

Know God – Sin No More

I John 3:4-9

Last week we looked at John's words of hope about Jesus' Second Coming. Each and everyday we are to strive to become more and more like Jesus in our character and action. John told us that we could have assurance in the fact that we are God's children TODAY – NOW. It is not something that we have wonder about, but is something that God, through the Holy Spirit, wants us to confirm in our lives.

We saw that when Jesus comes back to get us, that we will be different. We will be different because of the growth that has taken place, or the growth that is still to come. That life circumstances are opportunities for growth. They can test our faith and strengthen our character.

But we also know that there will be a miraculous transformation that will grant us more understanding, and that will transform our physical bodies into glorified and resurrected bodies that will no longer suffer human nature, sickness, disease or sin. We can't begin to imagine what it will be like on that day, but it does give us something to look forward to.

John told us that when we see Christ that we would be similar to Christ. We will see areas in our lives where we can relate to Jesus and find a common behavior, but there will also be areas in which we will see that we have missed the mark. The more we have in common with Jesus the more we will be able to understand him.

John challenged us to be pure as Christ is pure. Purity produces understanding. The more we partake of God's divine nature, the more we understand God, and the more we do become more like Christ.

But this morning John adds to his topic of being pure as Christ is pure and lays out characteristics of those who are pure and those who merely have the image of purity.

1. The False Teaching

We do know that during this time there was a concept going around the church that stated that since we all sin then it is okay to continue to live in it, because the only saving grace is that Jesus will forgive us in the end. We have looked at this before in previous teachings we have done here at Redwood. This concept would allow us to live however we want now, and in the end Jesus would look past it and forgive us. In **Matthew 16:27** Jesus tells us:

For I, the Son of Man, will come in the glory of my Father with his angels and will judge all people according to their deeds.

Don't try to avoid responsibility by saying you didn't know about it. For God knows all hearts, and he sees you. He keeps watch over your soul, and he knows you knew! And he will judge all people according to what they have done. Proverbs 24:12

"See, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me, to repay all according to their deeds." Revelation 22:12

Don't be misled. Remember that you can't ignore God and get away with it. You will always reap what you sow! Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful desires will harvest the consequences of decay and death. But those who lie to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. Galatians 6:7-8

It is very clear that our lives should not give into to sin and remain there, simply, because God's forgiveness was not given so that we could sin more, but so that we would find freedom from sin. Every move we make in the game of life is watch and recorded by God, and his reward will be based on how we played the game.

2. Sin Opposes God. (4)

In I John 3:4 John tells us:

Those who sin are opposed to the law of God, for all sin opposes the law of God

The term law here needs to be defined. The law of God is simply his standards. One who opposes the law here is one who violates God's standard. We live in a society where laws are in place to stop people from killing each other, to stop them from running red lights, to stop sin from running rampant, thus placing others in danger. Some laws maybe unclear how they effect other people and may seem to have no meaning at all.

But the laws of God are in place so that we can be protected, and so that others may be protected as well. Sin is illegal in the laws of God. Sin comes from the Greek word "hamartia" which means to be without a share, to miss the mark, to be mistaken, or to miss or wander from honor or uprightness.

One who sins is one who isolates themselves from God, either not considering or simply do not care what they put at risk, or the consequences they may face, yet they still choose to step away from honorable and right behavior.

When someone sins there is definitely a separation that one makes in their mind. A separation between us and God. One cannot have the mind and heart of God when they are in the act of sin. The more I think about this the more I understand that as we sin, we separate ourselves from God first in our sin, then he responds by telling us that he cannot have anything to do with us until we repent.

Sin is outright rejection of God either in our lives, or in a certain area, or in a period of time.

3. The Importance of Jesus'. (5)

In **I John 3:5** we read:

And you know that Jesus come to take away our sins, for there is no sin in him.

