

So That You May Know

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

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

110. Distinguishing Between Sin and Righteousness- Part 9

WAOY Wednesday 11/7/07

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 look at verses 7& 8, so let's read those two verses together:

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.

Now John is emphatic here that we are to be careful not to let anyone deceive us. Deceive us about what? John says that the area where we might be deceived is about those who are saved and have forever escaped the tyranny of the devil and those who are lost and who still belong to the devil.

And what did John say in verse 7 that was the ground upon which we are to make the distinction between these two groups of people? The issue of Righteousness. John says that the person who practices righteousness or who does righteously; or the person who lives in a righteous manner *is* righteous; while those who live ungodly lives and dwell continually in sin are of the devil.

Now we would look at that statement as being basically self-explanatory today but I think that this is a lot more profound than we may think at first glance. We may be tempted to say, *“Okay, okay, I get it. Sin is bad and righteousness is good- let’s move on to something more interesting.”*

But wait just a minute, brothers and sisters. This issue is very pervasive in our culture today. For example, it is common to hear a preacher say that God wants you to be happy or that God wants you to have the best or that God wants you to live life to the fullest. And that sounds great and it sounds like that ought to be true. But is it true? Is it true that God’s main goal for our lives is that we be happy? I’m not sure. That all depends on what you mean by that statement.

The Bible teaches over and over and over that God wants us to be holy a whole lot more than God wants us to be happy. So right off the bat- us being holy is infinitely more important to God than it is that we are temporarily happy. And we need to understand that the pathway to holiness might very well make us temporarily unhappy. Therefore happiness in and of itself is not the number one goal of God for us is it? And I suggest to you, beloved that as you go through the list of what God reveals in His Word about what His Will for us is- that happiness is never even mentioned; Not once; Ever.

So are we to assume then that God wants us all to be sad? Not at all. In fact Christians are the most satisfied and the most joyful people on the face of the earth. But Christians are not joyful because they got some new toy or because they think well of themselves. Christians are joyful because they have been forever forgiven and rescued from the Wrath of God. Christians are joyful because they are obedient to God-

because when you are saved- it pleases you to obey God. Christians are joyful because they are going to Heaven- regardless of how bad things are here or how much persecution they endure now or how hard the path is down here. And this is something that is rarely even mentioned in the modern Church.

Salvation is so wonderful; and the very thought of going to Heaven is so great and brings such joy to the mind and heart of believers that whatever hard or bad or difficult thing that God has chosen for us to go through now is in reality nothing- compared to the joy and the glory that is awaiting us over there.

But if your mind and heart has been filled with false doctrine that teaches you to only be joyful about what you have now or to only be satisfied with what God has done for you in this life- then Heaven and the joy of going to Heaven is really not enough to help you through the bad times. So check your heart beloved and see if Heaven really thrills you like it did those people in the Bible. Check to see if being saved is the single most wonderful and joyful and glorious thing that has ever or will ever happen to you. And if it isn't- then I suggest to you that you have been listening to the wrong voice. And if going to Heaven to live with Jesus forever doesn't literally thrill your heart- then I suggest that you need to check your heart to see if you are really saved.

Brothers and sisters, a Christian's joy is tied in with Who God is- not who they are. And therefore this joy; this deep seated profound joy is not dependent upon the external circumstances and situations of this life. Because our joy is rooted in God- Who never changes- our joy is eternal and it transcends time and space and culture and politics and war and famine and pestilence and disease and struggles and trials.

Anybody can be happy when all is going well. Lost people can do that. It doesn't take God or Salvation or the Holy Spirit to be happy when everything is clicking on all cylinders for you. Lost people have an enormous ability to be happy- even when they are in serious and blatant sin. I know people personally who are shackled up together and will tell you that they have never been happier in their whole lives- yet the Bible says that they are in sin and they are dishonoring God. So, let's review. These people are living in direct rebellion to the Word of God on an ongoing basis and yet they are happy. I know that we don't think a lot about this today, beloved, but we should. In light of what you have read with me here in 1John- how is it possible for a person

who is saved to be content and happy while at the same time dwelling continually in unrepentant sin? John said that it wasn't possible. Jesus said that it wasn't possible. Paul said that it wasn't possible. Peter taught that it wasn't possible. James said that it wasn't possible. Moses said that it wasn't possible. And that's why I tell you it isn't possible. No way- no how.

