

Happy Independence Day

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Date: 23 December 2018

Preacher: Jim Masters

[0:00] If you would take your Bibles and go to 1 John, the first letter of John, not the Gospel, but 1 John, chapter 3.

If you're visiting with us, you need a Bible, go to that black Bible in the chair in front of you. Go to the back of that. Find page 186. 186.

1 John 3, page 186 in that black Bible. 186. 1 John 3, I'm going to read verses 4 through 12 to give us a context.

Even though our focus, we're gonna narrow our focus to chapter 3, verses 5 through 9 and really point out the promise that's given to us in verse 8.

But to give us a context, 1 John 3, starting in verse 4 and then all the way down to verse 12. 1 John 3, verse 4.

[1:11] Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins and in Him there is no sin.

No one who abides in Him sins. No one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. Little children, let no one deceive you.

The one who practices righteousness is righteous just as He is righteous. The one who practices sin is of the devil. For the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, our key verse right here, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

No one who has been born of God practices sin because His seed abides in Him. And he cannot sin because he has been born of God. By this, the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious.

Anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain, who was of the evil one, and slew his brother.

[2:21] And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil and his brothers were righteous. Can you imagine not celebrating the 4th of July?

Or that July 4th was a reminder of present oppression. That's what it was.

November 21st, just like, what, three weeks ago, was the 75th anniversary of Lebanon's independence from France. And yet, listen to what one blogger wrote about Lebanon's Liberation Day.

Quote, Independence Day just reminds that we still have the same problems and the same leaders. End quote. As a matter of fact, some said they wish they were still occupied by the French.

That's a sad way to spend Liberation Day. That's a sad way to spend Independence Day. A tweet was actually read on television there in Lebanon.

[3:37] It said this, quote, Independence is only possible if Lebanon is not a proxy for other countries, whether it is Iran, Saudi Arabia, France, America, or Russia.

End quote. Can you imagine that? How sad. You might say, well, why are you bringing this up about Independence Day for Lebanon?

Today, I want to challenge you to allow Christmas to be the day that you celebrate our independence.

No, no, no, no, no. Not as a nation. Not as America. But as a covenant community. It's Liberation Day. Christmas is really the beginning of Liberation Day because the Son of God appeared for this purpose that He might destroy the works of the devil or, as we will look at soon, liberate us from His power, from the power of sin.

Or here's a title for you. Happy Independence Day. Happy Independence Day. Yeah, yeah. Instead of Merry Christmas. You should do that. Family members that aren't here on Christmas Day, Happy

Independence Day.

[5:05] I'm sorry, I've had a cold. I think you just said Happy Independence Day. I did! If you want to get rid of relatives, just say that and they'll probably never show up again because they'll think you're crazy.

See? Anyways, but our focus, we're going to focus in on chapter 3, verses 5 through 9. We're going to walk through these specific verses.

Because the Son of God took on flesh to liberate us from sin. Sin is the works of the devil. Sin is the work of the devil.

Start in verse 5. Narrow our focus. Zero in on verse 5. Notice how John the Apostle starts. And you know that he appeared in order to take away sins.

Look at what he's saying. Christmas is Independence Day. Jesus came to not only forgive sins, but also to release his people from its terrible power over them.

[6:13] In Jesus, all the sins of those who believe are forgiven and we've been liberated. True Christians don't practice sin because sin has been taken away.

Because of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, those who trust him can have their sins taken away and be liberated from. It's power over them. And notice the next part, what he says, the next part of verse 5.

And in him, there is no sin. He's reminding them of what he said earlier in chapter 1 verse 5. Jesus Christ is without sin, which gives further evidence that he's God, the eternal Son, who came down from heaven taking on flesh.

He's totally pure, the God man. Look at verse 6. No one who sins, excuse me, no one who abides in him sins, no one who sins has seen him or knows him, abides, remains, stays.

He's talking about continual dwelling or remaining. See, or he has continual fellowship and intimacy with their Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. No one, they don't sin.

[7:36] Well, now wait a minute. All Christians wrestle with sin. So how is this, how is this possible? When he says here in verse 6, no one who remains in him sins.

How is this possible? Now, some have interpreted this as some kind of perfectionist state. The Wesleyan denomination, I think even the Nazarenes, they practice this.

In other words, you get to a point where you don't sin anymore. It's a perfectionist state and you actually, you sin on accident. Oh, shoot, man, I didn't mean to do that. No, no, that's not, that's not what he's talking about.

