

(Through the Bible) 1 John 1-2:11

by Chuck Smith

John's epistle is written to bring believers fullness of joy, power over sin, and assurance of eternal life by emphasizing the importance of fellowship with God and Christ as our example.

Duration: 1:09:09

Scripture: Romans 3:11, 1 John 1:7, 1 John 2:4, 1 John 2:6, 1 John 3:2-3, 1 John 3:7

Topics: "Through The Bible"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a story about a man who had been living a miserable and mean life for over 16 years. One day, his little daughter came running to him, but he pushed her away and she got seriously burned. Feeling remorseful, the man approached the preacher and asked if God could forgive him for his past actions. The preacher assured him that the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse a person from all sin, no matter how dark or bleak their past may be. The sermon emphasizes the transformative power of the gospel and the hope it offers to all who confess their sins and seek forgiveness.

Transcript

So we turn to 1 John. Why did John write this epistle? In chapter 1, verse 4, he tells us, These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full, so that you might have the fullness of joy. Do you know that God wants your life to be filled with joy? Peter says that though we haven't seen Jesus, still we love Him.

And even though we haven't seen Him yet, yet we rejoice with joy unspeakable or indescribable and full of glory. Jesus talked to His disciples about the fullness of joy, and He related the fullness of joy with their abiding in Him. Chapter 15, Abide in me, my words abide in you, that you may ask what you will, that your joy may be full.

In chapter 16 of the Gospel of John, He relates the fullness of joy to our prayer life. Henceforth you've asked nothing in my name. Ask that ye may receive, that your joy may be full.

Here the fullness of joy is related to fellowship with God. The life of fellowship with God, abiding in Christ, is a life of fullness of joy. Now it is important that we make the distinction between joy and happiness.

For joy is a quality of the spirit, whereas happiness is a quality of the emotions. So happiness is a variable because it is related to the outward circumstances. Things are going great.

I just got a new car. I'm so happy. I'm just whistling as I drive down the road, but I'm so preoccupied that I run into a tree.

Yikes. My happiness is gone. I'm miserable.

I'm sad. I didn't have a chance to insure the thing yet. Oh my.

So happiness is a variable. It can change very suddenly, very dramatically. You may come and say, oh, I'm just having a horrible time.

I don't know what I'm going to do. I'm just loaded with debts. They're going to repossess me.

I don't know what I'm going to do. And so I might sit down and write you out a check for \$10,000. And you went, oh, wow, this is great.

And you're so happy until you went to cash the check and then you'd be sad again. So happiness is a variable related to the outward circumstances where joy is the thing of my heart, my spirit. And it isn't a variable.

It doesn't change. It's a constant because it's a joy that's related to my relationship with God, which is a constant, you see. That relationship doesn't change.

Things may go bad. They may be horrible. But my relationship with God is secure.

Therefore, I have the fullness of joy. John writes this epistle to bring you into that kind of a relationship with God that you might have this fellowship with God that your joy may be full. The second reason why he wrote this epistle is in chapter 2, verse 1. These things write we unto you that ye sin not.

And so the purpose of this epistle is to bring to you a life of victory over sin, to give you power over sin. And then the third reason why he wrote the epistles in chapter 5, verse 13. These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God that ye may know that you have eternal life.

Written to believers for the purpose of bringing them assurance of their salvation, that ye may know that you have eternal life. So, to bring you fullness of joy, freedom from sin, and assurance of eternal life. Those are the purposes for which John wrote this epistle.

Now, in Isaiah chapter 55, Isaiah declares, it's not 59, 55 I guess. Isaiah declares as the Lord of the angels speaks, rain comes down from heaven, and the snow, and returns not thither, but waters the earth and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater. So is my word that goes forth out of my mouth, saith the Lord.

It shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish the purposes for which I have sent it. What is God saying? That when he sends his word with a purpose, the word isn't going to return void. There's power in the word of God, and it's going to accomplish the purposes for which God sent it.

Now that excites me, because I know that as we study this first epistle of John, God's word isn't going to return void, and by the time we've completed our study, you're going to be experiencing a greater joy in your walk with Jesus than you've ever known before. You're going to be receiving a new power over sin, and you're going to be having assurance of your salvation, because God's word won't return void. It's going to accomplish the purposes for which you have sent it, and John tells us very plainly, these are the

purposes for which he wrote this epistle.

