Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Christian's Incompatibility with Sin, Part 2
Scripture: 1 John 3:4-8
Code: 62-26

Let's open our Bibles to 1 John chapter 3 as we turn to the Word of God. We gather together to worship the Lord. We gather together to dig into His Word. Kind of rare thing, I'm afraid, today, so many churches meet to be entertained in one way or another. We meet to worship. So many people gather to receive, we gather to give, to give glory to the Lord, to give honor to Him by hearing His Word, by singing His praise. We find the culmination of our worship in turning to the Scripture so that it can speak to us.

John the Apostle wrote 1 John, as we know, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John wrote an epistle that deals with the issue of who is really a Christian. And there is, of course, a pervasive reality that exists in the world and that is that Satan is a deceiver, that Satan wants to convince people that all is well when all is not well. The whole idea of satanic deception is to blur the reality of salvation and one's condition. If Satan can convince someone that the wrong religion is the right religion, then he has succeeded in that deception. If Satan can convince someone that a wrong understanding of the right religion is acceptable, then he has also captured that soul in deception. Satan can convince someone that he or she is a Christian when, in fact, they are not. That deception, of course, is a fatal deception.

Church then has to be very discerning. Believers have to be very discerning. We are told to examine ourselves whether we be in the faith. And certainly that is true for those around us. The reality of true salvation is always under attack and assault. Deceptions proliferate to make it almost impossible to determine who is a real Christian. A level of tolerance is in the church today certainly would want to include everybody.

But John is so helpful to us. This is such a critical epistle. And there are others that deal with the same issue and even the Lord Jesus Himself in His teaching dealt with this. But John is concerned for us to understand how to identify a true Christian. There are doctrinal tests, that is what they believe. And there are moral tests, that is how they behave. There is the matter of doctrine and there's the matter of conduct. And what we're looking at in 1 John chapter 3 verses 4 through 10 is summed up in several statements. The first one is in verse 6, "No one who abides in Him sins." And then said another way in verse 9, "No one who is born of God practices sin." And then the summary in verse 10, "By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious." Shouldn't really be any difficulty in discerning because anyone who doesn't practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

Really, John is saying it's obvious who belongs to God and who doesn't. Those who belong to God practice righteousness. Those who do not practice righteousness do not belong to God. Another way

to say that is that when a person is truly reconciled to God, when a person is truly converted, to use that term, when a person is truly regenerated, or born again, saved is the general term we like, when that occurs, when there is new birth and regeneration, and redemption and conversion, a real transformation of that person takes place. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation," 2 Corinthians 5:17. We were basically created unto good works which God has before ordained that we walk in them. We used to be the slaves of sin and now we are the slaves of righteousness. This marks a true Christian. What was absolutely impossible to the sinner, that is righteousness, Romans chapter 3, "There is none righteous, no not one. There's none that does good, they're all evil," what was absolutely impossible to the sinner, namely righteousness, is now the truest expression of the saints inner person. We are manifestly righteous, we who are truly regenerated.
And in our text, as I just read, John distinguishes true Christians by this dramatically altered relationship to sin. This is unmistakable truth. It is really not arguable, it is so clear. We find that your life and my life provides the evidence of our transformation. And if there is no evidence, then there is no transformation. I am, as you well know, constantly amazed at the expanding acceptance of a minimalist gospel, no repentance, no confession, no submission, no obedience, no love, no righteousness necessarily and yet a person is still saved. That is exactly the kind of deception and error to which John is addressing this epistle. That unimaginable idea had come into the church in John's day. As we remember back in chapter 1, John was concerned about those people in verse 6 who said they had fellowship with God and yet walked in the darkness. And anybody who says they have fellowship with God, that is they have a relationship with God, a partnership with God, and still has a life pattern in darkness, meaning absent from divine life and characterized by sin, no matter what they claim, if they do not practice the truth, they lie. So that's of grave concern to John that there were false teachers who had come into the church and said that they had ascended to the true knowledge of God, and then continued to live in patterns of unbroken sin.
The trend now is very much similar to this. The trend now is that it isn't even necessary to have the doctrines of the gospel right. I suppose through the years I've spent most of my time trying to bring the moral tests to bear upon evangelical understanding of salvation, that's why I was writing The Gospel According to Jesus, The Gospel According to the Apostles and having preached so many, many sermons on that, perhaps preached hundreds and hundreds of times around the country and around the world on that subject, trying to make it very clear that the Bible says if a person doesn't manifest righteousness, and a pattern of righteousness, that person is not a Christian, no matter what spiritual experience they might have had or what they profess. They must pass the moral test.

