

Series: 1 John
Title: Doing Righteousness
Text: 1 John 2: 29; 3: 4-10
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1 John 2: 29: If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

Our subject: Doing Righteousness

Some think “doing righteousness” means he practices righteousness. God’s saints delight in the law of God after the inward man. His grace does bring forth a new walk by making us servants of righteousness.

But in 1 John 3, John says the believer does not “commit sin.” Is there anyone here who does not commit sin? Some say he means habitual sin, he does not make it his common practice. Again, believers should endeavor to “sin not”! But all those things a child of the devil can imitate and John is declaring what is the manifest difference between a child of God and a child of the devil.

We must interpret scripture in its context. From chapter 2 verse 18 to chapter 3 verse 24, John is dealing with the same subject: he declares the manifest difference between those who are of God and those who are of the devil.

1) John begins by identifying antichrists, telling us what he means by “*committing sin*”: **1 John 2: 18: Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19: They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us...22: Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. 23: Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father:...**

That is what John means when he speaks of “committing sin”. This is the opposite of “doing righteousness”—“committing sin” is denying Christ, abiding not in Christ alone to the end; mixing man’s works so that it ceases to be by grace alone. “Committing sin” is going out from God’s saints, not continuing under the preaching of the gospel with Christ’s people, forsaking the assembling together with us under the preaching of the gospel of Christ—which is to hate brethren rather than love them

2) Then John identifies Christ’s people and what it is to “do righteousness”—**1 John 2: 20: But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. 21: I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth...24: Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. 25: And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life. 26: These *things* have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. 27: But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you : but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. 28: And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.**

This is what John means by “doing righteousness”, it is the opposite of “committing sin”—by “doing righteousness” he means we, believe on Christ, we abide in Christ in truth unto the end, not mixing the lie of will-works with God’s grace. “Doing righteousness” includes loving our brethren by continuing to assemble together with them under the gospel unto the end and doing all things involved in order to love them and continue together.

So be sure to understand: by “*committing sin*” John means denying Christ, mixing works with Christ, denying the truth, apostatizing from the gospel, forsaking assembling together with Christ’s people. By “*doing righteousness*” John means abiding in Christ, abiding in the truth, loving our brethren assembling with them unto the end under the gospel.

3) Now, seeing what John means by “committing sin” and what he means by “doing righteousness,” in chapter 3, he continues the same subject, declaring the manifest difference between the children of God and the children of the devil and why this difference exists—**1 John 3: 4: Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. 5: And ye know that [Christ] was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. 6: Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. 7: Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 8: He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 9: Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10: In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother...23: And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. 24: And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in [Christ], and [Christ] in him. And hereby we know that [Christ] abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.**

By “*doing righteousness*” John means believing on Christ in truth, persevering in faith, abiding in Christ in truth, not mixing law and grace, not apostatizing from the truth; included is loving our brethren by assembling with them under the gospel and all things required to continue doing so. By “committing sin” John means the opposite: it is to apostatize from the faith, to deny Christ, to deny the truth, to forsake assembling together with Christ’s people

Here is a question, how does “*knowing Christ is righteous*” assure us that everyone that believes on Christ and continues abiding in Christ is born of him?

Proposition: Knowing Christ is righteous, we know Christ makes his people abide in him alone because this is righteous and Christ only does that which is righteous. So the sinner who abides in Christ is born of him.

CHRIST PUT AWAY OUR SINS

1 John 3: 4: Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. 5: And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. 6: Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

“*Whosoever committeth sin*”—whosoever abides not in Christ by faith alone, whosoever apostatizes from faith in Christ—“*transgresseth also the law.*” If a man does not abide in Christ, does not believe on Christ, he sins against God because God commands us to believe on Christ his Son. God said, “*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased, hear ye him.*” (Mt 17: 5) And Christ taught us the work of God is to believe on Christ.

John 6: 29: Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

By not believing on Christ, a man transgresses the whole law because the law is fulfilled in Christ. He is left in his sins and condemned. Christ said,

John 3: 18: He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19: And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20: For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

By committing the sin of not believing on Christ a man “*transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*” It is because Christ is the fulfillment of the law for his people. To reject Christ is to abide under the curse and condemnation of the law. Christ said, “*this is the condemnation*”—this is the sin that condemns him—“*that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.*” John began 1 John by speaking of light and darkness—light is believing on Christ in truth, darkness is rejecting Christ for the works of the flesh. Christ said when the Holy Spirit comes he will convince men “*of sin, because they believe not on me.*” (Jn 16: 9) The sin John is speaking of committing is the sin of not believing on Christ.