So, great times ahead as we study this epistle of John, as we develop then in our relationship with the Lord. Now man needs an example. You know, you can tell me how to do something, and I may get somewhat of a concept in my mind, but if I can see you do it, I can follow the example much easier than just a verbal command.

Jesus is our example, and so he points to Jesus as our example, and first of all, he is our example in our relationship with God. For if we walk in the light as he is in the light, then we have fellowship with God. As the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son is cleansing us from all sin.

So he is our example in our walk, walking in the light as he is in the light. That is in chapter one, verse seven. Then in chapter two, verse six, he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.

So again, Christ is our example in our walk, our walk with God, our relationship with God. Then Christ is our example in our own personal spiritual life. In chapter two, or three, verse two, beloved now are we the sons of God, it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

And so as he is, we will be like him as we see him, as he is. So, verse three, then every man that has this hope in him purifies himself even as he is pure. So my example in purity.

Christ is the standard. I am pure. I am the standard.

I am pure even as he is pure. And then in verse seven again, I am righteous as he is righteous. So that inward purity, that righteousness, Christ my example, pure as he is pure, righteous as he is righteous.

And then in chapter three, verse twenty-three, 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. And so he is our example in our relationship with each other as we are to love one another as he gave us the commandment. And then the clincher of all is in verse seventeen of chapter four.

Herein is our love made perfect, our love made perfect that we may have boldness in the day of judgment because as he is, so are we in this world. He is our example. As he is, so are we.

He is to be the example that I follow. So Christ the example, my relationship with God, my own interpersonal life, and then my relationship with others. Now the Bible warns us about self-deception.

Be not deceived. God is not mocked. James said, if any man seems to be religious and bridles not his own tongue, this man's religion is vain.

John tells us that it is possible for us to deceive ourselves, the truth not in us. So the way we deceive ourselves many times are in the claims that we make. But the claims that I make are not valid unless they are backed up by corresponding experience.

So false professions, and as we look at 1 John, he tells us many of these false professions that people make. Verse six of chapter one, if we say that we have fellowship with him, and what a glorious profession to make. Oh, I have fellowship with God.

I have communion or I'm one with God. Great thing to say. But if you say you have fellowship with God and you're walking in darkness, then you're deceiving yourself.

You're lying. You're not telling the truth. You cannot have fellowship with God and walk in darkness.

Now don't be deceived about this. Many people are deceived on this score. They think that they have fellowship with God, but they are walking in darkness and that is an impossibility.

Verse eight. If we say that we have no sin, then we deceive ourselves. The truth is not in us.

Now the word sin here in singular is a reference to the root nature of sin. And unfortunately there's a lot of people, there are a lot of people today trying to deny the root nature of sin. You know, I don't have a sinful nature.

Well, the Bible says you do. The Bible said even by one man sin entered the world and death by sin, so that death passed unto all men for all sinned. Not all have sinned, this is translated in King James, but just all sinned.

By one man's sin, we were all made sinners. So that as Paul said in Ephesians chapter two, and you were by nature the children of wrath even as others. David said I was born in sin.

So the denial of this sinful nature is only to be self-deceived. And that is what he's referring to here. If we say we have no sin, no sinful nature, we're deceiving ourselves.

You see, the Bible teaches that basically I sin because I'm a sinner. And sinning doesn't make me a sinner, it only proves that I am a sinner. I have a sinful nature, therefore I sin.

And they liken it then to a horse thief. Stealing a horse does not make you a horse thief, it only proves you're a horse thief. If you weren't a horse thief, you could never have stolen that horse.

There's no way a man can steal a horse unless he's a horse thief. It's in your heart to do, you see. If it weren't in your heart to do, you couldn't do it.

And so with sin, the sinful nature, and if I say or deny that I'm just deceiving myself, the truth that isn't in me, then if we say that we have not sinned, I'm saying that this root of sin has never borne any fruit. Then I make God a liar because God has said all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none righteous, no not one.

There is none that seeketh after God. So God has declared that we're all sinners, and if I try to deny the fact that my sinful root has ever borne any fruit, then I am denying the truth of God and making God a liar. Now, he that saith, verse 4 of chapter 2, I know him.

