

Series: John

Title: A Word to Live By

Text: John 18: 1, 8

Date: Nov 10, 2022

Place: SGBC, NJ

The apostle Peter exhorts God's saints to:

1 Peter 2: 11: abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul

Lust does not mean only sexual sin—it is any sinful desire. Every lust that comes from our sin-nature is sin. The only thing the lust of our flesh does is war against our soul—against the new spirit, the new heart, the new man, which the Spirit of God has created within us in the new birth.

God has given us a new heart in which we strive against sin. In regeneration, God gave us a new heart, with faith and repentance, freeing us from being the servants of sin. He made us servants of righteousness—giving us a new will to willingly serve God from the heart. So we strive against sin.

The desire of our new man is to do all things our Lord teaches us to do—we know all things our Lord teaches us to do are for the good of our soul. All that Christ commands us in the word is summed up in believing and seeking him preeminently at all times. He taught us not to be anxious about things we need in this life

Matthew 6: 33: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness...

Concerning brethren, his commands are summed up when Christ said, “love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 13: 34; 15: 12). And concerning all men, as well as brethren, Christ said,

Matthew 7:12...all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them:

Now, the Lord's thoughts are always on his people.

Psalm 139: 17: How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! 18: *If* I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.

So he tells us to set our affection on him at all times.

Colossians 3: 1: If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2: Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

**Subject:** A Word to Live By

The sword whereby we wage this war against the lusts of our flesh is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (Eph 6: 17) So it is wise to start each day by reading a passage of scripture or even better, one verse and set our affection on Christ above and ask the Lord to give us light on it. Then keep thinking on that word as we go through our day. The Lord will work things in the day to give us more light on it. The Lord promises,

Proverbs 3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Our text tonight, is just such “A Word to Live By”. This word will set our affection on Christ if the Spirit bless it to our hearts. After the Lord went forth and spoke his name to Judas and the officers, saying, “I AM”, they fell backward. Then the Lord again spoke his name to them and the Lord spoke a word that is a good word to live by. This is a word, that if we get the meaning, will carry us through each day, even our whole lives, if blessed to our hearts by the Spirit of God.

**John 18: 8: Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: 9: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.**

This is substitution: this is the gospel of Christ and him crucified! By the Lord giving himself to suffer the cross in place of his people, he freed his elect from sin, death and hell. This is the word our Savior blessed to free us and give us faith in the first hour. This is the word he shall continue to bless to keep us and free us from sin and trouble in this world. This gospel keeps us remembering what Christ has done for us so that we continue in him. This good news is our one weapon against the lust of our flesh.

## **THE ONLY FIT MAN**

The Lord said, “It is me ye seek, let these go their way.” He is saying, “Take me and let these go free.” He said this because he was the only fit Man able to go to the cross and accomplish redemption for his people.

Concerning all the elect of God that Christ came to lay down his life for, scripture says, “all we like sheep have gone astray” (Is 53: 6). We all sinned in Adam and came forth guilty sinners full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores (Is 1: 6). We are not fit to redeem and free ourselves from sin in justification or sanctification. But Christ Jesus is the Spotless Lamb of God.

Remember, the lamb in the old covenant sacrifices had to be without spot or blemish. They would examine the lamb all over. If they started at the nose, searched and found no blemish, then right at the tip of its tail was a blemish, they would look for another. The lamb had to be spotless. It typified our Lord Jesus’ sinless humanity.

The Son of God came down and took the body that his Father prepared him. He was not born of Adam as we are. That is the significance of Christ being born of a virgin. He is the Woman’s Seed, the Incorruptible Seed, the Holy Seed.

He came forth without sin and was made under the law and was examined for 33 years and there was found no blemish. His nature, his thoughts, his words, his deeds were spotless, sinless. He is the only Man fit to be the Substitute of his people.

When he went to Gethsemane, the devil was trying him in every way possible to get him to sin. But the Faithful One resisted unto blood. Then on the cross, he resisted unto blood.

