

1 John 3:4-18 The Marks of a True Believer

4 Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. 5 And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. 6 Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. 8 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. 9 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. 10 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. - PRAY

There was a man who was hiking through the Amazon jungle in Brazil with a guide –

A)When he came to one of those rickety old looking Ravine footbridge spanning a canyon Ravine

B)It didn't look very sturdy but the Guide said it is sturdier than it looks I have crossed it 100's of times

C)Well the man took a deep breath and very cautiously took a few steps

D)The more steps he took the more he realized the guide was right – the bridge was plenty sturdy
1)Pretty soon he was walking confidently across that bridge even stopping in the middle to take a few pics

The Christian life – can be like that – sometimes when a person first comes to Christ –

A)There is a caution –Not sure exactly what they are getting themselves into

B)But the longer they walk with Jesus – the more confident their steps get –

C)The more they enjoy the view of life in Christ

One of the major themes of the book of 1 John is that of Assurance!

A)The aged Apostle John so wants these believers in the Church in Ephesus to know they belong to Jesus

B)We have noted that John tends to write in circles or this letter can seem a bit repetitive

C)But John is not repeating himself because he is old and can't remember what he said.

D)Nor is he repeating himself for the sake of just being repetitious

Each time that John repeats himself he is building upon an earlier idea.

A)Example: In Chapter 1 John told us that a true follower of Jesus is going to walk in the light and not in the darkness

B)Then in Chapter two – He repeats the idea about walking in the light but expands on it – defines it

C)Those who walk in the light keep the Lord's commandments –

1)and primarily the commandment to walk in Love

D)Their lives will be marked by Love and not hate.

Here in Ch 3 he is going to build on that idea again.

A)The title of the message today is The Marks of a True Believer

B)Three main points from this section

#1 A True believer practices righteousness rather than lawlessness V.4-10

#2 A True believer Loves others V.11-18

C)We will look at those first two today

D)Next week - #3 A True believer Has Confidence in Christ V.19-24

#1 A True believer practices righteousness rather than lawlessness V.4-10

4 Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

When my son Aaron was in grade School he was sort of a class clown –

A)So he would get in trouble in school for being silly.

B)I was having a discussion one day about how there are times to be silly times not to be /

1)class at school is not the time to be silly

C) If you are silly in class/ you will find yourself getting in trouble!

D) Too which my 8 year old son responded "Dad everyone gets in trouble sometimes because we're all sinners!"

Now it is true: We are all sinners –

A) But the apostle John is wanting us to know that there is a difference between sinning –

B) Blowing it sometimes - And habitually sinning or practicing sin.

C) The Greek word translated "commits" is in the present perfect tense that speaks of continual action.

D) Thus, this verse does not refer to one who falters in sin, struggles with sin,
1) or falls because of a struggle with a certain sin.

E) It refers to one who blatantly, habitually, and continually practices sin.

Those who are habitually sinning they are habitually committing Lawlessness

A) Lawlessness is the sin of DEFIANCE – REBELLION

B) Those who are living habitually in Sin – blatantly doing what they know God is against –
1) are being Rebellious - Sin of Lawlessness

C) John wants us to understand that as people whose lives have been touched by Jesus
1) We have a new Relationship with Sin

D) V.5 5 And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.

Jesus was manifested – he came into this world – to take away our sins - The cross – Communion

A) Understand Jesus Took away the Penalty of Sin – He Took our Punishment

B) Took away the presence of Sin – Sin forgiven and forgotten –
1) Amanda and the calculator – Clear

C) Seen already in 1 John 1:9 – If we confess our sin cleanse us from all unrighteousness

1) Confess = say the same as – Own it – Repent – turn from it

D) Sin is forgiven and forgotten -

So Jesus takes away the Penalty of Sin – the Presence....

A) Take away the Power of Sin – No longer have to live in bondage to our lust.

B) Complete Freedom in Christ –

C) The Result: 6 Whoever abides in Him does not sin. {idea is Practice sin – abides in sin –

D) makes no sense – if we are abiding in Jesus – the two don't go together

Now there are those who like to use v. 6 to say that they have reached a state of sinless perfection –

A) Meaning they never sin anymore.

CHS – pitcher of water – "I thought so"

B) V.6 is not suggesting that we can one day reach a place of sinless perfection as followers of Jesus

C) As long as we are in these bodies living in this world – we will sin –

1) I sin in some way every day. Temper – wrong thoughts -

D) Doing the right thing – wrong motives – Always wrestling with my flesh- NORMAL

E) But the true follower of Jesus doesn't sin habitually

1) Doesn't live in a continual state of rebellion – SINNING IN THE SAME AREAS/WAYS

So those who are abiding in Jesus – walking with Jesus don't practice sin

A) Here is the flipside Whoever sins {practices sin - lives in it habitually has neither seen Him nor known Him.