Great thing to say, isn't it? Oh yes, I know him. He that says I know him and keeps not his commandments is a liar. We'll cover that a little more thoroughly as we go through tonight.

Verse 6, he that saith, he abides in him. Another glorious thing to say. Oh yes, I abide in him.

Wonderful thing to say, but it's not just saying it. If I truly abide in him, then I will be walking as he walked. We become one.

And then finally in chapter 4, verse 20, if a man say, I love God, and a lot of people have made that claim, I love God and hates his brother, he is a liar. So it's not what I say that counts. What I say can be deceptive.

I can even deceive myself. And to say that I love God is a glorious thing, but if I hate my brother, then that's a lie. It's interesting how that there seems to be so often this inconsistency in people's lives.

We say one thing and do another, or we do one thing and say another. We have one of these little girls, and I have dozens of them, that I just adore. And they're always coming up to me and saying, hi Chuck, or whatever.

And I just love these little girls, and little fellas too. And it's just so neat. And it's so cute, really, the things, the concepts in their little minds.

And there's this one little girl this morning. She's probably somewhere between two and three. And she told her mother, I want to go to church and see the Godfather.

And she was talking about me and she thought I was God's father. And she said, well, then who is God's father? Another little girl that always has to say hi to me whenever she comes and come up and give me a hug and a kiss. The other day, the family was going off on Sunday, and so they said, well, no, we can't go to church today because, you know, we're going to take a trip today and we're not going to be able to go to church.

And she put her hands on her hips and she says, damn, I wanted to go to church. And she said, well, you know, I'm not going to go. And the inconsistencies, they show up early.

It's not always what I say. It's what I am, what I'm doing. Now, I can know.

In fact, God wants me to know. He wants me to be assured. Part of the purpose of this epistle was to bring me assurance.

I've written these things unto you that believe, that ye may know that you have eternal life." How can we know? How do we know what we know? As we go through this epistle, we find there are many ways by which we can know certain truths. Verse 3, chapter 2, and hereby we do know that we know Him. Now if I say I know God and don't keep His commandments, I'm a liar.

But here's how I can know that I really know Him. If I keep His commandments. Verse 5, chapter 2. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected, and hereby we know that we are in Him.

How can I know that I am in Him? Because His love is being perfected in my life. Now over in chapter 3, verse 16. Hereby perceive we the love of God.

How can I know that God loves me? Because He laid down His life for us. You know that the Bible only seeks to prove God's love at the cross. Whenever the Bible wants to declare or to prove to you that God loves you, it always points to the cross.

The fact that Jesus laid, here in His love, not that we love God, but that He loved us and gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. It always points to the cross. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

Here in His love, not that we love God, but that God loved us and sent His Son to die. So, hereby we perceive the love of God. Now verse 19, and hereby we know that we are of the truth.

How is that? Verse 18, little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and truth. When I am loving by my deeds, loving deeds, that's loving in truth, and by that I know that I am of the truth. Verse 24, hereby we know that we abide, or that He abides in us, by His Spirit that He has given us.

How do I know that He is abiding in me, the Holy Spirit, indwelling my life? How can I know the truth? Verse 2 of chapter 4, hereby know we the Spirit of God. So many churches, so many religions, how can I know? Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God.

This is the spirit of antichrist. Verse 6 of chapter 4, we are of God, and he that knoweth God hears us, and he that is not of God does not hear us, and hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. Whether or not the person will listen to the truth.

Verse 13 of chapter 4, going back to 12, no man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us, and hereby know we that we dwell in Him. How? Because His love is perfected in me.

Then finally in chapter 5, verse 2, by this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and keep His commandments. So how do we know what we know? Interesting epistle. Let's go back to chapter 1 and begin our study.

It's interesting to compare the first verse of this chapter with the first verse of the Bible and the first verse of John's Gospel. The first verse of the Bible, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. You know, you have to have a starting point, might as well start at the beginning.

In the beginning God, He was before the beginning. God has always existed. In the beginning God.

How long ago was that? Well, you know, our minds can't conceive or fathom. You can go crazy trying to figure out how long ago that was, but God was there. In the beginning God.

Now in the Gospel, in the beginning was the Word, the Logos. The Word was with God and the Word was God and the same was in the beginning with God. Now as he begins his epistle, he said, that one who was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes and have looked upon.

