

# Are You a Christian? - 1 John

by Anton Bosch

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*Anton Bosch's sermon on 1 John challenges listeners to examine their faith through love, obedience, and the acknowledgment of sin to ensure they are true Christians.*

**Duration:** 47:18

**Scripture:** John 3:16, 1 John 1:7-8, 1 John 2:3, 1 John 3:10, 1 John 3:18-19

**Topics:** "Christian Living", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the darkness and sinfulness of the world we live in. However, he assures that if we are truly of the light, the darkness will not overcome us. The preacher emphasizes the importance of having Jesus in our lives, as he is the source of life. He urges believers to not just talk about love, but to demonstrate it through their actions. The preacher also warns against being too focused on worldly things and urges believers to prioritize the things of God.

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## Transcript

We're in the first epistle of John, John's first epistle, and as we've been going through the Bible, one book per week, we have done the introduction to this book in the Sunday school this morning, and we're almost near, we're close to the end, I'm not sure where we're gonna go from here, but next week we probably will do 2 John, 3 John, and Jude, these are all very, very short books, and then we have one more week to do the book of Revelation, and then we will have gone through the Bible every Sunday over the last year and a bit. So we've come to 1 John, and again, forgive me for repeating some of the stuff that we said in the Sunday school, but the problem with 1 John is that we have these prejudices about John and about who he is and what he has to say, and the majority of people seem to see John as somebody who is really a little bit, maybe effeminate, certainly a little bit soft, maybe not a man who's really a man's man, because one of the themes that we all know about that John speaks about in his gospel and in his epistles is the theme of love, and love is not really something that men speak much about, and so we have this picture that John is maybe a little bit soft, and he's a little bit not really like Paul, who was really a man's man and really stood for the faith and stood for the doctrine, but in fact, that's a totally wrong idea as to who John is and what John is all about, and John shows us love, but not the kind of love that we think, but in fact, a very, very strong form of love. He says some very, very strong words here.

John is black and white. When we get to the issue of love, it's always gray and we need to give and take and we need to compromise, and John is very, very specific. He deals with light and darkness, heaven

and hell.

You're either of God or you're of the devil. There is no gray with John, and John's message on love, and I'm not gonna speak on that message this morning. I did consider speaking about that, but I wanna speak about another aspect, but John's message on love in the epistle of John is very, very, very strong, and so he says that if you say that you love God and you hate your brother, he says you lie.

It's as simple as that. This is powerful stuff, and so John's version of love is not what our modern idea of love is all about. John's version of love is something which is powerful, something that is strong, something that requires sacrifice.

He says if you say that you love your brother, he says you need to lay down your life for your brother. You need to be willing to die for your brother. This is not the wishy-washy, let's hug and let's shake hands and let's sing kumbaya.

This is strong commitment to one another, strong commitment to God, and this is one of the things that John speaks about, and so John also is written to give them assurance of salvation, but also to address the issue that obviously had now come into the church. Remember, we're now, this is in about AD 90. This is 60 years roughly after Jesus had ascended, and in these 60 years, many things had happened to the church, and one of the things that was obviously happening in the churches was that many people were joining the church who were not truly born again, who were not real Christians, and this is very much the situation we have today.

There are many people who claim to be Christians, but who are not really Christians, and so one of the things that John does, and this is what I want to examine this morning, is that he gives us various tests as to how we can know that we are a Christian, and what this does is one of two things. If I don't make the grade, then I know that I am not really a Christian, and I trust that we will come out of this meeting this morning and have a clear idea as to where we stand with God. If I am a Christian, then he gives us assurance.

