



On Wednesday night we looked at the first three verses of 1 John chapter three. It was very touching as we discussed what it really means to be “children of God.” That privilege comes to us merely by believing in Him. John tells us it is “bestowed” upon us. That means that we didn’t earn it or deserve to be God’s children; rather it was a gift that was just showered upon us. Some translations render

the word as “lavished.” He EXTRAVAGANTLY POURED OUT HIS BLESSINGS ON US. That, my friends, is called GRACE. Along with being children of God comes all of the things that a spectacular parent would do for us. He guards, guides, and gives to us. He touches us when we are in need, and He teaches us when we are in ignorance.

We then concluded by learning that we don’t really know much about heaven or what happens to us after we die, but we do know that we will see Him like He is, and we will be like Him. Many movies and books have been written about the afterlife, but the facts of what we learn from the Bible are scant at best. However, we know enough to know just what He wants us to know. We know that there will be no more suffering or dying in heaven. We know that we will be eternally in His presence. And we know that we’ll no longer be bothered by even the presence of sin. Knowing that this time on earth is short, John tells us, <sup>3</sup>*And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” (1 John 3:3, NKJV).* That means we want to be found living in holiness and righteous living when He comes. I reminded the group that if the Lord tarries, then He will come for each of us as we pass from this earth into heaven.

John then transitions in to some of the hardest verses in the Bible to comprehend. Let us first take as a given that Jesus + nothing = salvation. This means that we cannot earn it by baptism, good deeds, righteous living, or anything else. If that is determinative, then we have a hand in our salvation and the sacrifice of Jesus is not enough. These next verses are John’s reminder that a redeemed life will be evidenced by the signs and markers of redemption. John is telling us that if we cry “Lord, Lord,” but there is no evidence of Jesus being our Lord, then we might want to understand that we stand in the need of salvation to begin with.

***<sup>4</sup> Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. <sup>5</sup> And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. <sup>6</sup> Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. (1 John 3:4-6, NKJV).***

#### **VERSES 4-6**

John now addresses issues related to errant teaching. The first statement is related to the believer’s understanding of sin. Everyone who makes a practice of sinning, practices

lawlessness. They are functioning like Satan, who is the chief of lawlessness. Evil is always tied into lawlessness, and sin always is in rebellion to the commandments of God.

John contrasts that lawlessness of Satan to the perfection and holiness of the Perfect One, Jesus. To make a continual practice of sin is to live a life that is contrary to the person and character of Jesus Christ. This is not talking about Christians who, as some in our church like to say, are “saints who occasionally sin.” That means we mess up. It does not mean that we make a practice of sinning repeatedly, continually, and we do so without any internal turmoil or conflict. I know for me, when I’ve engaged in sin, there is a battle that rages in my mind. There is a conflict, and I know that there is a conflict. I’ve chosen sometimes to willfully ignore the conflict in me, but that assures me that the Holy Spirit is alive and well in me, seeking to bring my thinking, words, and conduct into conformance with the personhood of Jesus Christ Himself.

Those who point to some moment that they “prayed a sinner’s prayer” or had a “funny feeling” or something like that as the assurance of salvation, might be putting their faith in the “sinner’s prayer,” or that feeling that they had, but it might not really be faith in Jesus. I am not saying that praying the sinner’s prayer isn’t a good way to express faith in Him, but if the actual faith isn’t in it, it doesn’t mean anything. Just saying the words of the “sinner’s prayer” is not a way to get your “ticket stamped to heaven.” I fear that some who might think that they “got their ticket stamped” are on that long black train bound for hell. Whether someone has been sincere in their profession of faith is not something that we can readily judge. It is between a person and God Himself. BUT, at some point, someone who has truly put their faith in Christ will have some evidence of growth. It may be a long long time after their profession of faith, but the seed WILL sprout. This is what John is telling us.

This whole verse can be easily misunderstood looking solely at the English translation. The statement “whoever commits sin” certainly makes it sound like it includes all of us. But, the English doesn’t say what God is saying in His Word. Look below at the Greek text. The text reads that whoever “makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness.” This means it’s ongoing and habitual conduct and thinking.