That in the Greek is gazed, transfixed and steadfastly at. I mean, really studied, analyzed. And our hands have handled of the Word of life.

For this life was manifested, we have seen it and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. So in the beginning God. In the beginning was the Word.

That which was from the beginning was manifested. We saw, we stared, we heard, we touched. John came, as did the other disciples, to the awareness of who Jesus actually was.

They realized that when they heard Jesus talking, they were listening to God talk. When they were watching Jesus, they were actually seeing God. And when they touched him, they were actually touching God.

Imagine what that must have done to them to realize that when I put my hand on his shoulder, I was actually touching God. When he put his hand on my shoulder or patted me on the back, God was touching me. We handled, we touched, we heard, we saw the one that was from the beginning.

You remember Micah's prophecy of the birthplace of Jesus. And thou Bethlehem, though thou be little among the provinces of Judah, yet out of thee shall come he who is to rule my people Israel, whose goings forth have been from old from everlasting. The eternal life always existed.

In the beginning, the Word with God was God. But the Word was made flesh and he dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Jesus, the eternal Word, Jesus, the eternal God, became flesh, dwelt among men, and John said, we saw him, we stared at him, we heard him, and we touched him.

And that which we saw and that which we heard, we now bear witness to you. The eternal life that was with the Father and was manifested unto us. That eternal life, it's not just duration, it's a quality of life as well as duration.

You remember one day, a rich young ruler came to Jesus and fell at his feet and said, Good Master, what must I do to inherit this eternal life or this age-abiding life, this quality of life that I see that you have? Men were attracted to that life of Jesus, that eternal life. It was manifested, John said, we saw, we heard, and now we bear witness of it to you. For that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you that you also may have fellowship with us.

And truly our fellowship is with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. This morning we talked to you concerning this Greek word koinonia, which is an abstract noun. And of the difficulty of translating it into the English language inasmuch as we do not have any English, single English word that is an equivalent of this Greek word koinonia.

And so you find this word translated as partaker, communion, common, one, fellowship. They had all things in common, koinonia. That is, they shared everything that they had.

The root noun from which this abstract noun comes is translated partaker or partner or partnership. So the word can be translated friend, friendship, partnership, communion, common, one, partaker. And it's all of these things.

Becoming one with God, coming into communion with God, having all things in common with God, having a partnership with God, having a friendship with God, having fellowship with God. Partnership means a mutual sharing of resources, mutual interest in each other. That's what God wants with you.

The purpose of the gospel is to bring man into fellowship with God. The purpose of God creating man in the beginning was fellowship. I love that poem called God's Trombones.

That one phrase where God said, I'm lonely. And so he created man. That he might have fellowship with man, become one with his creation.

Now within the church, we should have a fellowship, a koinonia with each other. In the early church, they had this sharing of resources. Anybody had a need, they could come to the church.

There was a sharing of the resources of the people. All things in communion. It didn't work out because they had some lazy bums that didn't want to work and just lived off of the others.

Ideally, if we had an ideal situation, it worked beautifully. If every one of us were industrious and all had an ideal situation, it could work. It'd have to be a real work of God's Spirit, of love within our hearts and all.

But everyone just really sharing and concerned and giving, it could be beautiful. But as long as we're in these bodies of flesh, we're going to have those that would spoil something that was beautiful. So it didn't work in the early church.

The church went bankrupt, actually. The Gentiles had to take up offerings for those in Jerusalem after they mishap, really, of this experiment in communism within the early church. Not communism as you know it today, a forced thing, a godless thing, but a communism that grew out of a common desire to benefit everyone within the fellowship, motivated by love and totally voluntary with Christ at the center.

You're not going to find a perfect government, a perfect form of government, as long as man is ruling. It's not going to happen until Jesus comes again and establishes God's kingdom. And then it'll be right, and then it'll be perfect.

And then we'll do away with commercialism. According to Isaiah 55, money will be done away with. We'll share together the fruit of the earth and God's glorious kingdom.

So, these things John said right we unto you that your joy may be full, relating this fullness of joy to the fellowship with God. Of course, when you come into a partnership with God, a friendship, a communion or fellowship with Him, what a joy it brings in our lives, fullness of joy. Now, this then is the message John is saying, that we've heard of Him, that which we heard we're going to declare unto you.

