

The First Epistle of John

(Week 29 – 1John 3:4 – Part 1)

I. REVIEW:

A. 1John 3:1-3

1. The basis to godly behavior is understanding our current position: We are children of God!
2. Although we don't know how we shall be like in our new bodies, but we shall be like Him!
3. Those who have this hope purifies himself
 - a. The child of God does not continue to live like the world
 - i. Why? Because the love of the Father is in him/her, as a result, he/she does not love the world or the things in it (1John 2:15-17)
 - b. Even though we are in an imperfect state, the child of God grows in purity
 - i. The phrase “*purifies himself*” in 1John 3:3 is in the *present active tense*, denoting a continuous, habitual action

II. SIN AND THE DISCIPLE: Part 1

A. Parents and their new born

1. Parents of a new born child look for a resemblance (hair color, eyes, nose, mouth, fingers, toes, etc.)
 - a. Sometimes they dig through their baby pictures and compare them to the new baby.
 - b. Parents delight in seeing their imprint on their new born!
2. As the child gets older, that child starts adopting attitudes, speech patterns and behaviors influenced by its parents.
3. In 1John 3:4-10, John sends out this message:
 - a. Those born of God resemble Jesus in the way they live their lives.
 - b. Their attitude, speech patterns and behaviors are influenced by their Heavenly Father.

B. 1John 3:4 (ESV), “*Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.*”

1. **Question: The word “law” is in “lawlessness.” What “law” is in view here?**
 - a. John cannot be referring to the Law of Moses, since we are not under Law, but under grace (Romans 6:14)
 - b. The law can be referring to the specific law of Christ of loving one another (John 13:34)
 - i. John addresses the concept of love in 1John 3:10-24.
 - c. The law can be, and most likely is, referring to the generic law of Christ of “*teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you*” (Matthew 28:20 ESV)
2. In John 2:29, John describes the child of God as one who practices righteousness, but now describes the false believer (in context, the Gnostics)
 - a. Some Gnostics practiced asceticism, others practiced libertinism.
 - i. Asceticism = extreme deprivation of the flesh (celibacy, etc.)
 - ii. Libertinism = free to do as you wish (indulge the flesh)
 - b. John, who called these false teachers “the antichrist” in 1John 2:18ff, exposes them as lawless people.

3. John also points out the seriousness of sin
 - a. The practice of sin is a direct rebellion against God
 - i. It is more than just an evil act, it's a heart issue!
 1. Consider an iceberg:
 - You only see a small percent of the iceberg above the water.
 - The majority of the danger lies beneath the surface of the water.
 - A ship, like the Titanic, that comes too close to an iceberg can sink, even if the crew think they are a safe distance away from the iceberg.
 2. Sin is like an iceberg: the action is like the exposed part of the iceberg, while the greater danger lies deep within the heart.
 - b. Consider the following two passages:
 - i. Ecclesiastes 9:3 (ESV), *“This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that the same event happens to all. Also, the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead.”*
 - ii. Matthew 15:18-20 (ESV), *“But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. (19) For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. (20) These are what defile a person...”*
 - c. **Question: What took place the moment we became born of God?**
 - i. God did surgery on us!
 1. Ezek. 36:25 (ESV), *“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.”*
 - God cleans us up
 - This is done through the blood of Christ when we repent and are baptized. (cf. Rev. 1:5-6; Acts 2:38)
 2. Ezek. 36:26 (ESV), *“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”*
 - God performs a heart-transplant on us!
 - The heart of stone which is resistant, stubborn and rebellious against God gets replaced with a soft, pliable heart, useful to God's ministry.
 3. Ezek. 36:27 (ESV), *“And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”*
 - The spirit of the world is now gone, the Spirit of God now resides in us as His children!
 - Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:12 (ESV), *“Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.”*

- ii. Now that we are cleaned up and given a new heart and Spirit, we seek to please God and not the world!
- iii. For this reason, John says in 1John 3:6 (ESV), “*No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.*”
 1. On the contrary, the child of God seeks to do the will of the Father!
 2. This includes the works of service God has prepared for them to do!
 3. For example:
 - Sharing Jesus with the lost (Mark 16:15)
 - Helping disciples grow in Christ (Matt. 28:20)
 - Practicing hospitality (Romans 12:13)
 - Being salt of the earth and light in the world (Matt. 5:13-16)
 - Loving one another (John 13:34-35)
 4. Lord willing, we will discuss 1John 3:5ff in more detail next time!