

# The Epistle of 1st John

## LESSON ONE: INTRODUCTON

Southgate Church of Christ

by Milt Langston

### I. BOOK WRITTEN BETWEEN 90-95 AD

- A. History and tradition states that John stayed in Jerusalem caring for Mary until the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. After this it is said that John moved to Ephesus.
- B. The book does not tell to whom it was written, nor who wrote it. It was probably a circular type letter. A letter written by John and passed from church to church.
- C. John lived longer than any other apostle did.
  - 1. He stood in the gap between the apostolic era and the apostolic fathers' era.
    - a. Explain apostolic fathers.
    - b. Disciples or pupils of John; Polycarp, Papias & Ignatius.
  - 2. Read **John 21:19-23**
- D. It was a time when “the love of many waxed cold” as Jesus predicted in **Matt. 24:12**.
  - 1. Notice how many times John states the phrase, “Love of the brethren”.
  - 2. Remember this letter originated probably from Ephesus.
  - 3. Read **Rev. 2:1, 4**
- E. Peril during the time of this writing.
  - 1. The peril was not from persecution
  - 2. It was from heresy, **Acts 28:29-30**

### II. THE CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN'S DAY WAS GNOSTICISM

- A. Gnosticism = Gnosis (GK) = Knowledge
  - 1. The Gnostic teachers claimed to possess a special knowledge that was not generally known by everyone else in the churches.
    - a. John warns of those false teachers and tells Christians not to allow them to stay in their houses, **2nd John 2-11**.
    - b. What caused and still causes people to give credence to Joseph Smith, Mr. Terrel, and Mary Baker Eddy?

c. When you or I believe that knowledge alone is the key to salvation, you, I, and the idea are Gnostic.

2. Gnosticism grew out of Greek philosophical influences. Christianity was viewed as a Jewish sect. Gnosticism freed "Christianity" from this evil and introduced a additional evil making "Christianity" conform to western influences. The philosophers of the day had long disputed western religion as it was, and they were playing with eastern influences such as Zoroastrianism from Persia.

a. The following is taken from ISBE, "The Zoroastrian or Persian system was based on the assumption that there existed two original and independent powers of good and evil, of light and darkness, Ormuzd (Ahura-Mazda), the wise Lord, and Ahriman (Angra-Mainyu), the wicked spirit. These powers were believed to be equal, and each supreme in his own domain. The earth, which was created by Ormuzd, became the battlefield of the two powers. Ahriman led away the first man and woman from their allegiance to Ormuzd, and so all evils result to mankind.

b. "In oriental (Persian) dualism," says Professor Bousset, "it is within this material world that the good and the evil powers are at war, and this world beneath the stars is by no means conceived as entirely subject to evil. Gnosticism has combined the two, the Greek opposition between spirit and matter, and the sharp Zoroastrian dualism, which, where the Greek mind conceived of a higher and a lower world, saw instead two hostile worlds standing in contrast to each other like light and darkness. And out of the combination of these two dualisms arose the teaching of Gnosticism with its thoroughgoing pessimism and its fundamental asceticism" ("Gnosticism," in Encyclopedia Brit, 11th edition, XII, 154).

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.

3. The Gnostic teachers created situations of all kinds of evil

a. They believed that the world was created by a lesser or created deity (Does this sound familiar?) The theory of emanation: There was God (pure knowledge), then a lesser god, and a lesser god, etc. (Does this sound familiar?)

b. They taught that man's body is evil with a divine spirit.

c. They taught that sin = ignorance ∴ holiness = knowledge

4. They taught that there was no bodily resurrection, but at death, the spirit entered the spirit world. (can you imagine why they taught this?)

a. Kind of like the African view of life after death

b. Paul refutes this idea in **1 Cor. 15**

B. Three major groups of Gnostics

1. Ebionites – Denied the deity of Christ (not God)

2. Docetists – Denied the humanity of Christ (Why?) Taught that he was, but was only visionary like a spook.

3. Cerinthians – Taught that Jesus was ordinary son of Mary and Joseph and that the spirit of God took him over at his baptism, and took away this spirit at crucifixion. (Why?)

C. The consequences of the Gnostic belief

1. They practiced asceticism which controlled their attitude toward their body
  - a. To bring out the spirit they buffeted (literally) their body.
  - b. They forbade marriage---it was only physical.
  - c. They adapted Jewish customs to such as Sabbaths and feast days to punish the physical (See **Col. 2**)
2. Epicureanism = Body is evil so you are not responsible for its acts. The body is doing the sin, your knowledge and spirit is above it all. (Clergy above sin)
3. Perfectionism
  - a. Kind of like the second experience of grace by some today---“How do you do?”---“I know it because I feel it right here.”
  - b. Some knew, others did not (they were the honest ones)---Caused a discrimination of the less knowledgeable brethren. (**Rom. 14:1; 15:1**)

**III. JOHN MAKES LOVE A TEST OF FELLOWSHIP**

- A. Read **I John 2:9-11; 3:14-17; 4:7-8, 20-21**
- B. Is love a test of fellowship today?

**IV. JOHN’S CONCEPT OF GOD (THE FATHER)**

- A. God is light and contains no darkness. **I John 1:5**
- B. God is love. He loved us before we loved him. **I John 4:8, 16**
- C. God is righteous and begat us in righteousness. **I John 2:29**
- D. God is truth and reveals himself to us. **2 John**
- E. God is good and manifests his goodness to us. **3 John**

**V. JOHN’S CONCEPT OF JESUS (THE SON)**

- A. He is from the beginning. (Eternal) **I John 1:1; 2:14**

- B. He is the Son of God. (Deity) **I John 4:15; 5:5**
- C. He is the Christ (Messiah) **I John 2:22; 5:1**
- D. He was truly and fully man. (Total man and total God) **I John 1:1-3; 4:2-3; 5:6**
- E. He dealt with sin. (A sinless man) **I John 3:5**
  - 1. How he deals with sin
    - a. As an advocate. **I John 2:1; 2 Cor. 1:3**
    - b. As a propitiation = satisfaction.
  - 2. Christ is our advocate to stand beside us in judgment and He is our propitiation and satisfaction so that we who are unclean can have boldness to approach the mercy seat. **Rom. 3:21; Lev. 16:1-5; I Cor. 15:10; Phil. 2:12**
- F. He is the giver of life. **I John 4:9; 5:11-12**
- G. He is the Savior of the world. **I John 4:14**

#### **VI. JOHN'S CONCEPT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

- A. Preach the Word
  - 1. Those who reject him have a spirit of error.
  - 2. The Spirit of God is a spirit of truth.
- B. The spirit of God is the seal of salvation and proof of sonship. **I John 3:24; 4:13; Eph. 1:11; Rom. 8:9**

#### **VII. JOHN'S CONCEPT OF CHRISTIANS**

- A. They walk in the light of God's truth. **I John 1:6-7**
- B. They reflect in their lives in the righteousness of God. **I John 2:29**
- C. They do not practice sin. **I John 3:3-10; 5:18**
- D. They love one another. **I John 3:10-11**
- E. They show their love by keeping Christ's commandments. **I John 5:2-3**

#### **VIII. JOHN'S PURPOSE FOR WRITING THIS BOOK**

- A. That we might have joy. **I John 1:4**

- B. That we might not sin. **I John 2:1**
- C. That we might guard against error. **I John 2:26**
- D. That we might know that we have eternal life. **I John 5:13**

**IX. JOHN'S SEVEN FOLD TEST**

- A. Walk in the light. **I John 1:7**
- B. Admit you are a sinner. **I John 1:8-10**
- C. Obey God's will. **I John 2:4**
- D. Imitate Christ. **I John 2:6**
- E. Love others. **I John 2:9**
- F. Hate the world. **I John 2:15-17**
- G. Live righteously. **I John 2:29**

**X. AN OUTLINE FOR THE STUDY**

- I. John's right to write. I John 1:1-4
- II. God is light. I John 1:5-2:27
- III. God is love. I John 2:28-5:12
- IV. God is life. I John 5:13-21

# The Epistle of 1st John

LESSON TWO: 1:1-7

Southgate Church of Christ

by Milt Langston

## I. JOHN'S RIGHT TO WRITE (1:1-4)

### A. NOTICE THE PARALLEL OF THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

The Gospel	The Epistle
1. "In the beginning (en arche) was the Word. <b>1:1</b>	1 "That which was from the beginning" (ap arches) <b>1:1</b>
2. "And the Word was with God" (pros ton theon) <b>1:1</b>	2 "The life...which was with the Father" (pros ton patera) <b>1:2</b>
3. "In Him was life" <b>1:4</b>	3 "The Word of life" <b>1:1</b>
4. "The light shineth" <b>1:5</b>	4 "The life was manifested" <b>1:2</b>
5. "We beheld (etheasametha) His glory" <b>1:14</b>	5 "That which we beheld" (etheasmetha) <b>1:1</b>

### B. (READ 1:1-2) JOHN STARTS RIGHT OUT BY SHOWING THAT JESUS WAS NO PHANTOM (AS THE GNOSTICS TAUGHT):

1. John says, "**We beheld...**" "**...we have seen...**" (3 times)
  - a. This is not just a casual glance. ("Behold") It is a fixed and absorbing stare, a prolonged contemplation.
  - b. Behold comes from the Greek word "etheasametha" (**etheasametha**). This is the word from which we get the word theater. The word describes how our children "behold" TV on Saturday morning.
2. John says, "**our hands handled...**". John had grasped the hands of Jesus, he had embraced Jesus. He knew Jesus was no phantom.
3. In these verses, John simply presents why this book came about. He here states his right to speak out, his aim for writing. He states his right to write.
  - a. He heard Christ
    - 1) John had not just heard Jesus, he knew him.

- 2) John had not just listened to a set of cassette tapes Jesus had made. He knew Jesus.
- 3) He declares his right to write about Jesus.
- b. I have seen Jesus
  - 1) You and I have seen Jesus with the eyes of faith, but have you ever seen Jesus?
  - 2) Some were, and still are today, claiming to have superior knowledge. John says, "Let me tell you about Jesus, I have really seen him!"
- c. I have beheld Christ
  - 1) As we showed this word is more than behold, it almost means to stare.
  - 2) John said, "I have not only seen the Lord, I have stared at him."
- d. Our hands have handled Him.
  - 1) John had reclined in His bosom (refers to position relative to Jesus around the dinner table).
  - 2) He had, figuratively speaking, walked with Jesus hand in hand for 3 ½ years. John knew more about Jesus than the Gnostics did. More than any man alive when this book was written.

**C. (1:3-4) THE AIM OF WRITING.**

- 1. (READ 1:3) To produce fellowship
  - a. Fellowship does not = agreeing together here.
    - 1) Not bellyship
    - 2) Not fellowship one with another.
  - b. Fellowship with God = Finding God's word, believing God's word, and doing God's will. What is needed is meekness on our part.
- 2. (READ 1:4) To bring abundant joy.
  - a. John's desire is that man find the abundant joy, the real happiness, that he has found in Christ.
  - b. Notice a comparison of John's Epistle and his Gospel:

Gospel	Epistle
1. "That they may all be one." <b>17:20</b>	1. "That ye may have fellowship with us." <b>1:3</b>
2. "That they also may be one in us" <b>17:21</b>	2. "Our fellowship is with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ." <b>1:3</b>
3. " And these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy made	3. "These things we write, that our joy

full in themselves.” **17:13**

may be made full.” **1:4**

- c. John had found joy, but where had he found it first?

## II. GOD IS LIGHT (1:5 - 2:28)

### A. (READ 1:5) AFTER DECLARING HIS CREDENTIALS, OR HIS RIGHT TO WRITE, JOHN GIVES HIS MESSAGE: “**GOD IS LIGHT!**”

1. One of John’s 4 great affirmations of God’s nature.
  - a. God is light (1 John 1:5)
  - b. God is spirit (John 4:24)
  - c. God is faithful (1 John 1:9)
  - d. God is love (1 John 4:8)
2. To say God is light is to say that God is self-revealing
  - a. If someone says to me, “I’ve turned on the lights,” I do not have to say, “Prove it”, unless I am blind.
  - b. Light needs no witness. Its presence is its witness.
3. The nature and character of light
  - a. There is no shadow. No dark areas to hide our faults. (James 1:17) “**Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.**”
  - b. When we try to hide or keep others from knowing our sins, we are drifting from the light into darkness.
    - 1) Light reveals our faults. Brethren, because we are in the light, it becomes important that we have forgiving spirit in the church.
    - 2) Forgiveness and grace are God’s salve for our sins.
    - 3) When you and I are unforgiving, tale-bearing, or unkind to others in the church, we are working for Satan to drive them from the light back into darkness.
    - 4) We all need to be supportive of one another and work together to rid the darkness of sin from our lives.
    - 5) **READ Eph. 5:8-14...**



- c. Light is a revealer.
  - 1) All things are opened and revealed before God. Christians realize this. We cannot hide.
  - 2) It reveals hidden things.
- d. Light is a guide to keep us on track. **Ps. 119:105**
- 4. **“In Him there is no darkness at all.”**
  - a. There is no wickedness in God at all. God does not even think of being anything but pure. To be God is his only desire.
  - b. In John 12, darkness stands for ignorance.
  - c. John 3:19 – Darkness stands for immorality. **“And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.”**
  - d. Darkness is unfruitful.
    - 1) Try to grow a plant in darkness. Will it bear fruit?
    - 2) Not many things will grow in darkness. Do they?
    - 3) Only a few perverted plants grow in darkness. Any plant that grows in darkness is perverted. Study botany.
    - 4) Eph. 5:11 **“Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.”**

**B. (READ 1:6) THE GNOSTIC SAYS THERE IS NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARKNESS. THIS IS THEIR FIRST MISTAKE!**

- 1. As long as a person is in the “know” it really does not matter, it is not important what you do or where you go as long as you know what is right or wrong. They refused to make a distinction between light and darkness.
- 2. Today, religious books are telling us that there is no “absolute” truth. This is a Gnostic idea. God says that it is white or black, light or dark.
- 3. When John says, **“If we say...”** (vs. 6, 8, & 10), he is showing us what was being said by the false teachers.
- 4. If we say we are Christians but walk in darkness. John calls them liars here for the first time. It won’t be the last.
  - a. Does this mean that John is a hateful, mean, old man because he calls the teachers liars?
  - b. No. He is writing as the apostle of love.
    - 1) Love sometimes forces us to discipline our children, ourselves, and sometimes it causes us to speak words to our friends that we really don’t want to speak.
    - 2) Sometimes we don’t want to say things we must say and sometimes we don’t want to hear the things we need to hear.

- 3) People in the dark don't always like the light, but they need to see the light. John is shining the light.
- c. Love will motivate us to do that which is best no matter what the situation.
- d. If you say you are in fellowship with God while you work in the dark, John says very simply, you are a liar.
  - 1) The lie is not so much what the Gnostics were saying.
  - 2) The lie was what the Gnostics were doing. **"You lie, and do not the truth"**

**C. (READ 1:7) NOW NOTICE THE CORRECTION NEEDED...IF YOU ARE WALKING IN DARKNESS, THE CORRECTION NEEDED IS TO WALK IN THE LIGHT.**

1. What is walking in spiritual darkness?
  - a. 1 John 2:4 Walking in darkness is walking outside the word of God (ignoring the will or commands of God).
  - b. John 14:6 Jesus said that his is the only way, so to walk in darkness is to walk outside of Jesus.
  - c. 2 Cor. 6:14-17 To walk in darkness is to walk outside Christ's decree, His demands, His will.
    - 1) The Gnostics were claiming to be Christians while they walked in darkness outside Christ's light.
    - 2) They were corrected by John: **"Walk in the light!"**
2. The solution, says John, is not in the talk, but in the walk. (Problem in the churches today too).
  - a. Our fellowship with God is not so much in our meeting together like here in Bible class today to talk.
  - b. It is much more in the **walk** our life is involved in. What does our life teach others about Jesus Christ and his church?
  - c. He does not say that the solution is in "how" we walk, he does not say the solution is in how "well" we walk, but he says the solution is "where" we walk.
  - d. Walk in the light as God is in the light. We have fellowship with him and his Son Jesus' blood cleanses us from **"all"** sin.
  - e. The newborn babe that crawls in the light is as acceptable to God as the man who has been in Christ for 50 years and runs in the light. We need to remember that salvation and God's view of man is a matter of His dispensation and His grace, not ours.
    - 1) We sometimes govern our acceptability by the degree of work we are doing. That illuminates us and points out a weakness. (Anytime we illuminate ourselves we are bringing attention to a mess.)
    - 2) God is not nearly as concerned with that as he is with where we are walking. Walking in the light brings attention to God. That is where he wants us to concentrate.

- a) If we walk in the right place
  - b) God will take care of the increases. 2 Cor. 9:8-10, "And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, 'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness."
  - c) Who supplies spiritual seed?
  - d) Who multiplies this seed for sowing? Same as in natural world.
3. To walk in the light denotes two things.
- a. Direction = Light---God is light.
  - b. Progress = Walk---Stick one foot in front of the other.
4. Let's look again at this nature of light.
- a. Morally pure (incorruptible)...
    - 1) Isa. 60:19-22, "The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down, or your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended. Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever. They are the shoot that I planted, the work of my hands, so that I might be glorified. The least of them shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the LORD; in its time I will accomplish it quickly."
    - 2) Ps. 27:1, "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"
  - b.

# The Epistle of 1st John

LESSON THREE: 1:8-10

Southgate Church of Christ

by Milt Langston

Review:

1. What is the major false teaching of the day called?
2. Why is Paul's letter a little easier to follow than John's?
3. What are three major areas John will discuss? (Light, love, and life)

**TEXT:**

**I. JOHN'S RIGHT TO WRITE (1:1-4)**

**II. GOD IS LIGHT (1:5 – 2:27)**

**A. (1:5) GOD IS LIGHT, NOT DARKNESS!**

**B. (1:6) THE GNOSTIC'S FIRST MISTAKE – “NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARKNESS!”**

**C. (1:7) THE CORRECTION NEEDED – “WALK IN THE LIGHT!”**

**D. (READ 1:8) THE GNOSTIC'S SECOND MISTAKE – THEY DENIED THEIR OWN PERSONAL SINFULNESS.**

1. If we make the boast that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves only
  - a. We will not deceive our neighbors.
  - b. We will not deceive our friends.
  - c. We will not deceive our God.
    - 1) Have you ever seen a person with a “holier than thou” attitude?
    - 2) Is such a person good for the church? Does he draw men into Christ's body?
    - 3) What does such a person need or lack which is basic to Christianity?  
Allow discussion **(Matt 5:3)**.
  - d. A person who does not think of his own sin first is self-deceived.
  - e. When we deal with an erring brother, what is our first obligation? **(Gal. 6:1-5)**

- f. It is usually easier to see someone else's sin before seeing our own. Why?
- 1) We are more tolerant of our own weakness.
  - 2) We love self more than others.
  - 3) Note: **(1 Pet. 1:22)** "Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart."

2. Not only are we deceived when we disclaim sin, we are cut off from the truth. **"The truth is not in us."**

a. We live in an unreal world if we say we have not sinned. We live in a make-believe world if we don't realize that there is still that sinful nature in us.

1) A sign of this problem – when we study and receive God's word as something to apply to others only.

a) Preachers, elders, deacons, and teachers all must study that way, but they had best study and apply to self first.

b) Pitchfork Christians

2) We must all apply God's word to ourselves first, because we understand Matt. 5:3 we press on until death. No such thing as a Christian who has arrived. That is what the Gnostic teachers taught.

b. Thank God that our sinful nature can be controlled by a spiritual life.