B) This was important for these Christians to hear –
1) because remember there were false teachers – Gnostics crept into the church

C) They were saying – because the real you is Spiritual –

1)the body is physical it really doesn't matter how you live – behave

D)John is illustrating a very important truth – True Belief is going to affect how you Behave.

1)Belief and Behavior go hand in hand.

E)In the same way you know a tree by the fruit it produces –

1)you will know a true Follower of Jesus by their consistent behavior/ fruit from their lives

7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. – Practices = walks in

What does it mean to Practice Righteousness? Or Walk in Righteousness?

A) There is a moral side to this- Walking in the Light – doing the right things.

B)There is also a social side to this- Walking in Love – treating others rightly.

C)The Hebrew word for righteousness is Tzedakah it is translated "charity"

1)because the concept of righteousness in Judaism is deeply connected to acting justly/ helping those in need.

The Greek word righteousness used here is dikaiosyne - dik-ah-yos-oo'-nay

A)It ALSO speaks of not just doing the right things – but it is acting rightly toward others. –

B)Treating others with Kindness/ tending to the needs of others

C)Jesus gave the ultimate display of righteousness by coming to our rescue –

1)Lost- doomed- damned because of sin

D)He came to our RESCUE

John is saying: Those who are really Children of God are going to walk in Righteousness like Jesus

A)And the greatest display of that is going to be in how they love others & care for those in need.

B)Important that we catch this: Because sometimes we Christians can focus only on the moral side of righteousness –

C)We sum up the Christian life to a series of DO'S AND DON'TS

We are walking in righteousness if we are checking all the boxes

A)Not doing the “sinful” things – we are not like those heathen people around us

B)But we are missing what it means to show the love of Jesus to others.

C)That is what the Pharisees did – they were morally righteousness – holier than though –

1)Better than everyone else – Completely unloving Super judgmental of everyone/ Jesus condemned them

D)And yet Jesus was called the friend of sinners! – Cared for people had compassion on people.

1)Sinners enjoyed being around him

E)Unfortunately a Lot of followers of Jesus come off more like the Pharisees- than like Jesus

This was something that I didn't do well when I was in High School

A)I was a Christian – I went to public School – my whole mentality was one of Survival –

B)I isolated myself from unsaved classmates- Stuck close to my Christian friends –

C)my whole mentality was to try and make it through High School without blowing

1)Without Losing my virginity or getting sucked into the party scene

D)But in doing so I lost all opportunity to be a witness to my unsaved classmates

That mentality followed me into College – although I was trying to figure out how to navigate it –

A)I wanted to be a witness – I wanted to make an impact –

B)I wanted to Impact for Jesus people that I worked with and went to school with

C)Turning point happened when I was working at the Sheridan Hotel in New Port Beach –

1)room Service – BlakeNever spoke to me again – I am a Christian ...heathen

D)I need to find a better way – A couple of weeks later – Lakers

#1 A True believer practices righteousness rather than lawlessness V.4-10

A)Walking in Righteousness is both moral and social righteousness

B)The next thing John wants us to understand is this - Behavior is a sign of who you belong to V.8-10

8 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.

Lawlessness or Rebellion originated with Satan – That is his MO

A)Rebel against God –

B)He wants to entice/ seduce others into doing that – His MO –

1)His mode of operation is to Kill Rob and Destroy

C)Jesus came to Destroy the Works of the Devil – Life and that more abundantly – New way to live

1)Who you belong to is evidenced in your behavior V.9

9 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. 10 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.

To practice righteousness rather than practicing sin is not just about choices – it is about Birth –

A)It is a matter of parentage or heritage

B)There is a resemblance between children and their parents in earthly families. -

C)Kids have the physical traits of their parents – Amanda my shaped eyes

1)Amy and Aaron – Moms curly hair

D)Audrey a little Destiny – Pic

E)But it is not just Physical traits – personality traits – temperament – their nature

If you have been born again – You have the nature of God placed into you – this is what John means in

A)Greek Scholar K Wuest points out that the word born is perfect participle in the Grk –

B)speaking of a past completed act of regeneration

C)That work of Regeneration includes the impartation of a Divine nature

D)That is what is meant by the phrase V.9 his seed remains in him

E))His seed is a reference to the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our lives –

1)We receive the nature of Christ

F)In Christ – we are a new Creation

See the indwelling of the Holy Spirit – makes it impossible for a true believer to live in an ongoing state of Rebellion.

A)Christian's can and do rebel – but – a true follower of Jesus isn't going to stay in that place.

B)The Holy Spirit in us – makes us miserable in our sin!

