

Remember, John was addressing false doctrines and false teachings that had arisen in the 50 years after the resurrection of Jesus. We need to put all that John said into context to make sense of what we might read here. We interpret the Bible by the Bible. We need to take into account the “whole counsel of God’s Word” (Acts 20:27). So, this morning, I want to take a bite size piece of scripture at a time and move forward through it.

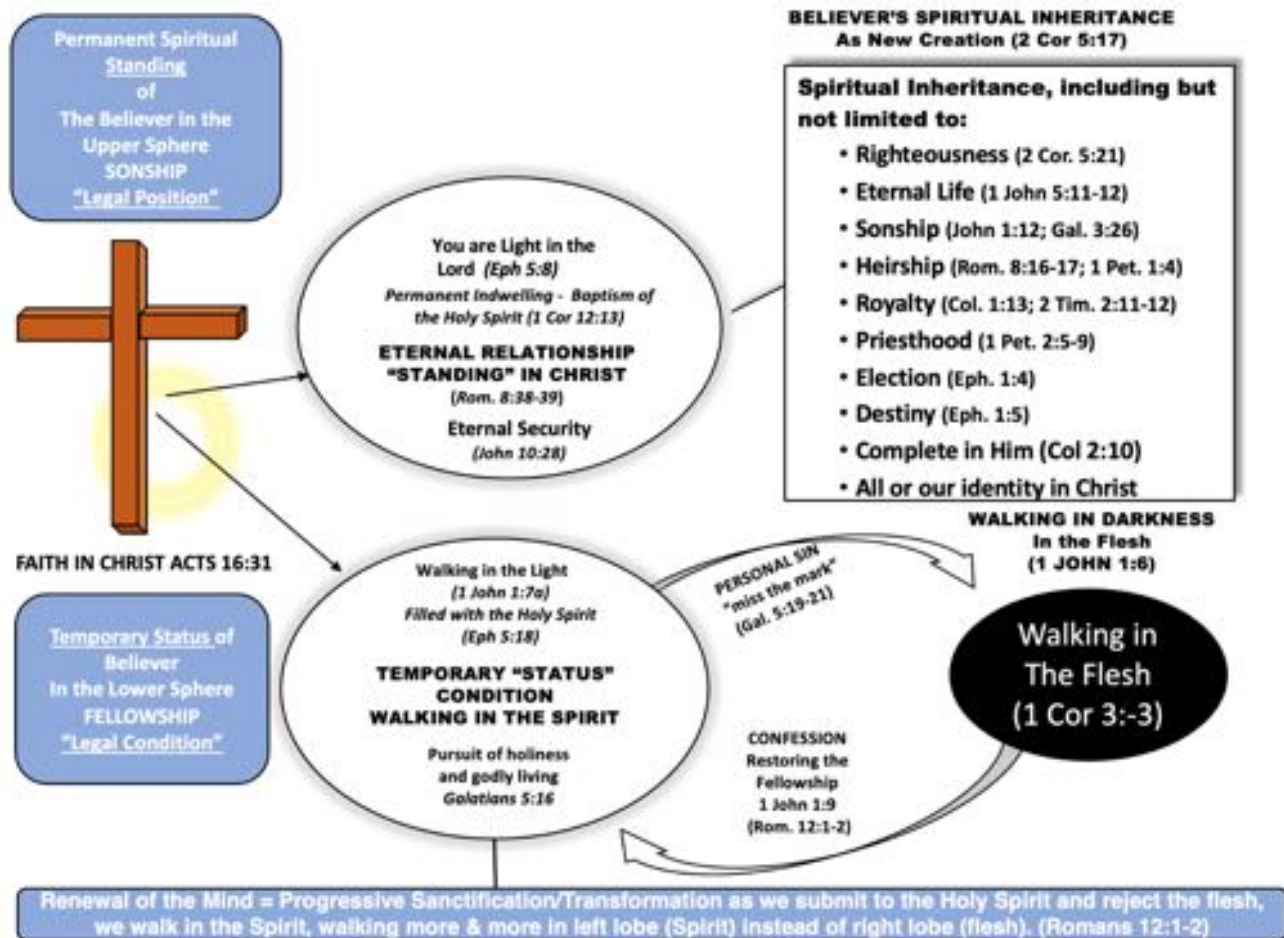
⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. 2. ¹My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ² And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. (1 John 1:8-2:2, NKJV).