1) Read **Gal. 5:16-17**. You have to work at being spiritual, right?

2) Notice the great weakness. If a person feels that he has already arrived, will he put out that extra effort at being spiritual? NO.

a) We all have a problem with sin, but it can be controlled by our new spiritual man.

b) If we can deceive ourselves into not thinking of our sin, if we by our actions disregard our sin, we will not control our sinful nature by the effort of living a spiritual life.

c) This as it was in John's day is still a real problem!

1] Cussing match in eldership

2] Fist fight in elder's meeting.

c. If the truth is not in these, they are not in the light. The cure: get into the light!

3. This was a problem in John's day and it is still a problem today.

**E. (READ 1:9) NOTICE JOHN'S ADVICE FOR CORRECTING THIS PROBLEM. "CONFESS OUR SINS."**

1. The confession of sins.

a. This is the exact opposite to not claiming to have sinned.

- b. (Homo-logged) = "To say the same word"
    - 1) God knows we have sinned.
    - 2) He wants us to say, "I have sinned".
  - c. The confession is to God, not to man.
    - 1) This is not talking about public confession even though public confession is taught in God's word (James 5:16). Here we're talking about confessing our sins before God.
    - 2) We are confessing to God.
      - a) The confession of specific sins shows our sincerity.
      - b) A person is aware of his sins to list them before God, but when we ignore sin, we do not confess them.
  - d. Confession to God means humility and sincerity.
  - e. Why do we not confess our sins to one another or to God?
    - 1) Because of pride?
    - 2) Because I'm afraid you will tell others?
      - a) That is pride, too.
      - b) It's a cover up of sin. **Prov. 28:13-14**
2. The forgiveness of sins (**READ vs. 9 AGAIN**)
- a. God is faithful and righteous to forgive when we confess.
    - 1) He is faithful to whom? Jesus elaborate: Jesus' dying request to the Father is, "**Forgive them for they know not what they are doing.**"
    - 2) He is righteous to what?
      - a) What causes God to be righteous to save?
      - b) The blood of Jesus (or the death) is what God is righteous to.
      - c) There is something in the world greater than sin. The blood of Jesus.
      - d) For Christians?
  - b. Forgive = To send away (Greek)
    - 1) Remit = "Mit" = to send; "re" = again
    - 2) Remit = To send again = To put away. (**Ps. 103:12-17**)
3. The cleansing of sin (Is it the same as forgiveness?)
- a. Forgiveness = pardon. An amnesty is declared. One is innocent in God's sight.

b. Cleansing = Active cleansing in one's life. Man's actions will be cleaned up by the working of God's grace. In chapter 2:1 we will learn that grace's purpose is to lead us away from the practice of sinning. God will clean up a person's life by leading him to spiritual life.

1) Our conscience is first cleaned. We don't feel guilty, we feel clean. We feel forgiven! IF YOU DON'T FEEL FORGIVEN, YOU ARE NOT CLEAN!

2) By being aware of sin, confessing to God who forgives, and by working in your life not to sin again our life becomes clean. We're cleansed! Is this true?

c. In forgiveness, God removes, forgives, and forgets past sins. In cleansing, he aids and helps keep us from sinning again.

**F. (READ 1:10) THE GNOSTIC'S THIRD MISTAKE – THEY DENIED GOD TO AVOID THE GUILT OF THEIR SIN.**

1. God calls right righteous, and wrong sin.
2. To deny sin by calling wrong right is to deny God!

1. God forgives sin. He does not permit sin.

a. God does not allow sin – even for a Christian.

b. God does not condone sin – even for a Christian.

c. God does forgive sin – only for the Christian because of the weakness of the flesh.

2. Yet there are some who say, "I have not sinned, that is just my weakness God allows!"

a. That makes God a liar because he did not provide grace so that we could sin more and more.

b. We have an obligation after admitting sin, (That's confession) to correct it (That's repentance)

**Summary of 1 John 1:5-10 (3 mistakes of the Gnostics)**

1. **Bad – We are liars if we say we fellowship with God but walk in darkness.**
2. **Worse – If we deny or forget and neglect our sinfulness, we deceive ourselves.**
3. **Worst – If we condone sin by God's grace, we have made God a liar. That is the worst mistake.**

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LESSON FOUR: 2:1-6

Southgate Church of Christ

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Review:

1. What was the major false teaching in the church called which occurred in that day?
2. What are the three major areas John will discuss?
3. Name the three mistakes the false teachers made and the two corrections John said was needed in chapter one: There is no distinction between light and darkness! Walk in the light! They denied their own sinfulness! Confess your sins! They denied God trying to avoid guilt for sins.

**TEXT:**

## **I. JOHN'S RIGHT TO WRITE (1:1-4).**

## **II. GOD IS LIGHT (1:5 – 2:27).**

- A. (1:5) GOD IS LIGHT, NOT DARKNESS!**
- B. (1:6) THE GNOSTIC'S FIRST MISTAKE: "NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARKNESS."**
- C. (1:7) THE CORRECTION NEEDED: "WALK IN THE LIGHT!"**
- D. (1:8) THE GNOSTIC'S SECOND MISTAKE: THEY DENIED THEIR OWN SINFULNESS.**
- E. (1:9) CORRECTION NEEDED: "CONFESS YOUR SINS!"**
- F. (1:10) THE GNOSTIC'S THIRD MISTAKE: THEY DENIED GOD BY AVOIDING GUILT THROUGH DENIAL OF SIN.**
- G. (READ 2:1-2) GOD'S PURPOSE FOR GRACE.**

1. John is trying to handle two extremes of thought concerning sin.
  - a. The **first** extreme: Sin is constantly present in my life no matter how hard I try. I might as well give up!
    - 1) This person sees God's commandments as a basis of man's relationship to God, and he becomes so despondent with himself that he says, "I can't keep it; I give up!"
    - 2) This person is a legalist and he needs to understand grace.
      - a) God loved us when we were sinners.
      - b) If He will take you at your worst, He will take you.



- c) But God does not leave you in sin, but helps through Christ to guide you out of the cesspool of sin.
- d) Therefore, God's love is not dependent upon our performance in keeping His commandments.
- e) Our works of service and keeping of commandments is an expression of our love back to Him...not a measuring rod of acceptance, but a measuring rod of devotion.
- f) Without it faith is dead!

b. The **second** extreme: Since sin is handled by the blood of Jesus, grace has turned sin into a minor thing; so I can give over to it...don't worry about it!

- 1) This person has taken God's grace to be a license to sin. **Read Rom. 6:1.** To him God's grace gets him off!
- 2) This person needs also to understand grace. He needs to understand the purpose of grace.
  - a) Grace does not make provision for our sin, its purpose is to eliminate our sin.
  - b) Grace does not get us off because of our sin, it creates fellowship with God so we can return to God from whence we have strayed.
    - 1] Grace restores.
    - 2] Grace heals.
    - 3] Grace forgives.
    - 4] Grace makes us servants of God.

2. The availability of pardon is not an encouragement to sin.

a. We have fellowship with God which includes forgiveness. This fellowship should not be abused.

- 1) God did not save us so we could sin.
- 2) God saved us so that we could become useful to God as His servants.
  - a) Paul said in **Rom. 6** that we are to be dead to our will and to sin.
  - b) He also said that we are able to be alive and to do God's will.

b. What did Jesus come to do? If we can know his purpose, we can know grace's purpose.

- 1) **Lk. 19:10** He came to save sinners!
- 2) **1 John 3:8** He came to destroy the works of the devil!
  - a) Where does Jesus destroy the Devil's work?
  - b) In our lives...in our bodies.

3) What's the purpose of forgiveness, for grace? **"That we might not sin..."**

3. We are against sin. To establish a relationship between man and God forgives sin and reckons righteousness because of faith through grace. Otherwise God's holiness would destroy us as we draw near to Him in His true nature. Grace provides us with Christ's righteousness we wear like a cloak till God rids us off all unrighteousness through faith in Jesus and ultimately our own death.

a. **"My little children"** = believers. Those who are children of John in the gospel... **"Not for ours only"...**

- 1) "Us" and "we" = Christians
- 2) John is writing to Christians about their difficulties.
- 3) He is not telling people what to do to be saved anywhere in 1 John.
- 4) He is telling saved people what to do to stay that way.

b. **"Whole world"** = non-Christians. Christ can even save them, but John doesn't go into the how here.

c. When we sin, Jesus is our advocate.

1) Advocate = one called to the aid of another, generally, one who pleads another's cause, an intercessor (Greek: One who stands beside).

a) Illustration of not having to stand alone...in the principal's office.

b) We do not have to face the wrath of God on judgment day. **John 3:18** Because Christ has stood and will stand in our place. (He has asked us to stand in His place now.)

c) This gives boldness in the face of judgment knowing who will stand with us, **1 John 4:17!**

d. Not only is Christ our advocate, He is also our propitiation for our sins.

1) Christ does not go before God empty handed. He also provides sin's propitiation.

2) Propitiation = "Satisfaction, deed of gift that removes wrath."

a) Christ's death for sin satisfies God's wrath.

b) If Christ stands with us, we stand forgiven.

1] Are we standing now with Jesus? That's the question we need to ask!

2] There is no such thing as an unforgiven sin to a faithful Christian.

3] Christians are cleansed from all sin (**1 John 1:7**) if we walk in the light. (How much is all?).

3) **"The wages of sin is death"** (Rom. 6:23).

4) Christians are **"buried with Christ through baptism into death"** (**Rom. 6:4**).

- 5) Who paid the debt?
4. The propitiation of Christ is how powerful?
  - a. Enough to save the whole world?
  - b. Does this say that the whole world will be saved?
  - c. What does it say?
  - d. Does anyone need to be lost?
  - e. Can anyone be saved?

**H. (2:3-6) WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO KNOW THIS LAWYER WHO SAVES? WE CAN KNOW WE ARE IN CHRIST!**

1. **(READ 2:3)** If we keep Christ's commandments.
  - a. A person who knows Christ will know Christ's will and keep His commandments.
  - b. Christ will stand with us if we stand with Him now. Matt. 10:28-33, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. 'Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.'"
2. **(READ 2:4)** The Gnostics boasted of their superior knowledge (Gnosis) and spiritual insight. They maintained their acquaintance with Christ despite the fact that they did not keep His commandments. The verbs in the Greek text are in the present tense. He who keeps on saying, "I know Him and yet continues not keeping His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him."
  - a. If knowledge (true knowledge) of God brings salvation (**Heb. 8:8-13**), then ignorance brings damnation. (**2 Thess. 1:7-8**).
    - 1) Hebrews 8:12-13, "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach one another or say to each other, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest."
    - 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8, "For it is indeed just of God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to the afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus."
  - b. The test of true knowledge is the things we do. (**Lk. 6:46; Tit. 1:16**) "Look at your life...you can know!"

3. (READ 2:5a) The love of God is perfected in us when we respond to that love by keeping his commandments.
  - a. God loved us so much that he saved us...Salvation is a gift of God's love. **John 3:16**
    - 1) Christ saves us by fulfilling the law's requirements. **Rom. 8:3-4**
    - 2) Christ did for us what we were unable to do for ourselves.
  - b. God's love perfected IS in us by keeping His commandments; we are those "...who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."
4. (READ 2:5b) We can know we are in Christ by keeping Christ's commandments in response to God's love.
  - a. Remember that commandment keeping is not to measure our acceptance by God. God loved us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8).
  - b. Our love compels us to walk where Jesus walked...love compels as Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:14, "Christ's love compels us..."
5. (READ 2:6) If we abide in Christ (John is) we should walk as Christ walked.
  - a. How did Christ walk?
  - b. He walked with a heart that wanted to obey His Father more than he wanted to do his own will. (The prayer of Christ in the garden.)
    - 1) You and I cannot obey the commandments as Christ did.
    - 2) But we "ought" to and we can want to, which will lead to spiritual growth.
  - c. It all hangs on the intent of the heart.
  - d. How can we know if we have a personal relationship with Jesus?
    - 1) What is your relationship to the will of God? How do you feel about God's will?
    - 2) From the heart of God came salvation through love. God said with actions, "I love you!"
    - 3) Our response should be, "I love you, too," which will be substantiated by our actions through obedience to the commands of God. How will God know we love him?
    - 4) Sinless perfection is impossible on our part. It is not required—God provides it through Christ.
    - 5) What God wants from us is a visible response from the heart!

e. The Gnostic teachers claimed to know Christ better than others, but John says, “If that is true, then why do you do the things Jesus would never do...why do you go where He would never go!”

### **John’s Gospel Cycle on True Knowledge**

**2:3-6**

**Contrast verse 4**

**The Gnostic False teachers made a claim to superior knowledge and spiritual insight, but they did not love the brethren, and they did not keep Christ’s commands. The conclusion John draws is that the brethren had a superior knowledge to the Gnostic teachers. Theirs was true knowledge, and the false teacher’s was a perverted knowledge.**

**1 John 1:3-6**

# The Epistle of 1st John

LESSON FIVE: 2:7-17

Southgate Church of Christ

by Milt Langston

## Review:

- 1. What was the major false teaching in the church called which occurred in that day? What is it like which is present today?
- 2. What are the three major areas John will discuss?
- 3. Name the three mistakes the false teachers made and the two corrections John said was needed in chapter one:

There is no distinction between light and darkness

Walk in the light!

They denied their own sinful nature!

Confess your sins!

They denied their own individual sins.

- 4. What is the purpose of grace?
- 5. How can we know if Jesus stands with us or not? (Are we standing with him?) Keeping God's commandments!
  - a. How did God show that he loved us?
  - b. How do we show Him we love Him?

## TEXT:

### I. JOHN'S RIGHT TO WRITE (1:1-4).

### II. GOD IS LIGHT (1:5 - 2:27).

- A. (1:5) GOD IS LIGHT, NOT DARKNESS!
- B. (1:6) THE GNOSTIC'S FIRST MISTAKE: "NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARKNESS."
- C. (1:7) THE CORRECTION NEEDED: "WALK IN THE LIGHT!"
- D. (1:8) THE GNOSTIC'S SECOND MISTAKE: THEY DENIED THEIR OWN SINFULNESS.
- E. (1:9) CORRECTION NEEDED: "CONFESS YOUR SINS!"

- F. (1:10) THE GNOSTIC'S THIRD MISTAKE: THEY DENIED GOD BY AVOIDING GUILT THROUGH DENIAL OF SIN.
- G. (2:1-2) GOD'S PURPOSE FOR GRACE.
- H. (2:3-6) HOW TO KNOW WE ABIDE IN JESUS.
- I. (2:7-8) THE OLD AND NEW COMMANDMENTS (JOHN IS LAYING A FOUNDATION HERE FOR HIS NEXT POINT STARTING IN VERSE 9).
  - 1. This commandment is both old and new. It is not fresh (new) in that it is not the first time it has been given. It is (fresh) new in that it indicates a new relationship to Christ.
    - a. John is not giving new significance to an old commandment because he is not giving a new commandment.
    - b. But it is new because of Jesus, "...in Him."
    - c. So on one sense this command to love is old, and in another it is new.
  - 2. (READ 2:7) It is not new because it was given by Christ recorded in John 13:34, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."
    - a. John calls it an "old commandment." It is old because Christ gave it 60 years of so before, but it is also new (v.8) because it expanded on the O.T. idea of loving your neighbor as yourself.
    - b. There are two words for "old"
      - 1) "Palaios" = Old like an old man.
      - 2) "Arche" = Ages old, archaic, decaying.
    - c. The text uses "palaios" not "arche".
    - d. In verse 7 & 8 the old and new commandment is the same love. Man's understanding of it, however; is now new with the revelation of Christ's death.
  - 3. (READ 2:8a) The new commandment - "Kainos" = "New in kind."
    - a. This old commandment of Christ was new when He commanded it in John's day. In this sense it is a new commandment.
      - 1) The Old Testament (Levitical) said...
        - a) Love your neighbors as you love yourself.

- b) O.T. Principal: Love others with as much fervor as you love yourself.
- 2) Love was given a fresh relationship in Christianity.
- b. N.T. Principal: Love others even better than you love yourself. Phil. 2:2-4, "...make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others."
- c. Through Christ love took on a depth that was never known before.
- 4. Tying this in with what John has already said, in verse 6 we are told to walk as Jesus walked.
  - a. Jesus walked in love and He was light.
  - b. Therefore, If we walk in the light, we must also walk in love!
  - c. Notice this new commandment "...is true in Him and in you..."
    - 1) Jesus demonstrated love as it should be...It was something old made "new" in that sense.
    - 2) We practice this love through our obedience to Christ. This also is "new" in concept.
- 5. (2:8b) "Darkness is passing away and the true light already shineth." The defeat of darkness is in process now.
  - a. This is not true of the world, but it is true of we who are Christians. John 3:18-20, "Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed."
  - b. Darkness recedes in the life of a Christian. It passes away as more and more light is added. John 8:12, "Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.'"



- c. Everywhere a Christian goes, he dispels darkness by his light, which is the light of Christ. That's why Jesus said in Matt. 5:14-16, "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."
- J. **(2:9-11) LOVE IS A TEST OF ENLIGHTENMENT! JOHN HAS ALREADY LAID DOWN THE FOUNDATION FOR THIS TRUTH. HE HAS SHOWN THAT THE BASIC (OLD AND NEW) COMMANDMENT OF CHRIST WAS AND IS LOVE...THIS IS CHRIST'S LIGHT!**
  - 1. **(READ 2:9)** The man who hates is in darkness, not the light!
    - a. Some were saying that they walked in the light.
      - 1) These were false teachers.
      - 2) The Gnostics of John's day were kind of like the Humanists of today.
        - a) John is saying, "What they say is not true".
        - b) They misunderstood even the basic knowledge of Christ.
    - b. That basic was love, and the person who hates is in darkness, not light regardless of how enlightened he claims to be!
      - 1) God is light. 1 John 1:5.
      - 2) God is also love. 1 John 4:8.
      - 3) Hate ≠ Light because Light = Love
  - 2. **(READ 2:10)** Abiding in the light.
    - a. He that loves his brother abides in the light.
      - 1) Abiding in the light or being enlightened is manifested by a loving relationship with your brethren.
      - 2) What about a brother who hates another brother?
    - b. The proof of this statement has already been established: Light = Love.
      - 1) To love = light, knowledge, enlightenment.
      - 2) To hate = darkness, ignorance, deception.

- c. The result of abiding in the light or loving your brother: "There is no occasion of stumbling"
  - 1) Loving the brethren is a deterrent to sin.
  - 2) It is very hard to sin against a brother or someone you love as yourself.
    - a) If you study God's word with him.
    - b) If you pray with him for the lost.
    - c) If you make yourself his servant. The love of Christ is the love of the towel.
    - d) It is difficult to hate this brother.
- 3. (READ 2:11) Hatred is the evidence of darkness.
  - a. Hatred = "miso" = "a malicious and unjustifiable feeling towards others". (vine).
  - b. Love = "Agape" = An active good will toward others.
  - c. Love = Light.
  - d. Hate = Darkness.
- K. (2:12-14) John's reason to write is to show that sins are forgiven.
  - 1. (READ 2:12) Our sins are forgiven for Christ's namesake.
    - a. John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
    - b. Acts 4:12, "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved."
  - 2. (READ 2:13-14) Commandments to Christians of different levels of maturity. All are to increase in their knowledge of God, "After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent' (John 17:1-3).
    - a. He addresses fathers, young men, and little children.
      - 1) Fathers know him from the beginning.