Next time our flesh lusts to be exalted over another and we think ourselves something when we are nothing, the Spirit of God will take a word like this and bring it to our remembrance. He will turn our heart to remember how the Son of God humbled himself, took the form of a

servant in sinless humanity, like unto his brethren, and said, “*Take me and let my people go free.*” Thereby Christ will humble us in heart. Anytime we begin to think ourselves to have overcome and become proud or we think lightly of our sin because it is only in thought or we become weary and faint in our minds because we are opposed, the Lord will strengthen us and turn us to Christ and say:

Hebrews 12: 3: Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4: Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

## **HE ALONE MUST DRINK THE BITTER CUP**

**John 18: 1:...he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron...11: Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?**

Why did our Lord give himself to go to the cross and command his people be let go? He alone must be made sin and a curse for his people. He alone must drink from the brook. He alone must drink this bitter cup. Thereby, our triune God in Christ gets all the glory.

We saw this typified in the brook Cedron. Verse 1 says “*he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron.*” We saw how our Lord was typified by David crossing this brook with his people with him. But this is also fulfillment of Psalm 110: 7:

Psalm 110:7 He shall drink of the brook in the way...

This metaphor is not of our Substitute drinking from a clear, refreshing mountain, spring but of the black brook, the sewer ditch. It is a metaphor to picture what Christ willingly, actually was made and bore on our behalf, that is, the sin and curse/wrath of God. As sickening as it would be to one of us to drink from that dirty brook Cedron, it was unimaginably worse to our sinless Savior to be made sin and a curse before his Father. Concerning the great, innumerable multitude of his elect, it says,

Isaiah 53:6: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

2 Corinthians 5: 21: He hath made him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Galatians 3:13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:

Being our sin-bearer is another reason he sweat blood in Gethsemane. He prayed, “O Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt” (Mt 26: 39). Then he came forth and now it is this bitter cup given by his Father which our Substitute willingly drank on behalf of his people, “*Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*”

Scripture speaks of the cup of God’s wrath and fury, the cup of trembling. It is the judgment God must and shall pour out on every sinner born in this world. Yet for an elect multitude, Christ drank that bitter cup himself. He had to drink it alone that the glory in our redemption be God’s alone.

Isaiah 63:3: I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people *there was* none with me...

As we go through our day thinking on a verse like this, when we face some cross and the lust of our flesh would shy away from it, the Spirit of God sets our affection on Christ to behold him drink that bitter cup and by it set us free. He brings us to say concerning our light affliction, "*the cup my father gave me, shall I not drink it.*" He drank the bitter cup his Father gave him that we might drink the sweet cup of salvation. Therefore, our light affliction is nothing in light of glory that awaits in beholding our Redeemer.

But even when we bear a cross, our Lord Jesus, by this same word will lift up our head. Do you remember what Ps 110: 7 says Christ will do because he drank of this brook?

Psalm 110:7: He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

Psalm 3:3: But thou, O LORD, *art* a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

Having accomplished the redemption of his people, our Lord lifted up his head. Our Substitute arose triumphant from the grave into heaven and sat down at the Father's right hand. So did all his people arise and sit down in him. So now as we face our light afflictions—which to us seem anything but light—our Lord shall lift up our head to behold him and our redemption accomplished so that we know he shall never lose one.

David experienced this power of our Lord blessing his word to his heart. When the day brings troubles. It could be the enemy of our own flesh or the devil's accusations or some enemy rises up from without and the lust of our flesh is to save ourselves, David said,

Psalm 27: 5...in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. 6 And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

## **THE ACCOMPLISHMENT**

Our gracious, successful Redeemer lifts our head by blessing the word to our inner man so that he sets our affection on Christ above and renews us to remember how Christ said, "Take me and let these go." The accomplishment of Christ's substitution is that he has freed his people forever.

Our Substitute declared God absolutely just as he satisfied justice for each of his elect by his death on the cross in our place. Therefore "he HATH redeemed us from the curse being made a curse for us" (Gal 3:13). Being eternal God in human flesh, "He hath obtained ETERNAL redemption for us" (Heb 9: 12).