If I am not a Christian, he's not going to give us any kind of false assurance. Now, this is one of the problems that we have today, is that preachers seem to feel the need, and particularly pastors, and obviously I understand that pastors want to keep people together and don't want to lose anybody, and so in order to do that, what we do is we speak nice, comforting words, and everything's all right, everybody's fine, we're all going to go to heaven, we're all brothers and sisters, and John says, no, we need to be clear whether we're in the light or whether we're in the darkness, whether we're of the truth or whether we're of the lie, whether we're of God or whether we're of the devil, whether we're going to heaven or to hell, and so he makes some very, very clear statements, and he gives us a whole series of things, and I'm not going to look at all of them, but I'm going to look at a number of them. So let's read from 1 John chapter three, and we'll read the chapter.

1 John chapter three. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God. Therefore the world does not know us, because they did not know him.

Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when he is revealed, we shall be like him, and for we shall see him as he is. And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure. Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

And you know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him there is no sin. Whoever abides in him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen him nor known him.

Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for his seed remains in him, and he cannot sin because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest.

Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of the wicked one and who murdered his brother, but why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.

Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.

Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, because he laid down his life for us, and we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods and sees his brother in need and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and truth.

And by this we know that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.

And whatever we ask, we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his son, Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave us commandment. Now, he who keeps his commandments abides in him, and he in him.

And by this we know that he abides in us by the spirit whom he has given us. I'm going to begin in chapter one, verses six and seven. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

But if we walk in the light as he is on the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin. And so he says in verse six, if we say we have fellowship with him and we walk in darkness, we lie. In other words, if you say you have a relationship with God and you don't walk in the light, you don't really have fellowship with God.

Why? Because God is light. And so what does it mean to walk in the light? Well, it really means two things to me. The first is, and not really in any order, but the first is that thy word is a light unto my feet and a lamp unto my path.

When I'm walking in obedience to the word, as God's word lights up the way for me, and I walk in that way, being obedient to what he is showing me, being obedient to what he is calling me to do, I'm walking in the light. When I'm walking in my own ideas, my own counsel, my own agenda, I'm not walking in God's light.

God is leading me in a direction.

He's leading each one of us in a particular direction through his word. And as we follow that light, we're walking in the light. But walking in the light also means that we are open in our relationship with him.

And John deals with this about the fact that the light came into the world in his gospel. Remember, it's speaking about Jesus as the light of the world. The light came into the world, but men loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil.

And so walking in the light means that I'm open, I'm transparent, I have nothing to hide. I'm able to come to God and say, Lord, you know my heart. You know everything about me.

I'm not trying to hide anything. I'm not trying to be something that I'm not. And so being open in my relationship with God.

But also you'll see that he's speaking here about our fellowship with one another. He's speaking about two things, our fellowship with God and our fellowship with one another. And we need to be open in our relationships with one another.

When we have hidden agendas, we're not walking in the light. When we are not transparent with one another, when we're trying to manipulate and maneuver around one another, we're not walking in the light. And so he's really saying, if I'm being obedient to the word of God, and if I am open in my relationships, whether they be with man or with God, then I'm of God.

But if I'm walking in darkness, scheming, maneuvering, manipulating, whether it's God or whether it's man, when I'm walking in disobedience, there's a very serious question as to whether I'm of God or whether I'm not. And then verse eight is a, and every verse, and this is the amazing thing, and we're not amazing, but the wonderful thing about this letter is that every verse is powerful. Every verse is a sermon in its own.

And verse 18 says, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say we have no sin, the truth is not in us. We're simply deceiving ourselves.

And so, do you feel that you're okay? You feel that you don't have issues? You don't have sin? Everything is good? And your relationship with God and your relationship with everyone else? He says, you're deceiving yourself. The truth is not in you. You're not saved.

Now, that's scary. So really, what he is saying is that if I'm truly saved and I'm truly born again, if I truly have a relationship with God, I will be aware of my sin. Because the fact is we all sin.

And he says that if we say that we are without sin, we're making God a liar because God says we sin. We sin every day. In fact, I don't think we can go from one moment to the next without sinning.

Now, he's not wanting to beat up on us. He doesn't want us to be feeling bad all the time and negative about ourselves and about our lives. But what he is speaking about is being aware of the fact that in me dwells no good thing.