- a) John 1:1 Jesus is the Word from the beginning.
- b) How do we know Jesus today?
- 2) Young men overcome the evil one (2:14b).
  - a) They are strong in the faith.
  - b) The word of God abides in them (What is the result of God's word in us?)
  - c) Therefore, they overcome the evil one.
- 3) Little children know the father (2:13b).
  - a) Little children = to everyone John wrote this book: his converts; younger Christians.
  - b) According to John 17:1-3, how do we know the Father? (by knowing the Son).
  - c) How do we know the Son?
  - d) How do we get a strong faith? John 17:17.

**Three great gifts of God are seen in verses 12-14**

- 1. **Forgiveness of sins---why? (For Christ's namesake)**
- 2. **An increasing knowledge of God---how? (Knowing Christ-the word)**
- 3. **Victorious strength---what's the result? We will overcome the evil one---This is the true light of life!**
- L. **(2:15-17) THE WRONG KIND OF LOVE.**
  - 1. **(READ 2:15a)** We should not love the world.
    - a. What is the "world"?
      - 1) It is not the earth; not the beauties of God's creation.
        - a) God created the world and the things in it---"It was good".
        - b) God created man and it was "very good!"
        - c) Since man is God's creature, if we do not love man, we do not know God!
      - 2) We are not to love the world that Satan and man have made through rebellion!

- a) Satan is the prince of the world. John 14:30-31.
  - b) He does not rule God's creation.
    - 1] Jesus rules the world. Acts 2:29-36.
    - 2] Even Satan is under his rule. 1 Corinthians 15:25-28.
  - c) Satan has a dominion and rule but he rules by the lust of the flesh, eyes, and the pride of life.
- b. The "world" is then the dominion of Satan---who rules through deception---God allows Satan to deceive man.
- 2. (READ 2:15b) We are also not to love the things of this world.
- a. The things of this world have their origin in Satan's deception.
  - b. They are designated as:
    - 1) The lust of the flesh - carnal desires.
    - 2) The lust of the eyes - desires awakened through the appeal of objects of sight.
    - 3) The vainglory of life - vanity, pride, worldly honor.
  - c. This was exactly the course Satan used to seduce Eve. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food (the lust of the flesh), and that it was a delight to the eye (the lust of the eyes), and that the tree was to be desired to make thee wise (the vainglory of life)."
  - d. We can love everything that is not controlled by the lust of the flesh, eyes, and vainglory of life.
  - e. We cannot love the devil; it is impossible; he is the world.
- 3. (READ 2:15c) To love the world ≠ to love God. (You can bank on it!).
- a. No such thing as a holy devil! Or heavenly devil!
  - b. No such thing as a sinful Christian! Or a worldly Christian!
- 4. (READ 2:16) The nature of the world.
- a. The lust of the flesh = natural, physical appetites of the body (adultery, gluttony, drunkenness, etc. All physical in nature).

- b. Lust of the eyes = esthetical appetites, the appetite of the mind (wealth, dress, art, etc.)
  - c. Pride of vainglory of life = "alzoneia" (Greek) = pretentious egotism, the braggart.
  - d. The monks tried to escape the world by withdrawing.
    - 1) They tried to withdraw from the lust of the flesh by taking a vow of chastity.
    - 2) They tried to withdraw from the lust of the eyes by taking a vow of poverty.
    - 3) They tried to withdraw from the vainglory of life by taking a vow of obedience.
    - 4) Vows will not get the job done---
  - e. We can stop loving the things of this world---only by loving the things of God more.
- 5. (**READ 2:17**) Why shouldn't we love the world?
- a. Because we are disciples of Jesus. **John 17:14-17.**
  - b. Because our bodies belong to Christ. **1 Cor. 6:19-20.**
  - c. Because we are members with the angels of the church of Christ. **Heb. 12:18-29.**
  - d. Because of heaven, it is our new home. **1 John 3:1-3, Phil 3:20-21.**
  - e. Because of the world's nature. **2:17, 2 Pet 3:10-13.**

# The Epistle of 1st John

Lesson Six: 2:18-27

Southgate Church of Christ

by Milt Langston

Review:

1. What was the major false teaching in the church called which occurred in that day? What is it like which is present today?
2. What are the three major areas John will discuss?
3. Name the three mistakes the false teachers made and the two corrections John said was needed in chapter one:

"There is no distinction between light and darkness"

Walk in the light!

They denied their own sinfulness!

Confess your sins!

They denied God trying to avoid guilt for their own individual sins.

1. What is the purpose of grace?
2. How can we know if Jesus stands with us or not? (Are we standing with him?) Keeping God's commandments!
3. How did God show that he loved us?
4. How do we show Him we love Him?
5. What is the old-new commandment?
6. How can we know we are walking in the light?
7. How can we keep from loving the world too much?

**TEXT:**

## **I. JOHN'S RIGHT TO WRITE (1:1-4)**

## **II. GOD IS LIGHT (1:5 - 2:27)**

- A. **(1:5) GOD IS LIGHT, NOT DARKNESS!**
- B. **(1:6) THE GNOSTIC'S FIRST MISTAKE: "NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARKNESS."**
- C. **(1:7) THE CORRECTION NEEDED: "WALK IN THE LIGHT!"**
- D. **(1:8) THE GNOSTIC'S SECOND MISTAKE: THEY DENIED THEIR OWN SINFULNESS.**

- E. (1:9) CORRECTION NEEDED: "CONFESS YOUR SINS!"
- F. (1:10) THE GNOSTIC'S THIRD MISTAKE: THEY DENIED GOD BY AVOIDING GUILT THROUGH DENIAL OF SIN.
- G. (2:1-2) GOD'S PURPOSE FOR GRACE.
- H. (2:3-6) HOW TO KNOW WE ABIDE IN JESUS.
  
- I. (2:7-8) THE OLD AND THE NEW COMMANDMENTS.
- J. (2:9-11) LOVE = THE TEST OF ENLIGHTENMENT.
- K. (2:12-14) JOHN WRITES TO SHOW THAT A CHRISTIAN'S SINS ARE FORGIVEN.
- L. (2:15-27) THE WRONG KIND OF LOVE.
- M. THE ANOINTING (2:18-27)
  
- 1. (READ 2:18a) The last hour.
  - a. In the Old and the New Testament, a last time was a climatic pregnant time of change.
    - 1) When nations became wicked, God spoke to the people of judgment during the last days. "For I know that after my death you will act corruptly and turn from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days, for you will do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger with the work of your hands." (Deut. 31:29). "Now it will come about that In the last days, The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it." (Isaiah 2:2). "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." (Hebrews 1:1-2).
      - a) I don't think that is what is being said here---it is not talking about Jerusalem's destruction because this book was written after Jerusalem's fall---it is not talking of the end of the world because it has been centuries since it was written.
      - b) It is the last hour because of verse 17, where John says, "...The world passeth away, and the lust thereof..." ∴, It is the last hour.
    - 2) John uses this term of a coming "hour" frequently to refer to a time of traumatic change.
      - a) "Jesus said\* to her, 'Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father...an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father

in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers." (John 4:21, 23).

•b) "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live....Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice" (John 5:25, 28).

•c) "They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God....But these things I have spoken to you, that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you" (John 16:2, 4).

•3) This "last hour" term used in scripture is a pregnant hour because:

- a) It is a moment of great expectancy.
- b) It is a time of great pain. (Child-bearing)
- c) It is a time of change.
- d) Look what is about to happen in the church? ( **Acts 20, 1 Tim. 4**)

•b. There was a last hour for Israel.

•c. There was a last hour for Judah.

•d. There was a last hour for Jerusalem.

•e. There was a last hour for Rome.

•f. There was a last hour for Nazi Germany.

•g. John is saying, brethren, it is last hour time.

•1) The anti-Christ's are here changing things they have no business changing.

•2) Apostasy is predicted and approaching.

•3) John says the truth is being changed for a lie.

•4) The characteristic of these times is turmoil.

•5) The apostasy of this "last hour" is seen in other passages as well. **1 Tim. 4:1-4, 2 Tim. 3:1-9, 4:1-5; 2 Thes. 2:1-12.**

•2. **(2:18b-19)** The characteristics of those of this age.

•a. **(READ 2:18b)** They know it is the last hour because many anti-Christ's are gone out!

•1) They are characterized as liars and those who deny the deity of Christ. (They are who?)



- 2) The anti-Christ is the fellow who says, "Jesus is not the Christ". Every modernist is the anti-Christ.
  - 3) The anti-Christ denies the deity of Christ whether by word or by deed.
  - 4) Are we living in a "last hour" type of time today? Look at the people today who deny the deity of Christ. They are the anti-Christ.
- b. **(READ 2:19)** They went out from us, but they are not of us.
- 1) Three times he says, "**They went out from us.**"
  - 2) Three times he says, "**They are not of us.**"
  - 3) There are many friends, if we will note, who are getting closer year by year to leaving the church.
    - a) The characteristic is that a lot of people were leaving the church. It was a last hour time.
    - b) Today many have progressed to the point where the church is too old fashioned for them...the strict adherence to scripture has become too confining and outdated.
  - 4) The characteristics of the anti-Christ are still around today.
    - a) They do not love the brethren.
    - b) They talk about walking in the light but embrace many social sins publicly.
    - c) In debate, in bulletin, in preaching, they defend Christ, but in practice, they deny him.
- 3. **(2:20-27)** Three safeguards against the evil of the anti-Christ.
- a. **(READ 2:20 & 27)** **The spirit of God** is a safeguard against false teachings. (Paul says it this way in 1 Corinthians 6:11, "**And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.**")
    - 1) There is a play on words being used here which we cannot see in English. We get words like charisma or charismatic from this same play on words.
      - a) Christ = the anointed one.
      - b) The anti-Christ were those with out anointing.
        - 1] They are the very ones who claimed to have this special charisma or knowledge from God.
        - 2] It was a "I know better than you" kind of attitude.

- 3] As you know this prideful attitude is still alive and well in our times today!
- c) John here tells us that all Christians have an anointing. The apostle Paul said it this way in 2 Corinthians 1:21, "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God."
- 2) The spirit of God anoints us, but the spirit anoints us through the word.
  - a) The spirit's sword is the word of God. **Eph. 6:17.**
  - b) **1 Corinthians 2:6-16** Prophetic inspiration gave New Testament writers all the insight of God's Spirit in the form of written words. These you and I have even today!
  - c) The spirit guided the apostles into all the truth (**John 16:12-13**) The spirit taught the apostles everything Jesus said (**John 14:25-26**)
  - d) Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free..." **John 8:32** Later he said to God, "Your word is truth." The sword of the spirit is the word, yet the word would have no life with out the Spirit. Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." (John 6:63).
- 3) The judge of the truth is the spirit of God through his revealed word!
- b. **(READ 2:21-24)** The word of God provided by the spirit of God is a safeguard against false teaching.
  - 1) The word gives knowledge to all and it gives us all knowledge.
  - 2) These Christians already knew the truth because the word dwelt in them.
    - a) The word teaches us all things. We can know the truth.
    - b) The word is true and infallible.
    - c) The word dwells in us. **Jer. 31:31-34, Heb. 8:8-10.** It is written in our hearts and on our minds!
  - 3) If God's word abides in us, God and Jesus abide in us!
- c. **(READ 2:25-27)** The giving of eternal life (God's life) is a safeguard against the last hour.
  - 1) John says, I've seen him, I've heard him, I beheld him, I knew him, so I'm telling you to hear him through your anointing."
  - 2) He says, don't listen to those Gnostics, these Humanists, you have an anointing, listen to it. You have something that abides in you, the truth, listen to it! Abide in the truth and you abide in eternal life.

•4. John, in this section, is coining a term used by the Gnostic heretics to refute their error. The Gnostics claimed a special anointing—a special "chrisma" which they claimed came from God making themselves special apostles with an inspired message. 2 Corinthians 10:12, 11:13-15; Rev. 2:2; 2 Pet 2:1-3.

•a. Here's an excerpt from a guy named Hippolytus who was a Gnostic: "We alone of all men are Christian who complete the mystery of the 3<sup>rd</sup> portal and are anointed there with speechless chrisma." (Philosophuma, Vol. 9, pages 121-122)

•b. John is saying, the word of God is sufficient for all and there are no private or exclusive revelations. **Matt. 15:9; Acts 20:30; 1 Cor. 4:6; Gal. 1:6-9; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:28; Heb. 1:1; Gal 3:15; 2 Tim. 3:14-16; 2 Pet. 1:3, 20-2:3; Jude 3; Rev. 22: 18-19.**

# The Epistle of 1st John

Lesson Seven: 2:28-3:3

Southgate Church of Christ

by Milt Langston

Review:

1. What was the major false teaching in the church called which occurred in that day? What is it like which is present today?
2. What are the three major areas John will discuss? (light, love, life)
3. Name the three mistakes the false teachers made and the two corrections John said was needed in chapter one:

"There is no distinction between light and darkness"

Walk in the light!

They denied their own sinfulness!

Confess your sins!

They denied God to avoid the guilt of their own individual sins.

1. What is the purpose of grace?
2. How can we know if Jesus stands with us or not? (Are we standing with him?) Keeping God's commandments!
3. How did God show that he loved us?
4. How do we show Him we love Him?
5. What is the old-new commandment?
6. How can we know we are walking in the light? (Love we have for others)
7. How can we keep from loving the world too much? (Love God more)
8. Does God bless one group of people with more knowledge? (No) What has God given to all Christians equally? (His anointing)

**TEXT:**

**I. JOHN'S RIGHT TO WRITE (1:1-4).**

**II. GOD IS LIGHT (1:5 - 2:27).**

**III. GOD IS LOVE (2:28-5:12).**

•A. **(2:28-3:3) THE APPROACHING LIFE.**

- 1. **(READ 2:38)** Christ's coming and our confidence.

- a. The Gnostics thought that when Jesus came they would be bold and unashamed because of what they knew---because of how well they had figured things out.
  - 1) The Greeks were very inquisitive people---they were constantly in quest for knowledge---they wanted to understand---read Plato, Aristotle, and them--- Contrast faith---faith of Abraham---sheep?
  - 2) When they met Christianity, they thought they had the answer so they tried to fit their philosophies into Christianity.
  - 3) They worshipped knowledge.
    - a) Then they glorified in how much they knew.
    - b) They thought they had it all figured out.
    - c) This spirit is not dead today. Consider the Humanist movement today.
- b. John says that boldness and confidence does not come from knowledge. When Christ comes, boldness will come from dwelling and abiding in Him!
  - 1) Example: Suppose Brother A, who has lived a long life of sin and self gratification, learns about Jesus tonight and is baptized. Suppose Sister B was baptized years ago and she has learned a lot from God's word. She knows volumes more than Brother A, who knows only enough to be saved. Now, suppose both of them die tomorrow.
    - a) Knowledge will not make a difference.
    - b) Our confidence comes from being in Christ.
  - 2) To abide = to take up permanent residence.
    - a) Not only do we come to Jesus, but we stay in Jesus.
    - b) Coming home to Christ indicates not only accepting Christ, but also being faithful to him.
- c. John says, "Your confidence, your boldness is in Christ".
  - 1) Jesus lived and died for us.
  - 2) **Gal. 3:27** His life has become our outer garment. This gives us boldness and confidence.
  - 3) What is our obligation to Jesus now?
  - 4) Do we worry about death?
  - 5) Where is our confidence?
- 2. (READ 2:29) Christ's coming and our new birth.
  - a. When the righteous Jesus returns, He will know His own by their righteousness.

- 1) The Christian knows that Jesus is righteous.
  - a) Who does the Christian live for? Jesus
  - b) If the Christian lives for righteous Jesus, how does he endeavor to live? Righteously.
  - c) What about the Gnostic who claimed to know Jesus, but practiced unrighteousness? He does not know Him.
- 2) Again, what was the purpose of grace found in **1 John 2:1**? So that we will not live in sin. Therefore, the life of a Christian is a righteous life.
  - a) By our righteousness we can know we have been begotten of God and that we are children of God.
  - b) Our righteousness is the fruit of our salvation for who? For us or for God? **Eph. 2:8-10**
- b. How do we know if we have been born again? We know because we abide in Christ (we depend on Christ) and because we live righteously.
  - 1) What about the person who says, "I'm saved by grace", but he lives for Satan? He's not abiding in Christ though he says so!
  - 2) How do we know? Because a man's righteousness shows that he has been born again.
- c. Where is our confidence: Is it in our righteousness, or in our abiding? Our confidence is in Christ's righteousness and that is why we abide in him.
- d. If you look, you should see my righteousness. But if you look close, you will also see me sin. That is beside the point. I'm still living righteously.
  - 1) It is a matter of life, not the deeds of life.
  - 2) If it were a matter of the deeds of life, with each individual deed considered as the totality of life, then "there is none righteous, no not so much as one. There is none that doeth good, al have turned aside to do evil..." **Rom. 3:10-12** But as you go on in Romans, it also says:
    - 3) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." **Rom. 8:1**
      - a) The foundation and basis of Christian righteousness is Jesus' righteousness. **2 Cor. 5:21**
      - b) And the by-product of his righteousness is our own righteousness that we produce in Christ.
      - c) But if we belong to Christ and know Him and in knowing Him obey His commandments thereby producing righteousness, whose righteousness is it really?
        - 1] It is not ours for we belong to Him!

- 2] It is His produced by Him in us and through us!
- 3] What an honor!
- 3. (READ 3:1) Christ's coming and our new relationship.
  - a. "Behold" = "emblepo" = "to study with intensive care; to behold; look here."
    - 1) John is saying, "Look here at what I am saying," or "Pay attention!"
    - 2) John uses this very strong word showing that he considers this as one of the most important points of this epistle.
  - b. Our new relationship is as children of God.
    - 1) God was not known as a father until Jesus came.
    - 2) Now we call him Father. Why? Because through our new birth we are adopted children of God. **Rom. 8:12-17** (Isn't that what John said in **2:29**?)
    - 3) John is emphasizing our family relationship with God.
  - c. Look at John's argument so far. He is dealing with immature Christians who have come to doubt their salvation by falling prey to the teaching of the false teachers. (Gnostics taught a salvation by works of merit.)
    - 1) Major premise #1 - Are you abiding in Christ? (Yes)
    - 2) " " #2 - Are you begotten of God? (Yes)
    - 3) " " #3 - Are you a child of God? (Yes)
    - 4) Conclusion: Don't worry about Christ's second coming.
      - a) Are there degrees of punishment in hell?
      - b) If you are in Christ - don't you worry about it?
- 4. (READ 3:2) Christ's coming and our change.
  - a. If being begotten of God makes us children of God, then three times in three verses John says we're "children of God".
  - b. Now he says that what we are going to be changed to is not as clear as what we are.
    - 1) He says, "I can understand what we are now---we're children of God".
    - 2) "But it is not completely manifest what we will be..."
  - c. What is manifest is that we will be like Jesus!
    - 1) When Jesus manifests his new eternal life when He returns...we will be changed as He is!
    - 2) We will see Jesus as he is.

- a) Jesus is our forerunner (illustration of bushmen burying gourds of water) --- "Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God' (in the scroll of the book it is written of me)." When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:5-10).

- 1] Jesus did God's will which is more important than sacrifices and offerings to God. It is more pleasing to God to honor His desires than it is to try to appease Him with rituals of worship.

- 2] And Jesus' body, which is the church, now serves to do the Father's will through us.

- 3] Jesus did what we could not do, and now enables us to continue His work.

- b) As Jesus is now---we will be someday, and we are now becoming.