C)Those who have been born of God – who's seed remains in them will walk in righteousness

D)Walk in Love – God's nature is love – Fruit of the H.S. is love

E)The seed is going to produce fruit after its kind – Apple seeds – Apples

1)Orange – Oranges – HS – Loving!

Leads us to consider point #2

A)#2 A True Believer Loves Others V.11-18

◆ Love is the Defining Mark of a Christian V.11

11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,

B)On the night before the Cross

³⁴A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love

one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34,35

C) Consider the Negative example of Cain V.11b -we should love one another, 12 not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous. 13 Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. 14 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. 15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 16 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.

Cain and Abel were blood brothers – But Cain ended up hating his brother and Killing his brother.
A) But Cain’s problem was not so much with Abel as it was with God.

B) See God prescribed a way that he was to be worshipped -
1) Modeled it in the garden after the fall – Implied

C) Adam and Eve – Naked – covered with skins –
1) Implied there was a Sacrifice

D) Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins

God was making a precedent – giving a picture that pointed to Jesus –
A) the blood of an innocent would be shed for the sinner – the guilty.

B) Faith comes by hearing Word of God

C) By Faith Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice – Cain’s was unacceptable

D) I believe God communicated – this is how he was to be worshipped - Abel understood this –
1) By faith Followed it – offered a lamb

Now Cain was also a worshipper – A church goer – But his mentality said I will do it my way.
A) Cain was a farmer – I will approach God on my terms – I will bring him the works of my hands

B) Cain is the picture of every person who thinks that they can be saved by their own works

C) Look what I have done for you God!
1) Cain’s sacrifice was rejected – Abel’s accepted –

God is seeking those who will worship him in Spirit – Sincerity – truth – the way he prescribed.

A) Come through Jesus – Not our works – not our boasting

B) Now when Cain’s sacrifice was rejected he got mad at God and Jealous of his brother – hated him

C) God saw the wickedness in Cain’s heart – Sin lies at the door – don’t give into it Cain – turn from it
1) 2nd chance – make this right

Cain once again rebels against God and kills his brother!

A) John is contrasting Cain with Christ –

B) Cain walked in Hatred – True believers walk in Love

C) Well I have never killed someone
1) What about with Your words ?

D) Hatred in heart is the same as murder

E) A person who is living with hatred in their heart is proving – they are not in fellowship with God

1) Hatred is of the Devil

Contrast Cain with Christ Jesus

16 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. 17 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? 18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

Here John tells us 3 important truths about Love
1ST True love is Sacrificial

A) Jesus loved us by laying down his life for us

B) We love each other by being willing to lay down our lives for each other

C) **True Love Sacrifices** – Husband love your wife as Christ.....gave himself –

1)Not just being willing to take a bullet – easy part

D)Harder part – is daily laying aside our desires to care for the needs of our wife -her needs above my own

E)Wake up – NOT -what does Denise want for Breakfast – Is she going to make me breakfast

1)Living Sacrificially for our families -

Sacrificial love Costs

A)Time: Young mother w/ 2 kids was at a Women's bible study - shared w/ her group -the trouble she had finding time for devotions

B)Now this Group - could have judged her & maybe some did / thinking "We can do it why can't she"

C)But 2 women showed up at her house - one day the following week / - go to bedroom - pray read –

1)we will take care of kids & house

They did this for about 1 hour for 7 straight days –

A)That allowed the young mom to set up a pattern/ develop the discipline of getting in the Word

B)Helped her rekindle that spark of sitting at the feet of Jesus

C)After those 7 days she was able to do it on her own!

D)That is the kind of thing John means - love in action! To love this way will cost you!

Sacrificial love might cost you money

A)A 9th grade boy named Billy bought roses for his crush – Ruth – card attached to the Roses said – with all my love and most of my allowance

B)Time, Money, even inconvenience – Vulnerable

C)So 1st True love is Sacrificial

2nd True love is not indifferent V.17 – can't see a brother in need and ignore it or shuts up his heart from him- CSB withholds compassion

A)True love can't ignore the needs of a brother or sister.

B)To have compassion means to get in their skin and feel what they are feeling

C)Jesus saw the multitudes – Compassion – Sheep without a shepherd

D)Starts with Compassion – How can I help.

1)Seeks to walk in Wisdom between helping vs enabling

Finally the 3rd thing John tells us about True Love is V.18 – True love is more than words

A)It doesn't take much to tell someone – I love you!

B)But the saying is true – Actions speak louder than words

C)Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

D)Josiah – Loves to tell us he loves us – Very Affectionate – Learning True love is Demonstrative

E)Seen in our actions – True followers of Jesus – Loving – seen in the way they treat others