But by his grace, I can be saved. His grace is able to forgive us. And in fact, he continues in the next verse and he says if we confess our sins, and that word confess our sins here, the word confess simply means agree with God.

When I agree, yes, Lord, I'm not what I should be. He forgives us, cleanses us of all unrighteousness. And so there's this ongoing process of my coming to him and saying, Lord, I sin, and him forgiving me.

And so there is this constant walking with him. This is walking in the light because he's showing me things in my life which are not right, which don't please him. And as I come to him, he deals with that, he forgives us, he cleanses us, he embraces us, he accepts us.

But the very serious problem is when I feel that I don't have issues. Well, if I don't feel I have issues, I'm not going to come to him and ask for forgiveness. And he can't forgive what I've not asked for.

You see, God doesn't extend to us blanket amnesty of saying, well, here's a free ticket. And you can just continue to live your life any old way and I'll just keep forgiving you whenever you commit something wrong. No, no, no, he's asking us to come to him and to say, Father, I've sinned again.

And he forgives us. Now, that is not because God wants to keep us feeling bad about ourselves all the time. The reason why he does that is so that we don't get too far away from him, that we remain in our relationship with him.

Not because he wants to have control of us in a negative sense, but because he knows that when I become independent of him, I will get into trouble. I will get too far away from him and too far away from his word, and I will end up in gross sin. And so he's encouraging us to remain close, to stay close to him.

When you're walking out in the bush and it's dark, and I've a few times for various reasons ended up having to walk in the dark at night in strange territory. And when there's a group of you, you stay together. In fact, I remember once, and I may have mentioned this before, where we actually had a rope and we had one guy who had a flashlight in the front and he navigated and all the rest of us held onto that rope.

There were 20 of us and we held onto that rope and we stayed together. Now, you let go of that rope or you separate from the group, you're gonna be in trouble. You're gonna get lost.

And so he's encouraging us, stay close to the leader. Who's the leader? Jesus. And he's saying, stay close to him.

And so as we stay close to him, we don't get lost and we stay in a relationship with him. And so the first thing is, if we walk in the light, we're saved. If we walk in darkness, we're not.

If we say we have no sin, we're saved. Sorry, we're not saved. If we admit our sin, we are saved.

Then chapter two, verse three. Now, by this we know, and this is one of the key words, over 30 times he uses this word, no. By this we know that we know him if we keep his commandments.

If we keep his commandments. Now, I think we touched on this last week, but I want to emphasize this again. The fact that we keep all the rules does not in and of itself mean that I'm saved.

There are many people who keep the rules. And remember, Jesus confronted these people. They were called Pharisees.

And they said, but we've kept all the commandments. But you see, they were trying to get to heaven on their own merits, on the basis of what they had done. But he's saying, no, we can't get to heaven because even the best things we do are as filthy rags before God.

We can't get to heaven on our own merits. We have to come because Jesus died on the cross, and we have to accept the work that he did for us as he died in our place upon that cross. And that's all, just believing on Jesus.

But now that we are born again, and this is what he is saying, if I'm born again, there has to be evidence of that new birth. And remember, Jesus says, you know a tree by its fruit. And so how do we know that it is an apple tree? Because you get apples off it.

How do you know that it is a thorn tree? Because you get thorns off it. It's as simple as that. And how do we know that someone is born again? Because they keep the commandments of God.

Because they love God's word, and they love to be obedient to God. It's as simple as that. And so people who don't love the word of God, and who do not love to be obedient to the word of God, clearly he is saying, are not born again.

And so by this we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. Now, remember that he is writing that we may have assurance. And I don't want you to go away and say, well, you know, I don't succeed 100% at keeping his commandments.

Because this connects to the previous point we've just made. If we say we're without sin, then we're not there either. And so he's not saying that we've achieved 100% in keeping his commandments.

But what is it that my life is about? What is my life about? Is it about living my own life? Or is my goal in life to please God? Is my goal in life to live according to his word? Is that what drives me? It's not whether I make it 100%. None of us will make it 100%. I trust we get better at it as we go along.