Up until very recently, there wasn't a lot of debate about the doctrinal tests. But that has changed. Now much to my surprise, I will admit, there are evangelicals who are jettisoning any doctrinal requirement. That is to say it really doesn't matter what your view of the work of the cross is, what your understanding of the doctrine of justification is, it frankly doesn't matter what your view of Jesus is. In fact, it doesn't matter whether you ever heard of Jesus or not, whether you ever knew He went to a cross and rose from the dead or not. Any view of Christ would be enough for some people, any

view of justification would be enough for some people, or frankly, no view of Christ and no view of justification would be enough for some. We're now saying that pagan people, wherever they are, if they just live up to whatever understanding they have, God will accept them on those terms.
This would outrage John. And here we are in the midst of evangelicalism trying to protect the gospel, trying to protect the reality of salvation not against those who want to eliminate any moral tests but against those who want to eliminate any doctrinal test. Staggering really. So John, writing for God, as all the Bible writers did, not only writing for God but writing the very Word of God tells us that there are absolutes in this matter of salvation. One must believe in the true God, the true Christ, the true Holy Spirit, the true work of Christ as an advocate and a propitiation. And not only must one believe rightly, but in order to demonstrate that the real transformation has taken place, one must behave rightly. Unless a person, John says, and other writers of the Bible, unless a person confesses sin, repents of sin, obeys the Word of God, walks as Christ walks, loves brethren, doesn't love the world, lives righteously, that person is not a Christian no matter what they claim.
I don't know why people have so much trouble trying to sort out who Christians are. This is not a minimalist gospel and as I said, John if he were here today would be outraged at the concessions that have been made obliterate these very foundational tests. So many people today in evangelicalism are content to let people go to hell in deception. And if you think this is an inordinate concern to me, one of the responsibilities of my calling is to be a guardian of the truth. Paul said to Timothy, "Guard the treasure that was handed to you." It's not just to be proclaimed, it's to be protected. So false teachers have always been planted by the adversary all throughout the years in the history of the church. The closer they get to the true church, the more effective they are. And there are always those weak and unstable souls that can be led astray. There are always those spiritual children who can get tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine.
So John addresses the issue with these people to whom he writes. And he points out, it doesn't matter what these people claim about their relationship to God, about their possessing the true knowledge of God and spiritual life. It can all be verified by some very objective tests. Did he believe the right thing and did he behave the right way? If their doctrine is wrong and their conduct is sinful, their claims are useless. They fail the test of theology and they fail the test of life. Bad theology damns, and bad behavior reveals bad theology.

Some people have thought that this is just an Antinomianism that has crept into the church and you've got sort of lawless Christians running around and they really shouldn't behave the way they do. They need to rededicate their lives. They need to recommit their lives. They need to have some sort of major spiritual traumatic experience that will catapult them out of constant carnality into spirituality. They need to come to the second level. They need to reach the higher plain, the deeper life, the ascended life. They need to be self-crucified, to borrow the old Keswick(?)terminology.
It's not just that. It's not just that these people are sort of stumbling around in Antinomianism, even though they're Christians, they're living these lawless lives and they really need to dedicate their lives and get serious about Christ and move to the next level. There isn't anything about that in the Bible,

that doesn't even exist as an option in the New Testament. Nothing like that is taught anywhere. When a sinner is reconciled to God, when a sinner is regenerated, converted, given eternal life through faith in Christ, he obeys, follows Christ, loves, rejects the world and righteousness prevails in his or her life. There's no such thing as being a Christian and not having prevailing righteousness in your life. Christians do sin, back to chapter 1 verses 8 to 10, "If we say we don't sin, we lie." Christians do sin. But here's the change. We don't have to. Chapter 2 verse 1, "My little children, I'm writing you these things that you may not sin." We do sin but for the first time, we don't have to and thirdly, we do not sin habitually. We sin occasionally, our flesh is a debilitating reality, our unredeemed humanness. That's why we cry out for the redemption of our body. Whereas before we habitually sinned, we now follow the path of righteousness. John and other New Testament writers have told us the reason, "We have been born again. We have been given a new nature, or new disposition. We are being sanctified which means set apart from sin."