But Christ put away the sin of his people on the cross. Now, the justice of God demands that Christ must take away our sin of unbelief by giving us faith in him. John says, “*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*” Since Christ put away our sins on the cross, Christ sends the Holy Spirit through the gospel and puts away our sin of unbelief, giving us faith in him. “*Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.*” Abiding in Christ is believing on Christ. And by abiding in Christ by faith, we sin not.

Christ took away all the sin of his people by being made sin for us and making us the righteousness of God in him. So John says, *“and in him is no sin.”*

Hebrews 1: 3...when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Therefore, Christ takes away the sin of unbelief in those he redeemed by creating each of his redeemed anew and making us know him and see him and giving us faith to believe on him. This is how he brings us to abide in him, to believe on him and keeps us believing on him. Therefore, John says, *“whosoever sinneth”—whosoever abides not in Christ by faith—“hath not seen him, neither known him.”*

John 3: 3: Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

But when we are born of Christ, Christ reveals himself, making us see him. We know him. The result is what Christ said, *“they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”* (Jn 10: 27-28)

So we asked the question, how does knowing Christ is righteous make us know that everyone that believes is born of him? It is because all who believe are given faith because Christ put away our sin on the cross and he puts away our sin of unbelief. He brings us to rest in Christ by faith as our only righteousness. So those who believe on Christ and continue abiding Christ do so because they been made righteous by Christ and born again.

AS RIGHTEOUS AS CHRIST

1 John 3: 7: Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

Remember, “doing righteousness” is believing on Christ. It is the same as what Christ called “doing truth.” Christ said,

John 3: 21: But he that doeth truth cometh to the Light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Believing on Christ is called “doing righteousness” because through faith Christ’s doing of righteousness is freely imputed to us because his doing, as our Head, is the doing of his believing people.

Romans 9: 30: What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31: But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32: Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33: As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

When Christ reveals himself we are no longer *“ignorant of God’s righteousness, and [no longer] going about to establish [our] own righteousness, [but] have...submitted [ourselves] unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”* (Rom 10: 3-4) Paul said, *“the word of faith, which we preach”* is this *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* (Rom 10: 8-10) Believing on Christ is what John is calling “doing righteousness” because it is through faith in Christ that the

believer establishes the whole law in righteousness. Not because we established it but because Christ did for us. (Rom 3: 31)

So if we know Christ is righteous then we know he that does righteousness—believing on Christ—is born of him and is righteous even as Christ is Righteous.

WE CANNOT “NOT” BELIEVE

1 John 3: 8: He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 9: Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for [Christ’s] seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10: In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

Since Christ was manifest to destroy the works of the devil, “*whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin*”—those born of faith cannot stop believing on Christ. We cannot cease looking to Christ and begin looking to our works for salvation. We cannot apostatize from the faith nor can we cease loving our brethren. Why? It is because we are born of Christ’s incorruptible seed and his seed remains in us and we cannot sin the sin of stopping believing on Christ because we are born of God. In the new man that Christ creates is no sin. But in our flesh is only sin. Yet, faith in Christ is the one sin that those born of God cannot commit because Christ will not allow it by his incorruptible seed remaining in us.

1 Peter 1: 21: Who by [Christ] do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. 22: Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently*: 23: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 24: For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 25: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

The gospel comes in power when Christ speaks and implants the seed, the word, within his child. A new man is created after Christ’s image. By God’s grace we “*put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*” (Eph 4:24) We are continually “*renewed in knowledge after the image of Christ who created us*” (Col 3:10) The result is “*[Christ’s] seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin*”—he cannot NOT believe on Christ—“*because he is born of God.*”

John says by Christ’s incorruptible seed we do righteousness and love our brethren. It is because the word comes in power making us irresistibly heed God’s command which John gives again in verses 23-24. Here he tells us clearly what doing righteousness and loving our brethren is, “*And this is his commandment, That we should BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF HIS SON JESUS CHRIST, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*”

Do you delight to do his will? Christ’s yoke is light and easy to his people. We believe on Christ, abide in him and cannot do otherwise, nor do we want to. We love our brethren by continuing under the gospel together. The Spirit which he has given us makes us willing and we cannot do otherwise. “*In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness*”—whosoever believes not Christ or departs from the faith—“*is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.*”

Amen!