But what is it that I'm aiming at? What is it that's guiding my life? What is it that's directing my thoughts? What is my goal? Is it to bring my life in line with the word of God? Or do I have some other agenda? That's really the issue. That's really the question. And so I don't want you to go away and say, well, you know, I just don't get it right.

That's not the question. The question is not whether you get it right. The question is whether you're trying.

The question is whether this is your desire, whether this is what your life is about, keeping the commandments of God, being obedient to him, being obedient to his word. Then in chapter two in verse nine, he comes to this issue of love. He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in darkness until now.

It's so simple, and yet it's so profound. He who says he's in the light, in other words, you say that you're saved. You say you've seen the light.

And he hates his brother. He's not in the light, he's in darkness. Now, you say, well, you know, I don't hate my brother.

And let me clear this up because the question came up this morning. Does that mean we have to love Osama bin Laden? No, not necessarily. He's speaking about the brothers.

He's speaking about those who are part of the family of God, those who are saved, those who are part of the church. And we say, well, you know, I don't really hate anybody in the church. But he covers that base also because he says, if I don't love, I hate.

You see, so it's not a matter of just saying, I don't do the negative, I don't hate anybody. No, he says, it's more than that. I actually need to actively love everyone in the church.

And loving everybody is not saying, if you have a problem, be close and God bless you, but actually doing something to help the person who's in need. And that may be a physical need. It may be an emotional need.

It may be a spiritual need. But he's speaking about looking out for one another. If we really love one another, we will be looking out for one another.

We will be helping one another. We'll be caring for one another to the degree that we will lay down our lives for one another. Now, that's a challenge.

We say, but you know, brother, you know, I love the brothers. But you know, I love to watch the football match more than I love to be in church. Do you really love the brothers? I don't want to hit on people who are not here this morning.

But you know, if we really love the brethren, we'd love to be with the brethren. You don't love somebody and then say, I don't like to be with that person. I mean, if you love somebody, you want to be with them.

If we love the brethren, we'll want to be with them. We want to be whenever the church gathers together, whether it's on a Sunday, whether it's on a Wednesday, whether it's on any other day. We just love to have fellowship with the brethren.

And so there's a test. Do I love the brethren or do I hate the brethren, the brothers or the church? The church. Chapter two, verse 15.

It's getting awfully quiet in here. Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the father is not in him.

Now again, when he speaks about the fact that the love of the father is not in him, you have to read the whole of the book and you'll understand that when he says the love of the father is not in him, he's simply saying you're not born again if you love the world. You see, because you can't love God and the world. Remember, Jesus said that.

No man can serve two masters. He'll love the one and he'll hate the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon.

Mammon, his money, represents the world system. You can't love both these things at the same time. And again, the test is very easy.

Do you love doing the things in the world more than you love doing the things of God? Do you love going where the world goes more than you love going where the church goes? Do you love the things that the world is passionate about more than the things of God? And he explains what the world is. It's the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life. What is it that drives us? What is it that motivates us? What is my life focused on and what does my life center around? Is it the world or is it the things of God? Now again, I understand, and John doesn't give any leeway here.

There's no gray with John. There's no in-between. It's either black or white.

And yet I do understand, and Paul deals with this, that there are Christians who are born again, but their love for the world is quite strong, but they love God also. Now, we need to move away from that gray area because unfortunately, if you're sitting on the fence, you can fall off either way, either side. And we need to be sure, because the purpose of John's writing is that we may have assurance.

John doesn't, and I don't want you or any of us to say, well, I don't really know. I want you to know that you are born again. And on the other side, I want you to know, if you're not born again, I want you to know that, because if you know that, you can say, well, I'm not where I should, I'd better give my life to Jesus.

But when we're in this gray area in-between, we say, well, maybe I am, maybe I'm not. That's no way to live, because it's not a thing we can play with. It's not a thing you can take a chance on.