So John is simply saying here, "Look, you want to know whether someone is a Christian," and he couldn't say it more black and white, "if you abide in Him, you don't sin. If you're born of God you don't practice sin." That's where you see the dramatic change. No sense in saying, "Well, you know, I know So-and-so is living in the midst of ongoing sin, and has for a period of time and doesn't have any interest in the things of Christ, but I remember when that person was converted..." There's no point in talking like that.

I remember I was riding along with a man who was a professor in a theology...of theology in a seminary and we passed a huge liquor store. I mean, it was an unusual liquor store in that it was solid glass with lights on the inside and you can just see all the liquor through all this glass and it was just kind of startling because it was all lit up. And I said, "Boy, that is a strange kind of liquor store." To which he replied, "Yeah, they're all over the city here. They're owned by a guy in my Sunday-School class."

I said, "Really, somebody in your Sunday-School class?"

"Yeah," he said, "but that's not the worst of it. He's not faithful to his wife," and he went on to describe this guy's life. And then he made a most amazing statement to me which I've never forgotten, he said, "You know, it's really hard to believe how a Christian can act like that."

And I said something that I thought was rather simple. I said, "Well, did it ever occur to you that he might not be a Christian?"

To which the response was, "No, I remember the day he prayed the prayer."

Well what did that mean? What did that mean? It meant nothing. That isn't ever the test of anything. There needs to be an evident breach with sin and a pattern of righteousness, not perfection, that's not the perfection of your life but that is the direction of your life. And three arguments are given here why there is this righteousness in the life of sinners.

Argument number one, sin is incompatible with the Law of God. Sin is incompatible with the Law of God and we saw that in verse 4. "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness. And sin is lawlessness." By definition, sin is living in rebellion against the Law of God. By definition, sin is living

in rebellion against the Law of God. It's not just a series of violations against that Law, it's a heart attitude that hates that Law. It's a rebellious attitude. It's the dominance of sin that produces a bent toward breaking the Law of God. It is the purest and truest expression of the fallen person's heart that they will violate the Law of God. Sin is lawlessness. The construction here in the language of the Greek indicates that sin and lawlessness are identical. Matthew 7 Jesus said, "I don't know you, I've never known you, you who practice lawlessness." If you are compelled in rebellion against the Law of God to do that which is lawless, then whatever you may claim you may say, "Lord, Lord, we did this, we did that in Your name," and He will say, "I don't know you, I've never known you, you who practice lawlessness." It's not your profession, it's not your claim, it's what you practice that flows out of a rebellious heart.

Conversion, however, has changed that. It has changed the believer's nature, the believer's disposition toward sin. That defiance is replaced with compliance. That rebellion is replaced with obedience. That hatred of God's Law is replaced with love for God's Law. That sense that God's Law is intruding into your life and cramping your joy is replaced with an attitude that God's Law moves into your life to produce real joy and lasting satisfaction. Saving faith is an act of submission to God in which a sinner asks for forgiveness for a life of violating and rebelling against the Law of God. The sinner comes, confessing that rebellious attitude and rebellious practice, asking to be forgiven and transformed. And when that transformation comes, then what is said in Psalm 40 verses 7 and 8 becomes a reality. "I delight to do Your will, O my God. Your Law is within my heart."

Instead of a heart of rebellion, have a heart that loves the Law. Romans 7 again as we saw last week, Paul said, "The Law is holy, just and good. And when I break the Law it's not what I want to do, it's what I don't want to do."

Now this is just New Covenant truth. This isn't anything out of the ordinary, this is standard New Covenant truth. Go back to Ezekiel 36 where we have really the Old Testament presentation, the complete presentation of the New Covenant, the essence of the New Covenant. And in Ezekiel 36 I want you to understand what God promised the New Covenant would be. That is the only saving covenant, the covenant that saves, the New Covenant. In verse 25 it describes this New Covenant, "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols." That is not talking about justification as such, it's not limited to that. It's also talking about transformation. Verse 26 follows up, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." I'm going to take you and I'm going to make you all over again. I'm going to wash you, I'm going to clean you. I'm going to scrub out the filthiness. I'm going to give you new heart with new longings, new impulses, new desires. I'm going to put a new spirit, a new attitude, a new disposition in you. I'm going to remove that stony heart that is that rebellious obstinate heart, that lawless heart. And then in verse 27, "I'll put My Spirit within you; after I've changed you, I will give you My Spirit." This is very important teaching because it is exactly what the New Testament says. When you were saved, when I was saved, when anybody is really transformed and regenerated, first of all, they are changed. This is

