

1John 3:4–10

Joining Our Savior's War against Our Sin

Thursday, April 25, 2024 • Read 1John 3:4–10

Questions from the Scripture text: What does the one committing sin also commit (v4)? Why is this true? Why was Jesus revealed (v5)? Who knows this? What isn't there any of in Him? What doesn't the one abiding in Him do (v6)? What two things hasn't the sinning one done? How does the apostle address his readers in v7? What does he urge them not to let anyone do? What is the relation between one's works and one's status? From where do both come? Of whom is the one who sins (v8)? How do the devil and sin relate to one another? Who has been manifested? For what purpose—to destroy what? Of Whom are some people now born (v9)? What does such a man not do? Why—what abides (remains) in him? What can't he do? Why—of Whom has he been born? Which two categories of men have been distinguished from one another (v10)? How is this distinction revealed? What two things are always the case for someone who is a child of God?

What's the big deal about sin? 1John 3:4–10 prepares us for the second serial reading in public worship on the Lord's Day. In these seven verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **sin is a big deal because it is opposed to God, opposed to Christ, and opposed to the new life and identity of the believer.**

The nature of sin: lawlessness. v4. Sin is utterly heinous, because it is against God. It is against His existence, His deity, His glory, His claims upon us. And this glorious God has given us His Fatherly instruction, His law. This law is an expression of the applications to our lives of the implications of His character for us as His image-bearers. So sin is an utter rejection of the glorious God, and an utter rejection of His self-revelation to us. It clamps its hands over its ears, as it were, and refuses to receive God's good and kind communication of Himself.

Christ as solution to sin (1): taking away our sins. v5–6. Jesus was manifested to take away our sins (v5a) in the two ways that we heard about in 1:9. In our justification, Jesus Himself is counted as our righteousness, with His keeping the commandments of the law counted in our behalf, and with His offering Himself as an atoning sacrifice wiping away the guilt and penalty of our sin. So, He was manifested to forgive us our sins. But He was also manifested to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Not only does He instantly take away the penalty of our sin; He instantly takes away its power over us and progressively takes away its power within us and presence within us. Indeed, sin still feels powerful, but it is no longer our master. And He weakens it more and more, even as He makes us more and more holy.

Jesus's great work is to take away sins. It is the height of wickedness to tolerate sin or to teach that a Christian may do so. Since in Jesus there is no sin (end of v5), and since a Christian may aptly be described as one who abides in Jesus, how can a Christian go on in sin? Sinning never comes from seeing Him; sinning never comes from knowing Him (v6). Though since the time that this book was written, false teachers have been telling saints that seeing and knowing Jesus permits them to go on sinning comfortably, the truth is exactly the opposite. Abiding in Christ makes sin most uncomfortable!

Christ as solution to sin (2): destroying the works of the devil. v7–8. The word for "practices" in v7 (and 10) is actually "works." There were teachers at the time saying that those who were righteous with God in Jesus Christ could just go on working unrighteousness. But this was a lie, so the apostle says, "let no one deceive you." If Jesus is righteous, then He produces a telltale sign in those whom He makes righteous: they work righteousness (v7).

But all believers began dead in sin (cf. Eph 2:1), walking according to the devil himself (cf. Eph 2:2), as children of wrath (cf. Eph 2:3). And even after we have that new seed within us, that new birth, that new nature, it is possible for us to live according to that which is passing away, that which remains from our former nature. Is it ok to go on sinning then? By no means! "He who sins is of the devil" (v8)! Whenever a believer sins, he acts according to that satanic nature with which he came into the world. He must not do so! Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (end of v8), to go on in is to fight against the cosmic mission of our God and Savior.