Say, well, maybe I'll go to heaven, maybe I won't. Now, you'd better be sure. And so, how do we know? We walk in the light, if we confess our sin, if we keep his commandments, if we love the brothers, if we don't love the world.

And then chapter two, verse 29, he says, and if you know that, sorry, if you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of him. Everyone who practices righteousness is born of him. Now, he's spoken about keeping his commandments, but here, this seems to be the same thing, and yet it's not the same thing, it's slightly different.

Who practices righteousness. What does it mean to practice righteousness? Very simple. They do the right thing.

It's as simple as that. They do the right thing. Christians do the right thing.

Even if doing the right thing is hard, even if doing the right thing means sacrifice, even if doing the right thing means having to lose friends, but they do the right thing. They practice righteousness, their life, and the word practice there, that's important. It means that that is their lifestyle.

This is what they do habitually. Now, again, none of us make 100%. All of us do unrighteous things from time to time, especially when we're in motorcars, but our lifestyle is one of doing the right thing, and sometimes we don't get it right the first time, but you know, the moment we make a mistake, the moment we do something that is unrighteous, God's spirit convicts us, and we know that we did the wrong thing, and we go back and we fix it, and we do the right thing.

Sometimes we don't do it straight away. Somebody testified on, was it this Wednesday? Or maybe last Wednesday that he had to do the right thing, but it took him a long time to get there, months or years to eventually get there, but eventually he did the right thing. And that's a sign of somebody who is born again.

Somebody who is not born again will do the wrong thing and never fix it, feel nothing, but those who love God will practice righteousness. Their lifestyle is doing what is right. Then chapter three, verse three, everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he, meaning God, is pure.

Notice, purifies himself, but I thought that that is something that God has to do. He has to cleanse me, he has to wash me. Yes, that is something that he has to do, but remember, I have a part to play.

As we confess our sins, John said in chapter one, he is faithful just to forgive us and to cleanse us. So I have to come to him and he'll do the rest. And so what I need to be doing is I need to be purifying myself

all the time.

I need to be putting off those things and putting away those things that soil me, that make me contaminate me, that contaminate my thoughts. I need to be pushing those things out of my mind all the time. I need to be thinking on the things that cleanse and purify me.

I need to push away those relationships and those associations that make me dirty. I need to be looking for those relationships that will challenge me and cleanse me and purify me in my thinking and in my love and in my relationships. And so in every area of my life, I'm looking to be clean.

I'm looking to be purer, more and more pure. And you've heard the illustration before, and this is probably the most graphic way that we can see the difference. You can take a peg and you can wash it and cleanse it and put perfume and powder all over it, but you let it loose for one minute, what's it gonna do? It's gonna go straight back to the muck and the mire and the filth and the mud and roll around in it.

Why? Because that's its nature. That's the way it is. You can try and clean it up, but its nature is it gravitates to that kind of stuff.

You take a cat, and our cat disappeared this week. We're very sad. But you take a cat and it just walks outside and it just walks in a little bit of mud.

What does it do? It instantly cleans it and shakes itself. There's no way you can make a cat dirty. It will do everything it can to get rid of the dirt.

It will do everything it can to be clean all the time. Why? Because it has a different nature to a peg. These are two different animals.

And this is what he is speaking about. He's saying that if I'm a Christian, I'll be like that cat. There'll be times that I'll do the wrong thing.

There'll be times that I'll be contaminated by the world and its thinking and its values. But everything within me will want to get rid of it and shake it off and get rid of it out of my life. But if I don't have that desire for purity, there's something wrong with my nature.

When I revel in filth and in the sleaze of this world, when that's where I'm comfortable. Yesterday, I attended a meeting of people who share a similar interest with me in my hobby. I felt very uncomfortable all the time because not of anything particular they were saying, but just because I don't fit in there.

I don't belong there. I share a common interest in one area. And yet everything that they're about is different.

