

5. The children of God and sins

1/28/2007

Can you imagine right after the 9/11 disaster, the Americans accept a sincere apology from Osama Bin Laden and allow him to come into our country and give him a house to live next to our homes without any fear of retaliation? "That is not possible," we would say. Yes, he ordered to kill 3000 innocent non-combatants in a matter of two hours. We want some blood of theirs. That would be our revengeful mindset.

However, it is far worse when it came to our Lord Jesus Christ. While we were still His enemies, He came earth to be the perfect sacrifice for our sins, so that we may go into heaven and live there with Him eternally without any fear of retaliation.

Some of us may say, "If I was living in the days of Jesus, I wouldn't be one of those Pharisees or Romans soldiers who killed Him." You might be absolutely right. But I beg you the difference. We were still born with sinful nature. Being a sinner means an enemy of God. If any of us took the place of Adam and Eve, we would have done exactly the same thing as they did – sin against God.

From the status of the enemy of God to the children of God, only God can change us like that through His grace, mercy and love in Jesus Christ. But the enemy of God, satan doesn't want us to be the children of God, nor he wants us to be remain grateful.

This morning apostle John is pointing out to us that we cannot stay in sinful life as born-again Christians.

A. GOD'S LOVE FOR HIS CHILDREN

1 John 3:1-3 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

It is a great benefit to the Christian to take a good, intense look at the love of God bestowed on us.

'Bestowed on us' speaks of many things. First, it speaks of the measure of God's love to us. It could more literally be translated 'lavished on us'. Second, it speaks of the manner of God's giving of love. 'Bestowed' has the idea of a one-sided giving.

What is it that makes us slow to believe the love of God? Sometimes it is our pride, which we demand to prove ourselves worthy of the love of God before we will receive it. Sometimes it is our unbelief, which we cannot trust the love of God when we sees the hurt and pain of life. And sometimes it just takes time for a person to come to a fuller understanding of the greatness of God's love.

The greatness of this love is that we are called children of God. So who calls us the children of God?

- The Father does.
2 Corinthians 6:18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty."
- The Son does.
Hebrews 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,
- The Spirit does.
Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God

One might have to wonder why God would give us this seemed unnecessary blessing after He gives salvation to those who put their trust in Him. It is His demonstration of true and deep unending love for us.

We would make a tremendous error when we think of redemption as merely a restoration of what was lost by Adam and Eve in Paradise. We are granted more in Jesus than they've ever had.

It is important to understand what it means to be the children of God, and that everyone is not a child of God in the sense apostle John meant it here. God's love is expressed to all human beings in the giving of Jesus for the sins of the world, but this does not make all of humanity the children of God. Here he speaks of those who have received the love of Jesus in a life of fellowship and trust with Him.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

In v2 it says, "*But we know that when He is revealed*", it is either by His coming for us in the time of Rapture or our coming to Him through our death, we shall be like Him. This does not mean that we cease to be ourselves. We will still be ourselves, but our character and nature will be perfected into the image of Jesus' perfection. We will not be "clones" of Jesus in heaven.

The Christian should long to be like Jesus, yet remember that God will never force a person to be like Jesus if they don't want to. And that is what hell is for: people who don't want to be like Jesus. The sobering and eternal truth is that what we choose about Jesus now will effect our eternal destination permanently.

Again in v2 it says, "*we shall see Him as He is,*" we will get to see our Lord and Savior Jesus in His unhindered and unrestricted presence. According to apostle Paul we see everything in spiritual realm as if we are looking at a fuzzy ancient bronze mirror according to 1 Corinthians 13:12. But when the perfection comes it will be different. That perfection only exists in heaven and on the earth after the second coming of Jesus Christ, not the present time.

1 Corinthians 13:8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

Just a side note since these verses were mentioned. There are some denominations that believe speaking in tongues, prophecy and healings were stopped in the first century ever since the Bible was completed. They believe that having the Bible is perfection that mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13:9. I do agree with them regarding the

Word of God is perfect in every fact and facet. But for the rest, there is nothing perfect in this world. So these spiritual gifts are still in motion. A funny thing about their argument is that the rest of spiritual gifts, such as gift of administration, gift of teaching and others are still existing.

