

So That You May Know

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

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

106. Distinguishing Between Sin and Righteousness- Part 5

WAOY Wednesday 10/24/07

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 discussing what John meant when he said that Jesus Christ appeared to "**take away our sins**", so I want to go into that area again by looking closely at verse 5 again:

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

Now since the dawn of human history- one thing has continually

and consistently separated God's relationship with all of Mankind and that one thing- is sin.

So, under the Old Covenant- God graciously established a very elaborate system of sacrifices for sin that symbolized the forgiveness that Man so desperately needed. So, God gave this sacrificial system that was instituted on Mt. Sinai. This complex system that was given to Moses in the ceremonial Law was well scripted and had intricate details and it was precise and nothing was left to the imagination of Man, and nothing was left to chance- and this system involved the establishment of a priesthood.

And this system involved a Tabernacle and an "outer" Court and an "inner" Court and the Holy of Holies. It involved a Veil that was 18 inches thick and the Ark of the Covenant and a brazen Altar and a Mercy Seat- and it involved various offerings that would be brought by these priests:

- ✓ A Burnt Offering
- ✓ A Peace Offering
- ✓ A Sin Offering
- ✓ A Grain Offering
- ✓ A Guilt Offering

And there were brought bulls and goats and lambs that were unblemished and doves and pigeons and rams- enough animals to make a member of PETA to faint.

And even more this system involved a Day of Atonement and the establishment of a high priest and a scapegoat and hyssop and an altar of incense and a golden lamp stand and a laver and a table for showbread and curtains and priestly garments with an ephod and a breastplate and there were holy days and there were tithes and festivals and there was the Passover and there was the Feast of Unleavened Bread and there was the Feast of the First Trumpets and there was Pentecost and there was the Feast of the Booths and there was all of this.

Yet there was one thing in this elaborate system that was lacking- and that one thing was the most important thing that all of these details and all of these intricacies- that at the center had the institution

of the priesthood- all of these things combined - **could not take away one sin!**

Hebrews 10:4

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

All of the elaborateness of the ceremonial Law was simply a picture of the coming of Jesus Christ- Who would die upon a Cross and there become our great High Priest and die for us.

The entire Levitical system merely looked ahead to the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ- who John tells us does take away our sins. Jesus is the fulfillment of the entire Levitical system- all of its details; all of its sacrifices; all of its rituals; all of its intricacies are completely and totally fulfilled in the Person of Jesus Christ.

He is the perfect Priest- Who made a perfect Sacrifice that provided the perfect atonement for sin; the perfect redemption from sin; the perfect propitiation of God; the perfect access to God; the perfect reconciliation with God; the perfect access to God; and perfect acceptance with God.

This is the central message of this entire Levitical system was that the best that the Jew had was to obtain a temporary reprieve from God's wrath against His sin until the perfect High Priest came onto the scene.

So by the Apostle John telling us that Jesus is able to do what nothing under the Old Covenant was able to do- he was encouraging the Jew of the first century and the 21st century completely and utterly abandon and leave the Old Covenant which gave them symbols and signs and types and shadows that could never take away sins with an imperfect priest and for them to fully embrace the New Covenant- which gives us these the fullness of redemption and a perfect Priest.

By John saying that Jesus Christ is able to take away our sins here in verse 5 of 1John 3- he is saying that what we have in the Lord Jesus Christ is so much better than the entirety of the Old Testament Levitical system **which could do absolutely nothing to save one soul or to remove one sin!**

There is a saying that says- the main thing is to keep the main thing- the main thing. A good teacher is able to keep his students on point; a good preacher is able to make his point so that the people can

know what God has said. John was a good writer because he keeps the main thing- the main thing.

And the main thing that John is telling us here in verse 5 is that Jesus Christ is a superior Priest to those priests who were operating under the Old Covenant. Jesus alone is a perfect High Priest and through Jesus Christ alone- not only are we forgiven- but Praise God- our sins are completely and utterly and totally taken away- never to be held against us.

