

So That You May Know

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

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

116. Distinguishing Between Sin and Righteousness- Part 15

WAOY Tuesday 12/04/07

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 today's broadcast, I want you to notice the last part of verse 9. John says that those who are born of God:

... cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Now even though the dominion of sin over our lives has been forever broken- there is still more good news. John teaches here that because this new nature that was created in Righteousness and true Holiness

gives us both the power and the desire to love and serve God- John says that once we are saved- we lose the capacity to ever reverse that process.

Notice the word that John uses here. John said that we “*cannot sin*”. John didn’t say that we *ought* not sin- but that we *cannot* sin. The word that was translated in English here as “**cannot**” is the Greek word that denotes ability or power. So John is teaching here that because Salvation is such a supernatural miracle of God- that God changes the very nature of the human being when he is saved so that he becomes unable to continue or dwell in sin on an ongoing basis.

Now it is true that saved people sin. And sadly, sometimes they sin grievously. But if a person is truly saved- what makes him saved is the fact that he had been regenerated and given a new nature and John is saying here that part of that new nature is that the saved soul loses the ability or the power to dwell continually in sin.

And the reason that he loses the power to dwell in sin on an ongoing basis is because he lost the desire to sin when he was justified. You see, our actions are based upon our desires and our desires are based upon our nature. If our nature is changed- our desires change and if our desires change- our actions will change.

So John was teaching here that Salvation is *exactly* what Jesus said it was- everlasting life. It is life that never dies; it is life that can never fade away; it is life that cannot be diminished or lost because this life is not based upon human will power or human strength or human wisdom- but this eternal life is based upon God and His Power and His Character and His Nature.

Now we all know people who *said* that they were saved- who certainly went through the motions of being saved and these people turned back to sin and they stayed out in sin and to this day have never come back to Jesus. And we are then tempted to look at this and then rationalize that Salvation must not be permanent after all and that eternal life is only eternal as long as we put our *own* will power and our strength into it. But that would be a mistake, beloved. Because to do that is to judge the validity of what God says in Scripture by our own human logic- and that is wrong. God said that eternal life was – well, eternal. And it is eternal precisely because Man has nothing to do with it.

Anything that Man does is temporary and can fade away and anything that is based in human will power or human strength or human wisdom is not eternal. So that is why we must believe what God said about Salvation- that Salvation is not about human power or human strength- but that Salvation is a Sovereign work of God alone.

And I suggest to you that people who say they are saved and who dwell in sin on an ongoing basis do not prove that Salvation is not eternal at all. Simply because some people in the Church go back out into sin does not in any way change or alter what God has said. So all that people like that prove- is that they were never truly saved to begin with.

John says very clearly here that those who are truly and genuinely born of God do not dwell in sin on an ongoing basis because they can't- their nature has been changed and thus their desires have been changed and thus their actions have been changed forever by the Sovereign act of God to save them.

Now brothers and sisters, if what John says here disturbs you or if what John says here conflicts with what you believe or what you have been taught- then I say to you that what you believe is wrong and what you have been taught is wrong- because John is right.

John was an Apostle of Jesus Christ- who was moved along by the Holy Spirit to write down inspired, infallible, inerrant, authoritative, relevant, and eternal words that came right out of the Mind and Heart and Mouth of Almighty God. So we have the duty and the obligation here that when we see that any of our beliefs or any of what we have been taught is in conflict with divinely inspired Scripture- we must humble submit to the authority of Scripture and cast our beliefs aside.

Now I want to look at our last verse in this section- so let's read verse 10 again together:

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.

John uses this last verse in our section to give us a summary of all that he taught here. John says that **“by this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious;”** So what John is saying here is that the things that we have been going over the last fourteen broadcasts about

the great contrast between sin and Righteousness and the great difference in the relationship that saved people have with sin and lost people have with sin is the distinguishing factor of who is a child of God and who is not.

Over and over in his Epistle John makes this point. John is basically saying here that talk is cheap. You can say anything that you want to and you can believe whatever suites your fancy but if you dwell continually in sin and if you do not love your brother- John says that you are not a Christian.

