

1 John 3- (5/12/19)

Those who claim to love God must live as He wants them to live- in holiness & love for other people.

Abide in Him (2:28-3:3)

- The Christian life begins **whenever someone believes and trusts in Jesus**- but then what?
 - We are to **“continue”** (or, **“abide”**) in Him so that when we see Jesus face to face, **we may be confident and unashamed.**
 - Verse 28 has actually been the topic of much debate- is this a reference to **unsaved people being ashamed**, the possibility of losing salvation, or **Christians being ashamed**?
- At the **judgment seat of Christ**, believers' works will be evaluated and eternal rewards will be given- and **at that time the possibility of shame exists.**
 - 1 Cor. 3:10-15 tells us that a person's works will be revealed as either **perishable** or **imperishable.**
 - But how can we **produce things that are eternal and not be ashamed**? We are to **ABIDE** in Him- and in so doing we will produce fruit!
- In vs. 29, John reminds his readers that the new birth **HAS** to be **accompanied by righteousness.**
 - Those who **profess salvation but don't actually demonstrate any real fruit of righteous living are actually unforgiven** and don't any real confidence of salvation.
 - It's the fruit of our lives that reveals who we are- not just an **outward profession** and a title.
- John then breaks out in **spontaneous worship and wonder** at the love of God in making us His children (3:1).
 - The reason **we're not accepted by the world is because the world** doesn't know our Father.
 - If we're truly **living like Jesus**, doing what He did, and displaying righteousness in our lives, **we'll never be fully accepted by the world.**
- Even though we're **God's children**, we won't really grasp **the full significance of this reality until He appears (vs. 2-3).**
 - This process of our transformation on the earth- which is **slow, frustrating, and uneven**- will be rapid and complete when we see Jesus.
 - Once we begin to **understand the unimaginable wonder of this fact**, we will WANT to live pure and holy lives (vs. 3).

Do Not Live in Sin (3:4-10)

- The following passage is one **that has been the topic of debate** from various Bible scholars across the **theological spectrums.**
 - The **tension in this passage** is meant to rattle us and shake us out of any notion that God is O.K. with us **tolerating sin in our lives.**
 - The opening statement is obvious- “sin is lawlessness” (a trait of “Antichrist”, 2 Thess. 2:3-4)- **when we sin, we break God's law.**
- The reason **Christ came was to take away not only the curse and death that sin brings**, but to take away sin itself (vs. 5).
 - Therefore, **it's unthinkable that any person truly abiding in Him** would keep on sinning.
 - Here's where this gets confusing- **the letter already acknowledged that we have sinned** and that we DO still sin (1:8-2:1).
 - Also, the instruction NOT to sin wouldn't be necessary if **sinlessness was a possibility.**
- Vs. 8 provides us some clarity- “whoever **makes a practice of sinning**” isn't truly **born of God.**
 - The verbs in these sentences are present tense, which means, “**keeps on sinning**”.
 - We will sin, **we may even sin badly**- Peter cursed and denied Jesus, the Corinthians tolerated adultery and violated the Lord's supper, and the churches in Asia (Rev. 2-3) sinned.
- But anyone who has truly been born of God can't stay in a **lifestyle of willful, unrepentant sin.**
 - A true believer can **NEVER** settle down into a lifestyle characterized by sin and they can never adopt a lifestyle that the false teachers of the day **were encouraging them to live.**
 - But when people live in open, unrepentant, and habitual sin- **and yet still claim to have been born of God**- they're lying.
- Remember the context- **false teachers were claiming that Christians don't sin**, they're free to sin, and if they do sin, it doesn't matter anyway because we're spiritual not physical.
 - John ultimately **DESTROYS** this absurd idea- it's evident those who are children of God, and those who are children of the devil (vs.10).
 - People prove to be “children of the devil” when they **refuse to do what's right and refuse to love.**

- Scripture **takes seriously believers** as born-again, Spirit-filled, new creatures in Christ.
 - It doesn't tolerate any **casual attitude towards sin**- sin and salvation are opposites!
 - Wanting to sin is **not part of being led by the Spirit or having Christ in us.**
 - Refusal to take this passage & warning seriously should call us to **reexamine our commitment to Christ.**

Love One Another (3:11-18)

- Again we **hear the message of love** from the beginning of Jesus' ministry (2:7).
 - But before we learn what love is, **we read what love is not.**
 - We shouldn't be like Cain, who **murdered his brother Abel.**
 - Why did Cain murder Abel? **Abel's righteousness** apparently caused Cain resentment and anger that was intense enough to incite murder.
- As a result, just as Cain hated Abel, **so the world will despise Christians.**
 - Some people will **see righteous living and Godly fruit in your life** and it will cause them so much resentment and guilt they'll hate you.
 - Anyone who has “passed from death to life” (vs 14) will love the “brothers”, not hate them.
 - In fact, **hatred is described as murder, and anyone who hates isn't of God.**
- The Christian, as long as they are abiding in Christ & living in conscious fellowship with Christ, will **not continue to harbor habitual hate** towards another individual.
 - If a person is willing to **harbor habitual, unrepentant hate** or they have no remorse at murder, **that person is not a Christian.**
 - No-one whose life is **characterized by hate or murder can be a Christian.**
- The nature of God is true love, and true love was revealed by **Christ being willing to lay down His life for us.**
 - Therefore, we're to **lay down our lives for others.**
 - While the necessity of dying for someone else may be rare, what isn't rare is **the necessity of helping meet someone else's needs.**
 - The true test of a Christian's love is not their words- it's their **willingness to sacrifice** for the sake of their brother and to love with **actions and in truth.**

Confidence Before God (3:19-24)

- The **false gnostic teachers in Ephesus were teaching** that they knew the truth by special, inner, hidden knowledge- even though their lifestyles were marked by **blatant sin, greed, and hatred.**
 - John counters this idea by claiming the mark of truth is a lifestyle of **high moral character and good deeds that grow out of our commitment to Christ.**
- We all know that **in our desire to live lives of high moral character and good deeds towards others**, we're going to fail.
 - When this happens, **our hearts may condemn us (vs. 20)**, but we can rest in His presence because **God knows everything.**
 - God knows that we believe in Christ, that we strive to love others, and **that we regret it when we fall short.**
- God is “**greater than our heart**” (vs. 20) – our fickle, unreliable human emotions are not the final standard for whether or **not we've been born of God.**
 - God's **power and steadfastness**- not our own- gives us security that we're His.
 - When our **heart condemns us because of our sin and imperfection**, we can silence it by confessing our sin (1:9), and by resting in the fact that God knows all things and sees the **true state of our heart.**
- Once our **hearts no longer condemn us, we can have confidence before God (vs. 21).**
 - This confidence then leads us to fruitfulness in prayer- **we receive what it is we're asking when we keep His commandments and we do what pleases Him.**
 - John also tells us **we must ask in God's will (5:14)**, in Jesus's name (Jn. 14:13), **while we're abiding in Jesus (Jn. 15:7,16).**
- What are the **commands we must obey** if we're to be fruitful in prayer?
 - We must **believe in Jesus** and love one another (vs. 23).
 - Those who keep these commands live in Him, or abide in Him, and we know from their obedience to **these commands** that the Spirit is in them.
 - The **Biblical test** for the presence of the Spirit of God is found in **someone's lifestyle.**

The Tests of Authenticity

- I. The absence of habitual, willful, and unrepentant sin (vs. 4-10).
- II. The absence of hatred towards others (vs. 15).
- III. The willingness to love in deed and in truth, not just talk (vs. 17-18).