As we have looked at before, Sin was serious enough that God sent His Son to save us, because we could not save ourselves. In **I Peter 1:18-20** we read:

For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. God chose him for this purpose long before the world began, but now in these final days, he was sent to the earth for all to see. And he did this for you.

Jesus bridges the gap between mankind and God, thus making it possible for imperfect and sinful believers to experience the presence and relationship with God. This will never change.

In **I John I** want you to notice that verse 5 tells us that “there **IS** (not was) no sin in him” pointing to the idea a continuous and never-ending characteristic. The work of Jesus will never fade away or diminish. It will never become unavailable. It sits there waiting to be embraced.

John continues in **I John 3:6** and says:

So if we continue to live in him, we won't sin either. But those who keep on sinning have never known him or understood who he is.

4. Habitual Sin Shows a Lack of Knowledge of God. (6)

As John is writing about sin he is very much aware that it is impossible to be completely sinless. He is not talking to those who occasionally fall every once and a while. The key word in verse 6 is the word “keep” – “Those who keep on sinning.” The word keep in the Greek is defined as one who remains, continues, dwells, endures, or stays in a state of being. It is the same word that John has used throughout **I John** to describe one who remain in Christ.

One who sins and remains, dwells or stays in that state of being shows that they lack knowledge about God. For some reason the seriousness of sin, the reality of God, and the threat to their soul has not been understood. **Proverbs 9:10** tells us:

Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in understanding.

Whenever the word Fear is used in conjunction with someone in authority it is defined as “to have exceeding reverence, standing in awe, or a recognition of power and position in contrast to our own with the granting of proper respect and honor.”

The more we know God the more we will see the need to eliminate sin from our lives. The Apostle Paul when writing to the Church in Philippi said in **Philippians 2:12**:

Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.

Listen to what Paul's words as he quotes portions of the Old Testament to the Romans in **Romans 3:9-18**:

Well then, are we Jews better than others? No, not at all, for we have already shown that all people, whether Jews or Gentiles, are under the power of sin. As the Scriptures say, "No one is good – not even one. No one has real understanding; no one is seeking God. All have turned away from God; all have done wrong. No one does good, not even one. Their talk is foul, like the stench of an open grave. Their speech is filled with lies. The poison of a deadly snake drips are their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. They are quick to murder. Wherever they go, destruction and misery follow them. They do not have what true peace is. They have no fear of God to restrain them."

Jesus told a crowd in **Luke 13:4-5**:

Dear friends, don't be afraid of those who want to kill you. They can only kill the body; they cannot do any more to you. But I'll tell you whom to fear. Fear God, who has the power to kill people and then throw them into hell.

The fear and respect of God should stop habitual sin. If it hasn't then I question whether or not an individual really does understand and know God.

This brings up another point in my mind. It is amazing to me how many Christians think that New Believers must change in a blink of an eye. To understand God is a process of

time. The strongholds in a New Believers life will take time to break. They will come to a point in their lives when they will have to make a choice.

I don't think that these baby Christians need the mature believers to point out their sin to them. I think the priority is for the mature believers to point out God to them and what he has asked us to do. Let God bring understanding of Himself. Let God be Sovereign God.

But John continues on in verse 7-8 and says:

Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right it is because they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous. But when people keep on sinning, it shows they belong to the Devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy these works of the Devil.

Notice that John uses the word, "children" showing us that he senses some responsibility to warn the church as a spiritual father. We wanted to warn of false doctrine that would say that it is okay to habitually sin and be a Christian at the same time – that God's forgiveness gives us even more license to sin.

5. Who are we influenced by? (7-8)

But John tells us that there are two kinds of people in the world. First, there are those who allow righteousness to influence them and cause them to live godly lives. Second, that there are those who allow Satan to influence them which causes them to remain in sin.