We covered 1 John 1:8-9 thoroughly on Wednesday night. If you missed it, you probably missed the most important teaching I have done in my seven years here at the Grove. The first verse of chapter two clearly tells us that John is writing to believers. I have connected 1 John 1:8-9 right to the beginning of chapter two because you must remember that there were no chapter or verse divisions in either the Tanakh (The Jewish Old Testament scriptures), the Second Temple writings (The New Testament), or about 1,000 years after Jesus. Therefore, it is very important to read the text together to understand what is being said to whom.

This is a letter written by John. He is writing this so that we, as believers, won’t be bound up in sin. We know this because he clearly says, “**my little children, these things I write to you.**” He’s not saying he’s writing this so we’ll live sinless lives. We’ve already gone over all of that on Wednesday. He’s writing us to let us know that we are free from *the power* of sin, but we’re not free *from sin*. So if we’re “free from the power of sin” why do we still sin? We sin because we are weak and we are frail. This doesn’t give us license (permission) to sin, but God has given us all we need to resist sin. We just studied the following verse in our study of 1st and 2nd Peter.

³ as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, (2 Peter 1:3-4a, NKJV).

Please refer to the “Confession Chart” below as we work our way through what some of this means and how it applies to our lives.



THREE TENSES (ASPECTS) OF SALVATION

Remember that our salvation has three tenses: 1) Past - Justification, 2) Present - Sanctification, and 3) Future - Glorification. At the cross we were **justified**. That means we have been freed from the penalty of sin. ***“He that knew no sin was made sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21, Pastor’s paraphrase).*** This put us in what I called on Wednesday night, the “Upper Sphere.” That condition never changes. When you came to the Lord Jesus as your Savior, you became a new creation with a new identity (2 Cor 5:17). His Holy Spirit was given to you at salvation, and He permanently indwells you. At salvation, you were gifted everything you needed to live a holy and godly lifestyle (Colossians 2:10). He’s given us everything we need to not sin, but He has made provision for us in those times when we do sin.

Sanctification is in the present. We are always in the Upper Sphere as our Standing in Christ never changes, but we live and operate in the “Lower Sphere.” In the lower

sphere, we “live out our salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12-14). This does not mean that we are working FOR our salvation, rather it means that we’re relying on the Holy Spirit to direct us and empower us as we walk in the Spirit (as opposed to walking in the flesh). This means that daily we are faced with decisions. We can choose to react in the flesh or respond in the Spirit. When we choose to submit to the will and power of God to direct us and empower us to walk in our identity in Christ, we are “walking in the Spirit.” When we choose to revert to our fleshly patterns of dealing with the troubles and stresses of life, we are “walking in the flesh.” I have represented this by moving to the right into the dark lower sphere. That represents walking in the flesh. John tells us in 1 John 1:9 how we move BACK into the lower left sphere and once again have sweet fellowship with the Lord. It is called “confession.”

John tells us that if we confess our sins (homologeō = same word), agreeing with God that our behavior is not what He desires for us, He is loyal and He continues forgiving us of our sins and He continues cleansing us from ALL of our unrighteousness. People sometimes ask me, “What if I don’t remember everything I’ve done wrong?” It doesn’t matter. The verse is general in its statement. It is just saying, “If we agree with God that we have sin, He is loyal and just to see us as He made us after the cross, justified, forgiven, and holy before Him.”

I summarized this act of confession on Wednesday: When the Holy Spirit convicts us (pricks our conscience not condemns us) that something we’ve thought, said, or done is wrong and is sin (ie. we’ve “missed the mark” of who we are in Christ), we simply agree with God (**homologeō** = same word, we agree) and say, “Lord, I’ve stepped out of who I am in you and what you desire of me. I receive the forgiveness that you paid for me on the cross.” The verse then tells us that He is “faithful and just” to forgive us our sins. That means He is loyal and just to not hold our sins against us. They’ve been paid for at Calvary. As I said Sunday, He perpetually cleanses (καθαρίζει = *katharizei* = “cleanses”) us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:10

John simply tells the audience here that they are liars if they refuse to admit that they sin from time to time. The Word isn’t in them because the Word in us pricks us, moves us, and nudges us to understand our shortcomings and to once again lean on Jesus.