- c) Someday we will be like Jesus-total transformation!

•5. (READ 3:3) Christ's coming gives us our present attitude.

- a. Our hope of the future leads to purity.

- 1) Remember what John said:

- a) What is the purpose of grace in **2:1**? (No sin)

- b) Now, what is the purpose of hope in **3:3**? (Purity)

- 2) John says, "Your purity is a result of God, not a result of your own efforts!" (To say that does not mean we don't put forth an effort because we do! But our trust is in God.)

- 3) Look at what John has said:

- a) We abide in Christ **vs. 2:28**

- b) Because we abide in the light, we live a righteous life---our confidence in Christ leads us to works of righteousness. (For who? By whom?) **vs. 2:29**

- c) Because we abide in Christ, we're called children of God **vs. 3:1**

- d) Because we're God's children, we will be changed to be like Him when Christ returns **vs. 3:2**

- e) Conclusion: Everyone with this hope purifies himself as Christ is pure.



- b. We are not pure by what we do. We are pure by whom we trust!
  - 1) Yes, we do works of righteousness, **2:29; Eph. 2:8-10** but that is not what makes us pure **Rom. 3:23.**
    - a) This can be said of Abraham, David, and all the heroes of faith.
    - b) God reckons men as righteous because of their trust in Him, **Romans 4:22-24.**
  - 2) Unless we realize that God is dealing with us as children, we are not going to get rid of this pride that keeps us from relying on Jesus. Only pride will keep us from relying on Jesus. "**Blessed are the poor in spirit.**"
  - 3) Remember why John is writing this. He is writing so we will not sin. He is trying to hinder sin. Abiding in Christ hinders sin.
  - 4) John is giving the only reason that will keep us from sinning. He is giving the only motivation that is strong enough to overcome the terrible pull of sin. That motivation is the love of God. John says God loves us more than we love ourselves. God loves our children more than we love them! Love is the only motivation that will cause a man to live a righteous life.
    - a) Why will I submit to the will of God? Why will I obey the command of God when it is very hard to do so? Because I know God loves me!
    - b) My righteousness, then, comes from God because He loved me.
- c. We know God loves us so much that one day he is going to make us like his own son. So great a love demands a great response from us.
  - 1) God's word, his authority commands us to follow God.
  - 2) And God's great giving love demands us to do our best! God's word commands, but God's love demands!
    - a) Every work of righteousness is born of God's love. Why do we obey God?
    - b) We purify ourselves, not others. We have to run our own race. You and God are the only two people who matter in Christianity and you exist to serve others.
- d. Our attitude = Purity

# The Epistle of 1st John

LESSON EIGHT: 3:4-10

Southgate Church of Christ

by Milt Langston

## Review:

- 1. What was the major false teaching in the church called which occurred in that day?
- 2. What are the three major areas John will discuss? (light, love, life)
- 3. Name the three mistakes the false teachers made and the two corrections John said was needed in chapter one:

"There is no distinction between light and darkness"

Walk in the light!

They denied their own sinfulness!

Confess your sins!

They continued to hide their guilt and deny sin individual sins.

It resulted in mocking God. Attempted to made God a liar.

- 4. What is the purpose of grace?
- 5. How can we know we know God?
- 6. What is the old & new commandment?
- 7. How can we know we are walking in the light? (Love we have for others)
- 8. How can we keep from loving the world too much? (Love God more)
- 9. Does God bless one group of people with more knowledge? (No) What has God given to all Christians equally? (His anointing)
- 10. What is the motivation of our purity? (God's love)

## TEXT:

### I. JOHN'S RIGHT TO WRITE (1:1-4).

### II. GOD IS LIGHT (1:5 - 2:27).

### III. GOD IS LOVE (2:28-5:12).

- A. (3:28-3:3) LOVE AND THE APPROACHING LIFE.
- B. (3:4-10) LOVE AND THE CONQUERING LIFE.
  - 1. (READ 3:4) Sin is unlawful.

•a. **Rom. 7:5-6, 10-17, 25b.** Man can with his mind serve God because of God's grace, but the flesh is constantly at war with our mind and with our heart. Therefore, God gives every Christian a conquering life. This new spiritual life helps us conquer self making us more and more under God's control.

•1) You are your own worst enemy. Why do we want to do what's right, but wind up doing what is wrong? Because with our mind we want to please God, but with our flesh we want to please ourselves. Jesus said, "**If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.**" (Mark 8:34). In each of us there is a war going on between the flesh and the spirit. **(Rom. 8:1-11).**

•2) Every man who tries to serve God under law or a legal system will become schizophrenic, disappointed, despondent, discouraged, and even cynical. He will even compromise for a lower standard of achievement and glory in that.

•a) He will set his heart on doing what is right, but because he is unable to do it, he will finally give up trying.

•b) He becomes so discouraged (being honest with himself) from trying and failing, that he will avoid the issue by doing less and less and less. (Less discouragement because of less failure, and less failure because of less effort.) But even in this he fails! Just like the one talent man-he has buried his talent.

•1] Example: Why does a person who comes only to the a.m. worship refuse to go to Bible class? (He doesn't want to) Why not Sunday evening? Why not Wednesday night? For the same reason: He really doesn't want to come! Now, why does he come to Sunday a.m. at all? He comes because although he is doing as little as he can to avoid failure, he feels that he must do something. A spiritual person attends and works for God not to be saved, but because he is saved. Because it is the Holy Spirit's desire and because he is led by God, not the flesh.

•2] A person with this type of attitude will not grow because he is trusting in himself. Before a Christian will grow, he must reach from outside himself to the help that comes from God. The first step in that direction is the removal of guilt, and guilt will always be there. Self is there because self is weak. **Matt. 5:3.** The Gnostics tried to eliminate guilt by denying sin. But a Christian confesses sin and depends on God to remove the guilt along with the sin.

•3) The apostle John in **verses 4-10** will show us that our new life (**2 Cor. 5:21**) is a life that conquers sin. The child of God cannot sin. Two thoughts will run parallel through this section

•a) What is sin?

•b) How can we overcome sin?

•b. First of all, John says, Sin is lawlessness = a violation of "that which is lawful."

- 1) Sin defeats the legalist. The legalist tries to keep the laws, but sin is law breaking, therefore, sin = failure. This is not so to the Christian because of forgiveness.
  - a) To a Christian, sin = victory and he is encouraged no to do it again.
  - b) To the legalist, sin = failure and he is discouraged because he knows he will do it again.
  - c) The Christian and the legalist are both trying to defeat sin.
    - 1] The legalist can't win because self keeps failing.
    - 2] The Christian can win for he has crucified self and works at keeping self crucified. He has placed his confidence in Christ's power over sin. Sins to him are forgiven, to be overcome, and then to be forgotten.
      - a] He mourns his sins.
      - b] He hungers and thirsts for righteousness which is his by faith.
      - c] He is forgiven and knows it, and the sinning process is being eliminated instead of ruling over him.
    - 3] The legalist is ruled by sin.
    - 4] The Christian is ruled by Christ, and Jesus is greater than sin...even my sin! Oh, blessed relief and joy is ours in Christ Jesus!
- 2) Everything that is not lawful is sin.
  - a) Even the Christian uses the law to determine sin, **Rom. 7:7-13.**
  - b) But the Christian is not under the law, but under grace.
    - 1] Though he is not under the law, he is still at work with sin.
    - 2] Therefore, he uses the law to zero in on sin to get rid of it.
- c. Sometimes we can be right and still be wrong because of our attitude. **"But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols?"** (1 Cor. 8:9-10).
- d. Sin is when a man places his desires above the desires of God.
  - 1) For example, Balaam wanted to go to Moab with the king's dignitaries. God did not want him to go, but Balaam kept asking until God finally said, "Alright, go on." Balaam was not breaking the law, but he was putting his desire above God's. It was sin!
  - 2) We said that the legalist's problem is self, and now we find that it is also the sinner's problem.

- a) Self is where the sin comes from. It does not come from God, but from our selfish desires.
  - b) The legalist depends on self to keep enough laws to remedy or purchase salvation, and self falls short of doing enough.
  - c) We are being forced by God to break out of self and learn like a child to depend on our creator. He has no sin, and He is more powerful than sin!
- 3) It is also sin when we know what we ought to do and we don't do it. **James 4:17.**
- a) The legalist will fail here for he will avoid doing what he ought to do for fear of failure. His trust is in self. Shame of it all, his inactivity = sin.
  - b) The Christian will trust in the presence of God and trust in God's promises, he will try to avoid failure. But, fear will not deter him for he understands forgiveness and his trust is not in self, he trusts in God. The Christian is moving, not sitting still.
  - c) Where the legalist fails by himself, the Christian wins with Christ.
  - d) Which of the two is more likely to be happy?
  - e) Which of the two is more apt to succeed?
- e. Sin = Hamartia (Gr.) = A missing of the mark.
- 2. (**READ 3:5**) Sin is unreasonable.
- a. John is here appealing to their intellect.
    - 1) Christ's work was to take away sin and for that reason, a Christian would never willingly sin. It would be beyond reason.
    - 2) Christ did not practice sin, and he is our example. Therefore, it is not reasonable for a Christian to sin when Christ did not sin.
  - b. Problem was that some of the Gnostics were saying, "Keep your mind pure and don't worry about the flesh."
    - 1) In some of the large denominations today, even their preachers preach on love, fellowship, peace, helping your fellow man, almost like the Rotary or Lion's Club.
    - 2) But he'll never preach on drinking, fornication, modesty, or honesty.
    - 3) They have the same problem that these had in 1st John. They have become intellectual sinners.
  - c. John says that there are two things that make it unreasonable to sin:
    - 1) ONE: Because of Jesus' work. He died for me to rid sin from my life.
    - 2) TWO: Because of Jesus' character. In him was no sin.
  - d. John says, "Don't contradict yourself"

- 1) The Gnostics, like many today, said, "Jesus is my model, but I'm going to live like a devil because of the power of his forgiveness." That is not reasonable. It is not good reasoning.
- 2) You can't work for purity in the sinner's camp. You can't convince a drunkard that drinking is sin by sharing a bottle of wine with him.
- e. Jesus wanted us never ever to sin nor lapse back into sin when we stop. But knowing we would, he died for us.
  - 1) Knowing that, what is our attitude toward sin? We set ourselves against it.
  - 2) Wouldn't it be stupid for a Christian to sin when his goal is to be like Christ?
- 3. (**READ 3:6-8**) Sin is unspiritual.
  - a. John is not saying that if anyone commits one single sin he does not know or see God.
    - 1) Take this passage in light of what John has already said: **1:8, 10; 2:1, 2, 4** John is not contradicting himself.
    - 2) "Sinneth" = Present indicative; continuous action. Therefore, the continuous action of sin---"Abideth" is the same tense.
      - a) A paraphrase: **"Whosoever makes his abode in Christ does not practice sin and whosoever practices sin does not see him or know Him."**
      - b) The NIV gets a pretty good sense of the tense here. It reads, **"No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him."**
    - 3) A person who loves Jesus keeps His commandments, **2:4-6; John 14:15, 15:14**
    - 4) Sin is unspiritual
      - a) Sin violates the principles of spirituality
      - b) If a person is spiritual, he will not practice sin.
    - 5) You do not get up in the morning and say, "Today, I am not going to practice sin". It is not that unnatural.
      - a) If you commit your life to Jesus, you will not practice sin.
      - b) When you commit your life to Jesus, you lose your desire to sin because you are no longer natural. You are now spiritual.
      - c) It is natural to sin, it is spiritual not to sin. Are we natural men or spiritual men? (You and God both know)
  - b. In **vs. 7** it says that the one that does righteousness, is righteous as Jesus is righteous; **vs. 3** said we are pure as he is pure.

- 1) The person who practices sin does not see or know God. (Remember, this does not mean we never sin. It means that we do not continually practice sin. We're not addicted to sin.)
- 2) The person who practices righteousness is righteous.
  - a) A person who does not practice righteousness is not righteous.
    - 1] Like those Gnostics.
    - 2] Or like the person who says. "I'm saved by grace, I don't worry about sin".
      - a] What he has said is true, but if he practices sin, it's just words.
      - b] There is no grace for that.
    - 3] What's the purpose of grace? (**vs. 2:1**).
    - 4] By a person's fruit, we will know them. **Matt. 7:15-20**.
  - b) A person who practices sin is not righteous at all. He or she is a sinner by practice!
- 3) Yet a person who practices righteousness is not righteous through the righteous things he does. An important point!
  - a) The legalist counts his righteousness by the things he does. That is not what John is saying. John is saying that the righteousness we do is proof of the righteousness we are. There is a difference.
    - 1] The legalist gets discouraged because what he does is not all that good.
    - 2] We do not become discouraged because what we do is only a proof of a much greater righteousness we have found in Christ, leaving no bounds to what we can do in the future in Christ
  - b) We, through grace, know that we were righteous before we started to practice being righteous. Listen to Paul again in **Eph. 2:8-10**, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God-not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life." (NRSV).
    - 1] Listen to Paul in **2 Cor. 5:21**, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." God saved us and provided for us a righteousness that measures up to His demands. It is found in Jesus Christ.
    - 2] This salvation and righteousness of Christ is now our motivation to practice righteousness.

- 3] The righteous practice in the life of Christians is proof of a much more holy righteousness which provides for us confidence building upon the righteousness we have found in Christ through grace.
- 4) It is because God made us righteous that we begin to do righteousness. All these works of righteousness that you and I do, we do after we receive the righteousness of Christ when we were baptized.
  - a) Praying
  - b) Studying
  - c) Giving
  - d) Doing good
  - e) Communicating
  - f) Loving the brethren
- 5) All the above are acts of righteousness. They do represent the righteousness that will save us, but they are only a by-product of the righteousness of Christ by faith. They came after we received the righteousness of God through Christ. Now, they are proof that I am righteous. Do you understand?
- 6) Only the righteousness of Christ can save us, but our own righteousness (though it doesn't save us) is proof of God's righteousness in us.
- c. **"He that doeth sin is of the devil."** (ASV); **"The one who practices sin is of the devil"** (NASB).
  - 1) **"Doeth"** = Is the same tense as is used throughout this section = **"He that practices sin is of the devil."**
    - a) By our practice, we know who we serve which is what Paul says in **Rom. 6:15-16.**
    - b) Jesus practices righteousness. Therefore, what should the practice of Christians be?
      - 1] God does not necessarily judge our performance. Jesus' performance is our righteousness.
      - 2] But God is very interested in what we practice in this life.
        - a] If we practice sin, we are sinners.
        - b] If we practice righteousness, regardless of how poorly we perform, we are righteous.
      - c) Satan practices sin. What we practice is what is important!
  - 2) In other words, to which of these practices do we give ourselves. One or the other.



- 3) "The devil made no man, begat no man, created no man, but whosoever imitates the devil becomes a child of the devil as a child begotten of him or created by him." Augustine
- d. Conclusion: "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."
  - 1) Jesus came to destroy the works of sin.
  - 2) We are not on the devil's side so we do not do his work. But we look to Jesus for life.
  - 3) A person can say that he is righteous, but if he is following sin, he is of the devil.
- 4. (READ 3:9-10) Sin is unchristian.
  - a. John says, "Here's how you can know whether a man is righteous or not, look at his life!"
    - 1) If his life is one of practicing righteousness, he is righteous.
      - a) The righteousness he does will not save him. It is not near good enough.
      - b) But the righteousness he does is proof of the presence in his life of God's righteousness in him.
    - 2) If a man's life is one of practicing evil, he is wicked, and he is unrighteous. God is not in him!
  - b. A look at the original language in vs. 9
    - 1) The verse says, the Christian "doeth no sin" (ASV), "No one who is born of God practices sin" (NASB).
      - a) "Doeth" = Present tense, linear point of action. Translated "practice" in NASB; "continue to sin" in NIV.
      - b) "Linear point of action" = In the process of happening.
      - c) Paraphrase = "Whosoever is begotten of God does not continue to sin"... "is not in the habit of sinning".
    - 2) There is a difference between the person who commits an occasional sin and the fellow who is in the practice of sinning and does an occasional good deed.
  - c. Debate on verse 9 comes from one of two misunderstandings:
    - 1) From the misunderstanding of legalism.
      - a) The legalist says this verse says that the man born of God cannot commit one single sin.
      - b) The verse does not say that, it says he does not practice sin.

- 2) It is also misunderstood from the misunderstanding of liberalism.
  - a) The liberal sees this passage as a license to sin. They say, "God ignores sin". "I cannot sin, it is only the flesh involved in sin."
  - b) To hold this view, we would have to ignore the majority of what John has said so far. It will not wash. **vs. 1: 5-10; 2:4**
- d. Shall I sin, or shall I obey God?
  - 1) Have you ever gotten to that situation in your life?
  - 2) When the Christian does, he has no choice because he loves God.
  - 3) He cannot sin.
  - 4) The decision is already made! Do it!
- e. The seed of God abides in us.
  - 1) It could be the word of God, **Luke 8:11** or the seed could be the spirit of God. Take your choice because if it is the spirit, we cannot receive it until we have received the word.
  - 2) Where God's seed is, God is. That is a good reason for not practicing sin.
  - 3) When we really come to understand that God dwells in us:
    - a) It will change the places we frequent for God is with us. We would not take God with us where He would not desire to go!
    - b) When we know that God is in us, it will change some of the things we do.
    - c) Knowing God is in us changes our attitude about everything.
  - 4) We live in hope of glory. In other words, we live to bring glory to Christ because we know that in a real sense, His life continues in us as we live. **Col. 1:27**
- f. The action and work of God in fellowship with the activities of our life enables us to conquer sin.
  - 1) The power to change comes from God.
  - 2) The seed, whatever it is, is not mine or yours, it is God's.
  - 3) We cannot sin because God's seed abides!
- g. What John is saying may be put down in 4 stages:
  - 1) ONE: The Christian ideal is the absence of all sin. **vs.2:1**
  - 2) TWO: The Christian's work is to try to make the ideal a reality in practice.
    - a) He fights to overcome the occasional sin and the temporary lapses.
    - b) He strives for the ideal.

- 3) THREE: The fact remains that all men do have these lapses, and when the Christian has them, he must humbly confess to God who will always forgive the penitent and contrite heart.
- 4) FOUR: In spite of the lapses, no Christian can possibly be a deliberate and consistent sinner. No Christian can live a life in which sin is dominant and decisive in all his actions. He may have lapses, but he cannot live in sin as the very atmosphere of his existence.
  - a) The ideal: not one single sin. It is for this that we strive.
  - b) When we lapse, if we ask, God will forgive us, but his forgiveness is not an encouragement to sin. It is an encouragement to keep up the battle.
- h. In **vs. 9**, John has said Christians do not practice sin and because of God's seed, he cannot sin.
  - 1) Maybe what he is saying is that Christians do not practice sin!
  - 2) Maybe what he is saying is that it is not near as impossible to stop sinning as we sometimes think it is.
  - 3) What he has said is that there is no need to sin, for we have discovered a life that conquers sin!
- i. Here is an absolute statement. **Read vs. 10, "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."**
  - 1) Children of God are manifest (shown to be) and they do not practice sin! **Matt. 6:24**
  - 2) Children of Satan are manifest. They do practice sin.
  - 3) Look at the contrast of God's children to Satan's children.
    - a) Two forces at work. (God and Satan)
    - b) Two fields. (God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom)
    - c) Two Families. (God's people and Satan's people)
    - d) Two philosophies. (love, self)
    - e) Two fellowships. (With Satan or with God)
    - f) Two moralities. (God's or the world's)
    - g) Two attitudes. (servant or selfish)
    - h) Two natures. (spiritual or fleshly)
    - i) Two destinies. (heaven or hell)
  - 4) There is no middle ground. **Matt. 12:30, "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me, scatters."**

# The Epistle of 1st John

LESSON NINE: 3:11-24

Southgate Church of Christ

by Milt Langston

## Review:

- 1. What was the major false teaching in the church called which occurred in that day?
- 2. What are the three major areas John will discuss? (light, love, life)
- 3. Name the three mistakes the false teachers made and the two corrections John said was needed in chapter one:

"There is no distinction between light and darkness"

Walk in the light!