In essence, we could say that those who habitually sin actually know Satan better than they do God. Even though people may not know where this kind of behavior comes from, they actually understand the character of Satan. Jesus, when talking about the difference between God's true children and those were not said in **John 8:43-47**:

"Why can't you understand what I am saying? It is because you are unable to do so! For you are the children of your father the Devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning and has always hated truth. There is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. So when I tell the truth, you naturally don't believe me! Which of you can truthfully accuse me of sin? And since I am telling you the truth, why don't you believe me? Anyone whose Father is God listens gladly to the words of God. Since you don't, it proves you aren't God's children."

When Peter rebuked Jesus for saying that he was going to die, Jesus told Peter, "Get behind me Satan." He was not calling Peter a demon but he was stating that Peter was being influenced by a power that was not of God. Instead of looking at God's will and plan, ideas of self-serving motives or denial of God's plan caused Peter to react.

In **I John 3:9** we read:

Those who have been born into God's family do not sin, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they have been born of God.

6. Believers Have the Help to be Free From Habitual Sin (9)

I in no way am saying that sin doesn't bother us from time to time. But those who have asked God to come and be Lord of their lives are granted the ability to live good godly lives. Yes, there may be the occasional sin, but these people are not controlled by it any longer. In **Ephesians 4:21-27** Paul tells us:

Since you have heard all about him and have learned the truth that is in Jesus, throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception. Instead, there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes. You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in God's likeness – righteous, holy and true.

Those who struggled with habitual sin are no longer stuck. They have the ability to find freedom from their sin only if they want freedom. Some may be struggling with thoughts of defeat when it comes to sin. They may have already written off the fact that they cannot stop. Or they may lack the self-control.

God has promised us that we can find freedom. We need to change the way we look at sin and its hold on our lives. God has granted us ability to stop, to stay away. We need to understand that we will not find freedom based strictly on our own effort. God is the one who has made us a new person, and he is also the one who continues to make us new people. It is with his strength that we can find freedom from habitual sin.

But those who remain habitual sinners are in danger. In **Hebrews 10:26-29**:

Dear friends, if we deliberately continue sinning after we have received a full knowledge of the truth, there is no other sacrifice that will cover these sins. There will be nothing to look forward to but the terrible expectation of God's judgement and the raging fire that will consume his enemies. Anyone who refused to obey the law of Moses was put to death without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Think how much more terrible the punishment will be for those who have trampled on the Son of God and have treated the blood of the covenant as if it were common and unholy. Such people have insulted and enraged the Holy Spirit who brings God's mercy to his people.

Conclusion

We need to understand that we can't just live however we want now, and in the end expect Jesus to look past our habitual sin and disobedience. Jesus does offer forgiveness to us, but he also expects us to do our part. Sin opposes God. Those who sin separate themselves from God because they ignore Him.

What Jesus has done for us required a lot from him. He laid down his life, thus showing us how serious sin has been, and how serious it is today.

But those who make sin a habitual practice in their lives simply show that they really do not know God. This is not simply because of ignorance, but because of a purposeful choice. But New Believers who are learning about God and who begin to understand who he is find an importance of avoiding sinful behavior.

In our own lives, who are we finding ourselves influenced by? Each choice we make in life will tell us upon whom we depend. Either God or Satan. Sometimes Satan can come and bring defeat into our lives before we even begin to seek help. As the father of lies, he tries to get us to embrace false teaching such as the one the John was addressing this morning, so that in the end we will find ourselves guilty and doomed. Instead we need to pay attention to the voice of God and the power of His Word. Finding freedom in truth and not in human emotion, or human logic.

We have the ability to stay away from habitual sin. It does not lie within ourselves, but is dependent upon God. But those who choose to remain in their sin are in danger. They are in danger of bringing God's wrath upon themselves. As they sin, they trample on the Son of God and treat the blood of Christ as nothing special. God does not look lightly at that.

John warns us:

1. Beware of False teachings
2. Sin opposes God.
3. Get to Know God so you will see the seriousness of sin
4. Don't let Satan influence you and wear you down.
5. Live in freedom, not in Sin