That's not right. That's not true. That's wrong. It seems that this denotes habitual or continual sin in one's life. Now, John will explain even more in the next few verses what he means by this.

So we'll get to that. Someone who does or practices or has a lifestyle of sin, right? But look at, again, the next part of what he says of verse 6. No one who sins has seen him or knows him because it's about relationship, intimacy, fellowship.

[8:54] One who continues to live and dwell in sin, habitually rebelling against God and His word, has not seen him by faith or knows him in intimate fellowship with Jesus.

That's what he's saying. And now we move into these next key verses. Look at what he says in verse 7. Little children, let no one deceive you.

So someone had been telling them otherwise. Someone was telling John's readers something else. So he's saying, don't let anyone deceive you.

The one who practices righteousness is righteous just as he is righteous. And then into verse 8.

The one who practices sin is of the devil. I'm going to stop there and unpack this.

The one who practices righteousness, the one who practices sin, practices righteousness literally doing righteousness, performing righteousness. Jesus is the perfect standard of righteousness and holiness.

[10:03] The person who lives and acts like Jesus in this way is a true believer. That's why he says knows. A positionally true Christian will be practicing righteousness.

And then the flip side. the one who practices sin is of the devil. Of the devil. Out of. Ek from the Greek comes out of.

Their origin is the evil one. What does he mean by the next part here of verse 8? For the devil has sinned from the beginning.

What beginning? That's man's fall. That's when we fell. Humanity fell from Adam and Eve. Jesus understood this.

That's why John brings it up in his gospel in John chapter 8. He says this in verse 44. You're of your father the devil and you want to do the desires of your father.

[11:07] He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him whenever he speaks a lie he speaks from his own for he is a liar and the father of lies.

The devil is a murderer he's a liar he's a deceiver. So one who's doing practicing sin has their origin from the enemy from the devil from the evil one.

And then that's why John says this next part there in verse 8 the middle of verse 8 which is our key text the son of God appeared for this purpose.

This is why Jesus took on flesh. This is why we celebrate Christmas. This is why we think of the incarnation. This is why we think about and celebrate the birth of Jesus.

The son of God appeared for this purpose that he might destroy the works of the devil. He came into this world the incarnation.

[12:20] Here is the reason why Jesus came into the world to take on flesh to fulfill God's promise to destroy the works of the devil. Now the word destroy can be translated like this render powerless or render inoperative.

He came to render inoperative. He came to render powerless the works of the devil. Well what's the works of the devil?

Well what has he been talking about with verses before? And what's he going to be talking about?

The verses after. Sin. The works of the devil is sin.

Sin. Jesus came to break the controlling power of the devil which is sin.

Look the devil's business is to sin to kill to lie deceive and destroy. Jesus came to reverse that.

[13:25] Jesus took on flesh to change that. Satan deceives us to rebel against God but Jesus came to break humans free from the controlling power of sin in their lives so that they would stop practicing sin and start practicing righteousness.

This is huge. This is huge for us as Christians. Jesus came not just to save us.

He came not just to be our example. He came to break the controlling power of sin in our lives.

Now think about that. Let that sink in. Think about sins the sins with which we truly struggle. from the big ones to what you might classify as the little ones.

I'll start from greatest to smallest. Pornography, drug use, alcohol, materialism, abuse, lying, gossip, anger, bitterness, hatred.

[14:50] Shall I go on? Jesus came to liberate us from the works of the devil which is sin.

The devil is a deceiver. He's a liar. He's a murderer. He wants to destroy us by having sin overcome us and conquer us. And to get us to forget that we've been liberated from sin.

to get us to forget not just forgiveness but that you're still in bondage to sin.

Which is why I put down here for you the devil brings doubt. That's his job. That's what he does. He doesn't want just to bring doubt into your mind that you're not forgiven.

He wants to bring doubt into your mind that you're not liberated from sin. That it still controls you.

Now granted God doesn't just zap us and then whammo we stop sinning.

[16:06] It just doesn't work like that. As a tree needs constant care nourishment and support in the same way it's the daily constant day in day out decisions of our lives.

And it's not about coming to a church service either. People are going to a church service right now because this is the holiday you're supposed to do that.

But does that change them necessarily? Of course not. God by his spirit saves sinners and changes sinners.

Now I told you the what and now I've started to move into the so what. What's the so what then?

We've talked a little about that in reference to the different sins that we struggle with.

This is why or this is the heart of biblical counseling. See this is why we don't buy into psychology and its solution for life and its therapies.