They denied their own sinfulness!

Confess your sins!

They continued to hide their guilt and denied their own individual sins.

It resulted in mocking God making Him out to be a liar.

- 4. What is the purpose of grace?
- 5. How can we know we know God?
- 6. What is the old & new commandment?
- 7. How can we know we are walking in the light? (Love we have for others)
- 8. How can we keep from loving the world too much? (Love God more)
- 9. Does God bless one group of people with more knowledge? (No) What has God given to all Christians equally? (His anointing)
- 10. What is the motivation for our purity? (God's love)
- 11. What will destroy or conquer sin? (Faith)

## TEXT:

I. JOHN'S RIGHT TO WRITE (1:1-4).

II. GOD IS LIGHT (1:5-2:27).

III. GOD IS LOVE (2:28-5:12).

- A. (2:28-3:3) Love and the Approaching Life.

- B. (3:4-10) Love and the Conquering Life.
- C. (3:11-24) Love Proves a Christian Life.

The theme of John's book has been, "Prove it!" The Gnostics claimed to know God, John says, "Prove it!" Now in this section he will show what the love of God in our life proves....

•1. (READ 3:11-12) Love is Proof that the Christian is Spiritual and Not Carnal (of the flesh).

•a. It has always been human nature to attack others when we have not done well. This somehow makes us look not so bad or so we think.

•1) Cain and Abel were both told to make a sacrifice. Abel followed the instructions of God. He was more righteous than Cain. His actions were righteous. **Read Heb. 11:4, "By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks."**

•2) Cain killed Abel because Abel had done righteously, and Cain had not.

•b. Have you ever seen someone doing a good job and working hard, and for no apparent reason there is a group who begin to make it their aim to stop this good work?

•1) Why do some criticize and persecute a person who is trying to do what is good and what is right?

•2) Because it makes them look better. It's a sign of weakness. It's a manifestation of a fleshly response which sees others as an adversary instead of an ally.

•c. Christian love taught by Jesus destroys this practice which comes from the flesh.

•1) When we love our brethren, we are willing to subject our will to theirs.

•2) We are willing to help them do good and prevent them from doing evil.

•3) We let them rise while we decline if need be.

•d. Our love proves that we are not like the rest of mankind.

•1) **Read John 13:34-35** When John wrote these words of Christ, he was not looking forward to the cross.

•2) He was looking backward to what Jesus had just done. **John 13:4, 15**

•3) Christian service is the selfless service of the towel.

•2. (READ 3:13) Love is Proof that the Christian is unlike the World.

- a. Contrast Cain to Christ
  - 1) Cain exemplifies the world's love of self. He laid down the life of his brother because his brother had done right and he had done wrong.
  - 2) Yet Jesus illustrates God-Love. He laid down His own life because His brother had done wrong and He had done right.
    - a) Trusting in God causes us to view ourselves as His creation.
    - b) We believe God created us to ultimately be right (righteous).
    - c) This goes back to **vs. 9** of our test.
      - 1] If we trust in self, we fail.
      - 2] If we trust in God, we wait for it to come to pass.
  - b. **John 17:16-18, Jesus says, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world." Back in verse 14 he said, "I have given them Thy word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."** Christians are not like the world nor are they of the world.
  - c. Christian love proves we are not of the world.
- 3. (**3:14-17**) Love is Proof that we are Like Christ.
  - a. (**READ 3:14**) When we love our brethren, it proves we have passed out of death into life.
    - 1) Jesus said it this way in John 5:24, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."
      - a) This involves faith!
      - b) And believing involves obeying Christ's commandments.
    - 2) John has established that Love = Life: to dwell in love is to dwell in life.
      - a) The reverse is true: Hate = Death: to dwell in hate is to dwell in death.
      - b) We are eating spiritual food.
      - c) We are writing God's word in our heart.
      - d) This concept is hidden from one eat up with hate and they can't see it.
      - e) A spiritual person will respond, for these words are written on our hearts.
      - f) When we preach or hear the word preached, and we are in error, our heart will prick us.
    - 3) Love = Agapao (Gr.)

- a) The love God had for his Son, **John 17:26**
- b) The love God has for the human race, **John 3:16**
- c) The love of God towards believers, **John 14:21**
- d) This love = unconquerable benevolence and good will. The wishing of active good. This is Christian love.

- 1] There may be some people we do not like, but we can love them with a Christian love by wishing only good for them.
- 2] We may not be drawn to certain people because of personality conflicts, yet we can still actively seek their highest good. We can still be willing to serve them and to die for them.
- 3] Look at **Prov. 6:16-20**, "There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers."

- a] God does not like and hate at the same time.
- b] Nor can we love righteousness and not hate iniquity.
- c] The love of God enables us to love the unlovely while we hate iniquity.
- d] God loved us when we were unlovely, **Rom. 5**, but he did not love our sin.

•b. (**READ 3:15**) If we do not wish active good will to our brother, we abide in death.

- 1) If we hate our brother, we have take up permanent residence with death.
  - a) Abide = Permanent dwelling
  - b) If we hate a brother, we have condemned ourselves to hell.
  - c) This is one of the most sobering absolutes in God's word.
- 2) Look again at Cain
  - a) Cain did not love his brother so he killed him. In reality, he did not hurt Abel's soul while his hate killed his own.
  - b) Hate full grown = murder. In **Matt. 5:22-23**, to be angry with a brother brings punishment for murder. To hate your brother makes you a murderer.
- 3) Remember the old and new commandment is love.
  - a) If we find ourselves wanting to hurt someone else, let's take that though captive through love.

- b) Let us strive never hurt our brethren.
  - 1] Not through silence: if we see a brother hurting because of an evil practice and we say nothing, we do not love him, but hate him.
  - 2] Nor through actions against one who is one with us in Jesus Christ.
- c) Let's be motivated by the love of God, **Phil. 4:8-9**.
- c. (**READ 3:16**) The cross of Jesus is the supreme example of God's love!
  - 1) The love of Christ was demonstrated when He washed his disciples' feet. "Having loved his own who were in the world, He now showed them in full extent of his love." **John 13:1**
  - 2) Jesus loved beyond himself.
    - a) Through His love He denied Himself and laid down His life for others. No one forced Him, but love compelled Him to do so, **John 10:17-18**.
    - b) We do not have to serve one another. No one will make us do it!
    - c) But we prove we are like Jesus when our love makes us like Him.
- d. (**READ 3:17**) Christian love is and active; it is a love of acts!
- 4. (**3:18-24**) Love proves that we are of the truth. In this section, John gives us three assurances.
  - a. (**READ 3:18-19a**) The assurance of truth!
    - 1) Love properly defined is the active obedience in God's commandments.
      - a) Remember how Christ summed up the law in just two commandments? (Love God with all you heart, soul and mind; and love your neighbor as yourself)
      - b) Love is proof that we dwell in the truth. It is proof because love is active.
        - 1] Suppose Brother "A" came to me hungry and I said, "I love you brother, but I am not going to give you any food." Is that love?
        - 2] When we ignore the lost, do we love them?
      - c) If love consists of words, when we stop talking, our love ceases.
      - d) Love is active, not passive.
      - e) However, the works we do, must be motivated by love. Remember **1 Cor. 13:1-4**. Philanthropy without love is vain.
    - 2) Christian love produces works of faith. The Christian discovers this in the truth of God's word; therefore, love proves that we dwell in the truth.
      - a) Not only does a Christian know the truth; he practices it too!



- 1] Knowledge alone puffs up.
- 2] But Faith and love puts the knowledge (truth) into practice.
- b) Therefore, by practical love, one for another, we know that we are of the truth.
  - 1] You see a lot of religious people bandy about what they talk about as "truth!"
  - 2] But their motive is not to help. Not to save. Not to rescue, but to hurt and to condemn with loveless unconcern for others.
  - 3] They talk about the truth, but they have not absorbed it for there is no love in their actions.
- c) Our practice of love is the fruit of our knowledge of Jesus Christ. **"We can be sure we know Him if we obey His commands." 2:3**
- 3) This leads to assurance of the heart.
- b. (**READ 3:19b-21**) The assurance of the heart!
  - 1) We assure (or persuade) our heart by doing what is right.
    - a) Heart = The conscience of moral memory of a person.
    - b) Assure = Persuade
    - c) There are two ways to look at this.
      - 1] "We can persuade our heart that it need not condemn us, for we are God's children even if sin is occasionally present."
      - 2] Or "As we grow spiritually and as our works increase, we do more and more of what God wants and less and less what we want. Our heart does not condemn us for we are doing what is right out of a pure heart."
      - 3] I think both of these combined are what John is trying to show. Grace removes guilt and this freedom enables us to grow spiritually and our heart condemns us less and less as we grow in holiness. God being the power behind it all.
  - 2) Condemnation comes from a consciousness of failure.
    - a) As we grow, we fail less and less.
    - b) Our heart condemns us less and less.
    - c) We develop assurance through spiritual growth.
  - 3) Even in our failures, God knows that there is a deep rooted desire within us to do what is right. He credits our faith in Him and our good intentions (hunger and thirst) with allowances that we would not make for ourselves. Brethren, a Christian aware of God's grace will be twice as

dedicated to keeping the commandments of God as a Jew who was under only the law. Look at what John has said so far:

- a) **1:7** Walk in the light as Jesus is in the light.
  - b) **2:6** Walk as Christ walks.
  - c) **3:3** Be pure like Christ is pure.
  - d) **3:16** Lay down your life for others as Christ laid down His.
- 4) There is much more demanded from us through grace than the law demanded.
- 5) John is showing us that even though we cannot attain to perfection which is required, that God is greater than our conscience. Therefore, we have boldness toward God because of His righteousness, which begins and grows and begins to blossom in us.
- c. (**READ 3:22-24**) We have the assurance of answered prayers.
- 1) When we, through love, keep God's commandments, and when our pleasure is to do God's pleasure, our prayers will be for things God wants and He will answer them.
  - 2) God answers the Christian's bold prayer: "**And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.**" **vs. 22**
    - a) Why does God answer our prayers? Because our motivation is to keep God's commandments.
      - 1] This is not legalism!
        - a] Legalism depends on self.
        - b] Legalism depends on performance.
      - 2] This is the works of God's grace.
        - a] It depends on God's fellowship and help.
        - b] It depends on God's acceptance based upon Christ's righteousness.
        - c] But look at the help it brings to us!
    - b) We do the things that please God (This is the motive for keeping the commandments. It is called love.)
    - 3) Here is God's commandment defined: "**And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.**" **vs. 23**
      - a) Believe in the name of Jesus Christ.
        - 1] What keeps us going in the midst of sin?

- 2] Our faith in Christ and His sacrifice sustain us!
- b) Love one another as Jesus loved us. **John 13:34-35**
- c) Keep God's commandments
- 4) Love is a result of the Holy Spirit's presence in us: "And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us." **vs. 24**
  - a) When we keep God's commandments, we live in God and God lives in us.
  - b) Christ's spirit is a spirit of love.
  - c) When we love, it proves the Holy Spirit is present.

# The Epistle of 1st John

LESSON TEN 4:1-6

Southgate Church of Christ

by Milt Langston

## Review:

- 1. What was the major false teaching in the church called which occurred in that day?
- 2. What are the three major areas John will discuss? (light, love, life)
- 3. Name the three mistakes the false teachers made and the two corrections John said was needed in chapter one...
- 4. What is the purpose of grace?
- 5. How can we know we know God?
- 6. What is the old & new commandment?
- 7. How can we know we are walking in the light? (Love we have for others)
- 8. How can we keep from loving the world too much? (Love God more)
- 9. Does God bless one group of people with more knowledge? (No) What has God given to all Christians equally? (His anointing)
- 10. What is the motivation of our purity? (God's love)
- 11. Is a Christian allowed to sin?
- 12. What will destroy or conquer sin in man? (living in Jesus)
- 13. Give two ways grace gives us a good conscience. (It forgives sin then eliminates it.)
- 14. What is proof of the Holy Spirit's presence? (Obedience to commandments)

## TEXT:

I. JOHN'S RIGHT TO WRITE (1:1-4).

II. GOD IS LIGHT (1:5-2:27).

III. GOD IS LOVE (2:28-5:12).

- A. (2:28-3:3) LOVE AND THE APPROACHING LIFE.
- B. (3:4-10) LOVE AND THE CONQUERING LIFE.
- C. (3:11-24) LOVE PROVES A CHRISTIAN LIFE.
- D. (4:1-6) LOVE PROVIDES A DISCERNING LIFE.

- 1. (READ 4:1) Test the spirit of the preachers.
  - a. "Prove" or "test" comes from a Greek word much like our word "assay", as an assayer of ore.
    - 1) John is saying, "Check out the spirit of those who preach to you".
    - 2) He has just finished saying that the love of God manifested in our life is proof of the Holy Spirit.
      - a) He said, "Those who obey His commands live in Him".
      - b) Now he says, "Check out the spirit of the Gnostic who is preaching to you".
  - b. They being the people of God, especially through the Jewish influence already knew how to test a prophet.
    - 1) **Duet. 18:22** "When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him." If a prophet's word does not come to pass, then you don't need to worry about what that prophet said. He is not a prophet of God.
      - a) No doubt, this passage was used against Jeremiah during all the years when he preached and God had not yet done what Jeremiah prophesied. (Fall of Jerusalem, return of Israel to Jerusalem after 70 years, the coming of the Messiah.)
      - b) Yet when Jerusalem fell, people became interested in the writings of Jeremiah. When Nehemiah and Ezra returned and rebuilt Jerusalem, they recognized him as God's prophet. His word proved him a prophet of God. Today, after the coming of Christ, there is absolutely no doubt.
    - 2) **Duet. 18:20** If a prophet says something that is contrary to the revealed will of God. The man is not a prophet of God. "But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die."
    - 3) Apostles of Christ were approved by signs and wonders, **2 Cor. 12:12**. The New Testament prophets were tested or proved by the signs that accompanied their preaching, **Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4**. They all passed the test of a prophet.
  - c. It was especially true in the 2<sup>nd</sup> area above where the Gnostic's failed.
    - 1) They were saying things that were contrary to God's revealed will while claiming to be prophets of God.
    - 2) John says, "Are they prophets or false prophets? Test their spirit."
- 2. (READ 4:2-3) The first test. Here he shows us how to prove the spirits. "Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God!"

- a. John has already gone to great lengths to show who knows and confesses Christ, and who does not know God nor confess Him as God.
  - 1) If we know Him, we'll keep His commandments, **2:3**.
  - 2) The one who claims to know Christ will walk as He walked, **2:6**.
  - 3) John is showing us how to prove if a man is a Christian or not. You can know the difference between a preacher of righteousness and a false preacher. **Matt. 7:15**
- b. The spirits that came from God teach that Jesus came in the flesh, **Heb. 2:14, John 1:14, 1 Tim. 2:5**.
  - 1) Here, John comes right out and exposes the Gnostics as false teachers.
    - a) The Gnostics taught that Jesus did not come in the flesh. He was a spiritual being. Not flesh and bone.
    - b) John as much as exposes their doctrine as being false.
    - c) They are without the spirit of God.
  - 2) The Gnostics taught that man in the flesh cannot be good, therefore, Christ never came in the flesh.
- c. Notice so far the spirit of the anti-Christ...
  - 1) Denies that Jesus Christ of the flesh came from God.
  - 2) And teaching that divides Jesus from being the Christ, or denies the incarnation of Christ is false teaching.
  - 3) Denies the deity of Christ.
  - 4) Denies the Sonship of Christ.
- d. And likewise today men can become antichrist...
  - 1) We deny Christ if we refuse His Lordship, **Lk. 6:46**.
  - 2) We deny Christ if we alter or change His gospel, **Gal. 1:6-9**.
  - 3) We deny Christ if we go beyond the boundaries of His word, **2 John 9-11**.
- 3. (**READ 4:4**) The spirit of Christ that is in us will enable us to recognize the spirit of error for what it is.
  - a. The spirit of Christ is a spirit of truth. When God is in us we abide by the truth, **2 John 9-11**.
  - b. The spirit of Christ is a spirit of submissive obedience to the commandments of God, **1 John 3:24**.
  - c. Christ is represented in the world through us, **2 Cor. 2:14-16**.

- d. We cannot see the spirit, but we can see the results of the spirit, **John 3:7-8, Rom. 8:5-12.**
- 4. (**READ 4:5**) The second test to test a false prophet: Who listens to what they say?
  - a. Now we have been given two ways to identify the false teacher.
    - 1) By what he says about Jesus.
    - 2) By the kind of people who listen to what he says.
      - a) The faithful Christian will not endure the false preacher.
      - b) But many times, false preachers come in an attempt to salve the ears of wrong doers, **2 Tim. 4:2-4** ("...but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths...").
  - b. The "they" in this verse are the Gnostics, the false prophets.
  - c. Remember that this section (**4:1-6**) is a parenthetical section between two discussions on love.
    - 1) In cp. 3:11-24 John discusses what love proves.
    - 2) And in cp. 4:7-21 he will discuss what love does.
- 5. (**READ 4:6**) The spirit of truth contrasted to the spirit of the false preacher.
  - a. The spirit of truth has two characteristics.
    - 1) It agrees with what the rest of the rest of the revelation has to say about Jesus.
    - 2) It appeals to the spiritually mature...to those who are of God...to God's children
  - b. The spirit of error
    - 1) Does not agree with other revelations about Jesus, but contradicts it.
    - 2) It appeals to the spiritually immature. This is how to tell the spirit of truth from the spirit of error.
      - a) Paul dealt with the same kind of problem in **1 Cor. 12, 13, & 14.**
      - b) The people were spiritually immature and divided the church over issues concerning of all things the spiritual gifts (miraculous powers) given by God, while ignoring what the spirit was trying to teach them.
      - c) **1 Cor. 14:37-38** is the same test: "If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized."
  - c. Remember that John begins this section by warning of the presence of false prophets.

- 1) They have always been with us as servants of Satan.
  - a) Maybe they mean well, but they serve Satan, **Ezek. 13:1-3, 7; Jer. 23:16-17.**
  - b) False prophets have even called God's prophets false prophets, **Amos 7:10-17.**
- 2) Therefore, we need to know how to tell a true prophet from a false prophet.
- d. Those who are in Christ recognize the speech (preaching) of others of God. They speak the same thing.
- e. Those who love the world will always reject God's word.
- f. By this we can recognize the spirit of error and the spirit of truth.
  - 1) Any who reject God's word are of the world.
  - 2) To reject an apostle or any preacher of Christ is to reject Christ, **Luke 10:16; John 13:20.**
  - 3) **1 Pet. 1:22-23** Our rebirth was a birth from water and spirit. It develops into an unfeigned love of our brethren based upon the word of Christ. Reject the word and you have rejected the spirit of Christ.
  - 4) Error does not produce children of God. Only the word of God produces children of God.



