

Review

Last time, we started in our study of the First Epistle of John. He told us that Jesus Christ, who existed from eternity past, had come to earth: visible, hearable, touchable.

John had seen Jesus, been in close fellowship with Him, and is now telling us that the message he got while in close fellowship with Jesus is about to be told to us...

1:5-7 God Is Light, So Don't Walk In The Darkness

The message is simple and clear, but it's far from easy to hear: God is light, with no darkness in Him. And so, if we're in real, close, sharing fellowship with God, then our lives will look the same - no darkness. If we walk in the darkness, then we're lying about being in fellowship with Him.

Ouch. Who among us can feel confident when we hear that?

But the great reminder is that we just need to walk in the light and in fellowship with one another, because our sin has been forgiven! Don't ever lose sight of the message you heard when you were first saved: Jesus' blood paid the price of your sin. (Which is why we're about to have the word "propitiation" thrown at us, which is a "means of appeasement.")

1:8-2:2 We Have An Advocate

None of us can say that we have never sinned...

Rom. 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

But what about now? Can we say that we have no sin now? No. None of us have attained that sort of perfection. Even when we try to "walk straight and fly right," we've got to remember that...

Rom. 14:23 ...whatever is not from faith is sin.

We continually need to remember that we are sinners saved by God's grace.

That means we do sin. But what should you do when you sin? If you're anything like me, you probably feel like a condemned loser, separated from God, and sometimes wonder if you're even a Christian. You

are stained with unrighteousness, and filthy because of your sin.

But here's the best news I ever got: First John one nine, the Christian's "bar of soap"!

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

When you deny that you've sinned, you only make things worse. Your distance from God increases, your countenance falls, you walk in condemnation. But when you confess your sin, you feel totally cleansed. You know that you're right with God, and are reminded of His grace.

And so the more you confess your sin, the less you want to fall into sin, which is John's desire as he says,

1John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin...

2:3-6 Walk Like Jesus Walked

So, the Christian is not one who lives in continual, unrepentant sin. It is someone who is in fellowship with God, not because of sinless perfection, but because they try to walk a straight path, and quickly confess when they deviate from it.

If somebody tries to tell you they are a believer, but doesn't obey the Word, doesn't confess their sin, and doesn't repent of it, then that person is simply a liar, according to John.

Do you want the security of knowing that you are a Christian today? Abide in Christ, walk as straight as you know how, and confess your sin when you fail. That's the best feeling of security that I'm aware of.

2:7-11 Love Your Brother

There are many commands that we've been given by God in the Scriptures. But John tells us about the "new commandment" that Jesus gave. Remember that Jesus had told the disciples,

John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also

love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

The inverse is also true: If you hate your brother, you're in darkness. Even if you think you're fine, you're not, because you are blinded, not even knowing that you're walking in darkness.

2:12-14 I Am Writing To You

John seems to single out little children, fathers, and young men twice each in these verses. Or does he mean something else by these terms?

It actually seems that John isn't writing to people who are literally these things, but spiritually these things. That he is actually talking about where each of us is in spiritual maturity.

We all begin our life in Christ as infants (1Cor. 3:1-2; Heb. 5:12-13; etc.). Then, hopefully, we grow and mature as we are fed the milk of the Word, and eventually graduate to meat as we mature.

What John is saying is:

- "New believer: yours sins are forgiven, and you know God."
- "Growing believer: you are learning to master the temptation over sin, growing strong because of the Word of God that you've been taking in."
- "Mature believer: You have come to a point in your walk that you realize that it's all about simply knowing God."

2:15-17 Love God, Not The World

Finally, this morning, John tells us to watch out regarding all the things in the world that can pull us away from our relationship with God. When we see the money to be gotten, the things to be bought, the experiences to be had, and the sights to be seen, we can very easily get distracted from simply knowing God and doing His will. Before we leave this place, let's make sure that our focus is on Him, and not on the things of the world.