

Studies in 1 John 05 Practical Righteousness

by John W. Bramhall

The sermon emphasizes the importance of practical righteousness in the life of believers, motivated by the Father's love, the hope of future glory, and the significance of Christ's death.

Duration: 45:43

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 14:15, 1 John 2:29, 1 John 3:5-6, 1 John 3:8, 1 John 4:9

Topics: "Genuine Faith", "Christian Living"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a little girl in Sunday school who truly believed in Jesus. The speaker emphasizes the importance of having genuine faith and highlights three motives for believers: the father's love, the blessed hope of becoming like Christ, and the death of Christ. The death of Christ is described as the deepest and most powerful reminder of God's love and forgiveness. The speaker also mentions that the manifestation of Christ was to take away our sins and destroy the works of the devil. The sermon encourages believers to live a changed life and not be led astray by the actions of others.

Transcript

Shall we turn today to the third chapter of this epistle of John? Just a very brief review of what God has given to us in the precious book of this epistle, bringing before us the great and the precious subject of God the Father and His family. We have divided the whole epistle into two sections, presenting in the first two chapters God the Father with His family and that family in fellowship with Him. The second section which we commence today begins in chapter three to the end of the book and particularly touches upon God the Father and His family with its responsibility while in the world.

The Father is very concerned regarding the family while we are in this present earthly scene. One thing is very certain, we are not yet at home in the Father's house. We do thank God for that blessed hope that the Lord Jesus said, if I go away I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also.

Referring to that blessed scene, my Father's house. It will be a great joy where we shall be at home but may we take to our hearts and to our consciences the great responsibility we have while in this present world on the way home to the Father's house. As we come into the third chapter we begin to consider throughout the whole chapter what is the very truth of the closing verse of chapter two which I would like to read to you.

For the divisions of our Bible in their chapters and verses we know are not inspired and many times the divisions by chapter may not be perhaps just exactly right. For the last verse of chapter two is connected with the truth that follows. Here are the words, if ye know that he is righteous ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

And as we commence the study that follows within chapter three I would like to title it with this caption, Practical Righteousness and its Modus. Now we all know I'm sure the distinction between imputed righteousness, the righteousness of God that we have positionally, imputed to us because of our faith in the Lord Jesus and his finished work. But what John and the Holy Spirit is concerned with in the chapter before us and even the rest of the epistle is the practical righteousness, the practical living of God's children while within this world.

And it is a great joy to recognize as the chapter develops the Spirit of God lays before us definite motives to produce that righteousness, to produce that practical expression as the 29th verse of chapter two declares that every one, every child that knows him and that has been born of God practices and doeth righteousness. May I read the first eight verses of our chapter for our morning consideration? John beginning to say, behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons or the children of God. Therefore the world knoweth as not, because it knew him not.

Beloved, now are we the sons or the children of God, and 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 every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself even as he is pure. Whosoever committed, perhaps better rendered would be the word, whosoever practices sin transgresses or is lawless, which is the proper meaning of the original text, for sin is lawlessness.

Now may I qualify the reason for the change in the reading? Sin existed before the law was given. Sin was practiced before the law of Moses was ever instituted. And the proper ending in the text in the original is, sin is lawlessness, disobedience and rebellion against God and his truth and his word.

So may I read the verse again? Whosoever practices lawlessness sins, for sin is lawlessness, and ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not. Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

Little children, and here John is writing and speaking to the whole family, children, let no man deceive you. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth, and again, he that practices sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Now we have before us in the section that we have read, three impelling motives to imply the necessity of a practical life of righteousness. To the glory and to the honor of our Father.

And it is lesser to realize that God not only expects this, but he encourages it by stating the motive that should motivate our heart and our motive that God by the Spirit gives through his servant John is this. It is the motive of the Father's love for us. The Father's love.

And what a love that is, please note the carefully. Behold that we should be called the children of God. Now may we make it very clear? It is not the love of God, though that be included, but it is particularly the Father's who has made us his children.

God could have loved us without making us his children, if he so desired. If we who are believers in the Lord Jesus in this present age, value with proper appreciation the relationship of God's children to him in this age of grace. As we stated at the commencement of our Bible study in this epistle, you do not have in the Old Testament dispensations the relationship of intimacy, where the saints survive in the intimacy of relationship that belongs to us.

And what John is emphasizing is not merely the love of God, but the love of that blessed one in the relationship he is ours. And John is presenting first of all the Father for each one of us to do righteous, do the things that are pleasing in his sight. John is very much concerned, as we've already seen, as we may yet see again, that sin should not be dominant in the life of God's children.

