

Wednesday Night Yard Teaching Guide: 1 John 3:4–10

[4] Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. [5] You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. [6] No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. [7] Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. [8] Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. [9] No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. [10] By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

Main Idea

The Christian life is lived between two advents – the first, when Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, and the second, when Jesus will come again.

Outline

- I. Discern, and do not be deceived!
 - A. Remain in the truth about Jesus Christ (1 John 2:19, 29; 3:7, 10)
 - B. The works of those who oppose truth mark them off from God's church: you know a tree by its fruits, and fruits are defined as "good" or "evil" according to the law of God (1 John 3:4)
 - C. This discernment is also vital for us, given that so many claim to be teachers of truth in our age. We must attend to God's own wisdom in order to tell the difference between truth and falsehood.
- II. The "root-fruit principle:" what you do comes from who you are (see 1 John 3:6, 8-9)
 - A. Apart from Christ, we are children of the devil, and therefore we do the works of the devil: lying, killing, destroying, hating God (see John 8).
 - B. In Christ, we have been born again from above by God: we love God, love his ways, and want to practice his ways. The new birth changes who we are such that we do the works of God.
 - C. Naturally, we are like our parents in physical appearance and in mannerisms and values. Spiritually, we are made like our Father who is in heaven.
 - D. The new birth is a gift which has its source in Christ's work on the cross (1 John 3:5, 8). We celebrate Christmas because God himself took on flesh to destroy the works of the devil.
- III. The Christian life is lived between two "advents."
 - A. "Advent" means "arrival," "appearance." Jesus appeared once 2,000 years ago to accomplish redemption, but during Advent we also look forward to Jesus' second appearance, when he

- will consummate redemption, and when we “shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).
- B. The Christian life is living between two advents – Christ’s first and second.
 - C. What do we do in the in-between, in anticipation of the second advent? We abide in Christ (1 John 2:28).
 - D. Challenge: during the next few weeks, remember the significance of this season between the first and second advent.
 - 1. Remember that because of the first you are a child of God.
 - 2. Remember that the second is coming soon.
 - 3. Remember that when the second advent comes, you will be like Christ, morally perfected, healed, in a resurrection body.
 - 4. Turn your attention to each of these two appearances. Pray to God about these appearances. Ask your parents about them. Talk to your friends about them.
 - E. “For they themselves report...how you turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come” (1 Thess 1:9-10).

Discussion Questions

1. How do we discern the difference between teachers of truth and teachers of falsehood? Where in your own life do you need to exercise discernment regarding your teachers?
2. What serves as the final arbiter of truth for Christians? What is our measure for truth and falsehood?
3. Whose children are we apart from Christ? Whose children are we in Christ? How did we become God’s children?
4. What does this mean for how we relate to God and our neighbors? How should this news affect us? What does this teach us about God?
5. What does “advent” mean? Why do we celebrate Jesus’ first advent? What can we expect at his second?
6. What do we do in between Christ’s first and second advent?
7. What was my challenge to you during advent and the Christmas season? How can you spend time meditating on Christ’s first and second advent? If you’ve chosen to practice this, how has this practice changed you?