B. THE NATURE OF SIN

1 John 3:4-5 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.

We often fail in the battle against sin because we won't call it for what it is: lawlessness, an offense against the Great Law Maker, God. The first step towards holy living is to recognize the true nature and wickedness of sin.

We should call our sins sins, not sugar coat it. We should also despise our own sins as our Lord does.

V5 shows us the work of Jesus Christ in our lives. We cannot take away the penalty of our own sin. We must instead receive the work of Jesus in taking away our sin. When we respond to His work that removes the work, power and presence of sin from us, we receive the eternal life in Christ and become the children of God.

C. SIN OR GOD

1 John 3:6 Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

At first glance, this verse is very disturbing to any of us. Does this mean that we have to live a perfect life in order to know God? If so, none of us can make it.

It is very important to understand what the Bible means – and what it does not mean – when it says, “*does not sin*”. According to the Greek verb tense John uses, “*does not sin*” means “*does not live a life style of habitual sin*”.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

From this verse, again the Greek grammar indicates John is speaking about occasional acts of sin. John is not teaching here the possibility of sinless perfection in 1 John 3:6.

NIV – New International Version renders much better and more accurate for this verse.

1 John 3:6 No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. (NIV)

A life style of habitual sin is inconsistent with a life of abiding in Jesus Christ. A true Christian may struggle with occasional sins, but he or she doesn't want to continue their lives with sins, because they love their Savior Jesus.

Allow me to make an illustration here. Can you imagine what would happen if a bridegroom who just married about an hour ago starts to flirt with the female wedding guests? The bride's family would take that boy out to the woodshed and do some serious laying hands on him repeatedly. If I were the one who officiated the wedding, I would open the woodshed door for them.

It is the same for us. We are the church, the bride of our Savior Jesus Christ. We are no longer available for anyone else except our Lord Jesus.

When a person comes to Jesus, their sins are forgiven and God's grace is extended to them, they are radically changed – the old man is dead, and the new man lives. So it is utterly incompatible for a new creation in Christ to be comfortable in habitual sin.

The question is not "Do we sin or not?" We all sin. The question is, "How do we react when we sin? Do we give into the pattern of sin, and let it dominate our lifestyle? Or do we humbly confess our sin, and do battle against it with the power Jesus can give?"

This is why it is so grieving to see Christians make excuses for their sin, and not humbly and honestly confess them. Unless the sin is dealt with squarely, it will contribute to a pattern of sin that may soon become their lifestyle – perhaps a secret lifestyle that will be blown up eventually in the most unfortunate time by God.

We can never wink at sin's presence in our lives or excuse it by saying, "Everybody is doing it. Jesus understands." No, He doesn't. This completely goes against everything we are in Jesus, and the work He has done in our life.

To live a lifestyle of habitual sin is to demonstrate that you have to be a person who pretends to be a born-again Christian. A person truly committed to Jesus will be convicted by the Holy Spirit and would ask God to forgive him and get back with Jesus.

D. THE ROOT OF SIN AND THE ROOT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

1 John 3:7-9 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.

Apostle John does not allow us to separate the righteousness in faith from the righteousness in life. If we are made righteous by our faith in Jesus Christ, it will be seen by our righteous lives.

People who are settled in habitual sin are not the children of God – they are of the devil according to what we just have learned.

The difference is that a true Christian knows God. A counterfeit Christian may talk about God and get involved in "religious activities," but he does not really know God.

Jesus came to put a stop to all the destruction by overcoming the devil completely by His life, His suffering, His death and His resurrection. Jesus wants to destroy the works of the devil, not to neutralize them, or not to limit them.

Many people are unnecessarily afraid of the devil, fearing what he could do against them. If they only knew that as we walk in Jesus, the devil is afraid of us because of Jesus in our lives and the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

E. CHALLENGES

1) Do you have a habitual secret sin? Remember, your secret sin on earth is an open scandal in heaven. Before it gets announced from the rooftop, why don't you come to the loving God and make it right with Him through your earnest confession?

2) If you are a born-again Christian, don't let Satan deceive you that God doesn't love you or forgive your sins. He loves you and forgives your sins and cleanses you and makes you whole. On top of it, He calls you His own. You are a child of Almighty God.