# The Epistle of 1st John

LESSON ELEVEN 4:7-11

Southgate Church of Christ

by Milt Langston

## Review:

- 1. What was the major false teaching in the church called which occurred in that day?
- 2. What are the three major areas John will discuss? (light, love, life)
- 3. Name the three mistakes the false teachers made and the two corrections John said was needed in chapter one.
- 4. What is the purpose of grace?
- 5. How can we know we know God?
- 6. What is the old & new commandment?
- 7. How can we know we are walking in the light? (Love we have for others)
- 8. How can we keep from loving the world too much? (Love God more)
- 9. Does God bless one group of people with more knowledge? (No) What has God given to all Christians equally? (His anointing)
- 10. What is the motivation of our purity? (God's love)
- 11. Is a Christian allowed to sin?
- 12. What will destroy or conquer sin in man? (living in Jesus)
- 13. Give two ways grace gives us a good conscience. (It forgives sin then eliminates it.)
- 14. What is proof of the Holy Spirit's presence? (Obedience to commandments)
- 15. What is the difference between the spirit of error and the spirit of God? (One recognizes and abide in the truth.)

## TEXT:

**I. JOHN'S RIGHT TO WRITE (1:1-4).**

**II. GOD IS LIGHT (1:5-2:27).**

**III. GOD IS LOVE (2:28-5:12).**

- A. **(2:28-3:3) LOVE AND THE APPROACHING LIFE.**
- B. **(3:4-10) LOVE AND THE CONQUERING LIFE.**

•C. (3:11-24) LOVE PROVES A CHRISTIAN LIFE.

•D. (4:1-6) LOVE AND THE DISCERNING LIFE.

•E. (4:7-21) LOVE PRODUCES A CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE (THE LOVE OF GOD PERMEATES THE NEW LIFE WE LIVE IN CHRIST! OR WE COULD SAY, "THOSE BORN OF GOD LOVE ONE ANOTHER!" LOVE PRODUCES THE NEW LIFE).

•1. (READ 4:7-8) Love is the essence of God.

•a. When John talks about the love of God, he is not talking about a characteristic of God, but he is talking about a character of God.

•1) God is love. It is not a characteristic of God.

•a) Like God is truth.

•b) Like God is life.

•c) Like God is light.

•2) Love can and should become the characteristic of Christians.

•a) Like truth is the characteristic of a Christian.

•b) Like life is the characteristic of a Christian.

•c) Like light is the characteristic of a Christian.

•3) Love is divine in nature.

•a) They that love are partakers of this divine nature.

•1] God is love.

•2] If we love, then we are of God.

•3] If we do not love, we do not even understand God's nature.

•4] The one who is born of God, loves. Love is a proof of our new birth.. We will discuss this more in verses 12-16.

•b. Love is the essence of God. Essence = "something that is, something that exists, and entity. Essence is also a substance that keeps, in concentrated form, the flavor or fragrance or other property of a plant, drug, food, etc., from which it is extracted." Example: essence of vanilla, or perfume, which is the essence of a flower. Essence = That substance that remains when boiled down to its smallest natural ingredients.

•1) Love is the essence of God which when added to a man's life makes that life Christ's life. As Paul said, "Not I that live, but Christ living in me" (Galatians 2:20).

•2) God is seen when we love one another. Because when we love we practice the essence of God. Jesus said, "And hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another."

- a) We become like God when we wish only the best for others because love is the essence of God and love is active goodwill.
- b) When we become like God, God's attribute or love is broadcast about for the world's scrutiny as it is revealed in us-as God's servants.
- c) We understand God when we understand love.
  - 1] The answer to God's providence = love.
  - 2] The answer to the cross = love.
  - 3] The answer to life = love.
  - 4] The answer to "Why am I here?" = love.
  - 5] The answer to preaching to others = love.
  - 6] The answer to eternal life = love.
- c. Why should we love one another?
  - 1) Because love is the essence of God. "The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given to us." **Rom. 5:5**
  - 2) Because love is the proof of the begotten.
    - a) The begotten of God love the brethren. Of course, he is accusing the Gnostics. They hated any of the lower cast. They considered themselves superior.
    - b) Any time a man manifests hatred for the children of God, it proves to all the world that his is not born of God.
    - c) The begotten of God become like God. they are children of God and love of the brethren is proof that we love as God loves.
    - d) If we do not love the lovable, how do we expect to love those who are unlovely? **Read Matt. 5:43-48**, "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR, and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."
      - 1] God is lovely. It is easy to love Him and we show our love for him by loving others, **Matt. 25:40**.
      - 2] It is natural to hate, but it is hard to love someone. You have to work at it!
        - a] There are enough unlikable traits in every person to work up a case for not liking them.

- b] Look hard enough and you can find something about everyone that you will not notice.
  - 3] There are some that you will have to look at long and hard before you can find something to love.
  - e) If we know God and if we love God, we will love even those people. It is a natural result of loving God.
- 3) If we do not love our brethren, we do not even know God. For God is love.
  - a) He who does not love his brothers in Christ does not know God. God is love.
  - b) How can I know if I know God? By loving the brethren.
  - c) How can I know if I don't know God? If I do not love the brethren.
  - d) Love is truly the essence of God. It has its origin in God. It has its reason with God.
- d. He who is a stranger to love is a stranger to God.
  - 1) All of God's attributes show his love.
    - a) God is holy, **1 Pet. 1:15**
    - b) God is fire, **Heb. 12:29**
    - c) God is severe, **Rom. 11:29**
    - d) God is just, **1 John 1:9**
  - 2) God has all the attributes that he might lead man to salvation. (We have only a vague idea of how bad our sin really is. It is so bad that if we give over to it, it will separate God from the ones he loves the most, you and me.)
  - 3) The fact that God is love is a demanding factor, and our love in response to God is a demanding principle. Therefore, John said, "**He that loves not, does not know God**".
- 2. (**READ 4:9-11**) Love found its highest manifestation in Christ.
  - a. This is one of John's favorite themes:
    - 1) "**No man hath seen God at any one time; the only begotten son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him.**" **John 1:18**
      - a) "**Declared**" = Exigete = exigesis = bringing out the meaning of something. Jesus declared the Father. He brought out the meaning of God.
      - b) Jesus defines love and love defines God. "**For God is love.**" **1 John 4:8**
    - 2) Jesus said, "**If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father**". Jesus was the revelation of God. We see Jesus by seeing His love. Jesus should be seen in our lives, in our teachings, and in our preaching by or through his love.

•b. (**READ 4:9**) God revealed Himself to man through His love, and this love was manifested in Christ, **John 3:16**

•1) Love is not love until it acts lovingly, no more than faith is not faith without works that demonstrate faith, **James 2:26, 1 John 3:17**.

•a) Love lives through its works and our obedience to God's will = loving.

•1] One of John's themes is that obedience produces lovely acts.

•2] Or obedience will cause us to love others.

•b) God does not love us if he does not aid us, **Eph. 2:8, Rom. 8:31-32**.

•c) True love manifests itself in action as God showed His love for us by sending Christ to die.

•d) Here are some reasons listed by John that show why Jesus was manifested:

•1] **1 John 3:5** - To take away sins.

•2] **1 John 3:8** - To destroy the works of the devil.

•3] **1 John 4:10** - To be an atoning sacrifice.

•4] **1 John 5:20** - To reveal God to man.

•2) God sent his Son to show the extent of His love. "**God so loved...**"

•a) When we see the creation, we get the idea that God loves us.

•1] You can see the love of God in the universe.

•2] You can see the love of God in the church.

•3] You can see the love of God in His providential care of your own children.

•b) There is only one place you can see the "**so love**". Only at Calvary. So loved = God loved the world to this degree.

•c) God described the fullness of His love in the death of Christ on the cross.

•c. (**READ 4:10**) Herein is love...in the death of Christ. Love originated in God.

•1) God started the process of love. This, John stresses again and again in all of his books. We do not take the initiative, God does. "**Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**"

•a) God's love was a spontaneous expression of His true nature. "**God is love.**"

•1] When did God start to love us? Before the foundation of the world.

- 2] **1 Pet. 1:19-26** Jesus is the lamb foreknown before the foundation of the world.
- 3] Before the waste and void of that first day, God's love was in action for us.
- b) Jesus was God's love in full blossom. The manifestation of God's love.
  - 1] God sent Jesus so we might have life, **vs. 9**.
  - 2] God sent Jesus so we might have an atoning sacrifice, **vs. 10**.
- c) Does God love us? Look at Jesus. "What think ye of the Christ?"
- 2) Jesus is the revelation of the fact that God loves us. When we look at the gift of Jesus at Calvary, we should not only know that God loves us, but also know that he loves us to the infinite ability of His love, **Rom. 8:31-39**. Nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ.
  - a) God's love left nothing out.
  - b) God's love held nothing back. (Compare our love to God's love. God's love saves, ours does not.)
  - c) God's love sets no conditions.
  - d) God gave His all on Calvary.
- 3) Now, how do you suppose we are supposed to love the brethren?
- 4) We are not saved because we love God, but because God loved us.
  - a) Man is a reflector, not an illuminator. Our love reflects God's love.
  - b) Human nature puts man first. It is selfish. When we love and sacrifice self, it is not us but God living within us.
  - c) We can do nothing to be saved. Our sin condemns us. It is God's love that rescued us from hell.
    - 1] We love because God wants us to love and because He loved us enough to save us.
    - 2] God's love saves and we copy God. Salvation is only in Christ.
  - d) The love John is talking about here is not man's search for God, but God's search for man. Each one of us is the prodigal son of Luke 15.
- 5) Christ is the propitiation for our sins.
  - a) Propitiation = atonement, satisfaction, covering.
  - b) Is Christ God's propitiation or ours? He is both. God needs Christ to be a savior and we need Christ to be saved.
    - 1] **Rom. 3:25-26** "...whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness,

because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

- a] God needed a just way to forgive sins.
  - b] God must be just, He wants to be merciful, but He must be just.
  - 2] In order to extend mercy, He had to extend it in justice. God is love but He is also just. He could not be unjust and still be God. Someone might say, "It is unjust for God to forgive man". We can say, "No, it's not because he did it and God is just." So Jesus died to be God's propitiation for our sins making God just.
  - 3] Jesus died to be my propitiation. Jesus is both God's satisfaction of justice and my satisfaction of mercy.
- d. (**READ 4:11**) Since God loved us we are to love one another.
- 1) Our love is born out of God's love.
    - a) "Ought" = "must"; it is a military order; we are obligated to love.
    - b) The love that God provided for us produces our love for one another, **2 Cor. 5:14**.
  - 2) A failure to love shows that we have never experienced or known love. If we do not love, we do not know about God's love. And if we do not know or understand God's love, we do not understand salvation. If we do not understand salvation, we are lost.

# The Epistle of 1st John

LESSON TWELVE 4:12-16

Southgate Church of Christ

by Milt Langston

## Review:

- 1. What was the major false teaching in the church called which occurred in that day?
- 2. What are the three major areas John will discuss? (light, love, life)
- 3. Name the three mistakes the false teachers made and the two corrections John said was needed in chapter one
- 4. What is the purpose of grace?
- 5. How can we know we know God?
- 6. What is the old & new commandment?
- 7. How can we know we are walking in the light? (Love we have for others)
- 8. How can we keep from loving the world too much? (Love God more)
- 9. Does God bless one group of people with more knowledge? (No) What has God given to all Christians equally? (His anointing)
- 10. What is the motivation of our purity? (God's love)
- 11. Is a Christian allowed to sin?
- 12. What will destroy or conquer sin in man? (living in Jesus)
- 13. Give two ways grace gives us a good conscience. (It forgives sin then eliminates it.)
- 14. What is proof of the Holy Spirit's presence? (Obedience to commandments)
- 15. What is the difference between the spirit of error and the spirit of God? (One recognizes and abide in the truth.)
- 16. What is the difference between the spirit of error and the spirit of God? (One recognizes and abide in the truth.)
- 17. What is the difference between spirit of truth and spirit of error? (One recognizes and abides in the truth>)
- 18. Who are those who don't know God? (Those who do not love.)

## TEXT:

I. JOHN'S RIGHT TO WRITE (1:1-4).

II. GOD IS LIGHT (1:5-2:27).

III. GOD IS LOVE (2:28-5:12).



- A. (2:28-3:3) LOVE AND THE APPROACHING LIFE.
- B. (3:4-10) LOVE AND THE CONQUERING LIFE.
- C. (3:11-24) LOVE PROVES A CHRISTIAN LIFE.
- D. (4:1-6) LOVE AND THE DISCERNING LIFE.
- E. (4:7-21) LOVE IS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.
  - 1. (4:7-8) Love is the Essence of God.
  - 2. (4:9-11) Love's Highest Manifestation is Christ.
  - 3. (4:7, 12-16) Love is the Evidence of the New Birth.
    - a. (READ 4:7 & 12) Love proves that God abides in us, therefore love proves that we have been born again!
      - 1) Verse 8 will tell us that God is love, and verse 12 tells us that when we love others, we extend and complete God' love.
      - 2) This word "complete" or "perfected" = mature or full-grown.
        - a) Grasp the thought: God is love and God lives in us and through us when we love others.
        - b) "Perfected" never means sinlessness.
          - 1] It means a full-grown or mature state.
          - 2] Are we mature or are we immature in our love for one another?
        - c) "Perfected" never reaches a state where it cannot be improved upon. Love is perfected in us when it produces love which extends from us to others.
    - 3) The old saying that there is a little good in all is true.
      - a) When people are kind, that is of God.
      - b) But as Christians, you and I are aware of this and cultivate it to bring in to the forefront through our submission to God's lordship.
        - 1] The world loves occasionally because God made all mankind in His image.
        - 2] Christians love repeatedly because they are reborn and God lives in them. They love on purpose and by choice!
  - b. (READ 4:13) Love proves we have been born again because it proves that we abide in God and that God abides in us!
    - 1) There are two proofs in this verse - subjective proof and objective proof.
      - a) Subjective proof - When we love one another.
      - b) Objective Proof - Because He has given us His spirit.

- 2) One is based on experience, the other on revelation.
  - a) By experience, I know God abides in me when I love the brethren.
  - b) By revelation I know God loves me because He told me and gave me the spirit.
  - c) One is experience and wisdom the other is faith.
- 3) We need to understand that there is nothing wrong with experience, but there is a big difference in someone saying, "I have seen a vision," or "This is what God told me," and someone else saying, "Here is what I have experienced in fulfilling this command".
  - a) Our experiences can help one another.
  - b) **Matt. 6:33** states, "**Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and these things shall be added unto you**".
    - 1] You can know it is true and even believe it is true.
    - 2] But you will be sure when you have put it to the test, then your experiences can add confirmation to what the Scripture says.
  - c) In **Malachi 3:10**, God says, "**Prove me now**".
    - 1] He told the Jews that if they would give liberally, that He would "**open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing**".
    - 2] He says, "**Try me and see if I will**".
  - d) Faith comes from hearing God's word. That is the source, but our faith grows and is strengthened through our experiences.
  - e) We prove God when we do what He says expecting the results He has promised.
- c. (**READ 4:14**) Jesus is the savior of all men, especially them that believe!
  - 1) This verse like 2:2 deals a death blow to the doctrine of limited atonement (Calvinist Doctrine).
  - 2) Calvinism - Christ died only for the elect. Paul and John both say He came to save all men of all time.
    - a) Calvinism has its roots in Gnosticism.
      - 1] The Gnostics taught of different classes of people.
      - 2] Those with Gnosis and those without. Those saved and those lost as J. Calvin developed it.
    - b) Paul tells Timothy not to allow men to look down on others in **1 Tim. 4:11-12**. In **vs. 10** he says, "**God is the savior of all men and especially those who believe**".
    - c) Man is a free moral agent.

- 1] God's election is through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- 2] The same salvation that one man rejects, saves another who believes it.
  
- d. (**READ 4:15**) The third proof -- Whosoever that confesses that Jesus Christ -- of Nazareth, the fellow born of a virgin, in the city of Bethlehem, who was raised in Nazareth in Galilee, tempted in the wilderness, who preached in Judea and Galilee -- was crucified at Calvary, and raised on the third day is the son of God, proves that he is born again.
  - 1) If anyone cannot confess that, he is not abiding in God and God is not abiding in him.
  - 2) The Gnostics could not make this confession.
  
- e. (**READ 4:16**) Our faith and trust in Jesus is the fourth proof that we are born again!
  - 1) Love is a proof of sonship with God.
  - 2) John is again saying that love is the very essence of God.
  - 3) Our faith, trust, and dependence on God's love is proof that we are born again.

#### **The four proofs in review.**

- 1. Our love of the brethren proves we are born again.
- 2. Our passion from the Spirit proves we are born again.
- 3. Our confession that Jesus is King and the Son of God proves we are born again.
- 4. Our faith and trust in Jesus proves we are born again.

# The Epistle of 1st John

LESSON THIRTEEN 4:17-21

Southgate Church of Christ

by Milt Langston

Review:

- 1. What was the major false teaching in the church called which occurred in that day?
- 2. What are the three major areas John will discuss? (light, love, life)
- 3. Name the three mistakes the false teachers made and the two corrections John said was needed in chapter one
- 4. What is the purpose of grace?
- 5. How can we know we know God?
- 6. What is the old & new commandment?
- 7. How can we know we are walking in the light? (Love we have for others)
- 8. How can we keep from loving the world too much? (Love God more)
- 9. Does God bless one group of people with more knowledge? (No) What has God given to all Christians equally? (His anointing)
- 10. What is the motivation of our purity? (God's love)
- 11. Is a Christian allowed to sin?
- 12. What will destroy or conquer sin in man? (living in Jesus)
- 13. Give two ways grace gives us a good conscience. (It forgives sin then eliminates it.)
- 14. What is proof of the Holy Spirit's presence? (Obedience to commandments)
- 15. What is the difference between the spirit of error and the spirit of God? (One recognizes and abide in the truth.)
- 16. What is the difference between spirit of truth and spirit of error? (One recognizes and abides in the truth>)
- 17. Who are those who don't know God? (Those who do not love.)
- 18. What is saving love? The love of God or man's love?
- 19. What are the four proofs that we are born again? ( Love, spirit, confession, faith and trust)

**TEXT:**

**I. JOHN'S RIGHT TO WRITE (1:1-4).**

**II. GOD IS LIGHT (1:5-2:27).**

### III. GOD IS LOVE (2:28-5:12).

- A. (2:28-3:3) LOVE AND THE APPROACHING LIFE.
- B. (3:4-10) LOVE AND THE CONQUERING LIFE.
- C. (3:11-24) LOVE PROVES A CHRISTIAN LIFE.
- D. (4:1-6) LOVE AND THE DISCERNING LIFE.
- E. (4:7-21) LOVE IS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.
  - 1. (4:7-8) Love is the Essence of God.
  - 2. (4:9-11) Love's Highest Manifestation is Christ.
  - 3. (4:7, 12-16) Love is the Evidence of the New Birth.
  - 4. (READ 4:17) Love Produces Boldness before Judgment.

## SUMMARY 4:7-16

- 1. Love is the Essence of God, vs. 7-8.
- 2. Love is the Manifestation of Christ, vs. 9-11.
- 3. Love is the Evidence of a New Birth, vs. 12-16.

## PREVIEW 4:17-21

John moves on now and says, "When love comes..."

- 1. Boldness comes! vs. 17.
- 2. Fear leaves! vs. 18.
- 3. We love the brethren! vs. 19-20.
- 4. We fulfill God's commands! vs. 21.

John is showing what Love does, or how it acts!

- a. Love brings with it boldness before the judge. "By this, love is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment."