Oh may I repeat, John deals with the problem of sin in the life of the children of God very clearly. That we should indeed, as we find in chapter 2 and verse 1, my little children, these things write unto you that you sin not. He has made me his child.

As you read in the very following, near to him, relationship is unintelligent, because it knew him not. That relationship that we have with the Father is completely unintelligible. To the world, the world is ignorant of Christ.

The world is ignorant of the believer. And thus we may recognize, and we should recognize, in that ignorance, the world is ignorant of Christ. It knows him not.

But we have been brought, and may I repeat it again, to the Father, as the Lord Jesus say in John 16, 26, because he hath believed that I came as a believer. You and I have known the Father. Would to God we had joined the truth of him.

May I quote the lovely words of a hymn we all know well, I'm sure, most of us at least. So near, so very near to God, that nearer I cannot be. For in that I am as near as he.

So dear, so very dear to God, dearer I cannot be. The love with which he loves me, such is his love to me. And may I just make the application as John has given us the heading of the chapter at the end of verse 29 in chapter 2. If you know that he is righteous, whether you refer to God or Christ matters not.

It's true of them both. Ye know that every one is born of him. That we are his children is manifested and the deeds of our life.

And thus we may realize one great motive is this. When I face the issue and the love of the Father should be a great restraint, as well as an in respect, my obedience to the Father in this world of sin. But then there's another motive.

Oh thank God for the scriptures that give us the motive that we can see within our souls and make real in our life. It is the blessed hope. Beloved.

And oh the joy that John uses such a word. Beloved. That blessed name of intimacy that is ours.

Beloved. Are we the sons or the children of God? We shall be like him. For we shall see him as he is.

There's not only the Father's love to be the impelling motive that my life may be a life. But there's a future prospect. Not what I am now.

What I shall be later. For what John is what I am now. We are not what we shall yet be.

Which in the future is the prospect for every child of God. We know John's saying in this second verse. We do not at the moment as you know him saying.

But please may I re-emphasize once more before passing. He reminds us what we are. Are we the children of God? For we are in relationship to him even now.

His dear children. You know John uses the expression when he addresses. I believe in the original text.

When he expresses and addresses the family as a whole. He uses dear children. Or my beloved.

He commences it with that same expression. Beloved. It carries my mind back many years ago.

To a beloved brother that lived in the area of New York City. Some of you may have known him in the past. And I ever remember.

Never will I forget that every time he he called them to know the intimacy of it in its meaning. As you think of Ephesians chapter one. When Paul declared we are accepted in the beloved.

In whom we have redemption through his love the forgiveness of sins. According to his grace. The spirit of God uses that expression of affection.

Beloved. Beloved. When he wrote to the believers in Rome.

Beloved. And how precious to recognize. The intimacy of its expression.

The very name that the father calls his son. This is my beloved. May I suggest for my own heart as well as yours.

Wouldn't it be wonderful. That if in our daily testimony God could say my beloved child. Being able.

To thus comment. On the conduct and the character of his children here below. Now.

We're his beloved children. And what we are going to be. We have not yet been able and we cannot be able yet to comprehend.

It does not yet appear what we. The future. And beloved it's a wonderful thing to set your heart.

We shall be. When he comes. That precious old hymn.

That we often sing. Then I shall be what I should be. Then I would be.

Then we shall be where we would be. We shall be our own. According to me.

The spirit of God sets before me with this blessed hope. What I shall be when he comes. And it will be as the apostle writes.

We know that when. He shall appear. The time of it.

When I shall be. As in that future day of glory. The full prospect of my redemptive glory will be manifest.

May I point out very carefully. There is no question of doubt. There are two suggestions that we can see in the apostles were.

The coming of the Lord. And second the coming of the Lord with us. He's coming.

He's coming with us. And remember Paul. Meaning if public manifestation in power and glory.

Then shall ye also appear. With it. So that we can include both.

The coming of. Together with the coming of. We shall thus be like him.

For there is no question. That in that moment. In that twinkling of an eye.

When the dead in Christ. Then. We shall be.

Like. Him. For we shall see him as he is.

I think of the lovely words of J. N. Darby in that precious old hymn. And is it so that I shall be like. Is this the grace which he for me has won.

In glory. To his own. What a joy to know.

We. Shall. Be.

Like. Him. Please may I state.

This is the blessed hope. That we shall see him. That we shall be with him.