παντων	εκεινου	εστιν	αγνος	
12	13	15	14	
-----				
Everyone	who	makes	a practice of	sinning
also	practices	lawlessness	• ;	sin
is	lawlessness	•	You know that	he
appeared	in order to	take away	sins	, and in
him	there is	no	sin	.
No	one	who	abides	in
him	keeps	on	sinning	has
either	seen			

Πᾶς<sub>1</sub> → ὁ<sub>2</sub> ποιῶν<sub>3</sub> ← ← ← τὴν<sub>4</sub> ἁμαρτίαν<sub>5</sub> καὶ<sub>6</sub> ποιεῖ<sub>9</sub>  
 τὴν<sub>7</sub> ἀνομίαν<sub>8</sub> καὶ<sub>10</sub> ἢ<sub>11</sub> ἁμαρτία<sub>12</sub> ἐστίν<sub>13</sub> ἢ<sub>14</sub> ἀνομία<sub>15</sub> καὶ<sub>1</sub> → οἴδατε<sub>2</sub> ὅτι<sub>3</sub>  
 ἐκεῖνος<sub>4</sub> ἐφανερώθη<sub>5</sub> → → ἵνα<sub>6</sub> ἄρῃ<sub>9</sub> ← τὰς<sub>7</sub> ἁμαρτίας<sub>8</sub> καὶ<sub>10</sub> ἐν<sub>12</sub> αὐτῷ<sub>13</sub>  
 ἐστίν<sub>15</sub> οὐκ<sub>14</sub> ἁμαρτία<sub>11</sub> πᾶς<sub>1</sub> οὐχ<sub>6</sub> ← → ὁ<sub>2</sub> μένων<sub>5</sub> ἐν<sub>3</sub> αὐτῷ<sub>4</sub> → →

Strong's Greek #3956; LN 59.24; οὐ; adverb, negative; particle, negative; Strong's Greek #3756; LN 69.3

No one who is abiding in Him keeps on sinning. This is not saying you somehow are not saved if you sinned. John already took care of that in 1 John chapter one. You must not doubt your salvation. Verse nine of that same chapter one assures that He forgives and keeps on forgiving us of all unrighteousness. I realize that this text sounds like those who know Jesus no longer sin, but HE IS NOT TALKING ABOUT SINLESS PERFECTION. He is talking about those that revel in their sin. He is talking about those who never take their sins to heart with remorse and never have regret for their wrong doing. I've known some who profess to know Jesus that seem to delight in their sin or who simply ignore habitual sin patterns in their lives. John is talking about such people.

The person who is "abiding" in Him is the person who rests in Him and dwells "in Him." Such a person longs to please the Father and longs to live a life that is holy and pleasing to God. This is the person that "obeys His commandments." This is the person who desires to bask in the presence of a loving, forgiving, correcting God, and who loves to please Him. Remember what we said about a loving father. He guides, comforts, corrects, and disciplines. The loving obedient son or daughter has a keen desire to do the right thing and to please their father. It's the same sort of thing when we truly want to follow the Lord and all that He commands of us.

#### **VERSES 7-9**

***<sup>7</sup> Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. <sup>8</sup> He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. <sup>9</sup> Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. (1 John 3:7-9, NKJV).***

John is saying not to listen to those people who are minimizing sin. He says that our lives will be a reflection of what is going on in our hearts. The sacrifice that was made on the cross is the perpetual cleansing that rules in our hearts. "Practicing righteousness" is making a practice of holy and godly living. It doesn't come naturally even to a believer. The desire to live a holy and godly life is triggered by a conscious decision to submit to the operation of the Holy Spirit in your life.

As long as we're on this earth, there will be a tension between our flesh and the life of the Spirit. The Spirit brings conviction and empowers us to live according to the righteousness of God. If the Spirit wasn't within you there would be no battle, so don't mistake the battle within you as something unusual. The Spirit of God is striving within us to sanctify our behavior and bring us more and more into the image of Jesus. This has nothing to do with our salvation. This has nothing to do with the "sanctification" we underwent when we were saved. That was when we were set apart (true meaning of sanctify) and when our sins were paid for by the blood of Jesus.

Sin always hurts and destroys, but we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus the Righteous. God has given us everything we need for a life of godliness. We are free from the penalty of sin. We are free from the power of sin. Hallelujah! LET'S REALIZE THAT THE VICTORY IS OURS. NOW

WALK IN IT! In verse eight John mentions that those who practice evil are in fact of Satan. That is a big statement, but that is what God’s Word says. Those who do evil without remorse should take notice. John is telling them that there is a possibility that they never had “His seed” within them. The bottom line is that our “fruits,” or lack thereof, tell a whole lot of what we’re all about.