what it's saying and the New Testament affirms it. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation." Secondly, they are given the Holy Spirit who operates in and through that new nature. "I'll put My Spirit within you." And what is going to happen? You now are new on the inside, you have a new heart, a new Spirit, you now have the Holy Spirit. And what is the result? "It will cause you to walk in My statutes and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." That is New Covenant theology. That's what the New Covenant does. It's not just forensic, it's not just justification, imputation, it is transformation, conversion, regeneration, new birth. Jeremiah 31:33 also, a parallel passage that deals with the New Covenant in the Old Testament, these two being the critical texts on New Covenant. Jeremiah 31:33, "I will put My Law within them and on their hearts I will write it."
When you become a believer that's what happened. God put His Law inside of you and he wrote it on your heart, on a heart that longs to obey. And by the way, those New Covenant promises of transformation are repeated in Hebrews 8:10 and Hebrews 10:16. That's why you have David in Psalm 119 who had received New Covenant transformation based upon the application to David of the death of Jesus Christ yet to come. Because David had received New Covenant transformation, because his stony heart had been replaced with a soft and tender heart, because a new Spirit had been put in him, a new heart had been put in him, because the Holy Spirit had been granted to him, Psalm 119 is written by him and is a long tribute, as we mentioned last week, to the believer's love for, delight in, satisfaction with, and desire to keep that Law written in the heart.
Can a Christian sin? Can a Christian sin in a protracted way? Yes, but it is an immense grief and agony to that very Christian. We struggle with our unredeemed flesh, as Romans 7 says, because the truest and purest element of our new nature is that we love the Law of God and that new disposition that loves the Law of God written on our hearts energized by the Holy Spirit, drives us in the direction of righteousness and away from sin.

Galatians 5:24 puts it this way, "Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passion and desire." Passion and desire which drove our lives died when we came to Christ. That's the past, that's history. Colossians 3 says, "We have put on the new self who is being renewed with a true knowledge according to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ.
So that's just a summary. Sin is incompatible with our new relationship to the Law. We used to be lawless and rebellious, we now have a new relationship to the Law of God, we love the Law of God, we delight in the Law of God, we respect the Law of God. We desire from the heart to obey the Law of God because that desire is written in our hearts. That's why no Christian can be habitually lawless. Secondly, sin is not only incompatible with the Law of God written in our hearts, but, secondly, sin is incompatible with the work of Christ. It is incompatible with the work of Christ. For this we look at verses 5 through 8 and several features stand out. John is systematic here. He's not always as systematic as we would like him to be, but he's pretty systematic here. He works his way through the Trinity in a very careful fashion.
From verses 5 through 8 he describes the reason why Jesus came. And there is one key statement in verse 5, "You know that He appeared in order to take away sins." No matter how you want to describe salvation and there are many people who get caught up in the doctrine of justification

because it's so glorious and so wonderful and they sort of stop there. The doctrine of justification, that is the doctrine of imputation, substitution, the forensic declaration of God that I am just because my sins are imputed to Christ and His righteousness imputed to me. That forensic concept of justification is not all there is in the doctrine of salvation, nor is it all there is in the reality of salvation. There is the other element and that is the real change. There is justification and there is sanctification, a real separation from sin. It couldn't be said better than in verse 5, "How in the world could a believer continue in a pattern of sin when Jesus appeared in order to take away sins?" To continue in sin is absolutely inconsistent with what Christ has done. "And you know," again there's that word *oida*, "you know that He appeared," *phaneroo*, it's often used of His appearing, His first and His Second. "He was manifest," and it affirms the purpose for which He came, "in order to take away sins, not to cover them, as in the doctrine of justification, not to forgive them, but to lift them." That's what *airo*in the Greek means, to remove by lifting, to take them away. "Behold the Lamb of God who," what...what is it? "Takes away the sins of the world."

You know, how do we know, *oida*, not by information, but by deep experience, that He appeared because we've experienced it and the result of that when He came into our lives was the taking away of sins. He lifted those away from us. It is an indisputable fact that the incarnation of Jesus Christ, of course, that He came to destroy sin. But we cannot forget that this is not just eschatological, it is not just that we will be delivered from sins when we die and until that time we should expect to be as sinful now as we've ever been. That is not the case. There was at the time of conversion a lifting of sin and there is a continual lifting of sins. Notice it's sins, not sin. It's not looking at categorical sin, He's looking at sins.

