

Last time we ended with vs. 3...

1 John 3:3 (NKJV)

³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

- Speaking of the hope of the soon return of Jesus Christ
- The expectation that Jesus can come at any moment has a purifying effect on our lives... to keep us from sin

1 John 3:4–6 (NKJV)

⁴Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. ⁵And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. ⁶Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

- David said in Psalm 19... the law of the Lord is perfect and the statutes of the Lord are right
- The prophet Micah prophesied... he has shown thee o man, what is good and what the Lord requires of thee speaking of the law
- Now it's true, we are not under the law... we are under grace... but that doesn't mean we are free to break the law
- God gave the law, the law is holy, the law is righteous and good
- It was given to man to be a tutor, to teach man of man's need for salvation
- It was intended to show man his sinfulness and the consequences for sin... which is death and man's inability to satisfy the righteous requirements of the law in his own power
- The word sin here is a noun, (hamartia) which means it's not a behavior but a way of life
- John is saying... if you continue to live in a destructive and depraved way like an unbeliever, you are living in lawlessness and you will be paid in death and decay
- Living in a state of sin (according to our sin nature) by definition is living in lawlessness
- John says the purpose of Jesus' coming was to take away our sins
- To remove our sin nature
- 1 John 1:7 John tells us the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin

- Peter says Jesus was offered as a lamb without spot or blemish (1 Peter 1:19)
- The law required that the sacrificial offering had to be without spot, meaning it could have no defect from birth and it had to be without blemish, meaning it could have no defect from a physical wound
- Jesus was born of the Spirit without sin and He lived His life without sin
- Thus, if we abide in Jesus, our sin nature has been removed
- If we continue living according to our sin nature, then we have not seen and we do not know Jesus

1 John 3:7–9 (NKJV)

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.

- Paul said in Romans 8 we are being conformed into the image of Jesus
- John says those who act like Jesus, who practice righteousness, are like Jesus... we are righteous
- Those who sin are of the devil because the nature of the devil is to break God's law
- John gives us a second purpose for Jesus' coming... to destroy the works of the devil
- The primary way Jesus destroys the works of the devil is through the new birth
- John uses the imagery of being impregnated with His "seed"
- When you are born again, you are born into a new family, you have new spiritual DNA

1 John 3:10–12 (NKJV)

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. ¹¹ For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that 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.

- John uses Cain as an example of a child of the devil and Abel as an example of a child of righteousness
- Cain means “to forge”... it’s a name that speaks of self-effort
- Abel means son of Adam... it’s a name that speak of family
- Cain was a tiller of the ground and Abel was a shepherd
- When the time came to bring an offering to God we read that Cain brought “an offering” of the fruit of the ground, Abel brought the firstborn of his flock
- The Bible says God respected Abel’s offering, but not Cain’s offering.
- Why? Abel brought the firstborn and Cain just brought a token offering
- The Hebrew word used for offering carries with it the idea that the offering was a tribute, something you would offer a King
- Abel’s gift was given out of devotion to God
- Cain’s gift was given out of obligation to God
- Thus God respected Abel’s offering, but not Cain because Cain’s obligatory gift to God was an insult to God
- No doubt Cain’s gift was substantial because Cain was very angry and his countenance fell
- He was jealous that Abel’s offering was respected and he became angry
- The Lord says to Cain, Why are you angry and why has your countenance fallen?
- If you do well, will you not be accepted?
- If you do not do well, sin lies at the door and it’s desire is for you, but you should rule over it
- In Young’s Literal Translation it says... if you do not do well, at the opening a sin offering is crouching
- What God was saying to Cain... if you do not do well, forgiveness is waiting for you
- But what did Cain do? Cain attacked Abel and killed him
- God said Cain would be forgiven, but Cain rejected God’s forgiveness
- Because Cain rejected God’s forgiveness, His works were evil
- Because Abel gave out of love for God, His works were righteous
- So this is how you tell the difference between the children of God and the children of eh devil
- The Children of God are characterized by love and forgiveness
- The Children of the Devil are characterized by hatred, murder, jealousy and unforgiveness

1 John 3:13–15 (NKJV)

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.

- Knowing the children of the devil are characterized by hatred, murder, jealousy and unforgiveness... don't be surprised if the world hates you
- Hatred is the way of the world
- But we are not of the world, we've passed from death to life
- If we have hatred in our hearts, if we won't forgive, if we hold resentment, withhold love and affection... we are abiding in death
- John goes further to say whoever hates his brother, is a murderer and eternal life is not abiding in him

1 John 3:16–17 (NKJV)

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?

- This is the real proof of our Christianity... God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son
- Jesus said no greater love has no man than this, that a man will lay down his life for his friends (John 15;13)
- That's what Jesus did for us... we ought to be willing to lay down our lives for our brothers in Christ
- Laying down our lives practically means being generous with what God has blessed us with
- If we see our brother in need and we have the ability to meet the need and we do nothing... then God's love doesn't abide in us

1 John 3:18–23 (NKJV)

¹⁸ My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. ¹⁹ And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. ²⁰ For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. ²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. ²² And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that

are pleasing in His sight. ²³ And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

- We know we are walking in the truth when we put our love in action
- When we love in self-sacrificing ways, the way Jesus loved us, then my love is genuine
- But when my love is not genuine, I question myself and I condemn myself
- So many believers struggle with condemnation and it causes them to doubt their relationship with God
- John says, if I have condemnation, if I question my love for God... I have to defer to God because God knows all things
- If I don't have condemnation, then I have confidence... interesting contrast
- Condemnation is the opposite of confidence
- Confidence releases my faith and I know that whatever I ask, I will receive because I keep His commandments and do what is pleasing in His sight
- Remember, a commandment is not written law, it's a spoken
- Vs. 23 tells us what commandment we are to obey... that we should believe on Jesus Christ AND love one another
- I would venture to say, if we struggle with condemnation in our lives it's because we struggle in these two areas...
- Believing Jesus and loving one another

