

Book of 1 John Series
Message 4
February 25, 2024

Opening Prayer

We started the book with understanding that Jesus is real and He continues to impact us daily not just during His time as deity in flesh
We talked about light and the power of light to drive out darkness and that mankind often prefers darkness and hiding our deeds to being exposed to light.
Last week we talked about the blood; both the blood of animals and the blood of Jesus that purifies us from all sin.
These are all things that God does for us.

Today we look at our response and responsibility in the “human-divine cooperation”
Sort of: Get to’s and Got to’s

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

We have in these 3 verses **If-Than** statements

If we claim to be without sin	Than we deceive ourselves
If we confess	Than He will forgive and purify
If we claim no sin	Than God is a liar and has no place in us

We have to go back to who John is addressing here to get this part correct.
The Bible will not say something to us that it was not saying to the original audience.

Remember what we talked about with what Gnostics believed:

Dualism: Gnostics believed that the world was divided into the physical and spiritual realms. The created, material world (matter) is evil, and therefore in opposition to the world of the spirit, and that only the spirit is good.
The fleshly manifestation of this was either asceticism or debauchery

God: Gnostic writings often describe God as incomprehensible and unknowable. This idea conflicts with Christianity's concept of a personal God who desires a relationship with human beings. Gnostics also separate the inferior god of creation from the superior god of redemption.

Salvation: Gnosticism claims hidden knowledge as the basis for salvation. Adherents believed that secret revelation frees the "divine spark" within humans, allowing the human soul to return to the divine realm of light in which it belongs.

Gnostics, thus, divided Christians into two categories with one group being carnal (inferior) and the other being spiritual (superior). Only the superior, divinely enlightened persons could comprehend the secret teachings and obtain true salvation.

Commentary: They probably did not claim that they had never committed wrongful acts, but they denied that the sin principle had lasting power over them or even had a presence in them, at least those who had claimed to have superior spiritual enlightenment.

Some argued that sin was a matter of flesh and had nothing to do with the spirit, or that since they possessed the spirit, they were beyond the categories of good and evil and therefore moral principles no longer applied to them.

That expression, to "have sin," is an unusual one, which is probably why the translators tried to improve it a bit. John is the only biblical writer to use that exact expression. He's describing sin as a *condition* rather than an *act*. To say that we "have sin" is to say that we have a moral problem, an underlying principle at work in our beings, a disposition toward disobedience. It's not just that we do wrong things; it's that there's something wrong with us, in us.

The reality is we are sinners by *nature* and by *choice*. That's how theologians put it. In other words, we have a disposition toward sin, and we commit sins. John is not the only biblical writer to make the point.

After committing adultery and murder, David prays, says, "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" ([Psalm 51:3-5](#)). He confesses both his sinful actions and his sinful sin nature.

As important and helpful as it is to confess to other human beings, ultimately each of us must confess our sins to God. He is the primary one we have offended, and He is the only one who can do something about it.

In fact, John says that if we confess our sins, God will do two things.

First, he will forgive us: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins" To forgive someone is to release them from their debt and obligation. When someone forgives a loan, it means you no longer need to make payments on that loan. When God forgives you for your sin, it means you no longer need to pay for that sin. You don't need to punish yourself. You don't need to do penance. Jesus took care of it (get to's)

The second thing God will do when we confess our sin is cleanse us: "...and to purify us from all unrighteousness." That word "purify" could just as easily be translated, "cleanse." To purify something is to remove what doesn't belong there. To cleanse something is to get rid of the dirt.

Like a shirt being laundered – white turtleneck and paper route. **It's ok mom you can get it out.** It was both true and presumptuous!!

Of course, there are no secrets from God. He knows it all. He sees it all. He feels it all. But He's willing and able not only to *forgive* us for what we've done, but to *cleanse* us from it. "Sin had left a crimson stain," the old hymn says, "he washed it white as snow." Forgiveness releases us from guilt. Cleansing removes our shame. Forgiveness takes care of our past. Cleansing makes possible our future. And all of this is possible not because God is a softie who's willing to look the other way when we mess up, but because he is faithful and just.

God can forgive our sin because Jesus paid for it by his death on the cross. God can cleanse our sin, because the blood of Jesus washes it away—no matter how deep the stain.

So John is addressing this false belief by saying that Sin is real and it is in all of us. You will never be too smart for sin or too enlightened for sin, it is a human condition that was passed down to us from Adam in the garden.