How could we then be habitually living in a pattern of sins when from the moment of our justification there began sanctification and sanctification is the removal of sin, the separation from sins. There is a real cleansing and a real purging. It says in Titus 2:14, this is a very useful text for many reasons, but verse 13 talks about the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, this is His next appearing. But then it says, "He gave Himself for us." And what did He attempt to do? What did He accomplish? "He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed." Again it isn't just a categorical deliverance. From every lawless deed, from every violation of the Law of God He wanted to rescue us, He wanted to deliver us so that He could purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

He didn't save you just to let you go on sinning at the same rate until you finally lose the human flesh and get elevated to heaven and enter into eternal perfection. He saved you so that now you could be delivered from lawless deeds which made up the whole of your life and purified and become a person whose zeal was toward righteous deeds. This is what the New Testament clearly teaches that if somebody was truly saved, Jesus appeared in order to lift sins, in order to deliver from lawless deeds, in order to purify for Himself a people who would be zealous for righteous works, what is good.

And that's Paul again in Romans 7, "I love the Law, it's holy, just and good. And every time I violate it, I hate it. It's not even...it's not even I that do it," he says, "it's sin that is in me, it's so contrary to who I

am in Christ." When you were saved, there's a wonderful concept at your salvation and it's expressed in several passages. Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water of the Word. When the Word came there was a washing, just like Ezekiel 36, you were sprinkled with clean water, you were washed from your filthiness. It isn't just forensic, it isn't just the declaration by God of imputed righteousness, there is a real sanctifying work and it happened by the washing of water through the Word. When the gospel word came and you believed, you were washed, you were clean.
Listen to 1 Peter 2:24, "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross in order that we might die to sin and live to righteousness." That we might die to sin and live to righteousness. And that is exactly what Ephesians 2:10 means, that we are saved by grace through faith unto good works which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

And, of course, back to our text, in 1 John, John adds this statement at the end of verse 5, "And in Him there is no sin." He is the absolutely sinless one and that has a glorious reality. He is the absolutely sinless one. And verse 29 of chapter 2, "If you know that He is righteous, then you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him." You can't be connected to the person and work of Christ and not have your relationship to sins dramatically changed. Your attitude toward the Law of God is dramatically changed because you're made new on the inside. Your conduct is dramatically changed because of that new life on the inside so that sin is lifted. Verse 6, the conclusion then, "No one who abides in Him, no one connected to Christ like that, o one who possesses His life and is the recipient of His grace sins. No one who sins has seen Him or knows Him."
That is pretty straight stuff. If you go back with me to Romans 6, it would be helpful. This too is a very important chapter. We're dealing with some very foundational theology. If you go back to Romans chapter 6, just pick it up in verse 4. "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death." That's not water baptism, that's literally being immersed into Christ so that we were dying in His death. "We have literally been buried with Him, immersed with Him into death." That is when He died we were dying there, it was our death He died. "In order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father...look at this...so we too might walk in newness of life." The purpose of our union with Christ, this glorious spiritual reality, is in order that the old might die and we might walk, that's a picture of conduct in life, in newness of life.
What is exactly that saying? Verse 6? Here's another way to say it. "Our old self was crucified with Him, what we used to be, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin. We no longer are slaves to sin. We no longer have to sin. We no longer sin with the same habitual regularity." Seven: "For he who has died is delivered or freed from sin." And then as the text flows through the chapter, go down to verse 17, "Thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin," and here's this New Covenant language again from Jeremiah and Ezekiel, "Though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart." Obedient from the new heart, from the heart where the Law was written, "To that form of teaching, that scheme of teaching, to which you

were committed. And having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."
Verse 20 he clarifies it further. "When you were slaves of sin you were free in regard to righteousness." There wasn't any. Verse 22, "Now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit resulting in sanctification," and finally the outcome, "eternal life."
The point is this, if you have been freed from sin through true salvation, and now are enslaved to God, the result is sanctification...sanctification. There's no way around it. This is the essence of New Covenant promise. A New Covenant doesn't major on the doctrine of justification, it majors on the doctrine of sanctification, new heart, new spirit, Holy Spirit, Law of God written in the heart, forgiveness, change. And so it is that the Apostle John says you cannot continue in the same unbroken pattern of sin and at the same time abide in Him because no one who abides in Him sins. Present tense, meaning continuous habitual action, carrying behind it the emphasis of defiance and persistence and the rebellion of the fallen heart. He doesn't say we will never commit a single sin, what he is saying is we will not be perpetual sinners because no one...NO ONE who sins that way has seen Him, or knows Him. No One! So if somebody lives in a pattern of sin, I don't care who they are, they're not Christians. They're not Christians. And what do you mean by sin? I mean sin as defined by violation of God's Law, any violation, not just what we would assume would be a heinous one.

