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1 JOHN 2:1-17

Last week, as we began our study in 1 John, we were reminded by the Apostle John that if we claim to be sinless, we are fooling ourselves, and not only that, but John says we are also lying and the truth isn't even in us and not only that, but John says that if we say we have no sin we even also make God a liar and God's Word isn't in us.

Now, those are pretty strong words coming from the apostle [who we always associate with love...](#) I mean, we would expect Paul or Peter to say something this strongly and dogmatically but somehow, we don't expect John to say these things to us in this way...

But, he tells us these things **because** of his love for us and because **God** loves us and moved upon John to hold nothing back from us that we need to hear.

There were folks **then** and there are folks **now** who believe they can reach a level in their Christian walk where they will not sin...but according to [1 John 1:8 and 10](#), that simply is not true.

Think about it...wouldn't it be nice to live just one day, knowing you haven't done a thing God **didn't** want you to do and you've done **everything** God **did** want you to do...

I'd love to spend just one 24-hour period when I didn't have an ugly attitude or an evil thought or say an uncalled for word or do something that was displeasing to God...one day when I get to heaven all this will be possible, but until then, I don't believe it will happen! Why? Because I still live in this body of flesh (and so do you)...

So, John begins [chapter 2](#) with a continuation of thoughts on this subject...

[Chapter 2:1-2...](#)

Advocate – “one who is called alongside to plead our case”

How wonderful to have the Lord Jesus Christ as our Advocate. How wonderful to have the dear Lamb of God to plead our case.

And, did you know that we also have another Advocate?

When Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit, He said He would be “the comforter.”

This is the same Greek word. In other words, we have an Advocate **within** our heart who is the dear Holy Spirit. And we have an Advocate **without** our heart who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, when we sin, our Advocate in heaven who sits at the right hand of God the Father, pleads our case for us.

“I sinned. And straightway, posthaste, Satan flew before the presence of the Most High God, and made a railing accusation there.

He said, ‘This soul, this thing of clay and sod has sinned, ‘Tis true that he has named Thy name, but I demand his death, for Thou has said, ‘The soul that

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sinneth, it shall die.' Shall not Thy sentence be fulfilled? Is justice dead? Send now this wretched sinner to his doom. What other thing can righteous Ruler do?

And thus he did accuse me day and night...and every word he spoke, O God, was true!

Then quickly, One rose up from God's right hand before whose glory angels veiled their eyes.

He spoke, 'Each jot and tittle of the law must be fulfilled; the guilty sinner dies!
But wait!

Suppose his guilt were all transferred to Me – and that I paid his penalty! Behold My hands, My side, My feet!

One day I was made sin for him that he might be presented faultless before Thy throne!
And Satan fled away. Full well he knew that he could not prevail against such love...for every word my dear Lord Jesus spoke was true!"

See, every time I sin, there is the accuser of the brethren and he rushes in and he demands that I die...he says, "Look at her...look at what she's done."

Then, the dear Lamb of God stands up for me and says,
"Yes, Father, it's all true...Gloria has failed. But, don't look at **her**...look at Me.
On the basis of **My** shed blood I plead for the remission of her sin."

Praise God for the cleansing power of the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Then, the Advocate who lives **within** our heart begins to do a work inside us and what happens...or what should happen if we're listening and if we're in tune with the Holy Spirit, is that we will become convicted of our sin and we will be miserable until we make things right with God...

Praise God for the Advocate in heaven and praise God for the Advocate in our heart!

By the way...why is the blood of Jesus enough? I mean, why don't I have to go through all sorts of rituals and ceremonies and sacrifices to get my sin forgiven?

Verse 2 says that Jesus is the "propitiation" for our sins.

Now, how many times did you use the word "propitiation" this week?

This 5-syllable word simply means that God is satisfied...He is pleased with the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus completely and absolutely and totally atones for all my sin and reconciliation is made by it. It simply means that my sins have been paid for by the suffering of my Advocate.

Notice that John didn't say that if I **repent** I have an Advocate with the Father. John also didn't say if I **go through a ceremony** to get rid of my sins, I have an Advocate...

I believe this means that before I confess and before I repent...At the very moment I had that evil thought and the moment I did that wrong act, the Lord

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Jesus was there at the throne of Almighty God to represent me as Satan is there accusing me...

And then, because of the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus and the satisfaction that God sees in the blood of the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit does His work of conviction in my heart and I confess my sin to the Father.