### ***The Imperative of Love***

***10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. 11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, 12 not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous. 13 Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. 15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. (1 John 10-15, NKJV).***

The key to this passage is once again “practicing righteousness.” This is not the righteous standing that you and I have before God because of Jesus Christ. You have been clothed in the righteousness of Jesus. This verse is not talking about “positional righteousness.” We enjoy that as a privilege of sonship. Your “practical righteousness” is **evidence of** your “positional righteousness.” Don’t get hung up on this. It is a work of the Lord and not something we have to strive over. He is responding to men who are walking in a way completely contrary to the character of God and need correction.

### **VERSE 10**

I want to repeat once again that this is absolutely a different kind of righteousness, and the Bible addresses it as “practicing righteousness.” This is how I treat you who are reading this sermon. It is how I treat my wife, my children, my friends, and my “neighbor” (anybody who God brings into my life). The Greek text clearly uses the phrase including the word “practice or

God	.	By this it is evident who are the children of	God	,
τοῦ <sub>22</sub>	θεοῦ <sub>23</sub>	ἐν <sub>1</sub> τούτῳ <sub>2</sub> → ἐστίν <sub>4</sub> φανερά <sub>3</sub>	• • τὰ <sub>5</sub> τέκνα <sub>6</sub> → τοῦ <sub>7</sub> θεοῦ <sub>8</sub>	
and who are the children of the devil :	whoever does not			
καί <sub>9</sub>	• • τὰ <sub>10</sub> τέκνα <sub>11</sub>	▶ <sub>13</sub> τοῦ <sub>12</sub> διαβόλου <sub>13</sub>	→	▶ <sub>14</sub> μή <sub>16</sub>
practice righteousness is not of God ,	nor is the one			
πᾶς <sub>14</sub> ὁ <sub>15</sub> ποιῶν <sub>17</sub> δικαιοσύνην <sub>18</sub> ἔστιν <sub>20</sub> οὐκ <sub>19</sub> ἐκ <sub>21</sub> τοῦ <sub>22</sub> θεοῦ <sub>23</sub> καί <sub>24</sub> • ὁ <sub>25</sub>	←			
who does not love his brother .				
→	▶ <sub>27</sub> μή <sub>26</sub> ἀγαπῶν <sub>27</sub> αὐτοῦ <sub>30</sub> τὸν <sub>28</sub> ἀδελφὸν <sub>29</sub>			

In the same way that there are believers who mix the covenants of God together; there are righteousness mixers that fail to understand that there are words such as “righteousness” in the Bible that refer to different things. One is referring to that righteousness we receive in the upper sphere (see my chart on confession) as opposed to living righteously (holy and godly living) in the bottom left sphere (referring to the chart on confession).

John is saying that conduct matters. It does not matter as to our salvation, but it “manifests” (shows) the condition of our soul. It is an outward sign of an inward faith. He is saying that people who consistently, constantly, and repeatedly live in ongoing sin are in the flesh, and they are showing by their fruit (their works) that they are not of God. They are reflecting who their true father is. They particularly manifest this in their lack of love for their “brother.” John is telling us that behavior matters, and love is the thermometer to show our spiritual temperature. When you come to Christ, change will take place as the Word of God takes hold of your soul and changes the way you think, live, and act. You will have the capacity to love in a Godlike *agape* type way.

**VERSES 11-15** He repeats this message of love, saying once again that it is an old message that has been the message from God since the beginning. He adds that we first see this message of God violated in the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. He adds that Cain murdered Abel because of Abel’s works of righteousness. It is just a matter of fact that the world and the evil persons in the world hate the righteous and even hate the righteous deeds done by the righteous. Solomon tells us, *“Bloodthirsty men hate one who is blameless and seek the life of the upright.” (Proverbs 29:10, ESV)*. Jesus repeated the same truth when He said, *“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.” (John 15:18, ESV)*.

John ends this dialogue on love attaching it to where we each will spend eternity. Those who live in hate are not of God. John says that they will not enjoy eternal life with God. This means that they’re not saved. Those who have received Him and become sons and daughters of Almighty God, will spend eternity in heaven with Him. Hallelujah! Brothers and sisters, this morning I urge you to walk in the Spirit. Practice righteousness in loving your neighbor in a godlike way that is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

Let us pray.

<p>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 <a href="mailto:uniongrove362@gmail.com">uniongrove362@gmail.com</a> 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.</p>
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