John gives us then a quick reminder of the problem that really brought this letter up. Verse 7, just injects this, I think, at the right moment. Little children, you having a problem with this? Don't let anybody deceive you. This is how it is. I'm telling you, it's really amazing. How when I dealt with this in 19...I guess 1988, 1993 in those two books, how volatile was the reaction. This is the anticipation right here. "Little children, when you teach this and when you believe this, it's going to be very hard for some to swallow, but let no one deceive you." Let me say it as clearly as I can, "The one who practices righteousness is righteous just as He is righteous." Because you are united to Christ. Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ, by union in His death, nevertheless I live, yet not I but...what?...Christ lives in me and the life I live I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." Christ lives in me. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." Christ is my life. I cannot have a union with Christ, I cannot have a transformation in my life by the power of God, washing and cleaning me in New Covenant terms, I cannot go through th is wonderful miracle of sanctification and be joined to Jesus Christ and continue to live the way I live before anything happened like that. So don't let anybody deceive you. Plenty of deceivers out there.
Salvation is not some thing that comes at some point in history and you can live any way you want. We gave you a list of pretty shocking quotes last week. If you are saved, it is manifest in a pattern of righteousness. Sin is incompatible with the Law of God. It is incompatible with the work of Christ, His death which removed sin's dominion which lifted sins away, and brought us into union with His holiness and His righteousness which is expressed through us.
There's another component. Verse 8, "The one who practices sin is of the devil, for the devil is sin from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this person that He might destroy the works of the

devil."
The Lord Jesus came to sanctify you to remove sin. He came to live in you to bring His own righteous life and live it out through you. And He at the same time accomplished the devastating defeat of Satan. He's not just talking eschatologically here. The Son of God appeared for this purpose that He might destroy the works of the devil. The Son of God appeared for this purpose that He might destroy the works of the devil in your life and mine, here and now, so that anyone who goes on practicing sin has not had the works of the devil destroyed in his life and therefore is not a Christian, whatever they may claim. He who practices sin, it's that *poieo*again, he is doing sin, is *ek ek*an ablative of source for you that are technical about the Greek, *ek*. He who is doing sin knows that it's out of the devil. He's out of the devil. He's out of the kingdom of darkness. He belongs to that one. He's of...in the language of John 8:44, he is of his father the devil for the devil has sinned from the beginning. He started it. He originated it. He is the wicked one. He sins. He tempts others to sin. He deceives. But when you came to Christ and you were not only justified but you were regenerated, sanctified, the work of Jesus Christ lifted sins away. The work of Jesus Christ brought Him into your life so that He lives in you and His perfectly righteous and holy life is manifest through you. And Satan was crushed so that you are no longer the child of the devil, but you are the child of God and you manifest God's character, not Satan's.
To say then that someone who goes on practicing sin is a Christian is impossible. It is incompatible with the Law of God and the work of Christ. Well, there's one other one. But I better save that for the next time, a couple of weeks from now. It is also incompatible with the work of the Spirit. That's a wonderful subject to talk about, so we'll do that.

Lord, it's been such a rich and wonderful day, so fulfilling to be with Your precious people and worship You and sing Your praise and enjoy the testimonies of baptism and again to be reminded of the realities of the spiritual realm. We thank You for Your Word. We thank You for the truth. Nothing is more important than that we know the truth. Protect Your people from deception. Protect sinners from being self-deceived and Satan-deceived. I know, Lord, that You know infinitely better that even the church that says it belongs to you is filled with people who by the virtue of these verses tonight couldn't pass the test of true salvation and they are and have been deceived. Lord, I pray that You'll raise up a great force of preachers and Christians everywhere who can shine a light into the darkness of this deception. We thank You for the wonderful epistle of 1 John, simple and yet so profound, so helpful. May we examine our own hearts, may we be careful to shed the light of this truth on others so they can see their true condition. Bring the light to bear upon those in the darkness of deception and use us as instruments, to that end we pray for Christ's sake. Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2014 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).