We shall be like. Him. My beloved believer may I try to lead your mind and my own mind and heart away from the glory that will surround us.

To the glory that will be in us. We shall be like him. In all the moral perfection of his person.

When in the redemptive glory of our spirit souls and bodies. We shall thus be transformed. To be ever.

Like him in eternal perfection. For we shall see him. As not as he was.

As he is going to be yours. And he's going to be mine. Now what we shall be.

Must have and should have a present purifying effect as we well know. Be a be a purifying most. No verse three.

Every man that hath this hope. In him. Or upon him.

Purifyeth himself. Even if he is pure. What a blessed moment.

He's coming. Can I give you the story. You may have heard it.

I'm not sure if it was our brother. T. Ernest Wilson who told the story many many years ago. But I recall the story was told.

Of a man. That had to leave home for one week or a part of the week. He thought at least on business.

And on Monday morning when he left the family. He gathered the wife and the children together. And prayed with them.

Committed unto the Lord. And then he told the children. He said now daddy doesn't know when he will return.

I may be able to get home tomorrow. Or the next day. Or it may possibly be even toward the end of the week.

But he said children. I want every one of you to be down at the railway station and meet me. When the train comes in at night.

And so the children said obediently they would. And so every day. When the it came time for the evening train to come back.

They cleaned up. They washed up. They went down to the railway station and waited to see if their daddy would be coming from the train.

Monday went by. Tuesday went by. Wednesday went by.

Thursday went by. And faithfully they went to meet him. But it wasn't until the last day Friday.

They saw him come off that train. And of course naturally he greeted them lovingly. They embraced him.

And welcomed him. And then when they had welcomed each other. Daddy.

Why didn't you come earlier in the week. Let us get cleaned up every night and come down here. He looked at the youngster and he said.

I could keep you clean. That hope of seeing him at the end of the week. Oh my beloved.

That blessed hope is the purifying hope. That you and I may practice daily. What a responsibility.

But what a motive. The blessed hope he gave to me. Go with me to verse 4 and through verse 8 if you please.

And note the third motive that we have before us in the section I presented to you in this particular way. Part of it is this. The death of Christ.

For you may notice in this wonderful book. The death of Christ is an important subject. May I link with you first of all.

Just four particular scriptures. Reasons that John gives why Christ. He came in the flesh.

Go with me to chapter 1. Let me read with you verses 2 and 3. For the light was manifested. And we have seen it and bear witness. And show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested.

We have seen and heard declare we unto you. Now why? That ye also may have fellowship with us. Fellowship is with the Father.

He was manifested to reveal the Father to us. And to bring us into fellowship. Thank God that he came in that blessed human.

Blessed body of his. That he might in his manifestation incarnate. Bring us to the Father.

To be in fellowship with him. Go to chapter 3 where we have been reading. Let me read with you the fifth verse.

Ye know that he was manifested. What for? To take away our sins. Beloved let us remember.

There perhaps is nothing deeper and greater that can reach the heart and the conscience of us. Than the blessed remembrance of the death of Christ. His death to take away our sins.

What a story this is. As we realize it. But then let me point out the second thing in verse 8 of this same chapter.

The end of verse 8. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested. That he might destroy or annul the works of the devil. Of which we may speak a little bit later.

More in more detail. Manifested to destroy the works or annul, make inoperative the works of the devil. Chapter 4 if you please.

In verse 9. Just very briefly. To point out the references that John gives. Regarding the reason for the manifestation of the life of Christ.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us. Because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world through him. Manifested to reveal God's love as well as to bring to us and bestow upon us God's life.

It is a wonderful thing to realize as we ought to do. Why he came. Why he was manifested.

Let's look at the section in chapter 3 before us. Let's see the centrality of the death of Christ upon the cross. He know that he was manifested to take away our sins.

Beloved may we say. That it was sin. It was sin that made Christ suffer.

That made him die for us. And the very fact that Christ had to die and did die for our sin. Is reason enough for us to hate sin.

And to flee from it. And to practice righteousness. May I make this statement and comment that's been very precious to me.

The seriousness of sin. Oh how many times I wonder if we realize the seriousness of sin. I remember many years ago reading this very brief expression.

Concerning the seriousness of sin. Which I had value. The writer said.

There are three great oceans to explore. If one could understand and would endeavor to understand the seriousness of sin. The first great ocean he suggested was this.

The sorrow. The grief. The pain.

The trouble. Through human history. To the end of time.