God's children opposed to sin. v9–10. Furthermore, going on in sin sets us against our new nature (v9; cf. Gal 5:16–17). We came into this new nature by being born of God. We cannot be born of God, then unborn of God. The new nature must persist and must win out until that which is from our former nature is defeated and eliminated. When we sin, we may know that it is coming not from our new and lasting nature in God, in Christ, but from our former and condemned nature whose days are numbered. So for every thought, we must determine: does that thought come from the spirit or from the flesh? For every word, we must determine: does that word come from my former nature or from my new nature from God? For every action, we must determine: does that action come from me as a child of God, or rather as I used to be, a child of the devil?

This is vitally important for us to distinguish, and if we find that we do not care to work righteousness, then this is very serious indeed. All of humanity are divided into two categories in v10: the children of God and the children of the devil. That song of old liberalism tells a diabolical lie when it says, "with God as our father, brothers all are we." No, there are two fathers: the devil is the father of those who are still in the first Adam, and God is the Father of those who are in the second Adam. God is the Father of those who are in Christ. And v10 gives us the telltale sign of the one who is a child of the devil: he doesn't work righteousness, and he doesn't love his brother. Such a person cannot be a child of God. In the Son of God, there is no sin (v5), so the children of God, who abide in the Son of God, also do not sin. Do they commit sins? Yes (cf. 1:8, 10), but only from what remains of their former, vanishing nature. It is not of their new nature, and they are at war with it.

How is it evident that you are at war with your sin? If you had to evaluate by whose side you seem to be on, do you seem to be a child of God or a child of the devil? What has Jesus done about the penalty of your sin? What is He doing about the power and presence of your sin?

Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us for breaking Your holy law. Not only is our sin against You Yourself, but also against Your good and kind teaching to us of Your law. Forgive us for how we have been willing to think and say and do that which Christ came to destroy. Forgive us for having tolerated thoughts, emotions, and actions that belong to the children of the devil, rather than the children of God. Truly, our sin is a dreadful thing. But we thank You that if we are in Christ, it is because we have been born of You, and Your seed remains in us. Make us to work righteousness, and to love our brother, we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP118A "Because He's Good, O Thank the Lord" or TPH461 "Blessed Are the Sons of God"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

First John 3 verses 4 through 10. These are God's words. Whoever commits sin, also commits, lawlessness and sin is Lawlessness. And you know that he was manifested to take away our sins. And in him, there is no sin. Whoever abides in him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen him.

Nor known him. Little children. Let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as he is righteous. 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.

Whoever has been born of God, does not. For his seed, remains in him and he cannot sin because he has been born of God. 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. And then, let's sends this reading of Inspired and inarin twerked. One of the things that the Apostle, John Was writing in order to combat was a false teaching in the churches that it was okay for Christians to go on sinning. In fact, there were some who called themselves Um, or who came to be grouped together and called gnostics because they claimed special knowledge.

And part of the special knowledge that they claimed was, That once you are a spiritual person, it doesn't really matter what you did with your body. You could be righteous in Jesus and go on sinning with your body. That that was just fine, of course. This is not just theologically false.

It's extremely wicked. And so in these seven verses the Holy Spirit by the Apostle teaches us about Sin and the Christian. The first thing he teaches us is the nature of sin in verse 4, that sin is lawlessness. Whoever commits sin, also commits, lawlessness and sin is lawlessness. Sin is so bad, so heinous because it is against who God is and what God is like.

And not only is it against who God is and what he is like but our God has kindly revealed himself to us. And his goodness and kindness, he has given us. His fatherly instruction is Torah his law. And when we sin we not only sin against that Divine character of God that is obvious in the creation that he has made known within ourselves.

We even sin. Against what he has told us, in his word, we sin against his self-revelation of Of himself. Uh, to us. Uh, so Sin is Dreadful indeed. Lawlessness is the proof that we care not for God and we spurn Has making himself known to us. So Finn in and of itself is Dreadful.

Well Christ. Then is the solution to sin. We see in the next two verses, you know, that he that is Jesus was manifested. Was revealed to take away our sins. This is true in two different ways. At least. And I'm thinking, especially now of the two different ways in verse 9 of the first chapter of this letter that, if we confess our sins, he is faithful.