[17:26] This is why. Because the Son of God appeared for this purpose to destroy the works of the devil. Now it's one thing to learn from psychology in terms of their observations.

You watch a psychologist or a psychiatrist and they can make some pretty spot on unbelievable amazing observations about people. It's so fun to watch people isn't it?

It's so fun to watch them especially during Christmas time. Just watch people and sit there. Oh look at that guy. Oh she's mad. Oh look at that kid. Oh he's going to get a whooping. Oh that kid he's in

trouble.

Oh that mom is not happy. Oh look at there they're so cute. Right? I love watching people. Psychologists can make some really stunning observations about people. But that's one thing. It's another thing when they give solutions to the problems that people have. To the sin problems. Their therapies.

[18:31] Cognitive behavioral therapy. Cognitive stimulation therapy. Feminist therapy. Relational therapy. And I'm not kidding. Sand play therapy.

That's right. There's actually a therapy called sand play. I think it's psychology.com if you go to the therapies I counted 58 different therapies you can have.

No. That's why we don't buy into that. This is why we buy into the fact that this word is not just inerrant friends.

It is sufficient because this is why Jesus came. I mean think about the etymology of the word.

Psychology. Ology means the study of.

Psyche is the Greek word for soul. Psychology the etymology of that word is the study of the soul. Well who can better study the soul than the living God.

[19:38] God's word is sufficient. It is. Which is why we believe Jesus has come not just to save us but also to change us.

And notice we close in this time with verse 9. No one who has been born of God practices sin because his seed abides in him.

Or in other words another way to translate this all the ones who have been born out of God are not doing sin. In other words true Christians will still sin their lives will demonstrate righteous living not lawless living.

There will be a pursuit of holiness and godliness not a pursuit of pure selfish hedonism. And he says because his seed abides in him seed refers to the new life given by the Holy Spirit. which happens through the word of God. The Spirit does not work outside of the scripture which is why he's called by Jesus in John's gospel believe it or not the Spirit of truth because the Spirit always works in and through the scriptures.

[20:59] So back to verse 9. because his seed abides in him than the last part of verse 9. He cannot sin because he has been born of God.

The continual unbroken pattern of sin in a person's life is demonstrated. Some people claim to be Christians and yet they live lives that demonstrate otherwise.

They're living like the devil himself. Well they made a professional faith. But this is why Jesus took on flesh. So we may be liberated from sin's power.

But they're living like the devil. But they made a professional faith. So what? What does that matter? They made a professional faith 30 years ago. So? Why does that make a difference?

Do you trust Christ now? Do you believe in Jesus now? Are you walking with Jesus now? The new birth.

[22:09] Oh. That's somewhere up there. Okay. The new birth is a work that God does in the life of a person, completely transforming them from a person of darkness to a person of the light, from a child of the devil into a child of God.

God does in the life of a person. It changes them. And they keep changing, transforming them. Are you here and need to be liberated from sin's power?

We talked about that earlier, about being a Christian. Do you need to respond to the gospel? Do you need to respond to Jesus? Do you need to repent and trust in Jesus alone? You can be liberated from sin's power today if you put your trust in Jesus.

sin's power is? But that's what we're celebrating today. So I challenge you, think through this. Let that, I was talking with somebody earlier, to let your mind dwell on these things.

Ponder of the fact that today is Independence Day. Well, Christmas time, two days from now. But to let yourself think about that. I've been liberated from the power of sin because the Son of God appeared for this purpose that he might destroy the works of the devil.

[23:23] And so Father, we pray, help us to think in this way. And thank you that as we do come together as a covenant community, as together we look at your word, as together we pray and we speak and read the scripture and we encourage one another about your amazing holiness.

our rebellion against you, how you took on flesh, Lord Jesus. You lived, you died, you were put in a stone cold tomb and you've been resurrected.

Our response, even now, at this moment, 1135 on December 23rd, we repent and we put our trust in you, Lord Jesus.

For only you alone can save us from our sins and only you alone, you alone can liberate us from sin. Let your mind dwell in these things.

Think and ponder what we've seen here in 1 John. and after a few moments, you know the drill, we do our time to worship and our giving, we worship with some more singing and we pray, but I want to encourage you to stop, to just put your stuff there in your lap, and to think.

[25:08] The Spirit of God work in your heart and your mind by filling you with truth, that the Son of God appeared for this purpose, that he might destroy, that Jesus will render inoperative the power of sin in your life.

Let your mind dwell on that over the next few moments.