And so those who are truly born again will purify themselves. They will cleanse themselves all the time. And then chapter three, verse 10, and we've touched on this.

In this, the children, look how clear it is. In this, the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest. This is how you know, a child of God and a child of the devil.

Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God. Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God. In other words, whoever does not habitually do the right thing is not of God.

And nor is he who does not love his brother. It's so simple. I don't know why we make it, well, I know why we make it confusing or difficult because we don't like the simple answer that we get.

We don't like the result of the test and the test is simple. Do you practice righteousness and love the brothers or don't you? And we say, well, you know, I didn't like those. So let's change the questions.

Let's put some ifs and maybes and buts and other things in there. But it's simple. This is how you know the children of God and the children of the devil.

Simple as that. Then in chapter three, verse 18, and I just want to touch on that loving the brethren. Verse 18, my little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

Now, so he's saying, prove your love. Verse 19, by this we know that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before him. How do we know that God loved us? Because he showed us.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. There is no doubt that God loves us. I have no doubt.

He proved it. As I said before, he didn't send us a message. He didn't send us a prophet.

He didn't send an angel to say, I love you. He didn't send us a Valentine's card. He sent his son who died on that cross, the most gruesome death.

And so I know that he loves us. Now he's saying, if we love one another, don't just talk about it. Don't just love in tongue and in word, but do it in deed and in truth, that word truth in reality.

All right. Interesting thing, one is in chapter four, verse five and six. They are of the world.

Therefore they speak as of the world and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us.

And he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. Again, you see those contrasts.

But he's saying, they are of the world because they speak as of the world and the world hears them. So how do we know a child of God and a child of darkness by what they say and who listens to them? He's saying, if I'm of the world, I speak like the world and the world listens. If I am of God, I speak like God.

And those who are children of God will listen to that. In this meeting yesterday, I overheard a conversation and I was just stunned. There were these two individuals, two grown men discussing some Harry Potter movie.

I guess it's the latest one. And they were absolutely mesmerized, enthralled, captivated by, you know, this happened because of that. And if this didn't happen this way, that would have happened.

And they were just absolutely caught up in this whole thing. This was their whole world, a movie. Now, there was no question, and I'm not the judge, but there was no question in my mind as to whether these individuals were Christians or not.

They speak like the world. A Christian is not, you know, the problem is I set them here. Christians get so caught up in the things of God.

Discussing, you know, this, the word of God, and this is what Jesus did, and this is about what Paul said, and you know, and all of the ramifications and the implications. This is sad that here are people discussing a worldly movie and they're more involved in it than many Christians are in the things of God. And clearly these two men were having fellowship, but the fellowship was not fellowship of Christians, because what they were speaking and what they were listening to was not the things of God.

But those, he says, that are the children of God, they talk a different language. And yes, the world doesn't listen to them. I didn't listen to what these guys, in the sense, you know, I listened to what they, but I wasn't paying attention to what they had to say.

I had no interest in what they had to say. They had nothing to say to me, but a Christian has something to say to Christians. But we know that when we speak to the world, they also say, well, you know, you're fanatical, you're crazy.

And so he says that light speaks to light, dark speaks to dark, Christians speak to Christians. Now, I'm not making a statement saying we have to be exclusive and only speak to Christians, but you see what I'm saying. We really have common areas and we're able to speak the same language.

And that's really the question. What language do you speak? Do you speak the same language as the world? Or do you go to functions like I did yesterday, you come away and you say, I don't belong here. And yet you meet with Christians and you say, this is where I belong, this is my home.

We speak the same language. And so he's saying, what language do you speak? And then chapter five and verse one, whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. And everyone who loves him who begot us loves him who is begotten of him.

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. Now, normally we put this right at the beginning and it's interesting that he puts it right at the end. Remember when we spoke from Peter last week, it began with faith.

He says, add to your faith and he goes on all of the issues, begins with faith. John for some strange reason ends with faith. He's right at the end of the book now and I'm at the end of the message.

