

So That You May Know

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

Chapter 3- The True Test of Salvation- Part 1

20. Belief in God and Belief in the Reality of Sin Part 3

WAOY Friday/Monday, 05/04-07/07; WOSM Friday 10/28/22

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing our verse by verse “journey” through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to look at what the Apostle John taught about “A Genuine Belief in God and a Belief in the Reality of Sin”. So, let’s open our Bibles and look at **1John 1:5- 10** again together.

5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous 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.

Now on the last broadcast, we were studying the concept that John promotes in these six verses that it is the responsibility and duty of the leaders of the Church to identify those who are truly saved and those who are only deceived into thinking that they are saved. And we saw last time that we- as leaders- are held accountable by God if we do not warn the wicked to repent. If and when God’s sure Judgment against the unsaved comes- they will fall under God’s Wrath to be sure- but their blood will be upon our hands- unless we were faithful to warn them.

We also saw last time how that this carefree attitude about sin in the modern Church that says that being deceived is a “private” issue between that person and God and is nobody else’s business cannot be backed up with either Scripture or Church History.

So, we saw that the *real* question is not do Church leaders have the duty and responsibility to warn the wicked- because the Bible clearly teaches that we should- no, the real question is just *how* do we identify people who are deceived into thinking they are saved when they are actually lost- *how* do we do this in accordance with Scripture?

Well, in these six verses of **1 John**- the Apostle gives us the answer to that question by presenting two crucial doctrinal tests to determine who in the Church is genuine and who is not. Those two doctrinal tests are:

1. An accurate and Biblical belief in the Character and Nature of God and
2. A genuine belief in and Biblical understanding of sin

Now on the last broadcast- we looked at verse 5 and today I want to begin to examine verse 6 which says:

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

Now here the Apostle gives us another clear test of genuine Salvation. John says that if we- who say that we are saved- walk in darkness- we lie about our Salvation. In other words, John is saying that if anyone *says* that he is a Christian- then he must apply this spiritual test to his life. And the test is that if this person walks in darkness- if he walks continually in sin- if he loves and enjoys and fellowships with darkness- then in fact he is *not* saved and he lies about his Salvation.

Now you have to give John credit for one thing- there is no doubt about what he thought about this issue. John is clearly teaching in this verse that it matters how we live after we say that we are saved. The Apostle John teaches here that for anyone to believe that once you are saved- you have the freedom to live anyway that your heart desires is the height of deception. So, Salvation is not a means by which we are

now free to do what is right in our own eyes- no, true Salvation is the only avenue by which a human being can be free from sin to glorify God.

So, John says here that if we dwell continually in darkness; if we abide in sin on an ongoing basis; if we fellowship with evil and things that the Bible declares to be wrong- then in reality- we do not have any fellowship with God or with Jesus or with John and therefore- we are not truly saved. And this is true because to be saved means that you have had the new divine nature placed inside you by a Sovereign act of God alone and it is that new nature- that is created in Righteousness and true holiness- that *causes* the individual to desire to love and serve God and cannot bear to sin against God. So, dwelling continually in darkness is proof beyond any doubt that the new nature is not present. And no one can be saved without possessing the new nature.

Now I cannot even begin to tell you the number of people who have told me that this is horrible; that John couldn't possibly mean what he says here. I have been told that I am misinterpreting this verse or that John really didn't mean to write this, and I have been told just about anything that you want to hear except to hear someone just say, "Amen" to what John says here in verse 6.

But before everyone gets to upset with me- I just want to say that I didn't write this. I mean when John wrote this down he never even consulted with me about it. John was moved upon by God the Holy Spirit to write this and so we must accept it and trust in it and proclaim it as being true and from God.

Now some people would call this legalism- but that is not true. Legalism is that heresy put forth by the Judaizers which teaches that you have to do certain things to try to earn Salvation. But struggling against the lusts of our flesh to obey Scripture after you are saved is not Legalism, dear friends- it is Biblical Christianity. John is not promoting legalism here at all and neither am I. John is simply saying that no one can be saved *accidentally*. A person is saved because he understands two facts that Jonathan Edwards understood: That God is a great God and that he is a great sinner. And that true knowledge about God and himself that only the Gospel brings serves to bring him to a place of utter desperation as he realizes that even though he is lost- he cannot save himself.

So, he reaches a place where he understands that he needs a Savior Who is sinless and spotless and Who lived and died and rose

again to bear his sins and pay the penalty for his sins. And that individual is then sovereignly given a new heart and a new nature; his blind eyes are opened; his deaf ears are unstopped and he is given the capacity and the ability to believe by Grace alone and then he is able to place all his trust in Jesus Christ and through genuine repentance- holy red Blood washes his black heart and makes it whiter than snow and then by the agency of Faith alone- the very same Righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to him and this vile sinner is made fit for Heaven!

But because his heart had been changed; because his old rebellious nature that was patterned after Adam has been *replaced* by a new divine nature that loves God- this individual now craves the Presence of God and he loves the things of God and he is drawn by this new nature to hunger and thirst after Righteousness and he can't get enough of God's Word and he yearns to spend time with Jesus and he tells everybody he knows what God has done for him and he devours the Bible and he loves to pray and seek God's Face and John says that he no longer can dwell in darkness because there is no darkness in Christ at all.

We must understand beloved, that even in the first century when John wrote this- there were many people who professed to know Jesus; they professed to be saved; they had prayed the prayer; and they had gone down front and shook the preacher's hand – but they were not truly converted. So, it was John's responsibility to distinguish between those people and those who were truly saved by giving the Church this spiritual test.

You see, John is one of those specially anointed and chosen men who were personally called by Jesus to set up and establish the Christian Church on the earth. They called these men Apostles. It was the Apostles job to set up the Church by formulating Christian Doctrine and by establishing the parameters by which other people would know whether they were saved and going to Heaven also.

And they did this by writing down inspired words that clearly identify what behavior is and is not acceptable to God; what signifies a Christian from a lost sinner; what to teach about marriage; how to raise your children; how to handle your money; and how to operate the House of God.

The Apostles did this through a series of letters or Epistles that God Almighty inspired them to write so as to instruct the Churches about the rule and order of the Christian Faith.

Because these men were specially chosen and specially anointed just like the Old Testament prophets were – their words and their words alone make up all Christian Doctrine. Collectively their words were called the Apostle’s Doctrine and we find them today in the Holy Bible.

No human; no organization; no Church; no council has the right or the authority to teach contrary to the words of inspired Scripture and only those who are humbly submitted to the authority of Scripture and who operate and function in obedience to Scripture can legitimately call themselves Christians.

And with the physical death of John- Holy Scripture was completed and today we have the final and complete and closed Revelation of God to man contained in the 66 books of the Holy Bible. So, the modern Church has no further need today of the office of Apostles for the express reason that the job that God anointed them to do has been completed.

The Christian Church has been set up on the earth; all Christian Doctrine has been formulated and written down; and the rule and practice of the Christian Faith has been established. That is what Apostles were chosen to do and they did that. So, since they did what God called them to do- we do not need to continue to do that which has already been done. That is why I say that the modern Church has no further need today of Apostles.

But we do need godly teachers and elders and pastors in the modern Church because we do have need today to learn and be taught and to teach and to accept and to put into practice that very same- already established Christian Doctrine that the Apostles wrote down.

We also need evangelists and preachers today because we have need to proclaim that very same Gospel that the Apostles proclaimed to every creature, and we have need today to make sure that we proclaim that very same Gospel the same way that they proclaimed it- without compromising it and without being ashamed of it.

We also have need today to constantly examine our own personal lives to see if we are living and believing and functioning in accordance with the already established Christian Faith.

And we have the great need today to reform the Church on an ongoing basis so that the visible Church on earth is in proper alignment with that “once and for all given to the saints” faith that was birthed through divine inspiration through the Apostles and written down for us.

So, the Church today is not to invent anything. We are not to be creative when it comes to Christian Doctrine or Church organization. We don’t have the right to preach another gospel or to impose our opinions into Scripture- because unlike the Apostles- we are not inspired, and we are not called to do that.

But we are called to humbly submit to those Doctrines that have already been given and we are called to be faithful to that divine revelation that has already been given and we are called to be obedient to those standards that have already been established.

So, because all of that is true- part of John’s holy responsibility as one of the chosen Apostles was to set down in writing very clear and precise tests that anyone can use to determine who is truly saved and who is not- so that the Christian Church will not implode with a thousand different opinions about what it means to be a Christian.

And one of those irrefutable and unmistakable tests is this:

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

So, look at this verse and then look honestly at your own life and see if you be in the same Faith as John. 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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