And just to forgive us our sins, which he does by the righteousness and sacrifice of Christ. And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness which he does by the life and light of Christ in us. So Jesus was manifested to take away our sins to take away, both our sins, guilt and our sins power, and eventually even our sins presence.

In him, there is no sin. So it can't be like those false teachers. So it can't be like those false teachers were saying, That you can be a Christian and just go on sinning. In Jesus, there is no sin. He is against sin. When the Christian sins, he does something that he is against, he does something that he is killing.

He does something that he hates. He does something that by the grace of God, he is doing less and less. And so Christ is the solution to sin. He was manifested to take away our sin. Whoever abides in him does not sin to whatever extent we sin. It is because we are not abiding in him.

We believe in him but we're not dwelling in him. Getting our life in him, getting our life from him. Consistently thoroughly perfectly. But the more we do, the less we'll sin. And the less we do, the more Wilson. And so abiding in him leads to sinning less. Sinning. Never comes from seeing Jesus or knowing Jesus.

Seeing him and knowing him. Does not mean that we can sin more and feel okay about it. That is not what seeing Jesus. And knowing Jesus means It means we are forgiven of our sin and we are guaranteed to win this battle. Seeing him and knowing him. Means fighting against it means working righteousness.

Whoever sins is neither seen. Never known him, so that's Christ. The first part of Christ is the solution to our sin. He takes it away, verses five and six. The second part of Christ is the solution to our sin is in verses seven and eight. He destroys the works of the devil.

In verses 7 8, he talks about destroying the works of the devil and he begins what we're going to see even more in verses 9 and 10, that a person's relation to sin shows, whether he's a child of God or a child of the devil. So there's this great big Cosmic battle Jesus was not just manifested to take away sin verse 5 says, He was manifested verse 8 says, To destroy the works of the devil.

So when we live according to our original nature, when we live, according to the nature that we have in the first item, We do the works of the devil, we sin. The devil is The Sinner from the beginning verse 8. He who sends us of the devil for the devil has sinned from the beginning.

He's the innovator of it. He's the author of it. He aspired to make himself God and he did create something. He created sin. He created that which was not like God, that which was the opposed to God. And so he who sins is of the devil for the devil has sinned from the beginning.

When the Jews were rejecting the Lord Jesus, And questioning him about his father. He told them thereof their father and their father was not God was not Jesus's father. He said, you are of your father, the devil? Because they were sinning because they were rejecting Christ. And so there's a command here and the command isn't just not to send The command, very specifically at the beginning of verse 7 is to not be deceived little children.

Let no one deceive you, why? Because the devil and everyone who participates in the thinking of the devil is going to tell you that it is okay to sin that you can be righteous and work sin. And he says little children, let no one deceive you. He who works righteousness, Is righteous just as he is righteous.

He who sins is of the devil for the devil has sinned. From the beginning for this purpose. The son of God is manifested that he might destroy. The Works of the devil, it's like Titus Chapter 3. Which Begins by urging Believers in the first couple of verses. To be gentle, quiet and Godly.

Because, We too were once foolish and disobedient. Um, Full of all manner of sin. He says, in the third verse and then in the middle of the chapter, he opens the gospel, the gospel of justification Now the kindness and love of God appearing and he saved us the gospel of sanctification washing us and renewing Us by his Spirit so that we wouldn't sin.

And by the time he He gets to the close of the section there. And verse 12 or 7 Titus Chapter 3, he tells Titus to make sure That those who profess Christ seek to live lives of godliness. Why? Because one of the main things that Jesus came to do, Is to destroy the works of the devil.

That's God's will for you, your sanctification. God's will for you. That you would sin less and less and that you would obey him more and more. When we sin? We are not acting according to our new nature in Christ. We are acting according to that, which remains from our former nature that which Jesus is bent on destroying.

