

CHILDREN OF GOD -- CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL

Sunday, September 12, 2021 -- 1st JOHN series -- Msg 16 -- Pastor Andrew Coleman

1st JOHN 3:3-10

English Standard Version (ESV)

3 And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure. **4** Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; 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 keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen Him or known Him. **7** Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as He is righteous. **8** Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. **9** No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. **10** By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

IMPORTANT BACKGROUND UNDERSTANDING:

The true church has always maintained that Scripture clearly sets forth basic standards of **BELIEF** and **BEHAVIOR** as necessary marks of genuine, saving faith.

- **Belief:** that sinners can be saved only by faith in the death and resurrection of Christ
- **Behavior:** that the lives of *true* believers will reflect the life of Christ

These two markers have continuously been under attack for the last **2,000 years**.

- Satan hates God and His people, the true church.
- Satan hates the Gospel and obedience to it.

Study and consider church history! One or both of these two pillars are always under attack. (distortions of Christology, the Scripture, the Trinity, soteriology are continuous)
(ungodliness, worldliness, selfishness, sensuality, apathy, greed, pride etc. are continuous)

In recent decades there has been a great decline and distortion of biblical doctrine/beliefs.

This results in bad theology. Bad theology damns.

In recent decades the church has become more and more like the world in behavior.

Key Concept: Bad behavior reveals bad theology.

FIRST JOHN is all about true, genuine, saving FAITH versus fake, self-deceived RELIGION.

FIRST JOHN presents multiple TESTS by which one can evaluate if they have true, saving faith.

- 1) Do you recognize your own sinfulness? (1:8-10)
- 2) Do you recognize Christ for who He is? (2:1-2)
- 3) Do you obey Christ's commands? (2:3-8)
- 4) Do you hate others? (2:9-11)
- 5) Do you love the world instead of God? (2:15-17)
- 6) Do you stay with Christ and His Church? (2:18-24)

NOW we come to a 7th TEST: Do you practice sin or do you practice righteousness? 3:4-10

3 And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure. **4** Everyone who **makes a practice of sinning** also practices lawlessness; 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 **keeps on sinning**; no one who **keeps on sinning** has either seen Him or known Him. **7** Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as He is righteous. **8** Whoever **makes a practice of sinning** is of the devil, for the devil **has been sinning** from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. **9** No one born of God **makes a practice of sinning**, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot **keep on sinning**, because he has been born of God. **10** By this it is evident who are **the children of God**, and who are **the children of the devil**: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

All of Scripture puts a continual emphasis on repentance and obedience that should be expected in every heart that has been transformed by true salvation.

1 John 1:6

If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

(Also see Matthew 4:17; 11:20-21; Mark 6:12; Luke 5:32; 13:3-5; 15:7, 10; 18:13-14; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; 17:30; 20:21; 2 Corinthians 7:9-10; 2 Timothy 2:25)

IMPORTANT GRAMMATICAL UNDERSTANDING:

In this passage the verbs related to sin are all in the present tense, indicating continuous, habitual action.

John is not referring to occasional acts of sin, but established and continual patterns of sinful behavior.

Sinless perfection is not possible until we are finally with the Lord.

- “The Already” is that we are justified (made right) through Jesus Christ NOW.
- “The Not Yet” is that we await the eternal state of no longer struggling with sin.
- But if you continue in sin now practicing it without repenting of it and forsaking it, then God's Word makes clear you have not been redeemed.

Key Concept: ***Forsaken sin is forgiven sin. Sin that is not forsaken is not forgiven.***

THREE REASONS TRUE CHRISTIANS DO NOT HABITUALLY PRACTICE SIN:

1) SIN is not compatible with the LAW OF GOD. vs 4

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

Remember Jesus's words in **Matthew 7:21-23**

21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. **22** On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ **23** And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, ***you workers of lawlessness.***’

4 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; 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 keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen Him or known Him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as He is righteous. 8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. 10 By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

Instead, the true believer goes from being a slave to sin to being a slave to righteousness.

Romans 6:16-18; (also see 8:12-14)

16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

2) SIN is not compatible with the WORK OF CHRIST. vs 5-8

vs 5 -- Christ came to take away sins!

He is holy. No sin. No darkness. (remember 1:5 -- *in Him is no darkness at all*)

Generally speaking, we know and think far too little about the holiness of God.

(Read Isaiah 6, *The Holiness of God* by RC Sproul or *The Knowledge of the Holy* by AW Tozer)

vs 6 -- It is impossible to abide in Christ and live in sin.

If you can live in sin, you cannot live in Him.

vs 7-8 -- Anyone who tells you otherwise, is trying to deceive you!

Righteous life reveals righteous standing with Christ.

Unrighteous life reveals wicked standing with Satan.

Yet Christ came to reverse the work of Satan! Genesis 3:15; John 12:31; Hebrews 2:14

3) SIN is not compatible with the HOLY SPIRIT. vs 9-10

vs 9 Being born of God only happens through the work of the Holy Spirit.

And His Spirit lives within His children. Every true believer has God's Holy Spirit.

JOHN 3:3-8 The Priest Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night...

*3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again** he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

4 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; 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 keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen Him or known Him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as He is righteous. 8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. 10 By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

The instrument by which the Holy Spirit gives new birth to sinners is the Word of God.

1 Peter 1:23-25; (also see Psalm 19:7; 2 Peter 1:4)

since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; 24 for

*“All flesh is like grass
and all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers,
and the flower falls,
but the word of the Lord remains forever.”*

And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

This work of the Holy Spirit that CAUSES you to be born again is a monergistic work.

This means it was ALL HIM!

Ephesians 2:1-6 is unmistakably clear in this regard.

*1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 **But God**, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*

KEY QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & APPLICATION:

- 1) *Has God's Spirit caused you to be born again?
Are you clearly trusting in Christ's death on the cross for the forgiveness of your sins?*
- 2) *Do you obey Christ's commands? Do you know His commands?
Have you been baptized as an outward confession of your faith?
Are you growing in obedience and holiness?*
- 3) *Are you living in habitual sin? Is that a problem to you? Will you continue in it?*
- 4) *Do you know Christ's plan for overcoming your sin? **Hint: see Romans 5-8.***