John says these two areas- not dwelling continually in sin and loving the brethren are the dividing line between the children of God and the children of the devil. You can go to the right Church- you can quote Scripture backward and forward; you can sing in the choir; you can preach the Gospel and you can get on radio and teach- but if you dwell continually in sin and you do not love all saved people- you are lost and you are yet in your sins.

This is what distinguishes the lost from the saved; the fish on the right side from the fish on the left; the tares from the wheat; the children of light from the children of darkness; the sheep from the goats; the sands of the sea from the stars of heaven.

Every day; in every way- we are manifesting that we are saved or that we are lost. I have been told by many people that what you believe is a private and a personal matter and that we should not share our beliefs with others. That is about the dumbest thing that anyone could say. How you live your life is an unmistakable and irrefutable reflection of what you believe. There is not one single human being on earth who can separate what they believe from how they live. John teaches very clearly here that the two things are inseparable.

Not many years ago- we had a President in this country who lived a very immoral life. Yet over and over we were told that he was a good man because of which side he was on concerning many political issues. And so these people said that his own immoral behavior didn't make him an immoral man.

But that is exactly the opposite of what John teaches here. John says that people who live immoral lives are immoral people. And people who do righteousness- John says- are righteous.

So if you engage in ongoing sin- it is because you are lost. Period- end of statement. There is no such thing- John says- where people can

live like hell all week long and then lay claim to being saved. They're not saved- they're deceived. And it isn't me who says this- what the Apostle John wrote in the Holy Bible says these people are not saved- and says they are deceived and says the Truth is not even in them.

Now once again this issue forces me to get into an area that many will find offensive. But even though this area is quite controversial to many people- it is very clear in Scripture. So, hold on to your hats.

I believe dear friends that as believers- we should formulate what we believe and what we say from Scripture and not take on the terminology and philosophy of the lost unsaved world. The world doesn't have the truth; the world doesn't have peace; the world doesn't possess eternal life and so they don't understand things correctly.

For example- when I was a child- we were told that when the frog crawled up on the lily pad and kissed the girl and became a prince that this was nothing but a fairy tale. But today the lost world calls this, "science". But there is nothing smart or intelligent or even scientific to believe that Man evolved from one celled amoebas. Darwinian Evolution is not scientific- beloved- it is nonsense. And it is nonsense that is perpetrated upon our children as though it were a fact by people who don't believe in anything.

So when we who are saved examine things about God or life- we must be careful that we do not formulate what we believe about an issue based upon what we saw on TV or what we heard on the radio or what Time Magazine or Oprah or Fox News or the Republican Party says about it. These agencies or these people are lost pagan entities which do not speak on behalf of God. Only Scripture speaks on behalf of God and so we must formulate what believe about these issues from Scripture and from Scripture alone.

For example- in this country- since the mid 1960's- sin has become a disease. And we call people who sin habitually "addicts". And we say that these addicts need what we call "treatment" as though sin can be cured with medicine and therapy. And this worldly terminology has crept into the Church over the last fifty years and it is common today to hear people in the Church speak about these issues the same way that the lost world speaks about them.

So what has happened is that the infallible Word of God has taken a back seat to human wisdom and human philosophy- and human logic- and we must not let that happen.

The truth is that sin cannot be cured with any human invention. Sin can only be cured through the Blood of Jesus Christ- which modern science and modern Government and modern intellectuals have completely rejected. In other words- what sinful people need is to repent and be saved- not given medication or therapy.

Many ailments and social problems and maladies and sufferings that have always been true out in the world- but which were never true in the Church for 2,000 years- are now just as prevalent *in* the Church today as they are out of it. And the reason for this is because- for the most part- the modern Church has accepted the ways of the lost world as being the same thing as the ways of God- and they're not.

So John says that there is a great divide- a great distinction between those who are saved and those who are lost and we need to accent that difference and we need to draw attention to that difference so that we may be the light of the world and the city that is set on a hill.

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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