Remember last week, we said that confession means to say the same thing...to agree with... So, when I agree with God and confess to Him my sin then, the sweet fellowship that sin has broken between my Father and myself is restored!!

We said last week that one of the reasons Christianity is different and distinct from other "religions" of this world is because of the forgiveness of sin!

Now, let me ask you...does this give us license to sin?
No indeed, let's look at what John says about that...

Verses 3-6...

Among the purposes that we listed last week for the **Book of 1 John** being written is for you and me to come to **know** that we are truly children of God, for us to **know** that we are truly born again!

In these five chapters, the word "know" is used over 30 times, and this word in the Greek refers to **experiential knowledge**.

Now we need to understand that this doesn't have to do with **getting saved** or **staying saved**. John is talking about **assurance of our salvation**. John is talking about once we are saved that we **know** we are saved! See, we need to remember that we don't keep ourselves saved. There are two extremes that prevail among believers...one is that once we're saved, we can sin and sin and sin and God won't care. The other extreme is that when we sin we're lost again and have to get saved all over again. Neither of these extremes is right. But, here John is assuring the believer that he can know beyond a doubt that he is saved.

Does this mean we can be saved yet not sure? Yes, it does...or else John would not have addressed this subject, would he?

Let me ask you...just by way of example...how many of you have ever had any doubt at all about your salvation?

Very few people I know have escaped this...Bill said he's never doubted his salvation...even though I've doubted his salvation a few times...

But, John says **we may know that we know...verse 3...**
"...if we keep His commandments..."

Now, this isn't speaking of just the Ten Commandments...
No, it's speaking of much more!!

I mean, the Ten Commandments were given under the Law, Beloved. The Law was merely our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ! Once we came to Christ, there are other commandments.

To give you just one example...**1 Thess. 4:2...**

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Some of those commandments are mentioned in the last chapter of this book...**1**
Thess. 5:16 ff. (and that's just one chapter of one book in the New Testament)

See, if God expected His children to keep His commandments on the **other side of Calvary**...how much more does He expect us to keep them on **this side of the Cross?**

Verse 5...not only does He expect us to keep **His commandments**, but He also expects us to keep **His Word**.

What's the difference in keeping God's commandments and keeping God's Word? Well, His commandments are indeed His Word, but not all His Word is His commandments.

In God's Word is also found God's character...
In God's Word is also found God's will...
In God's Word is also found God's pleasure...

Let me use this illustration...

Suppose your teenager (Think back a long time, now...) comes home from school and you say something like this..."Jimmy, I want you to be sure and take out the garbage and also clean your room today."

These are your commandments to Jimmy.

Now, if Jimmy obeys you, he will obey the specific commandments you have given him.

But suppose Jimmy comes home the next day, and he overhears you say to a friend on the phone... "I've had a migraine headache ever since I got this morning and I haven't cleaned house like I had intended. I surely do wish I had felt like doing it, but I didn't."

Suppose Jimmy begins to dust the house and vacuum and wash dishes and clean the toilets...and he does this, **not because he has to** but because he knows your character and he knows the dirty house is getting on your nerves and he loves you and he wants to make you feel better. He loves you and he wants to please you.

Example: Our son Brent putting up our Christmas tree a couple of years ago...

We open up the Word of God and find certain commandments of God. If we are saved, we will want to obey those commandments for the simple reason that God has given them to us.

But also as we read the Bible, we run across some desires of Jesus. They're not necessarily specific commandments but as we read, we learn that this is what pleases Jesus... this is how Jesus really wants us to live.

And because we know Him and we love Him, we keep not only His commandments, but we also keep His Word.

I believe the bottom line is this...instead of wondering how **far** we can go away from God's Word before He is **displeased** with us...we should seek to know how **closely** we can live by God's Word so He will be **pleased** with us.

I believe **verse 6** should be the very truth to which we should cling every moment of every day!

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Verses 7-9...

This is not a contradiction...I believe John is saying...

"I'm not telling you something you've not heard. You've heard this commandment since the beginning of your Christian walk. When Jesus was here He gave this commandment.

Remember, He said, 'a new commandment I give to you that you love one another ...by **this** shall all men know that you are My disciples... ..' So in a way, it's really an old commandment. **But, because we have more and more light and that new light dispels the old darkness, this commandment is always new and fresh."**

Haven't you ever felt that way? You've known some particular truth...you've read that truth over and over. You've heard that truth preached and taught and then suddenly one day the Holy Spirit brings it home to you in a new and fresh way and you feel as though it was just written especially for you!

Verses 9-11...