There is only one judgment sinners must face. All shall be judged of God. But for Christ's people, we have already been judged by God in Christ and him crucified. There is one judgment. Therefore, scripture says, "now ONCE in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (Heb 9: 26).

Isaiah 53: 11...By his knowledge, shall my righteous servant justify many for he shall bear their iniquities.

By the finished work of our Substitute, our Savior made each of his people better than righteous. A man can be right in this world and yet be unjustified before God. Christ has made his people, “the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor 5:21). He crushed the devil’s head and took his power to accuse us away by making his people righteousness. Our body of sin is crucified with Christ and now we live with Christ above. His Spirit abides in each of us he regenerated so that we “are not in the flesh but in the Spirit” and we shall never not be in the Spirit (Rom 8: 9).

Therefore, for each one for whom Christ died, mercy cries out for us to be set free. But mercy does not cry alone. By the perfect obedience of Christ unto death, justice cries in perfect harmony with mercy, demanding, “*let these go their way*”. As Toplady wrote

Payment God cannot twice demand  
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,  
And then again at mine.

Concerning the bitter up of God’s condemnation, since Christ bore it on behalf of his people,

Isaiah 51:22: Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God *that* pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, *even* the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:..

Having a word like this in our heart, when we are accused, remember this. By Christ giving himself and commanding his disciples be let go, those officers focused all their attention on Christ. His disciples were let go by Christ stepping into the gap. He turned the accuser away from his people to him. The Lord blesses a word like this to your heart when you are accused and makes you thankful they are accusing you and not those you love.

When we are offended and the lust of our flesh is to be unforgiving that is a bitter lust of our flesh which wars against our own soul. It may hurt those we love but it hurts us worse. But God lifts up our head to behold our Savior and speaks into our hearts, saying, “My son willingly drank the bitter cup for you. I have taken it out of your hand. Your sin and iniquity I remember no more. Now forgive for Christ’s sake as I have forgiven you for his sake.”

At times, the lust of our flesh is to say, “Well, I’ve done enough, let these others do the rest.” The Spirit brings to our remembrance how our Substitute “having loved his own which were in the world, loved them unto the end” until he said, “IT IS FINISHED!” He reminds us it is for this reason that God says to you in just-mercy, “let him go”. That makes us say, “I believe I will keep at it a little longer” and makes you do it as unto the LORD.

If we behold someone else sin and the lust of our flesh is to say, “Lord, I thank thee that I’m not like other men” or when we sin in some other ways beside these and fall flat on our face, he keeps blessing his word and keeps us coming to his throne of grace to confess our sin to him and cry again, “God be merciful [propitious] to me the sinner.” And he shows us as new as the first day that because he took our place he is our merciful and faithful High Priest, our Advocate with the Father, our Mercy Seat—“faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn 1: 9). And by continuing to wash our feet, his constant mercy keeps us washing one another’s feet.

## GRACE FOR TODAY

Someone might hear this and say, “I’m going to do this all of next year or all of next month. I will start out the day with a scripture and ask God for light on it as I go through the day.” But before we set our sights on next year or next month, remember the Lord said we need grace for today.

Matthew 6: 34: Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

Tomorrow, next month, next year is not our need. We need grace today. We need the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ one day at a time. So today, set our heart on him and ask the Lord to give us “this day our daily Bread” (Mt 6: 11). Ask the Lord to keep his word in our hearts and our affection set on him just from morning until noon. Then when noon comes, ask him to set your affection on him from noon to bedtime. We need grace for today.

Then maybe when the boss says, “This co-worker is in the weeds, can you take their work and free them up?” The Lord’s word will be in your heart and you will say, “That is what my Substitute did for me when he said, “*take me, let these go free.*” I will be happy to take his burden off of him.”

As long as we are in this world, our Redeemer promises that the Spirit of God will keep us remembering our Substitute so that we experience his continual mercies day-by-day. Doing so he will keep us worshipping him from the heart.

Psalm 103: 2: Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: 3: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; 4: Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; 5: Who satisfieth thy mouth with good *things; so that* thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.

**Amen!**