1 John 2:1 continued

Then John reminds us that when we sin, we have an “Advocate with the Father.” Do you know what an advocate is? It is someone who speaks on your behalf. When I was practicing law, I was an advocate for my client. My job was to “present my client’s case in its most favorable light.” Jesus presents us as having been washed in His blood and being clothed in His righteousness. That’s some amazing advocacy work. In the Greek text here, it is a *parakleton* (*parakleton* = *one called to the side of another*). In ancient times, this person spoke to the judge on behalf of the accused so that the judge would

show favor. Here John is not speaking about the Holy Spirit, but rather Jesus. The blood of Jesus constantly speaks in our behalf! Hallelujah! The blood of Jesus is our perpetual and constant advocate forgiving us and cleansing us.

I think we shouldn't think of Jesus as having to run before the Father everytime we sin. It is wrong to think of Jesus running before the Father begging a big Angry God to withhold His wrath. Scripture tells us, "**Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!**" (**Romans 5:9, NIV**). In Christ, we are free from the wrath of God. John is saying something more like the blood of Jesus is continually presenting our case that our sins are paid for and washed away. This is important because it removes the condemnation for sin.

John then reminds us that HE (JESUS) IS THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS. That word is a big word, so let's break it down. In Latin from whence we derive the English word, it means "that which appeases from here on out." It has ancient roots in the Sanscrit proto-Endoeuropean root 'pra-pra' meaning "on and on."¹ This means that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross cleanses us and covers us ON AND ON AND ON. I find that very comforting.

John then reminds us that He not only appeases (brings peace and reconciliation)² for you and me personally, but He does so for the whole world.

Verses 3-6

³ Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶ He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1 John 2:3-6, NKJV).

John reminds us that one good test of knowing that we know Him is whether or not we walk in His commandments. I think that means it is efficacious to detect whether or not we have a desire to walk in obedience (in holy and godly living). Do you know that when you were saved and you received the Holy Spirit of God, you became a new creation (2 Cor 5:17)? And in becoming a "new creation," you now have the Holy Spirit of God living within you, and He gives you an appetite to obey. We need only ask, listen, and do. God does the rest. This is not a white-knuckled frantic search to learn the will of God and do it. We must read His word, ask His will, listen, and act on what He directs.

John takes it a step further and says something like, "In reality when you walk the talk it is proof of something redeeming going on in you." "If you are just talking the walk, but never get around to walking the talk, there might be something very wrong with you."

¹ <https://www.etymonline.com/word/propitiate>

² <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=appease>

These are strong words. He says, "You're making God a liar." So how does this make God a liar?

"I WILL TAKE AWAY THE STONY HEART
OUT OF YOUR FLESH, AND
I WILL GIVE YOU A HEART OF FLESH."
EZEKIEL 36:26



I want to close talking about this reference to "keeping His commandments." What do you think this is talking about? My position is that this is not talking about keeping the Ten Commandments or any other such thing. Those commandments used to be only on stone, but they have come alive and they are now in the heart of every believer.

¹⁹ Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within ^[e]them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. (Ezekiel 11:19-20, NKJV).

This is a promise to the Israelites of the day when they will all come to the Lord Jesus as their Messiah, BUT it also is an indication of what every believer receives when they come to Christ. You and I receive a new heart within us. When we are born again, God performs heart surgery on us. He gives us a heart transplant. When the Holy Spirit indwells you, it gave you the power to move from being sin-focused to God-focused. We do not become sinless (1 John 1:8), but we are now free to choose to be free from the bondage of sin. Jesus broke the power of sin to control us (Romans 6:10). We were separated from God with our hard hearts and now we can abide in Him with our tender soft hearts. The Holy Spirit living within you and me gives us the desire to please God and as we spend more time in the left lower sphere instead of the right lower sphere, we "are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18). God's desire is for each of us to become more and more like Jesus (Romans 8:29). We become like Him when we begin to allow God to remove our old, hardened heart and to replace it with that tender heart of flesh inspired by God and spoken by the Prophet Ezekiel.

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.