The truth is that whenever the principle of sin is denied as an ongoing reality, there follows a denial of responsibility for individual actions. Or conversely when we acknowledge sin the responsibility for our actions increases.

We live in a sinful and broken world and are in ourselves sinful and broken and because of this we need a savior.

Have you ever felt like you did not fit in this world?
That is good, the world is broken

Some years ago a Harvard psychiatrist wrote a provocative book entitled *Whatever Became of Sin?* In it he expressed his fear that "sin" was disappearing from our moral vocabulary—not just the word, but the very concept of a universal standard of wrongdoing.

He bemoaned the declining sense of morality in our culture and people's reluctance to take responsibility for their behavior. He was concerned for the impact it might have on our society and on people's physical and emotional well-being. He wrote that book in 1973, and I think we'd all agree that his fears have become a reality.

You don't hear the word "sin" much these days. We're more comfortable with words like "dysfunction," "disease," "mistakes," even "failures." In fact, a few years ago, the Oxford Junior Dictionary actually removed the word "sin" from its contents. They explained that it had fallen into disuse and was no longer relevant to younger generations.

Our discomfort has even found its way into the church. Years ago, a popular TV preacher was being interviewed by Larry King. King asked him about the word "sinner." The preacher replied, "I don't use it. I never thought about it, I guess. Most people know when they're doing wrong. When I get them to church, I want to tell them they can change."

To be fair, I can appreciate that preacher's desire to get beyond the legalism and judgmentalism that's often associated with Christianity. Sometimes we choose to use words that don't carry as much baggage as the word "sin." But I think we'd all agree that when the church abandons the notion of "sin," something has gone wrong with our message. It is incomplete.

Remember, last week we talked about the consistency of the Bible.
Look how wonderfully I John 1:7-10 and Romans 3:23-25 and 10:9-10 align.

John did not have the book of Romans, like we do, to corroborate this claim.

Romans ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement,^[1] through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.

Romans 10:9-10 That if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

¹ John 1:7 but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all^[b] sin.⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

2 different authors stating the same theology about sin's presence and how God made a way.

Without the acknowledgement that all have sinned, there can't be a whosoever gospel.

¹⁰ If we claim that we have not sinned, we make God out to be a liar.

Commentary: "Whatever is true about the sin principle in others, we, as Gnostic believers, have transcended it all. We do not sin! We have not sinned! Sin has no foothold in us." Some may have claimed that through their "knowledge" derived from the Christian proclamation they were removed from the possibility of sin. Others may have boasted that they had entered a sinless state through "knowledge" before the Gospel had even come to them.

It makes a mockery of the Gospel. It states that the reason God acted in grace and mercy toward us for the sake of our sins is false, that God first deceived us about ourselves and then become himself the Deceiver

We say to God, "YOU ARE NOT NECESSARY!"
So, we circle back to enlightenment.
Claiming that we are smarter than God
Humanism – we don't need a savior – we can save ourselves.

The contrast between verses 9 and 10 sets up an age old (even eternal) struggle: What God has done and our response to it.

Hubris vs. Humble

Hubris – arrogance and pride; all things God hates.

The spiritual descent of Lucifer into Satan, one of the most famous examples of hubris.

Septuagint, the "hubris is overweening pride or arrogance, often resulting in fatal retribution"

An extreme form of arrogance, **often in the face of facts.**

Hubris is a Greek concept of exaggerated pride or self-confidence that can provoke the wrath of the gods. It comes from hýbris, which means arrogance, abuse, or violence.

Humility is the ability to view yourself accurately as an individual with talents as well as flaws while being void of arrogance and low self-esteem.

Humility is not always acknowledged as a desirable trait to possess, but it is in fact a remarkable character strength.

Humility is a **modest or low view of one's own importance.**

The quality of not being proud because you are aware of your bad qualities.

Our vertical response: Gratitude for all that God has done thru Jesus and the blood

Our horizontal response: Understand that we are both sinful (our being born into sin) and

we sin (move away from the mark) confess these and accept God's provision for it with humility.

Closing Prayer

Questions:

Do we understand that our identity is not defined by our worst sin, neither is it defined by our best attempt to be holy?

Have I ever thought that I didn't need God? I can make my own way to heaven.

Share a time when either pride cost you something or humility opened an opportunity.