And which we along with Christ must be bent on destroying, too. Whenever we sin, we Strike a blow on the wrong side of the cosmic battle. That our God and Savior. Jesus Christ came to wage. And so, Uh, does someone who is a Christian ever sin? Yes. Does he ever sin from his new nature?

Absolutely not. And that brings us to the last point in verses, 9 and 10. Distinguishing between the children of God and the children of the devil. By how they relate to sin and righteousness. Because whoever has been born of God does not sin for his seed that his God's seed remains in him.

He cannot sin because he has been born of God. So, two things here first. If you have come to Faith in Jesus Christ, it's because you have been born of God. And if you have been born of God, you cannot be unborn of God. If you have been born of God, you have a new nature.

And yes, there is that which remains in you from your former nature? That's in which remains in you but its days are numbered. It must eventually vanish. And the seed of God that is in, you cannot be lost and it cannot lose it must win. And so live, according to your new nature in Christ.

Every thought every word, every desire, every action, Comes either from our new nature that which will be forever, that which comes from the seed of God, that which is born of God in us from Jesus by his Spirit, or it comes from our former nature. It comes from that which is a work of the devil and enslaved to the devil.

And even a child of the devil. Verse 10. Divides. The Uh, human race into two races. In this, the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest. So Jesus has manifested. We are manifested. And now the difference Uh, sorry. This. Yes, the Son of God was manifested.

In verse 8, he was manifested still Christ in verse 5. And now the the children of God and the children of the devil are manifested are revealed by doing what. Whoever does not practice righteousness, is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. So the contrapositive of that, of course, is true.

That if we are born of God, if we are children of God, then we will work righteousness. Because that's what the seed of God in us does. That's what the life of God. The Life of Christ in us. Does we will work righteousness. To anyone who does not practice anyone who does not work any righteousness.

At all does not love righteousness, does not think or speak or do righteously ever. Person can't possibly have been born of God. The only thing that is in him is that which is of the devil, he is a child of the devil. As verse 10 says, Jesus is this great divider.

Of the whole human race. So that old liberal song and I you use that in a theologically technical way, the word liberal meaning Um, Not believing in the inerrancy of the Bible and the necessity of the atonement and the genuineness of Salvation and the gospel and so forth. There's an old liberal song that says, with God as our father, Brothers, all are we?

No, it's actually not true. With God as our creator creatures, all are we But the only ones who have got is their father are the ones who have a new life in Christ. Who have a new birth from God? Who have the seed of God in them? And everyone who has that works righteousness.

And the righteous working that we are going that we are doing. Will one day be the only working that we do because Uh, eventually The Works of the devil will be destroyed. Jesus is not a failure. He is succeeding at what he came to do. And our former nature will be completely gone.

And there will only be that. Which is from God, from Christ. Therefore, let us work righteousness, let us love our brother. If this is the great work of God in history, To redeem, his elect to bring them to himself in Christ, to fill them, with his Spirit, to destroy the works of the devil.

So that their former, what remains from their former nature is slowly eventually completely obliterated. Than all, we not reflect Our Father and our savior. By loving our brother, too. Everything he's done in all of human history is for the love. Of the elect that electing love that is adopting love.

And the Lord Jesus Christ. And so this is the great way the great distinction. Between the children of God and the children of the devil. Whoever does not practice. Righteousness, is not of God. Whoever does not love his brother. It's not of God. God grant that we would work righteousness.

And love our brother, so let's pray. Our gracious. God and our heavenly father, we are Very thankful to you for giving us. The ability to gather for a few minutes to call upon your name. Say your word?

To consider your word. We pray that your spirit. Lift our hearts to you in thankfulness and love. For adopting us as your children in Jesus Christ. And that even what we have just now enjoyed from you and with you in your worship. Would prepare us. For our participation in the prayer meeting.

Grant that we ask. In Christ's name, amen.