Now, this is basically the message that he told. God is light, not God is a light, but God is light. This is the essence of His nature.

And in Him is no darkness at all. Therefore, if we say that we are one with God, have fellowship with God, and we are walking in darkness, we lie, we're not telling the truth. You cannot have fellowship with God if you're walking in sin, walking in darkness.

Paul said, now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, lasciviousness, and it goes on, drunkenness, and riotings, and seditions, and heresies, and drug abuse, and all. And he says, and we know that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven. You say you have fellowship with God, but if you're walking in darkness, you're only deceiving yourself, you're lying, you're not telling the truth.

But in contrast, if we walk in the light as He is in the light, then we do have fellowship one with the other, as the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, is cleansing us. And in the Greek, it's present perfect tense, which should be translated, is continually cleansing us of all sin. That's, to me, a glorious place to be walking, in the light as He is in the light, believing, trusting in Jesus, and as I do, the blood of Jesus Christ is continually cleansing me of all sin.

Now, if I say that I have no sin, I'm just deceiving myself, the truth isn't in me. But in contrast, if I will confess my sin, He is faithful and just to forgive me my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness.

So, the way of cleansing doesn't come by denial.

The way of forgiveness isn't by way of denial, or by trying to hide it. There is a proverb that says, Whoso seeks to cover his sin shall not prosper, but whoso will confess his sin shall be forgiven. So, if you try to hide it, cover it, deny it, you're only deceiving yourself.

But if you'll confess your sin unto Him, that's all. Just confess it. He's faithful, He's just, and will forgive you your sin and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

Now, I love that word, all, in this particular place. It means it doesn't matter what the past may be, how black or dark or miserable or mean, cleanses me from all unrighteousness. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses me from all sin.

Dr. Finney was holding a meeting in one of the major cities in the eastern part of the United States. And if you've read anything of church history and of Finney's revivals, they were really spectacular as far as the changes that were brought to a community. In one city in the east, one of the major cities where he had one of his revival meetings, when he left, they closed every bar in town for lack of patrons.

So powerfully was the city stirred with the gospel. And in one of these meetings, as he was walking up the church steps, a man stopped him and he said, I want to talk to you after church tonight, may I? And Dr. Finney said, yes, I'll be glad to meet you after church and talk with you. So as he came to the top of the steps, the deacons in the church said to him, what did that man want? And Dr. Finney said, well, he wanted to talk to me after church.

And they said, do you know who that man is? He said, no. They said, well, that man is one of the worst men in the city. He's horrible.

You just dare not go with him. He has hired killers and all, and he probably has it in for you. And, you know, don't do it.

So after service, the deacons met him and said, now you're not going to go with that man, are you? And he said, well, yes, I am. They said, well, you can't. He said, well, I gave the man my word, I must.

And so the man met him and led him down the street, up an alley and to a back door of a building. As Finney went in, he turned around and locked the door. And he said, sit down.

And Finney sat down and the man pulled a gun out of the desk and laid the gun on the desk. And he said, I heard you say something last night and I want to know if it's true or not. Finney said, what did you hear me say? He said, you said the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son can cleanse a man from all sin.

Then he said, no, I didn't say that. God said that in his word. He said, wait a minute.

You don't know me. You don't know what I've done. He said, you are behind a bar and we have an illegal gambling room.

He said, the gambling devices are fixed. He said, I've taken the last dollar from many people and they've gone out and committed suicide. You mean God could forgive me for that? And then he said, all I can tell you is the Bible says the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son can cleanse a man from all sin.

He said, wait a minute, that's not the whole story. He said, I own the bar out in front. And he said, men will come in and they'll drink.

And he said, their wives will come in in rags with their little children and they'll beg me not to sell their husband booze. And he said, I throw the wives out in the street and I sell their husband's booze until they run out of money. And then I kicked them out in the street.

You mean God can forgive a man like that? And he said, the Bible says the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son can cleanse a man from all sin. He said, wait a minute, you don't know the full story. He said, this gun.

He said, it has killed several people who have gotten in my way. He said, I've hired men to kill others. I've paid them to kill.