- 1) "Perfected" here is the same root word used in verse 12 = mature or full grown.
- 2) We have boldness because:
  - a) As he is even so are we in this world.
    - 1] We do not realize it, but so we are.
    - 2] Paul says, "For the church, which His body (is), the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way". **Eph 1:22-23**
  - b) How is Jesus in the world?
    - 1] He's perfect, righteous, so as he is, even so are we righteous in this world.
    - 2] We are the fullness of Christ.
- 3) You ask, "How can this be?" "All have sinned." John has already said so, **1:8 & 10, 2:1**
  - a) John has already gone to great lengths to show us that the purpose of grace is to eliminate sinful practices.
    - 1] He has said that the Christian is not permitted to sin and that in our life of service to Christ, our task under grace in Christ is to eliminate sin.
    - 2] So sin is a reality in the life we live for Christ, but it is a diminishing reality.
    - 3] A defeated trait.
  - b) Now he is going to show us another area of grace. As we live for Christ and improve our righteousness in practice for the master, we walk under the master's name, under the master's charge, under the master's righteousness.
  - c) The ambassador from England is treated with protocol and respect because of whom he represents.
  - d) Christians are ambassadors of Christ. Paul said, "We are ambassadors, therefore of behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us; we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God". **2 Cor. 5:20.**
    - 1] The man or woman who has confessed that Jesus is Lord is a Christian.
    - 2] A Christian is the fullness of Christ in this world. John says that it all comes through love.
  - e) **1 John 1:7** says that as we walk in the light we are made righteous!

•f) **1 John 3:7** says that we are righteous as He is righteous. Not only is our motivation to seek righteousness, it is also the standard by which we are blessed.

•1] **1 Cor 1:26-31** "For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

•2] Because of God, we are in Christ, who has become our wisdom, our righteousness, our holiness, and our redemption so that we are now the fullness of Christ in Christ. So long as we are trusting in Jesus and speaking His word, how wise are we?

•a] As wise as He is!

•b] As long as we are trusting in Jesus and His righteousness, how righteous are we?

•c] As righteous as he is!

•d] As long as we are trusting in His sanctification, how holy are we?

•e] As holy as He is!

•f] As long as we trust in His redemption, how redeemed are we?

•g] Totally redeemed.

•h] Totally saved, just as safe as Jesus is!

•3] The power of Christianity is Christ. As long as we consecrate on Him, we are fine, but when we set self up above Christ, we lose all the above blessings. No wonder Christ said, "**Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven**".

•a] Do you know people who do not attend services regularly? They are not converted to Christ.

•b] Do you know people who do not participate nor help in church programs? They are not converted to Christ.

•b. Jesus is our righteousness, this is what John was saying, "**We have this boldness in the judgment that as He is, so are we in this world**".

•1) If a Christian loves God and he is mature in that love, he can have boldness before God in the day of judgment because of Jesus.

- a) As Jesus is so the Christian is in this world. There is the truth. It is up to us to believe it!
- b) The church is the fullness of Christ.
- 2) Christians are not sinners.
  - a) A sinner is one who practices sin.
  - b) It is true that we do commit sin, but we do not practice sin.
- 3) Boldness comes when and because we realize that we are imputed righteousness by the grace of God.
  - a) We are recounted righteousness.
  - b) We are counted as righteous.
  - c) Righteousness is written on our heavenly record.
  - d) We have all this not because of who we are or because we are doing righteously (though we are), but because of what he has done and is doing in our life.
- 4) Sin is the only thing that could cause me not to have boldness on the day of judgment.
  - a) But Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, **1 John 1:1-2; 4:10**.
    - 1] "Propitiation = 'hilasmos' = merciful, propitious, signifying an expiation, a means whereby sin is covered and remitted. It is used in the New Testament of Christ Himself as "the propitiation", in **1 John 1:1-2; 4:10**, signifying that He Himself, through the expiatory sacrifice of His death, is the personal means by whom God shows mercy to the sinner who believes on Christ as the one this provided." (Vine)
    - 2] Propitiation here refers to the blood that covered the mercy seat. In the arc of the covenant was found written on two tables of stone the recorded law which was broken. The mercy seat was the top of the arc which contained this law. This violated law was in the Holy of Holies, but what covered from God's view this violated the law. Blood covered from God's view the broken law, type and anti-type. So the blood of Jesus Christ is called our propitiation...
      - a] So what covers from God's view yours and my violation of his righteous commandments?
      - b] The blood of Christ which we put on at baptism, **Gal. 3:27**.
  - b) Jesus is the center, the power, and the Lord of a Christian's life.
- 5) We are not righteous because of what we are, but by who we have.
- 6) We have the boldness through love, His love.
- 5. (**READ 4:18**) Love banishes fear!



- a. There is no fear in love. Most people that fear the judgment do not love their brethren.
  - 1) When we learn to love our brethren, we will lose fear.
  - 2) Love casts out fear.
    - a) When we know we're loved, we have confidence to go before the one who loves us.
    - b) When we were children, we always knew we could turn to Mom and Dad in the midst of trouble because we knew they loved us.
    - c) Can't you see how love casts out fear?
  - 3) Mature Christian love which casts out fear is proved when we love one another, "**Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us**" **1 John 4:11-12.**
- b. Fear is a by-product of condemnation and of sinfulness, "**For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES**" **Heb. 10:26-27.**
  - 1) There is no love present when we practice sin, therefore we have fear.
  - 2) Love casts out fear because when we love, we obey the commands of God, **1 John 2:3, 5.**
- c. We can see how love banishes fear between a husband and wife.
  - 1) When a husband really loves his wife, his protecting love ceases her fear of any trouble and vice-versa.
  - 2) A husband's providing love banishes her fear of want.
  - 3) His expressive love causes her to feel warm and tender towards him.
  - 4) This same spiritual principle taught by John here applies even in our relationships with one another!
- d. God's saving love causes us to fear absolutely none of our sins.
- e. God's sustaining love enables us not to fear anything that might happen.
- f. God's eternal love causes us not even to fear standing before Him in judgment.
- g. Love banishes fear as with a father (physical) and his child
  - 1) A father treats the child with respect because of his love for the child.
  - 2) The child wants to obey the father because of his love for the father.
- h. When you and I pray, we shouldn't pray to the judge, nor the savior, nor the creator. We pray to the father who is the judge, the savior, and the creator.

- i. We are three times winners:
  - 1) We live the best life a man can live on the earth.
  - 2) We get to go to heaven when we die.
  - 3) We miss hell!
- 6. (READ 4:19-20) Love verifies love!
  - a. John is called the apostle of love. He says we cannot love God if we do not love one another.
  - b. Love proves love.
    - 1) My love for you proves that I love God.
    - 2) Your love for me proves that you love God.
- 7. (READ 4:21) Love fulfills God's commandments!
  - a. The Gnostics who considered themselves to be superior in knowledge made "gnosis" or knowledge the final test, but John makes love the test of being right!
    - 1) Knowledge is great, but love is better.
    - 2) Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.
  - b. **1 Cor. 16:14 "Do everything in love."**
  - c. Christ summed up the keeping of the entire law with one word - love!
  - d. We can know what love is and what love does by taking a fourfold look at Jesus.
    - 1) **4:9 "By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him", He is the bringer of life, John 20:30-31.** John talks much about life.
      - a) He wrote the Gospel of John to show us how to find life.
      - b) He wrote the book of 1 John to show us how to know we have life.
      - c) He wrote the book of Revelation to show us how to keep that life.
    - 2) **4:10, "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." He is the reconciler of man.** (propitiation)
    - 3) **4:14, "And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." He is the savior of the world.** This fact strikes a death blow to exclusivism such as Gnosticism of Calvinism.
      - a) Fact: Jesus died for all, every single person.
      - b) Fact: Not all will be saved.

- c) Fact: Man's faith determines his destiny. The Gospel is for all but all do not accept it.
- 4) **4:15** "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God." **Jesus is the son of God**. The man Jesus, who lived and breathed, who ate and drank, who sweated and cried, who laughed and who died, but who lived again is the son of God.
- e. To know Jesus is to know God and to know God is to know love.
- f. Love always obeys God for God is love.

"As we live for Christ and improve our righteousness in practice for the master, we walk under the master's name, under the master's charge, under the master's righteousness."

# The Epistle of 1st John

LESSON FOURTEEN 5:1-12

Southgate Church of Christ

by Milt Langston

## Review:

- 1. What was the major false teaching in the church called which occurred in that day?
- 2. What are the three major areas John will discuss? (light, love, life)
- 3. Name the three mistakes the false teachers made and the two corrections John said was needed in chapter one
- 4. What is the purpose of grace?
- 5. How can we know we know God?
- 6. What is the old & new commandment?
- 7. How can we know we are walking in the light? (Love we have for others)
- 8. How can we keep from loving the world too much? (Love God more)
- 9. Does God bless one group of people with more knowledge? (No) What has God given to all Christians equally? (His anointing)
- 10. What is the motivation of our purity? (God's love)
- 11. Is a Christian allowed to sin?
- 12. What will destroy or conquer sin in man? (living in Jesus)
- 13. Give two ways grace gives us a good conscience. (It forgives sin then eliminates it.)
- 14. What is proof of the Holy Spirit's presence? (Obedience to commandments)
- 15. What is the difference between the spirit of error and the spirit of God? (One recognizes and abide in the truth.)
- 16. What is the difference between spirit of truth and spirit of error? (One recognizes and abides in the truth>)
- 17. Who are those who don't know God? (Those who do not love.)
- 18. What is saving love? The love of God or man's love?
- 19. What are the four proofs that we are born again? ( Love, spirit, confession, faith and trust)
- 20. Give four results in our new life of God's love. (boldness, loss of fear, love toward one another, fulfillment of God's commands)

## TEXT:

**I. JOHN'S RIGHT TO WRITE (1:1-4).**

**II. GOD IS LIGHT (1:5-2:27).**

**III. GOD IS LOVE (2:28-5:12).**

- 1. **(2:28-3:3) LOVE AND THE APPROACHING LIFE.**
- 2. **(3:4-10) LOVE AND THE CONQUERING LIFE.**
- 3. **(3:11-24) LOVE PROVES A CHRISTIAN LIFE.**
- 4. **(4:1-6) LOVE AND THE DISCERNING LIFE.**
- 5. **(4:7-21) LOVE IS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.**
- 6. **(5:1-12) THE OVERCOMING LIFE.**
  - 1. **(5:1-3) Living is loving and loving is living the New Life!**
    - a. **(READ 5:1) You cannot love God without loving His children.**
      - 1) If you love the begetter, it naturally follows that you will also love the begotten. (Larry Hipkie was my best friend when Marie our daughter was born. How did Larry and Marie get along together? Larry and Marie loved each other.)

## **John's Gospel Cycle**

### **From Faith to Faith Moving towards Jesus is**

### **The Overcoming Life of a Christian**

**1.** Believing in Christ (v.1) leads to **2.** The New Birth (v.1) which leads to **3.** Loving God and His Children (v.2) which leads to **4.** Obedience of the believer (v.2) which teaches us how to **5.** Love (v.3) which leads back to the start **6.** Believing again (v.4).

(1)

Believing in God, v.1

(5)

Obedying God teaches us to love others, v.3

(6)

Love over-comes through faith (v.4), and we're back to the start

(4)

Loving God cause us to obey God, v.2

(3)

The one born of God loves His children, v.2

(2)

Faith in God causes us to be Born of God, v.1

- 2) If we love God, we will love Christ, "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God." (4:15).
- 3) But also by faith, "Whosoever believeth" is "begotten" of God; therefore, not only will we love Jesus, but we will also love other Christians who have been born again if we love God. Look what John has said:
  - a) We love by walking in the light, **2:9-11**.
  - b) We love because we have life, **3:14**.
  - c) We love by keeping God's commands, **3:23; 5:3**.
  - d) We love when we are born again, **4:7**.
- 4) Not only is John telling us how important love is, he is also showing us how to love, **4:7-10**. He said:
  - a) Love is the essence of God. **(vs. 7-8)**
  - b) Love was shown and explained by Christ's life and death. **(vs. 9-11)**
  - c) Love is a certain proof of a new birth. **(vs. 12-16)**
  - d) Love brings boldness in the face of judgment **(vs. 17)**
  - e) Love removes fear **(vs. 18)**
  - f) Love causes us to love in return **(vs. 19-20)**
  - g) Love fulfills all of God's commands **(vs. 21)**
- b. **(READ 5:2)** Two things prove if we love the brethren or not.
  - 1) When we love God, we love the brethren. (What about the reverse?)
  - 2) When we do the commands of God, we love the brethren.
    - a) A person who wants to do right, who wants to be right, who is a stickler for it being done right, but has no regard for his fellow brothers in Christ is not a Christian.
      - 1] He is a pretender.

- 2] He hurts others with no regard for them...he is against Christ who loved even his enemies.

- 3] He is a legalist.

- b) Revelation 2:1-7 reads. "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place-- unless you repent. Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.'" What was wrong with this church?

- c) Paul says, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing." (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

- 1] Obedience and works without love means that we do not understand God's purpose.

- 2] For God is love and we love others when we obey Him, "And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you" (Col. 3:12-14).

- 3) Our new life came from a new birth, which comes from our faith in Jesus. "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Love is the evidence of this new life.

- a) Let's look at a definition of terms:

- 1] Faith = obedience, **John 3:36, Jas. 2:17**

- 2] New birth = new life, **Rom. 6:4**; a changed life, **2 Cor. 5:17**.

- 3] Love = x

- b) Now, look how John has tried to explain love to us.

- 1] Faith + new birth = love

- 2] Love + new birth = faith

•3] Faith + love = new birth

•c. (READ 5:3a) Obedience is the proof of Christian love.

- 1) Life is the result of faith. (Faith → Life) vs. 4 & 5
- 2) Love is the evidence of life. (Life → Love) v.1
- 3) Obedience is the proof of love. (Love → Obedience) vs. 2 & 3

(Obedience → faith) 4:23

•d. (READ 5:3b) The commands of God are not grievous.

- 1) Grievous = "**barus**" (Gk.) = "heavy or burdensome"
  - a) About the teachers of the Law Jesus says, "**And they tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger**" (Matt. 23:4). Same word used here. God's commands were never meant to be heavy loads.
  - b) Any time you hear someone say, "You can't do this, you can't do that." For example: You can't have a kitchen in the church building. These restrictions on you are not born out of love, but out of legalism. They are means by which a selfish person attempts to bind his desires on others. He wants to have his way be the prescribed way. So he binds restrictions on others.
- 2) God's commands are not grievous.
  - a) God's commands are not to restrict joy. Joy is one of the fruits of the spirit.
  - b) God's commands are to restrict sin.
- 3) God's commands are not grievous because:
  - a) God never gives a commandment that He does not at the same time give the strength to fulfill it. Paul said in **Phil. 2:12**, "**Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**" In **verse 13** he says, "**For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for His good pleasure.**" What we work out is what God works in. Strength is provided, **Phil. 4:13, 19**. We are capable of doing more. We only lack the faith.
  - b) God's commandments are not burdensome because we love the commander. Our obedience is a response of love and love lightens the load. They may be difficult sometimes, but they are never a burden because we love God and he loves us.

•2. (READ 5:4-5) Living by Faith makes us victorious in the New Life!

- a. Here's another reason why obedience to God's commands is not a burden.
  - 1) Love makes the load lighter.



- 2) Faith gives us strength to carry the load.
- b. As I study God's word, I understand more and more why Jesus said, "**Blessed are the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of heaven**".
- c. Faith is our victory, but God had to do a lot of work in order to give us something to believe in. In reality, our faith is God's work, not our own.
  - 1) Look at John 6:29, "**Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.'**"
  - 2) So we believe. God had to work so that we could.
  - 3) We are destitute on our own. In front of Satan we are helpless to defend ourselves. Yet God has met our every need. When are we going to remove the weak and difficult self from the throne of our lives and place Jesus there through a poverty of spirit?
  - 4) We need something to hold on to. To believe in and God has provided it in Christ Jesus. Even our faith is God's work. We can lay no claims, not even our faith in Jesus, on our salvation. It is a gift of grace.
    - a) When a child grows, he believes in his parents. That is as it should be. That's the reason why the home is so important to God.
    - b) When a child grows up and discovers that Santa Claus is not real and Mom and Dad make mistakes too, that child will not be secure unless we assist that child to place his faith and trust in the only rock in his life.
    - c) Life is an empty shell to everyone except Christians. We have oh so much to offer the world.
- d. God begets faith in our heart. James said, "**Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls**", **James 1:21**. God is the planter of His word and Satan attempts to oppose it so the word will not be planted. Our faith comes from God.
- e. Who is he that overcomes?
  - 1) John says faith overcomes the world in **vs. 4** and God's work is our faith, so God overcomes through us (!!!).
  - 2) But in **vs. 5** he says, "**Who overcomes?**" and answers, "**He who believes**".
  - 3) We overcome the world through our faith.
    - a) But really, God overcomes through us. That is fellowship.
    - b) Our life becomes a victory for God over Satan.
      - 1] My life for God is His victory!
      - 2] God's eternal life in me by my faith is God's victory!
      - 3] Jesus perfect life, death, burial, and resurrection is the basis for our victory.

•4] The lives of just men made perfect is the victory of God over Satan.

•c) These all come together in glorious purpose at my salvation. No wonder God so desires the lost to be saved.

•f. The commandments of God ceased to be burdensome. They have ceased to be grievous when I love God and when I have faith in Him. It then becomes my meat and my drink to do my father's will, **John 4:32**.

•3.

**It will help to understand this section by remembering the teaching of the Gnostics.**

- 1. They claimed the "gnosis" was the spirit of Christ, and that it came upon Christ after his baptism and that it departed Him prior to His crucifixion. They taught that this "gnosis" spirit was Christ and that the man Jesus was left to suffer on the cross as flesh deserves. Only the spirit of Christ was sinless and perfect.
- 2. They denied the resurrection of Jesus the man.
- 3. They denied that Jesus was the literal son of God. He was only God through the "gnosis" spirit of Christ.
- 4. John, in this section, will strike a death blow to the Gnostic doctrine.
- 5. John says that Jesus came by (or through) both the water, which indicates His baptism, and the blood, which indicates His crucifixion. John is saying, Jesus is the Christ and He did suffer and die on the cross.
- 6. The Holy Spirit of truth verifies this fact. (What does that make any teachings to the contrary?)

**What about verse 7?**

- 7. **Verse 7** in the King James Version was added to the Greek text. ("For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one.") A Spanish heretic named Priscillian who died in 385 A.D added it as a footnote to the Greek text. His footnote later became incorporated into the text itself and this is the text used by the KJV translators. It is not included in most other versions.

(5:6-12) The witness of Christ's deity.

- a. (READ 5:6-9) The witnesses of Jesus Christ by God that He is in fact God's son.

- 1) There are listed here three witnesses to Christ's sonship.
  - a) The water.
  - b) The blood.
  - c) The Spirit.
  
- 2) Notice the water's witness when Jesus was baptized, "Then Jesus arrived<sup>^</sup> from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted<sup>^</sup> Him. And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." **Matt. 3:13-17.**
  - a) John recognized Jesus as God's Son by revelation at His baptism.
  - b) This is the witness of the water.
  
- 3) Notice the blood's witness when Jesus was crucified, "But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." **Rom. 3:21-26.**
  - a) God sent Jesus to be a propitiation. "In His blood."
  - b) We are justified freely by the faith God has born in us and through the redemption that is in Christ's blood.
  - c) **Read John 19:31-36.** This could be the water and the blood that John is referring to.
  