If you could explore suffering in human. In the human family. Could you determine the greatness of it?
This is the ocean that sin is called.

Can you measure it? The greatness. It began with one act of disobedience. What an ocean it is coming to.

And become good to God. We realize the seriousness of sin. The second great ocean the writer suggested.

Is the death of Christ upon the cross. Who can measure? The suffering for sin. The penalty of sin.

The judgment of sin. The greatness. When he himself became the sacrifice for all sin.

God has laid on him the iniquity of us all. One is well written that lovely hymn. Mystery of mysteries of life of death.

The tree. Center of two eternities. Which look with rapt adoring eyes.

Where all his hour is. Oh my beloved. The death of Christ to take away ours.

You and I sing with joy and gratitude. My sin. Oh the bliss of this glorious song.

My sin. His name to it. He was man and in him.

His no sin. Is not that a great motive? That you and I should live for him? And righteously live in this world?
The third great ocean. If you and I could measure the ocean of suffering.

That will be the eternal portion of every soul in hell. You'd be able to measure the seriousness of sin.
Beloved I say humbly and I say advisedly to my own soul.

Let sin be a very serious matter. It necessitated the sinless one. In whom was no sin.

To be made sin. That we through him might be made the righteous of sinners. And if you look at the opening of verse four.

John is saying. It's lawlessness under Judaism. But it's lawlessness whether before Judaism.

As a believer should not be in disobedience and lawlessness. The death of Christ was to take away ours.
And there you can see the beloved in Christ.

Sin is not. Meaning he does not pleading. None is declaring him sin.

Does not habitually sin. In this aspect. If you and I value.

If you and I. We will not deliberately. We will not deliberately. Beloved.

The death of Christ to take away ours. Lawlessness and disobedience. Wound the heart.

No. To abide in him. The believer will not practice sin.

But in verse seven. You have the apostle saying. Or at the end of verse six rather.

The one that is not in him. Neither known him. Giving definite proof of not knowing him.

Little children. And again I say. It's to the whole family.

Let no man deceive you. He that doeth righteousness is righteous. Even as he is sin.

Here again. We have the practical. He doeth righteousness.

It's not what he. The reality of the profession. The one that's doing.

Gives the evidence of it. I remember a little story. It may seem trifling.

But I think what was in it. Will give the important lesson. That is suggested here.

There was a little. A little girl in the Sunday school of a certain assembly. Took the stage.

Teachers they watched her. One of them asked her brother. Saying do you think that your sister is really saved.

He thought for a moment. He said yes. He says I really think she is.

They said why. Well he says I know there's something at home. She doesn't sweep the dirt under the carpet anymore like she used to.

But you get the inference. There's a change. One old hymn writer has written those lovely words.

What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought. Since Jesus came into my heart. The change is in the life.

The change is in the knowledge. That I'm now his. And I will live for him.

And what joy. This is how we need not be led astray. When we see.

And my beloved. Let's take it to our heart. That is the testimony of my Christian life.

To the glory of God. And then in verse eight. Note that the.

The evidence of the unreality. He that practices sin. Is of the devil.

For the devil sinned from the beginning. From the beginning of our chapter. There were the children of the devil.

And beloved one can certainly recognize. It is within the children of the devil. That in life.

The unknowing of sin. In the life of the believer. He does not enter into the subject.

In detail. And in substance. But John.

Of the death of the Lord Jesus. Our sin. Make inoperative in our lives.

The works of sin. And that manifestation. As you well know from Paul.

Was the death of Christ upon the cross. By his death. His burial.

And his resurrection. With him. In his death.

In his burial. And his internewness of life. Which issues into the next life.

But here are three motives. And may we close by repeating. Now please let me repeat.

Not the thinking that we are righteous. The motive of the. May I ever do those things.

I think of the Saviour's words. Which please. And you and I have the same responsibility.

Though I'm conscious of human faith. That blessed hope. Which may even be consummated today.

Is a purifying hope. To impel me. To live for the.

And what reflection. When I meditate upon the death of Christ. May I say as the poet wrote.

Love so amazing. So divine. Demand.

Blessed Father. We thank thee for thy divine instruction. Father.

Who has made careful instruction. How the children of thy family. Should live.

We would ask thee Father to make us. Hearers of the word. But beyond that.

Doers of the word. And what we have learned today. May we prove it.

By what we do. While in this world. Representing the Father.

And the Son. We ask it with thanksgiving for thy gracious help. In our Saviour's precious name.

Amen. Thank you.

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