You mean God would forgive me? Then he said, all I can tell you is that the Bible says all sin. He said, wait a minute, across the street in that big brownstone house, he said, I have a wife and a beautiful little child. He said, I haven't said a decent word to my wife in over 16 years.

I've been miserable. I've been mean. He said, the other day when my little child came running up, he said, I pushed her away into the stove and she was burned seriously.

He said, I've never told that little girl that I love her. You mean God could forgive me? And at this point, Finney stood up and he grabbed him and he began to shake him. He said, young man, you've told me about as horrible a story as I've ever heard or could dream.

And he said, if it were up to me, I don't know if I could forgive. But all I can tell you is that the Bible says the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, will cleanse a man from all sin. He said, that's all I wanted to know.

Thank you. He went over and knocked the door and he said, you can find your way from here. The next morning, as the sun was coming up, he was walking from the bar over to his home.

When he came into the house, the wife was in the kitchen with his little daughter and he went on upstairs. And so the mother said, go tell your daddy that breakfast is ready. And so she ran halfway up the stairs and she called and said, Daddy, mama said breakfast is ready.

And he answered, sweetheart, tell your mommy that daddy doesn't want any breakfast this morning. The little girl came running back down into the kitchen. She said, mommy, mommy, daddy said he didn't want any breakfast and he called me sweetheart.

Mama said, honey, you must have been, you must have misunderstood, you know, and go up and tell him again that breakfast is ready. And again, she ran halfway up the stairs and she said, daddy, mama said breakfast is ready. And he said, come here, honey.

And she went over to him and he picked her up and set her on his lap and he began to tell her how much he loved her. With that, the mother, of course, wondering what was going on, followed the little girl upstairs and standing in the door, saw him holding his little daughter on his lap for the first time, tears coming down his cheeks. And he said, come over here, honey.

And he said, I found out something last night that is the greatest thing I've ever heard. He said, and it's true. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, can cleanse a man from all sin.

He closed the bar. He began to be a benefactor to that community, changed by the power of Jesus Christ. No matter what the past is, no matter how black or bleak, the gospel of Jesus Christ holds out hope for all.

All you have to do is confess your sin. He's faithful and just to forgive you and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Oh, what a glorious thing is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Oh, the transformation it has brought to lives and can bring to man who is hopelessly lost in the power of darkness and sin. As Jesus said to Paul, I have called you to go to the Gentiles to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to the kingdom of God. And so ours is the most joyous, blessed privilege of sharing with men the power of God to deliver from the power of darkness and sin.

If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar. His word is not in us. My little children, these things write we unto you that you sin not.

Now, he's talking about the purpose of writing is to bring you fellowship with God. But the thing that breaks fellowship with God is sin. Isaiah 59, God's hand is not short that he cannot save.

Neither is his ear heavy that he cannot hear. But your sins have separated you from God. Always the effect of sin.

God said to Adam in the day that thou sinnest, thou shalt surely die. Adam sinned and God came into the garden. They said, Adam, where art thou? Fellowship with God had been broken as the result of sin.

Always is. So in order that you might have fellowship with God, it is necessary that we sin not. And John is writing that you might have power over sin.

And the power over sin, of course, comes through the abiding of the Holy Spirit within our lives. So these things have I written unto you, my little children, these things write I unto you that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ.

The righteous. The advocate is the intercessor. The one who intercedes for you.

One who is representing you. One who stands there in your behalf. One who pleads your case or your cause.

If we sin, we have Jesus up there as our advocate before the Father. Jesus Christ, the righteous. Wherefore, He is able also to save to the uttermost all who will come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 7.25 Paul in Romans 8 tells of, Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ who died, yea, rather is risen again, and is even at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. Writing to Timothy, he said, There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. So when we sin, we have an advocate with the Father.

One who is representing us. Even Jesus Christ, the righteous. When Job was going through all of his problems and his friends were trying to help him to understand his miseries.

One of his friends said, Hey, just get right with God and everything will be okay. Job said, Look, I look at the stars and the heavens and I realize how vast God is to create this universe. And I realize how nothing I am.

How in the world could I ever approach God to plead my case? He is so vast, I'm nothing. The gap between is so great, I could never cross it. The reach between the infinite and the finite, impossible to bridge from man.

And that's the shortcoming of every religious system, because they start with an earth base and try to reach to the infinite. Starting with a finite base, trying to reach to infinite, impossibility. The finite can never reach to the infinite, no matter how it may stretch.

