grace, beloved and so this hatred of sin and this desire to love and serve God is instantaneous- and is *not* a process.

The point here is that we have legions of people who are in the visible Church today who have been in the Church for years and yet they have not changed, and they continue to dwell continually in sin. And I hear all the time that they can't help it because they are babes in Christ. But we have to understand that the New Testament does not teach anywhere that people who dwell continually in sin are saved- even new converts.

I agree that new converts don't act like seasoned veterans. I understand that- but while that is true- it is also true that hating sin and loving God and loving the things of God is part and parcel to being saved in the first place- not of being mature. It is part of having the new nature inside you- and so if that is not present- we do these people a great disservice to tell them that they are saved simply because they prayed a prayer or walked down an aisle.

And that is what verse 6 means and so we must apply this truth not only to our own lives- but to the life of the Church. You see, brothers and sisters, John taught that it really means something to be saved. The Apostle John taught that Salvation is far more than just a choice. Salvation is far more important than a decision. It is a far greater miracle than an act of our own human will. Salvation is a supernatural miracle of Mercy and Grace from a Sovereign God to undeserving sinners, and we must always allow the definition of Salvation to remain what the Bible says that it is- a change nature which always results in a change life.

Dear friends- we must always be amazed at Salvation, and we must marvel at the Grace that caught our falling soul and we must be in awe

that a righteous and holy God would stoop to deal with us sinners. I tell you that we must resist the temptation to lower the bar about what Salvation means and what Salvation does to every single soul who experiences the miracle of the new birth. So, we must be careful to expect everything that Jesus expected out of people who say that they are saved so that we may not sin against God by reducing the awesomeness and wonder that Salvation really is.

Those who are saved hate sin. Those who are saved do not desire to transgress against the God who has saved them. They love God they want to please Him in all that they do. And while it is a fact that saved people still live in a fleshly body and therefore will never reach a place of sinless perfection- John said that it is also true that saved people do not and we will find out on the next broadcast- they *cannot* remain in sin because the very seed of Jesus Christ is in them and these people do not have the capacity to dwell continually in sin because they are born of God. That is what John taught and so that is what I teach and may God be praised for His unsearchable riches in Jesus Christ!

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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