John goes on to expound upon this commandment...

If we say we are walking in the light of the Lord, and yet we treat our brothers and sisters in Christ unfairly and with disrespect and with contempt and with hatred...then we aren't walking in the light at all...in fact we're stumbling around in the darkness.

Beloved, the one place folks ought to experience acceptance and love and forgiveness is within the body of Christ! I mean...you're not going to find love and acceptance in most of your workplaces...some homes are not even havens of love and acceptance.

Well, we could say a lot about this and no doubt each of us could give a personal word of testimony...but, let's move on...

Verses 12-14...

Only two families exist from God's perspective...

1) children of God 2) children of Satan

John is writing this letter to the children of God. And he reminds them in **verse 12** that as Christians, their sins have been forgiven and he goes on to speak to **three different groups** of God's children and these three different groups identify **three different stages of spiritual growth**...

- 1) **"fathers"** – the most mature in their knowledge of God, "you know (by experience) Him who has been from the beginning."
- 2) **"young men"** – these are strong and know sound doctrine yet lack the experience of walking with God that the fathers have, but they have overcome the evil one...
- 3) **"little children"** – those who have only the basic awareness of God and need to grow...

There are all these groups in God's family today, and those of us who are in need of learning shouldn't be ashamed **to ask** and those who know sound doctrine and have a lot of experience walking with God shouldn't be afraid **to share** what God has taught them.

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Let me ask you...what do we do with newborn babies? Primarily we feed them, don't we?

I mean, our schedules revolve around their feeding schedules. Why? Because food (milk) is absolutely essential for that baby's growth.

What a tragedy it is for folks to come to know Jesus and no one ever feeds them. They never grow. They stay a baby. There are 75 year old baby Christians in every church. What blessings of maturity and growth they miss!

Verses 15-17...

Well, very soon even baby Christians will find that being a Christian is not a bed of roses. The child of God has three foes...

- 1) an external enemy...the world
- 2) an internal enemy...the flesh
- 3) an infernal enemy...the devil

The "world" that John is speaking of in verse 15 is not the world of nature...it's not the flowers and trees and the mountains and seas...

No, God made all that and He gave it to us richly to enjoy.

He's not speaking of **humanity** here either...because if we didn't love a world of lost sinners, we'd never send another missionary and we'd never go on another mission trip, would we?

John is speaking here of this **world system that is opposed to God...**

We can't escape this world system...Jesus prayed that we be **in** it but not **of** it.

The world wants us to be **in it and of it!** The world wants to **displace and dethrone** God in your life.

God's Word is very clear...we're not to be conformed to this world. Beloved, God has something better for you. He has called you to a higher plane. He has called you to be separate and pure and holy...

Remember Lot? You'd never know Lot was a righteous man unless you read it in the New Testament, would you?

Lot was a righteous man...living in a tent. One day, he decided to pitch his tent toward Sodom. He compromised just a little! Then, he moved a little closer to Sodom. He was living on the edge of town, and his children were going to "Sodom High School" and his wife was president of the Sodom Garden Club.

Then, they found a really nice home right in the middle of one of Sodom's nicest subdivisions...and before long, Lot was among those influential men of the town who sat at the gate of Sodom.

Do you see how gradually the world conformed Lot? He was so conformed to the world, that he nearly lost his life down there...only the angels of the Lord could get him out of there...

Let me tell you how the world comes against us and then we'll be through...

- 1) "the lust of the flesh" – this means the cravings, the desires, the longings of the flesh.

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We still live in a body of flesh that cries out to be satisfied, and if that flesh is not under the control of the Holy Spirit, it will be under the world's control. The world will tell you, "If it feels good, do it." "You owe it to yourself..."

2) "the lust of the eyes" – Watch what goes into your mind by way of your eyes. Be careful what you read and what you watch on TV and the movies.

3) "the pride of life" – This means (among other things) living in such a way as to impress other people.

There's absolutely nothing wrong with having a nice home, a nice car and nice clothes...unless you want these things for the wrong reason. Do you want to impress others with your home? With your car? With your clothes? With your position?

By the way, before we leave the subject of pride...did you know we can even fall into the trap of **spiritual pride**? Are you proud of how spiritual you are. If you're really walking close to God, you don't have to boast about, folks will know it!

Verse 17...

John says, "this old world is passing away, folks..."

Don't put your roots down in this world...

Don't put your hopes in this world...

Don't fall in love with this world...

The world will let you down! The world doesn't care anything about you! The world will pass away!"