And that's every religious system comes short because it starts with an earth base. The gospel Christianity starts with a divine or heavenly base. God so loved the world, He reached down.

The infinite God reached down to touch finite man. No problem there. Being infinite, He can do anything.

And so starting then with the divine base, God reaching down to man, there is success. There can be a contact made. And He reached down to man through Jesus Christ.

That which was from the beginning, which we have seen, which we have looked upon, which we have heard, which we have touched, was manifested. We beheld Him. We heard Him.

We saw Him. We declared. God became man.

Now this is what Job was problemed with. God is so vast, He's infinite. And here I am, finite.

How can I ever approach God to plead my case? He said, for there is no dazeman betwixt us who can put His hand on both of us. In other words, Job saw that the only solution for finite man to reach an infinite God was to be someone standing here in the middle in this gap who could touch God and who could touch man. But they don't exist, Job said.

So here I am. I'm no way to approach this infinite God. Now that which Job was crying for, a dazeman to stand betwixt, is exactly what Jesus is.

One God, one mediator. The man Christ Jesus. So that He touches God because He was in the beginning with God and was God.

And yet He became man and He reached out and He touched men. And He lays His hand on us both. And so if we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins.

Or the one who has paid the price for the freedom from sin. And not only for ours, but for the sins of the whole world. You see, in the death of Christ, He received the pardon for every sin of every man in all of history.

There is not a sin that was not atoned for in His death. Jesus said all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven man. Except the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

Which will not be forgiven neither in this world or the world to come. Which is the rejection of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit's witness that Jesus Christ is the only answer to your sin.

You see, Jesus said, I didn't come into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through me might be saved. And he who believeth is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already,

seeing he has not believed on the only begotten Son of God. This is the condemnation.

Light came into the world, but they would not come to the light. That's the only thing you're going to have to answer for when you stand before God. Jesus is the propitiation for our sins and for the sins of the whole world.

There's only one sin that you must account to God for, and that's the sin of not coming to the light. The sin of rejecting the fellowship that God is offering through Jesus Christ. The sin of rejecting God's love.

This is the condemnation. Light came into the world, they would not come to the light. Because their deeds were evil.

So God isn't going to go down a long list and enumerate every horrible thing you've ever done. If you should stand before the great white throne judgment of God, there will only be one issue. And that's your rejection of Jesus Christ, your rejection of God's offer of pardon through him.

For he is the propitiation for our sins, but not only ours, but for the sins of the world, the whole world. And hereby we know that we know him if we keep his commandments. In the 14th chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus said, He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he who loves me shall be loved of my father, and we will come and manifest ourselves to him.

He that hath my commandments and keepeth them. It isn't enough just to have the commandments. It is keeping the commandments.

Paul said, Hey, just because you have the law, don't think that you're justified. It isn't the hearers of the law that are justified, but the doers of the law that are justified. Jesus said, This is the commandment that I give unto you that ye love one another.

You say, Oh, yes, I have his commandment. He told me to love one another. And yet you hate everybody.

You see, having the commandment isn't enough. How can I know that I know him if I keep his commandments? Now, he that says I know him and keeps not his commandments is a liar. The truth is not in him.

If I say I believe in Jesus Christ as my Lord and my Savior. Then that very belief is going to bring about a certain style and manner of living. If I really believe it.

Now, I can say I believe something that I don't really believe. And I may fool people into thinking that I believe something that I don't really believe, but I don't fool God. For true belief in Jesus Christ is going to be manifested in my behavior.

I cannot walk in darkness. And possess the light. But whoso keepeth his word in him verily is the love of God perfected.

And hereby know we that we are in him. And so basically the whole commandments come down to this. Love God and love each other.

Love. He that loves, Paul said, has fulfilled the law. And when he talked about love, he said against such there is no law.

It all comes down to loving. Loving God first supremely and loving one another. And that's where it's at.

You do that, you've done them all. You've kept them all. And that's basically when he talks about the commandments.

He's talking about loving God and loving each other. And you can't do one without the other. They go together.

He that loveth God ought also to love his brother. He that saith he loveth God and hates his brother is a liar. How can you love God whom you have not seen and hate your brother whom you have seen who was made in the image of God? So it's all in love.