And he says, it begins with believing or it ends with believing. So it begins and it ends with my trust in him. And chapter five is for whatever is born of God overcomes the world.

And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith. We overcome the world. The world does not overcome us.

Remember the light shone in the darkness. John said in his gospel chapter one, but the darkness did not comprehend. And that word comprehend means two things.

But one of the things it means is the darkness did not overcome it. And when you switch all the lights off in this auditorium, it's very, very dark because there are no windows. But you know what? You can bring the smallest little candle in here and the darkness will not overcome it.

The light, the candle will shine and its light will light up this whole place. And so he's saying that if we are of the light, the world will not overcome us. That's a comfort.

We live in a dark world. We live in a world which is sinful and wicked and getting worse by the day. But if we're really of the light, it will not overcome us.

It won't get the victory over us. It will not cloud our thinking. It will not cloud our hearts and our love and our devotion and our faith.

And then finally, chapter five and verse 12, he says, he who has the son has life. He who does not have the son of God does not have life. Simple.

Do you have Jesus or don't you? That's the question. Now I want to conclude very quickly with a part of the verse that we read from in chapter three, verse 20. You've listened, trust to what I've said this morning.

You've looked at these various things. Now the question is, verse 20, if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and he knows all things. If you feel condemned this morning, you feel I don't make it.

God knows everything. And there's no comfort in that verse. What he is saying is come to God.

Allow him to wash you. Allow him to cleanse you. Allow him to change your love, your affection, your goals, your life.

But then at the same time, verse 22, sorry, verse 21. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence towards God. Now remember, he began by saying, if we say we don't have sin, that's not the question.

The question is, is my heart right towards God? If it is, there's no condemnation. Now I pray that everyone who's in the service this morning will have no condemnation. And I believe we can have.

We can have that assurance that Paul says, I've run the race. I've finished the course. He says, I've done what God has asked me to do.

There is no reason to be condemned. And you find that many of the men in the New Testament and the Old Testament, they knew that they'd lived their lives in a God-honoring and a God-pleasing way. So I want you to have assurance.

John writes this and he says, I wrote this that you may have assurance. I want you to have assurance. I don't want you to blindly be going down a road and not knowing for sure that that road's gonna end up where you want it to go.

Make sure you're on the right way. Only a fool keeps going down the wrong road and never stops to say, maybe I'm going down the wrong way. Won't you stop this morning and say, am I in fact on the right way? Father, we thank you for your word.

Lord, for the challenges in it. And we thank you, Lord, for some of these, for all of your books, but Lord, for the book of John, which is just so clear and so direct and so simple. And Lord, if our hearts condemn us, we thank you that you are able to forgive and cleanse.

And Lord, if there are those this morning who feel that they don't measure up, we pray that they may turn to you. Forgive us, Lord, for giving people false hope and false security. And Lord, help us just to turn to you and to find in you that grace and that forgiveness and that cleansing that you are able to bring.

And that assurance you're able to bring that we belong to you, that we're of the light, that we're of God, that we're destined for heaven. And Lord, for those who are unsure this morning, I pray that we may make sure. And Lord, that there may not be one of us who will go leave this building this morning without being absolutely sure that our names are written in that book of life.

We're absolutely sure that we're of God, that we're of the light, that we're of the truth. So Lord, help us just to examine our hearts, to be honest with you, but above all, to be honest with ourselves. And so Lord, I just pray that this may be real to us in Jesus' name.

Lord, help us not to be like the Corinthians that Paul wrote about who sorrowed, who's sad because they didn't measure up and did nothing about it. But Lord, that our sorrow may lead to repentance. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Part us with your blessing, go with us, Lord, and bring us together again this evening for this evening's study. Protect us physically and spiritually and emotionally in every way. We pray for those who are not here, Lord, that you would minister to them and be close to them and draw them by your spirit.

Lord, we pray for this week that we may be those people who shine as lights in a dark world. In Jesus' name we ask it, amen.

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