1 John 3:24–4:3 (NKJV)

²⁴ Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

4 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, ³ and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

- The Presence of the Holy Spirit is the proof that we are abiding in Christ
- This isn't talking about being "spiritual" or having spiritual experiences
- Not every "spirit" is of God and not every spiritual experience is of God so we are to test the spirits
- What is the test that a spirit (or angelic being) is of God? Does it confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh?
- Is Jesus God in the flesh?
- If it does, it's of God and if it doesn't it's not of God
- Not every prophet or pastor who preaches in a church is from God
- In my ministry, I've served under so called pastors who turned out to be false prophets....
- They seemed sincere, but over time they turned out to be frauds
- John says there are many false prophets in the world today, but the test is the same...
- Do they recognize the Jesus is God in the flesh
- There is an antichrist spirit in the world that attacks the deity of Jesus
- We shouldn't be surprised by the growing opposition against Jesus in the world today
- We shouldn't be surprised when a government official is criticized for what church they go to as if the media has a right to approve my home church... it's an antichrist spirit

1 John 4:4–6 (NKJV)

⁴You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. ⁶We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

- John makes an incredible statement in vs. 4
- He says you are of God and you have overcome them or better translated you have victory over them because He that is in you is greater than He that is in the world
- As believers we have victory over all the powers of darkness because Jesus lives in us
- The world does not
- Those who are of the world hear the voice of the spirit of antichrist
- They speak the language of the world

- The children of God are not of the world and those who are of God listen to His Word and those who teach His Word
- But those who are not of God do not listen or obey God's Word or the people who teach God's Word

1 John 4:7–11 (NKJV)

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

The word John uses for love is agape

- Our English language has one word for love, but Greek has 4
- Phileo – brotherly love or emotional love
- Storge – family love which includes ethnicity and national pride
- Eros – physical love or body love
- Agape – God's love
- Most people think of loving one another on an emotional level
- Others consider love to be a connection with people
- But John is talking about love on the highest level... Agape Love
- Agape love is self-sacrificing, decisive, one way love
- Those who are born of God love like God loves... those who don't love like God loves are not of God
- The greatest example of agape love is Jesus' death on the cross
- Man is created to fellowship with God, to partake of God's divine nature
- Before man sinned, man did not have a consciousness of good and evil
- Man only had a consciousness of God
- But Satan tempted Eve with two lies... eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and you will be like God... knowing good and evil
- First that she would be like God... she was already made in the likeness of God meaning she was already like God
- Second that she would have something God has and that is the knowledge of good and evil
- God does not have a knowledge of good and evil because God is without sin... thus God only has a knowledge of righteousness

- So you have this perfect life in the garden... God is righteous and man has only a God consciousness... no knowledge of sin
- Eve was tempted and sinned through unbelief, but Adam sinned willfully against God's command and sin and death entered the world
- The DNA of creation was altered and man's nature was changed
- Because of Adam's sin, sin entered the world
- Everyone is born with a sin nature... the Bible calls our sin nature iniquity and our iniquities separate us from God
- But through Jesus Christ, grace reigns through righteousness

Romans 5:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

- When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the debt for all sin
- That is what the word propitiation means... Jesus took upon Himself the wrath of God for all sin for all time
- Now, if God showed His love for us by taking upon Himself our judgment, our condemnation... we ought to show the same love for one another

1 John 4:12–16 (NKJV)

¹² No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. ¹³ By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. ¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

- Now why would the statement... no one has seen God be linked to if we love one another? Because we see our brother
- Jesus said the world will know you are my disciples by your love for one another... love is the evidence to others that we belong to God
- The evidence to us that we belong to God is the Presence of the Spirit
- The evidence to God that we belong to Him is we confess Jesus is the Son of God and that we're abiding in Jesus

- Which brings us back to love... God is love and if we abide in love and love abides in God then God abides in us

1 John 4:17–19 (NKJV)

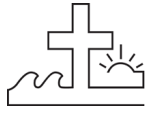
¹⁷ Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. ¹⁹ We love Him because He first loved us.

- As we abide in God, live in God... God's love is being perfected or matured among us and because we know we are loved by God we have boldness in the day of judgment
- We have no reason to fear because God loves us
- There is no fear of judgment, not fear of the future, no fear of the present
- God will not allow anything to happen to me that would jeopardize my eternal destiny with Him
- I may experience disappointment or heartache
- I may experience pain but God isn't the one causing my pain because God loves me
- If I didn't know if God loved me or not, I would be tormented by fear because I could never be assured that God has my best interests in mind... I wouldn't know if God was causing me pain for some purpose
- I would be confused... my love would be mixed with being afraid of God
- John says there is no fear in love... but John takes it a step further and says perfect love drives out fear
- As we grow and mature in God's love it drives fear out of our lives
- It changes how I interpret what I experience in life
- Knowing God loves me will keep me from becoming cynical and bitter
- Vs. 19 John makes a statement of truth... we love Him because He first loved us... God is the originator of agape love

1 John 4:20–21 (NKJV)

²⁰ If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

Jesus said...



John 13:34–35 (NKJV)

³⁴ A 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 says it again for emphasis and for clarity
- Love for the invisible God is shown by our love for visible people
- God desires for us to be loving