Hey, some people say, oh, I have a rough time with the commandments of God. What's so rough about loving God and loving each other? Now, you see, the thou shalt not are all entailed in love. If you really love someone, you're not going to lie against them.

You're not going to steal from them if you really love them. And so thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness.

You see, they're all superfluous if you love. If you really love God, you're going to not take his name in vain. You're going to honor him and to keep his day or days, actually, your life wholly unto him and separate unto him.

All of the rest falls along with loving God supremely and loving each other. And so whenever you deal with the commandments, don't try and go down and enumerate the ten or the longer list. Just deal with the two.

Loving God supremely, loving each other. Keeps it simple that way. And so how can I love someone who is so nasty and mean? I can't.

But he loves them. And as I submit myself to him, he can put his love in my heart for them. And the fruit of his spirit abiding in me is love.

The love that suffers long and is kind, that envies not, that bonds not itself, is not puffed up and doesn't behave itself unseemly, doesn't seek his own, believes all things, bears all things, hopes all things, proves all things. A love that never fails as the spirit of God is in control in my life. So, who so keeps his word? In him verily is the love of God perfected.

Oh, that God's love would be perfected in my life. Ooh, how I pray for that. How I pray for that.

And you know, it can't be until I've really come to the end of myself. The old flesh, the old man crucified with Christ. Long as I'm interested in me, and that's mine, and my territory, and I'm, you know, drawing out my little area of territory, and don't you trespass, you know.

The love of God is not yet perfected. Because the minute you come over on my territory, I'm going to, you know. You did that to me.

You said that to me. How could you do that to me, you know? So interested in myself, God's love is not yet perfected in me. And the more God's love is perfected in me, the lesser is of me the self-life.

Now, he that saith he abides in him ought also then to walk even as he walked. He's our example. Look at his life.

Study his life. Jesus said, come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden. And I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me. Learn about him. Study him.

Because if I abide in him, then I ought to be walking as he walked. Giving my life in concern and care for others. How many times you read in the New Testament, and Jesus looking upon them had compassion upon them.

Whenever he saw a person in need, he was always moved with compassion. He was touched in his heart to reach out and to help those that were in need. Now, if you see a brother in need and you shut up your heart towards that brother, then how can you say that God's love is dwelling in you? You're not walking as he walked.

You're not being touched as he was touched with the weaknesses, the infirmities of others. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which you've had from the beginning. And the old commandment is the word which you have heard from the beginning.

Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you, because the darkness is past and the true light now shines. And he who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in darkness even until now. But he that loves his brother abides in light and there is no occasion of stumbling in him.

But he that hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness and doesn't know where he's going because the darkness has blinded his eyes. What is darkness? Hatred. What is walking in darkness? Hating.

Now, is there someone that you are really upset with and you really hate them? You're walking in darkness. I can't stand them. I hate them.

Look out. Look out. You're walking in darkness.

You may say you're in the light, but you're deceiving yourself. You're blind. You're stumbling along.

You can't see where you're going. The darkness has blinded your eyes. There's nothing so blinding as hatred.

When your heart is filled with bitterness and hatred towards someone, you become blind to any value or good that might exist there. You don't want to see it. Love is like a light.

No occasion of stumbling for that man who walks in love. Love lights the path. This basically is the whole teaching of Christ and the gospel all summed up in this concept of love and loving God and loving each other.

And really, as John said, his commandment isn't grievous. It's really rather wonderful. It's very healthy to love people.

It's very unhealthy to hate. Hatred and bitterness create chemicals that have a destructive effect upon your body physically. Love produces chemicals that cause you to glow.

You ever see a person in love? How they glow? They're chemicals that are being created in their glands that just, you know, brings a glow to life when you love. But when you have hatred, other chemicals eat you up, sap, take away, shrivel your skin and make you look ugly. Oh, that we would learn the simple lesson of love.

We'll pick up at this point next week in our study as he writes to the little children, fathers and young men. So we'll break it in the middle of that chapter. Father, we desire tonight that your love be perfected in us, that we might walk as he walked, react as he reacted, love as he loved.

Oh, Lord, work in our hearts through thy love, not just in words, but in deed and in truth. And so may we show our Savior to the world. In Jesus' name, amen.

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