Yet we all know people who say that they are saved and yet do not walk with God. So, what do we call that? We call it the same thing that John called it- deception. Read with me **1 John 1:6**:

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

Now keep in mind that I am not talking about sinless perfection here and neither was John. John is merely repeating the same thing that everyone else in the Bible taught- that being saved means that you have received within yourself the new divine nature and that new nature cannot bear to sin against God. So if and when a saved person sins- he cannot bear it and he will weep and cry out to God and repent and do whatever it takes to get out of that sin and come back to God.

Conversely, a lost person can remain in sin and be perfectly happy about it and feel no conviction and no remorse at all. That is because he does not have the new nature inside him and he is still enslaved in his old sinful and rebellious nature.

And these lost people can even go to Church. And they can sing in the choir and they can even raise their hands without even the slightest hint of conviction. The Holy Spirit does not convict them because He doesn't live inside them. They don't belong to Him because that lost soul is dead to God and he cares not one iota about what pleases God and what does not please God. All that matters to lost people is that they themselves are pleased- so they do what is right in their own eyes and then they rationalize it in their own minds and then they justify it.

You see, because we are fallen creatures- we all have an enormous capacity to be happy and yet live diametrically opposed to God and His ways. So beloved, listen to me- happiness as the world describes it- is way overblown.

So the goal of a believer is not to simply be happy- it is not have your best life now. It is not to live with all the gusto you can muster. It

is not to be all you can be or any other Madison Avenue marketing slogan. Those things are the goal of the lost unregenerate world- but that is not the goal of genuine believers.

The goal of a genuine Blood bought saint of God is to live in humble submission to the Will of God and to be faithful to that which God has called him to do- period. A believer desires that God receive all glory and all honor and all praise for everything and he seeks no glory for himself.

Now what is amazing is how profoundly unable lost people are to actually find satisfaction. Because you see, true joy; lasting joy; eternal joy can never be found by feeding our desire for self- indulgence. The only thing that comes forth from trying to satisfy our own carnal lusts and cravings is that we become more and more discontented with everything. And this Truth has never been so obviously true than it is right here in America in the 21st Century.

We live in a culture that rewards possessions more than people. We hold up millionaires as being the example of what Christianity is and what Jesus wants to give to us- but while Jesus was alive- He rebuked rich people all day long. We sit in Church on Sunday listening to the Bible and then we go about our daily lives as though we didn't know what the Bible teaches.

We build bigger and nicer houses only to have less people in our families. American women have bought into the lie that leaving the home and pursuing their careers will bring them peace and security but in the process- they forsake their own wombs that God gave them to birth children. We surround ourselves with toys and gadgets yet we have no time for our children because we are too busy trying to pay for it all. We spend hours every day entertaining ourselves to death while half the world is starving. We are the most prosperous and blessed society that the world has ever known and we are the most disenchanted and dissatisfied society that the world has ever known.

We have forgotten that only by living a life of self- denial can true joy ever be realized. But the problem is that only saved people have any desire to live selflessly. Lost people worship self and saved people worship God. So lost people do what is right in their own eyes while saved people live to please and honor God. And this is the great divide. This is the difference between those who are born from above and those who are yet in their sins. And so if we really love people and we want to

see them saved- we must be faithful not to condone their sin and we must be faithful to show the huge difference between the lost and the saved so that perhaps God will give them eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to believe and they will be able to repent and trust in Jesus Christ for Salvation.

So, John drew a clear line in the sand and that line was unmistakable:

7. ... the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous
8 the one who practices sin is of the devil ...

And John gave us this clear line so that we would know who is truly saved and who is only deceived about his Salvation. And that's why he said in verse 10:

By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious

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

© 2007- 2023 by Enjoying God Ministries, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America
Enjoying God Ministries, Inc. PO Box 147 Saucier, Mississippi 39574 www.covenantofpeace.net

Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from The New American Standard Bible © 1995 by The Lockmann Foundation. Used by permission.

This is a single transcript in a larger series of teachings taken from a verse by verse Journey through the Epistle of 1John. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without cost or reimbursement to us with the stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this transcript without the express written permission of The Covenant of Peace Church and that this complete copyright statement be at the end of all copies.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.