And it is important for us to know that our sins deserved Gods' wrath and God was good and just to pour out His full fury and wrath against our sins- but the Good News of The Gospel is that while it is true that God poured out His wrath against our sin- He didn't pour out that wrath against us- But Jesus Christ was our propitiation and He alone took our place and He alone was our substitute so that all of God's fury against our sin and all of God's wrath against our sin could be poured out upon that spotless Lamb of God and in the greatest act of Mercy and Grace the world has ever known- Jesus took our punishment for us although he was innocent so that we may receive His Righteousness- although we are guilty.

Through Jesus Christ we have forever escaped the wrath of God which was against us because we were and are will always be guilty. In Jesus Christ- we are cleansed and made free from the curse of trying to earn our Salvation through works of righteousness. In Jesus we are free from having to continually year after year bring sacrifices and offerings for our sin. In Jesus Christ- we are free from having to get the high priest go behind the veil to intercede on our behalf- even though that high priest was a sinner too.

But in Jesus- we have a perfect High Priest; Who also happens to be our perfect Sacrifice: Who also happens to be the One Who right now at this very minute while you are hearing me preach this word- Jesus Christ is operating in Heaven as the Apostle and High Priest of our Faith and He is interceding to God the Father on our behalf! And I suggest to you today, beloved, that it is the intercession of Jesus at the right Hand of God combined with the groanings which cannot be uttered that the Holy Spirit is doing from inside your body that keeps you and me in the Love of God.

Don't ever get to the place, brothers and sisters, where you think that the reason that you stay faithful to God is because of some intrinsic

faithfulness on your part. No, please don't be arrogant about this beloved- You and I are faithful to God, and we love God because our faithfulness is a gift to us from God and our love for God is a gift to us from God and we cannot take any glory or credit for this at all.

John teaches us here in verse 5 that Jesus Christ has taken our sins away from us forever because Jesus is without sin and Jesus is without sin because He is the only human being who ever perfectly obeyed His Father's Law. So, we can see then, that it is the sinless Righteousness of Christ that Jesus developed by keeping the Law which allows for our sins to not just be forgiven- but to be taken away from us forever! And it is the sinless perfection of Jesus Christ which makes Jesus to be a far superior High Priest than any high priest under the Old Covenant could ever hope to be.

Now here is the summation of all that I have been saying to you about this verse. When the Bible in Ephesians that we are saved by Grace through Faith- the way that that phrase was written shows us that Paul meant that we are saved by Grace through Faith *alone*. Our Salvation comes about by the unmerited favor of God toward us as undeserving sinners and we receive the forgiveness of sins through the shed Blood of Jesus Christ. But it doesn't stop there.

In addition to having our sins forgiven by the Blood- we are then made Righteous and fit for Heaven by a marvelous act of God- Who imputes the very same sinless Righteousness that Jesus developed by perfectly obeying His Father while on earth- that very same Righteousness is imputed or credited to us through the agency of Faith alone.

We do not do anything to be saved but believe and trust- but even that belief and trust that we use to be saved was given to us by God- so we didn't originate or initiate anything to be saved.

Now here is the most fascinating part of this whole thing. When we say that we trusted in Christ or when we say that we believe and put our trust in Christ for Salvation- what are we actually saying? We are saying that because Jesus lived a perfectly sinless life **and** because this same sinless Jesus died on the Cross for our sins- **and** because this same Jesus was physically and bodily Resurrected from the dead- we are believing and we fully trust that all of God's wrath against our sins has been completely satisfied in the fact that he poured out that wrath against Jesus rather than us; and therefore- we are forever escaped

from any further wrath from God for any future sin. But it doesn't stop there.

When we say that we are trusting in Christ for Salvation- we are also saying that we fully trust that the Righteousness that we need to be able to go to Heaven has been imputed to us by the agency of faith alone- but it doesn't stop there. When we say that we are trusting Christ for Salvation- we are also saying that because Christ rose from the dead- that we too will rise the dead and we will live eternally in Heaven with Him forever!

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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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.