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Sin is Lawlessness

October 14, 2018

Sermon Text: 1 John 3:4

Scripture Reading: Romans 8

1Jn 3:4 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

As we watch the news today and some good things happening in our nation, we also see many examples of opposition to these good things. It is good, for instance, that:

- We will start seeing more judges actually interpret and apply the constitution as it was written rather than treating it as some kind of developing, evolving, organic document that changes with the times
- Immigration slowly but surely is starting to be brought back into an orderly process that protects

our nation's borders (national borders are God's will by the way. See the account of the tower of Babel for confirmation of that)

- Abortion over time may lessen

And many other good things.

Now my purpose this morning is not to tell you that President Trump is a Christian or that Republicans are all God's chosen and so on. My purpose is to talk to you regarding what the Bible calls *lawlessness*. This subject came to mind because we are increasingly seeing groups of people violently and hatefully attacking things that are good and right. You even see more and more politicians calling on people to use violence against our elected officials.

And as you think of all this, you have to ask yourself, *what makes these people "tick"*? How do we explain the hatred over losing an election? Or the outbreak of hateful violence about a supreme court nomination *before*

anyone even knew who the nominee was! Or the violent hatred we are seeing exercised toward the police? I believe the Bible has the answer, and that answer is found in this term – *lawlessness*.

Listen to the Apostle John once more:

1Jn 3:1-10 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. (2) Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. (3) And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

(4) Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; 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 keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. (7) Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. (8) Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God

appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. (9) No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. (10) By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

Sin...is...lawlessness.

Listen to Paul:

Rom 8:5-8 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. (6) For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. (7) **For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.** (8) Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Sin is lawlessness. The sinner's mindset is one that is defined by his sinful essence, his flesh, and he is therefore *hostile to God and does not submit to God's law. Sin is lawlessness.*

Now, as I watch hostile, violent, lawless elements in our nation today, I

see great similarity to other groups that we have seen down through history.

- Hitler's Nazi party when his loyalists worked to overthrow the German government through intimidation, hatred, and violence.
- The Russian revolution headed by the likes of Lenin and Stalin, all characterized by incredible violence. Socialism (communism) has followed those same patterns wherever it has worked to gain power.

What is it then? What is the spirit of these violent groups? How do we explain the intensity of their hatred to things that are good? The answer I suggest to you is given in these same three words-

Sin is lawlessness.

The sinner is *hostile* to God's Law. He is hostile to God! He hates God. You see this of course in Jesus' earthly experience:

Joh 8:39-47 They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, (40) but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. (41)

You are doing the works your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father--even God." (42) Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. (43) Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. (44) You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (45) But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. (46) Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? (47) Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."

Why did the Pharisees hate Jesus? We have been seeing in our study of Matthew that Jesus is the King and that His Kingdom has entered into this fallen world. It is spreading. It will soon fill the whole creation. He will destroy His enemies. All must bow and submit to Him:

Psa 2:1-12 Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? (2) The kings of the earth set themselves, and

the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, (3) "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." (4) He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. (5) Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, (6) "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." (7) I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. (8) Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. (9) You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (10) Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. (11) Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. (12) Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Sinners hate the King. Why? Because the King and His kingdom are ruled by His Law. Sin is lawlessness because it demands to be its own law.

Rom 10:3 For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

Do we not see this lawlessness in our children from the time they are even

born? What happens when you tell a two year old he "cannot"? He hates that law which you put on him.

We live not only in a generation of sinners, but in a time when the generations growing up have been largely allowed to spurn the law. This is one of the "missions" of the universities – teaching lawlessness. It really is a spirit of anarchy. Don't let anyone tell you what to do. This is what makes the jobs of so many people incredibly difficult: school teachers, police, elected officials, local churches, even in the military, and so forth.

Sin is lawlessness.

We of course have had lots of experience dealing with cases of domestic abusers. What is it that they crave? Power and control. What is it that the hate? Law. Limits. Boundaries. So much so that quite often these kind will rather kill their whole family, then kill themselves, before they will submit themselves to the law.

Listen to some more Scriptures on this subject:

Gen 6:12-13 And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. (13) And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh,

for the earth is filled with **violence** through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

2Ti 3:1-5 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. (2) For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, (3) heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, (4) treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, (5) having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

Mat 7:23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

Mat 24:12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.

2Th 2:3-7 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, (4) who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. (5) Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? (6) And you know what is restraining him

now so that he may be revealed in his time. (7) For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.

In other words, we live in these last days and we can expect lawlessness to increase because sin increases. The same lawless spirit that worked in almost all humanity in Noah's day is going to be increasingly unrestrained as we approach the end of this age and the coming of Christ.

We are wise when we understand that *sin is lawlessness* because this aids us in identifying the wicked. For all of their excuses and disguises, this characteristic will always reveal who the wicked are. Let me describe how it works once again:

The fundamental mentality of sin is lawlessness. This mentality is hostile therefore to God and to His Law. It overrules even the fact that some law is a very good and righteous law that even benefits the sinner. The fact that the law is the law and requires man to submit and obey it will cause the wicked to even kill the sinless Son of God.

Let me just insert this observation regarding the political and social world we are seeing in our nation. All sin is lawlessness. Even the "moral" man

who is more covert about his sin cannot love God's law. However, today we are seeing open rebellion movements against any kind of restraints. When you see that in a person or in people or in the philosophy and teachings of some group, you can be sure it is the spirit of lawlessness.

Conclusion

As we end, listen to these great words from Paul to Titus:

Tit 2:11-14 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, (12) training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, (13) waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, (14) **who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness** and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Do you see more clearly now still more of what Christ has done for us? He *redeemed us from all lawlessness*. This means that he freed us from slavery to that old nature that hates God, is hostile to the Law of God, and walks in rebellion against God. *Lawlessness is not freedom*. Do you understand that? Lawless people tell us

that if we join them, we will be free. That is a lie. Lawlessness is bondage to the devil and it ends in hell.

When Christ gives us a new heart and makes us a new creation, this becomes our attitude toward His Law:

Psa 119:1-12 Aleph. Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD! (2) Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, (3) who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways!

(4) You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. (5) Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! (6) Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. (7) I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous rules. (8) I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me!

(9) Beth. How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. (10) With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! (11) I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. (12) Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes!