

So That You May Know

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

Chapter 3- The True Test of Salvation- Part 1

25. Belief in God and Belief in the Reality of Sin Part 8

WAOY Tuesday 05/15/07; WOSM Friday 11/04/22

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing to our verse by verse “journey” through the Epistle of **1 John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about “The Biblical View of Sin”. So, let’s open our Bibles and read **1John 1:8-10** again together.

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 going over the Apostle John’s test of true Salvation by going over his Biblical definition of sin. In these three verses, John divides those who claim to be in fellowship with Jesus Christ- but who reject the Truth- into three categories:

1. Those who Walk in Darkness
2. Those who are Deceived
3. Those who Make God to be a Liar.

1. Those Who Walk in Darkness

1John 1:6

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

The first category are those who just totally ignore their sin as if it didn’t exist. These people are not walking in the true Light of God- but

are, in fact, living and abiding in darkness. They are not saved- they are simply deceived. If we love these people- we cannot allow them to continue to believe that they are saved- but we must encourage them to consider their “lostness”- in the hope that they will repent and truly be saved.

Now these people would be shocked to find out that there deception is not new. These people who walk in darkness and yet feel as though they are saved are simply the modern day equivalent of the ancient false teaching of the Docetists and Gnostic philosophers because they hold to the same view about sin. John tells us here that these people are really not saved.

The word, “**walk**” as used here in verse 6 refers to a manner of life or a personal conduct. This word denotes something that is just the normal way that people carry out their lives. So, when John says here in verse 6 that they “**walk in darkness**”- he is showing us that in the normal operation of these people’s lives- they sin. John says that they sin and abide and dwell in sin as a normal course of the operation of their lives.

So, the fact that these people sin as a normal operation of their lives shows us that these people are not saved because our normal state- our default mode- if you will- as believers- is that we walk in the light even as He is the Light. John says that these people walk in darkness- which proves their lost condition.

Now the first objection that always comes up at this point is this: *But Brother Blair- aren’t we all sinners? Don’t we all sin? Didn’t Paul say in Romans 7 that he sinned too? How can you say that these people are lost when everyone sins?*

This is a very good question and one that deserves an answer. And the answer to this question goes to the root of the issue of sin and that is precisely why I am teaching this part of **1John** so that we all may arrive at a Biblical view of sin.

John makes it clear in verses 8 and 10 that all men sin. Let’s read those verses together:

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

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

Now notice that in verse 8 John deal with the issue of whether or not we have sin present in our lives. In verse 10, however, the issue is not do we have sin present in our lives- but whether or not we have actually committed sin. John says that the answer to both questions is, “Yes”. All men- saved men and lost men- all men have sin present in their lives and all men are also guilty of actually committing sin.

Now there are some people who say that these two verses of **1John** are actually talking about people before they were saved- but that is a false interpretation of these two verses for two reasons. First, it is false to say that verses 8 & 10 deals with lost people because of how John ends both verses.

Verse 8 ends with the phrase:

... we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

And verse 10 ends with the phrase:

... we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

Lost people have neither the Truth nor the Word abiding in them anyway so they cannot be deceived about this, and they cannot make Jesus to be a liar because they are already lost.

The second reason that those who say that verse 8 & 10 deal only with lost people before Salvation is the fact that **1John** as well as all the other Epistles in the New Testament were not written to the lost- these Books were written to the saved- to those in the Church who have been born again.

So, John was not rebuking lost people here in these two verses- but John was laying out the correct way for saved people to look at sin- so that we may be in right standing with God about what we believe. John was fighting against heresy and false teaching about sin that had been brought into the Church by the Gnostics in the first century and he was- under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost- establishing for all generations the correct view of how Christians should view sin.

So now that we agree with John and acknowledge this fact that all men have sin present in their lives and all men actually commit sin- we must move on to the next issue. Since it is true that all men sin and since all men have sin present in their lives does that then make sin

acceptable? No. Sin is never acceptable with God. Well, does this mean that God understands that as humans we are going to sin and that He doesn't hold it against us? No, once again, God never excuses sin? Look with me at **Exodus 34:7** as Moses describes the characteristics of God:

who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."

And look at **Numbers 14:18**

The Lord is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth *generations.*'

So, the Bible clearly teaches that God will by no means clear the guilty. Yet we who are saved understand that our guilt as well as all our sins- past, present, and future sins- were all paid for once and for all through the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the Cross. So, we must understand, beloved, that as God forgave us- He didn't just ignore or excuse our sins and our sins didn't simply vanish away- no, our sins were paid for.

We must understand that all of our sins were laid upon the sinless and innocent Lamb of God- He was made to be sin for us who knew no sin. And with all of the sins of the whole world upon Him- Jesus satisfied God's just wrath against our sins by suffering and dying with them. So, it is very important to note it is true that our sins were forgiven- but we must also understand that the only reason that our sins were forgiven was because they were paid for.

In order for us to comprehend this glorious miracle of forgiveness better, permit me to use an example which illustrates the great contrast between Justice and Mercy. Consider if your precious little daughter was kidnapped and brutally raped and murdered by some demon possessed monster and they caught this guy and put him on trial, and you are sitting in the audience and the Judge looks at this man who is guilty and says to him:

“Are you sorry that you did this?”

And the startled guy stammers out

“I guess so, yea, I suppose I’m sorry”

And then the judge asked him,

“Do you promise that you will never do this again?”

The guy says, *“Sure, I promise that I will never do that again”*

And then you sit in absolute shock as you hear the Judge say:

“Okay, you’re forgiven- you’re free to go- next case”

Any thinking human being would rise to his feet in absolute disgust and cry out, *“That’s not Justice!”* And they would be correct. This terrible judge has just let go a man who is guilty of destroying your precious little girl! This is a travesty of Justice, and no one would consider that judge to be right.

If you have any humanity in you at all- you would be angry at the scene that I just described to you. This example is an obvious mockery of Justice- I mean the idea of letting anyone go who is obviously guilty. For any judge to give mercy to someone who is guilty removes all justice from that verdict. But this illustrates the fact that in order to issue Mercy- you cannot have any justice. And this concept of justice and punishment was the foundational truth that motivated the Pharisees.

And yet God shows you and me mercy every day and we are patently guilty. And we praise God for His mercy, and we sing about God’s mercy and we really do enjoy God’s mercy all the time- even though we are guilty and deserve Justice and yet did not receive Justice for our sins. So, God forgives us – not based upon justice- but based upon mercy. And this is the New Covenant in a nutshell. And this glorious concept of God having mercy on the guilty is the very concept that the Jews rejected because they said that it removed God’s Justice and Righteousness and therefore could not be. The Jews said that for God to pardon the guilty is the same thing as that Judge in our example

letting go the man who harmed your child and that would make God and Justice to be a farce.

So how does God show mercy and maintain his righteous justice at the same time? How is God both Righteous and Merciful at the same time? This dilemma shows us the great contrast between God being Just and God showing Mercy- and this issue goes to the very heart of how God views sin and how we must consider Forgiveness and Justice.

Justice goes to the very core of Righteous. In order for God to be Righteous- He must be Just. And Justice always demands punishment toward the guilty. Without sure and swift punishment against the guilty- there is no Justice. So, if God does not punish all sin- if God does not exact Justice upon every sinner- then He is, in fact, clearing the guilty and by doing that even one time- God would cease to be Just and He would cease to be Righteous and He would cease to be God. So, to remain Just- God must punish all sin with the full force of His wrath.

But to even further complicate this issue- Mercy requires Forgiveness. Without Forgiveness- there is no Mercy. And so, if God is only Merciful- if God simply ignores our sin; or if God simply says, "*Well, boys will be boys*" and turns His head and pretends that He doesn't see when we sin- If God issues any Mercy at all to any guilty sinner even one time- then in truth- God cannot be Just.

But if God remains Just and doesn't issue Mercy- He cannot forgive guilty sinners. If God clears the Guilty- then God cannot be considered either Just or Righteous. But if God does not clear the guilty- then no one can be saved because John says that we are all guilty.

Now what I just described to you is called, "The Great Theological Conundrum". And it is a real big deal. Let me tell you just how big a deal it is. The only Religion in the history of the world that solves this Theological dilemma is Christianity. No other religion or human philosophy allows God to be both Just and Merciful to the same person at the same time. And Christianity alone allows God to be both Just and Merciful only because of Jesus Christ. You see, God is Just because His righteous Justice against all sin and all sinners was satisfied by the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. God poured out His Wrath against sin on Jesus Christ.

And because God's punishment for sin has been fully satisfied by exercising it against Jesus- God is now free to show Mercy to all who

repent and trust in Jesus and His finished Work. But without a sinless Jesus- suffering and dying for the sins of the world- without the substitutionary death of Christ on the Cross- God could not show any sinner any mercy at all because that would make God to be unjust and unrighteous- and so nobody could be saved.

Neither Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, or Shintoism provides any solution to this dilemma because they do not allow for God to become a man and take upon Himself the sins of the world and suffer and die and rise on the third day. Only Christianity solves this dilemma of God being both Just and Merciful.

God is Righteous because He doesn't simply clear the guilty. God is able to be Just and punish the guilty because He laid upon Jesus all of the sins of the whole world and then subjected His Own Son to the just wrath against that Sin.

Thank God that His wrath against our sins has been justly satisfied in Jesus Christ- even though He was Innocent. And now, God is able to show us Mercy- even though we are guilty.

So, we must understand, beloved, that God doesn't forgive us simply because we asked him to. God doesn't forgive us simply because we need to be forgiven. God is not obligated to any man to do anything that is contrary to His Own Divine Nature. God doesn't owe anyone anything. No, God forgives us for only one reason- Jesus Christ has already paid for our sins and that allows God to be Just and Righteous by punishing Jesus- and that also allows God to be merciful to us and forgive us when we confess and repent. So please don't take sin so lightly, brothers and sisters because our forgiveness came at such a great price. 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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