- 4) Notice how the Spirit's witness.
  - a) The Spirit's witness seems to be continual. He says it is the Spirit that "beareth" witness (ASV), not bore as in past tense. (In NIV = "testifies" not testified.)
  - b) The Spirit's testimony is continual and bears witness in different ways. John is saying, "The testimony of the Spirit's word is the truth about Jesus".

- c) In other words, not only does Christ's baptism (the water) and his death (the blood) bear witness, but also the truth bears witness to Jesus being the son of God.
- 5) Notice how the Spirit bears witness.
  - a) Jesus was called the Son of God because He was begotten of the Spirit.
  - b) The Spirit bore witness at His baptism. The Spirit descended in bodily form.
  - c) The Spirit bore witness in His temptation because **Matt. 4:1** says, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil".
  - d) The Spirit bore witness in His preaching. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." **Luke 4:18-19 (NRSV)**. The Spirit anointed Him to preach the gospel.
  - e) Now, what power did Jesus say explains His message? "The Spirit."
    - 1] The Spirit witnessed to the son ship of Jesus through miracles.
    - 2] **Matt. 12:28**, "If by the Spirit of God cast out demons then is the kingdom come upon you." Jesus said the Spirit enabled Him to perform His miracles. He had the power but remember, He was in submission as a man. The man Jesus Christ
  - f) The Spirit of God witnessed in Jesus' death, **Heb. 9:14**.
  - g) The Spirit witnessed at His resurrection, **1 Pet. 3:18-19**.
    - 1] Jesus was "raised from the dead through glory of the Father." **Rom 6:4**.
    - 2] He was declared to be the Son of God "with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." **Rom. 1:4**.
    - 3] This same Spirit dwells in us (which will lead to our last point in **1 John 5:6-12**.)
  - h) So Jesus was:
    - 1] Born of the Spirit
    - 2] Witnessed of the Spirit at baptism.
    - 3] Led by the Spirit
    - 4] A preacher of the gospel by the Spirit.
    - 5] A miracle worker by the Spirit.

- 6] Witnessed by the Spirit at His death.
- 7] Resurrected and glorified by the Spirit.
- i) The truth, which is the Spirit's word, testifies all these things.
  - 1] Heb. 2:4, The Holy Spirit in the first century confirmed the apostolic testimony concurring Christ in the word by miracles and signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Spirit, which were treasured by the apostles.
  - 2] Now this testimony of the Spirit confirmed by the Spirit is still witnessing concurring Christ through you and me.
- 6) This is John's last word to the Gnostic and he saved his strongest point until last.
  - a) John says there are three witnesses that prove that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God.
    - 1] Some Gnostics believed that Jesus became God's son at baptism. They did not believe He was prior to that. John reminds them of the Spirit's witness at His baptism. A fact that everyone knew and could not deny. He calls it the witness of water.
    - 2] None of the Gnostics believed the Jesus was God's son when He died. Somewhere in between His baptism and His death, the Gnostics believed and taught that He became less than God's son. That is why John said, "**He came through the water and the blood**".
    - 3] Who then, according to John, according to the Spirit, and therefore, according to the truth, Jesus died at Calvary? The true Son of God, Jesus Christ!
  - b) John is making reference to the law which said, "**One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth; at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses shall a matter be established**". Duet. 19:15 (Matt. 18:16, Heb. 10:28) The law demanded three witnesses to establish a point. John has established that Jesus was the Son of God and still is by fulfilling this demand; three witnesses, water, blood, spirit.
- b. (**READ 5:10-12**) The testimony of God through the Spirit concerning Jesus continues in us.
  - 1) We have become witness because the witness is eternal life and eternal life dwells in us.
  - 2) 1 John 1:1-4, John himself was a witness. John has said, you do not have to depend on my witness, because you have the witness of the water, the blood, and the spirit.
  - 3) When you and I believe in Jesus, where is the witness. It's wherever the Spirit is.

# The Epistle of 1st John

LESSON FIFTEEN 5:13-21

Southgate Church of Christ

by Milt Langston

## Review:

- 1. What was the major false teaching in the church called which occurred in that day?
- 2. What are the three major areas John will discuss? (light, love, life)
- 3. Name the three mistakes the false teachers made and the two corrections John said was needed in chapter one
- 4. What is the purpose of grace?
- 5. How can we know we know God?
- 6. What is the old & new commandment?
- 7. How can we know we are walking in the light? (Love we have for others)
- 8. How can we keep from loving the world too much? (Love God more)
- 9. Does God bless one group of people with more knowledge? (No) What has God given to all Christians equally? (His anointing)
- 10. What is the motivation of our purity? (God's love)
- 11. Is a Christian allowed to sin?
- 12. What will destroy or conquer sin in man? (living in Jesus)
- 13. Give two ways grace gives us a good conscience. (It forgives sin then eliminates it.)
- 14. What is proof of the Holy Spirit's presence? (Obedience to commandments)
- 15. What is the difference between the spirit of error and the spirit of God? (One recognizes and abide in the truth.)
- 16. What is the difference between spirit of truth and spirit of error? (One recognizes and abides in the truth>)
- 17. Who are those who don't know God? (Those who do not love.)
- 18. What is saving love? The love of God or man's love?
- 19. What are the four proofs that we are born again? ( Love, spirit, confession, faith and trust)
- 20. Give four results in our new life of God's love. (boldness, loss of fear, love toward one another, fulfillment of God's commands)
- 21. 5:1-12 teaches that the Spirit lives in faith, love, and obedience; therefore, how does the Spirit live in us?

- 22. What does the Spirit witness to? (eternal life) Therefore, how can we know we have eternal life?
  - a. Spirit's witness is eternal life.
  - b. Jesus is eternal life.
  - c. We serve Jesus (faith love, and obedience); therefore, we serve eternal life and become a part of it. Is that different from serving in order to obtain life? (yes) Eph. 2:8-10
  - d. It is called grace, but is grace demanding? (yes) Does grace protect? How?

## TEXT:

### I. JOHN'S RIGHT TO WRITE (1:1-4).

### II. GOD IS LIGHT (1:5-2:27).

### III. GOD IS LOVE (2:28-5:12).

### IV. GOD IS LIFE (5:13-21).

#### •A. (READ 5:13) THE ASSURANCE OF THE POSSESSION OF ETERNAL LIFE!

Many times we have sinned against our fellow brethren by ignoring this passage. We must teach the assurance of our salvation in Christ. Knowledge of salvation and an assurance therein will eliminate mental disorders, legal concepts, and debates within the brotherhood and fear of failure. We're saved and that fact cannot lose.

How can we know that we have eternal life? John says, "That is why I wrote you; so you can know." So let's review... We know we are saved:

- 1. (1:5-10) **BECAUSE OF THE SETTLED SIN IN QUESTION.** In **Isaiah 59:1-2**, it says: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short That it cannot save; Neither is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear." The only thing that separates us from God is our sins. It is the sting of death. Remove it and death has no sting. In **1:5-10**, John settles this question. Sins are removed by:
  - a. Our walk.
    - 1) Christ came to save sinners. You and I came to Jesus, obeyed His command to be baptized, and received remission for our sins.
    - 2) Life after baptism is a life in and for Christ.
    - 3) If He has the power to save us, He has the power to keep us saved, **Rom. 8:31-32.**

- 4) When we walk in the light. The only kinds of sins a Christian has are forgiven sins.
- b. Our humility.
  - 1) If we are walking in the light, we are aware that Christ forgives sins daily; therefore, we would never deny our own sins. There is no need to deny them because a Christian who walks in the light knows that Christ is the power of his salvation and the remover of sins. Why deny it? That would only prove the darkness of our own understanding.
  - 2) So how do we walk in the light?
    - a) By living by faith in Christ's ability to make us right before God. He is our confidence.
    - b) By exalting Christ by giving Him credit for the forgiveness of sins.
    - c) By humbling self and not denying our sinful nature but exalting Christ as our savior.
    - d) We walk in the light by acknowledging our sinful nature and exalting the walk of Christ in our life.
- c. Our confession
  - 1) If we are walking in the light and have adopted a poverty of spirit attitude and if we exalt Christ.
  - 2) We will say, "I am a sinner, and thank God I am now a saved sinner." That is confession of our sins.
  - 3) Because of our confidence and attitude towards Christ.
    - a) We'll be humble enough to confess our sins to one another.
    - b) We'll say to a wronged brother, "I was wrong, forgive me."
  - 4) In our devotion to God, we will not be afraid to face up to the realities of our own shortcomings (when we pray at night).
    - a) Because of forgiveness, we can face sin.
    - b) Because of humility, we can confess sin.
    - c) Because of Jesus, we will overcome sin.
- 2. **(2:1-5) WE CAN KNOW WE ARE SAVED BECAUSE WE KEEP CHRIST'S COMMANDMENTS.**
  - a. Jesus is an advocate. Jesus is a propitiation for sins. Now, how can I know if He is my advocate and my propitiation?
  - b. **"We can be sure we know Him if we keep His commands."**
    - 1) No one else on earth is going to try to do all (unreserved acknowledgment of Christ as lord) that Jesus says, but someone that is saved.



- 2) We are not saved because we obey(don't get scared; stay with me), we are saved by the faith in us that puts us on to the task of doing all God asks us to do, our obedience is a sign (something we can recognize in ourselves) that we are indeed saved. Instead of being saved by our obedience; we are saved to obey! Only God's grace causes God to accept our obedience.
- 3) The person who only obeys what he wants to obey is not saved because obedience is a sign of salvation and partial obedience due to rebellion is disobedience.
  - a) The issue here is not our ability to obey, but our willingness to obey.
  - b) Our inabilities, our sins, were covered in Chapter 1.
  - c) This deals with our attitude. Is Christ your Lord or not? If He is your Lord, you will be active in doing His will by obeying His commands. It is a sign of salvation.
- 4) Many scriptures warn us not to tamper with Christ's authority (**Rev. 22:18-19, 2 John 9-11, Gal. 1:6-9**) but here John deals with the saved ones response to their Savior. They obey Him and that obedience is a sign of our salvation.
- c. Are you saved? John says, "Are you obeying God's commands?" If the answer is yes, then yes, you are saved. If it is no, then no, you're not saved. But there is no reason not to say yes, because even if we fail in our attempts, chapter one shows us that those failures are forgiven.
- d. The word "**keep**" in the ASV and "obey" in the NIV - "tereo" (Gr.) = "to watch over, to preserve, to keep, to watch, to be kept, to be observed, to give heed to, (Vine, p. 287). This talks of a man who practices keeping God's commands.
  - 1) Practice makes perfect.
  - 2) The more we practice righteousness, the more righteousness we do.
  - 3) The more we keep God's commandments, the more of God's commandments we keep.
- e. This growth and development is a sign of salvation. By it we can know we are saved.
- f. Because we keep God's commands, we can know we are saved.
- 3. **(3:14) WE CAN KNOW WE ARE SAVED BECAUSE THERE IS LOVE.**
  - a. We can know we are saved if we can see a change of attitude in ourselves.
  - b. Just by knowing the love you feel in your own heart for others, you can know you are saved.
  - c. John does not give us a final test to see if we are saved or not; he says add up these evidences and he then gives us a compilation. You can know you are saved because:
    - 1) Because you are walking in the light.

- 2) Because you are humble.
  - 3) Because you are confessing your sins.
  - 4) Because you are keeping His commandments.
  - 5) Because you love the brethren.
- d. No one loves the saved but the saved. No one loves the brethren but those who have eternal life.
- 1) If we see anyone who does not love his brother or sister in Christ, we can know that that person does not have eternal life in them.
  - 2) John has written us a letter so that we can know we have eternal life. Our love is a proof of eternal life.
- 4. **(3:24; 4:13) WE CAN KNOW WE ARE SAVED BECAUSE OF THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, Acts 2:38; 5:32; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 4:8.**
- a. In **Rev. 7:2**, the angel came down from heaven with the "seal of the living God". In our texts above we find that God's seal, the emblem of His ownership and the mark of His angels security, is the Holy Spirit. It secures us from destruction as in **Ezekiel 9:4-8**.
- 1) The Holy Spirit marks us for salvation so that God can recognize us, **2 Tim. 2:19**, and He knows us through His Spirit in us.
  - 2) If we do not have the Spirit, we are not saved, but if we have the Spirit, we know we are saved, **Rom. 8:9**.
    - a) Don't try with the physical senses to feel the Spirit. You will not know you have the Spirit by feeling Him.
    - b) Jesus said it is like the wind. You can't see the wind, but know it is there by its results.
    - c) The results of the Spirit are truth, faith, obedience, and love.
- b. If the Spirit did absolutely nothing for us, we would still be glad as Christians to have Him.
- 1) Because He is proof of our sonship.
  - 2) The seal of our salvation.
  - 3) The earnest of our inheritance.
    - a) Earnest money is proof that more is coming later.
    - b) While on earth, God gave of Himself by giving us the Spirit as proof that more is coming later.
  - 4) Because He is a witness to God for me.
- c. God's greatest gift to us is God in us through the Spirit, **Rom. 8:26-27**.

- 1) Does God know what you mean when you ask a dumb request? Yes, because He lives in your heart.
- 2) Does God know deep down in your heart you want to do what's right? Yes, because He lives in your heart.
- 3) Does God understand when you are so frustrated you don't know what to ask for and you just say "help"? Yes, because He lives in your heart.
- 4) And He lives in us through the Holy Spirit.
- d. If we have the Spirit, do we have eternal life?
  - 1) The Spirit is eternal.
  - 2) So when God gave us the Spirit, He gave us eternity.
- e. **Ps. 139:7-10**, The Spirit of God is everywhere. We cannot go on this earth where God is not.
  - 1) God's Spirit is in the trees. They don't sin. Glorify God.
  - 2) God's Spirit is in the deer. They don't sin. Glorify God.
  - 3) God's Spirit is in the moon, mountains, sun, and stars. They don't sin. Glorify God.
  - 4) God's Spirit is in us. We don't sin. We glorify God.
- 5. **(5:1) WE CAN KNOW WE ARE SAVED BECAUSE OF THE WORD OF GOD.**
  - a. When we believe the word, we are begotten of God; therefore, the word is proof that we are saved.
  - b. Our faith in that word is also proof that we are saved.
  - c. Our trust in the truth about Jesus is proof that we're saved.
  - d. How do I know I have eternal life?
    - 1) Because sin is a settled issue in my life.
    - 2) Because I keep His commandments.
    - 3) Because I love the brethren.
    - 4) Because He gave me the Spirit.
    - 5) Because I trust Jesus.
  - e. After all of this, if we deny or doubt that we have eternal life, we make God a liar, **5:10**.
  - f. If we walk in the light of the truth, we should be completely, perfectly, and forever convinced that we have eternal life. Without this knowledge and security we will never grow.
  - g. Aren't you glad you are saved?

•B. **(READ 5:14-15) THE ASSURANCE OF THE POWER OF PRAYER.**

- 1. Here we have the assurance that our prayers are heard and answered by God.
  - a. God wants us to be assured of this fact.
  - b. He wants us to know that He hears, that He is anxious to hear, and that He does not ignore our prayers.
- 2. **"This is the boldness we have toward Him..."**
  - a. **"Boldness"** - Parrhesia (Gr.) = (a) "primarily freedom of speech, unreservedness of utterance, or to speak without ambiguity. Plainly, or without figures of speech. (b.) The absence of fear in speaking boldly; hence, confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, without any connection to speech." (Vine, Vol. I, p. 138)
  - b. This boldness, this confidence, this assurance that we have is that anytime we bow in prayer, God listens.
- 3. When we talk, God listens.
  - a. This gives us boldness because we know that He is listening. He wants to help. He wants to give us what we ask for. Doesn't that make you feel better?
  - b. Sometimes God does not give us what we ask for because He loves us so much that He will not give us what will hurt us.
    - 1) Out of our own stupidity, we sometimes ask for things we don't really need, or things that are not good for us.
      - a) If we know not to give our own children things they want that are not good for them.
      - b) Do you suppose God knows enough not to grant us things that will hurt us.
    - 2) Sometimes we might ask for something that God knows would damn us eternally if we got it. God would not give it to us, because he loves us.
- 4. If in every prayer we pray, we pray that the will of the Father be done, then God will always say yes, **1 John 3:21-22**. We may have to wait awhile, but God will always answers such a prayer.
  - a. When Jesus prayed, He said, **"Let this cup pass from me...not My will but Thine be done."**
    - 1) God answered His son with a "Yes" when He showed that He had to drink the cup. It was not possible to take the cross away.
    - 2) Yet, God answered "yes" because God's will was done.
  - b. **Duet. 3:23-27**, Moses asked God to let him go into the promised land,
    - 1) Did God say yes or no?

- 2) He said yes. Read **Matt. 17:1-3**. Moses got to go into the Promised Land to talk to Jesus.
- 3) Sometimes we have to wait for God to answer our prayers for our own good.
- 5. When we pray and ask according to God's will, God hears us and He answers us.
- C. **(5:15-17) THE ASSURANCE OF PROTECTION FROM SINS.**
  - 1. **GOD ANSWERS PRAYER. NOTICE THREE THINGS ABOUT PRAYER.**
    - a. **(READ 5:15) THE BASIS OF PRAYER.**
      - 1) The basis of prayer is that God listens.
      - 2) Many people think that God does not listen.
        - a) I guess we think that God, like us, ignores many things we say to Him. (Have you ever noticed yourself ignoring what someone was saying to you? Have you noticed yourself being ignored?)
        - b) God does not do that. Ignoring people is a human weakness.
      - 3) If people believe God listens and answers every prayer we pray, then they will pray more.
      - 4) Don't we like to talk to people we love.
      - 5) Here are three reasons we don't pray.
        - a) We don't believe God is listening.
        - b) We don't love God.
        - c) Because of ignorance. (Just too dumb to pray)
    - b. **(READ 5:15) THE PRINCIPLE OF PRAYER - The conditions of prayer.** Some pray as though they were trying to destroy God's will. Prayer is not trying to lay hold on God's reluctance, but on God's willingness. We do not pray to change God over but to do His will. Instead, we change.
      - 1) Obedience **1 John 3:21-22**
      - 2) We must remain in Christ by remaining in His word, **John 15:7**.
      - 3) Ask in Jesus' name (by Christ's power and authority)
        - a) Canadian Mountie, "Stop in the name of the queen."
        - b) "In the name" = By the authority; "Blessed...Poor in spirit"
        - c) This does not mean that we must close each prayer we pray with the words, "In Jesus name, Amen" though it is all right to do so.
        - d) We can pray without ever stating the phrase, understanding the phrase is more important than saying it. "In Jesus name" is not a magic formula of

words. It means, "in Christ's stead," "for Christ's sake," "by Christ's authority."

- e) We could even say, "Lord, I'm Jesus brother and servant, and he told me I could talk to you."
- f) We should pray with Christ's authority, with His backing. We are asking Jesus to stand up to be viewed by the Father while we pray. ("Look at Jesus, Father, and help me") The mediator stands between. When we pray in Jesus' name, He stands up between God and us and we talk through Him and God looks through Him.
  - 1] So God answers prayer based on Jesus, not based on us.
  - 2] This is the reason that prayer is so powerful. We call the most powerful being in the entire universe to witness when we pray.
  - 3] We say, "Lord, answer this because of what Jesus did."
- g) When we pray in Christ's name, we hold before God every moan, every groan, every deed, and every word of Jesus. God looks at this when we pray in Christ's name and we say, "God, answer my requests because I am trying with all that's in me to serve Him. Answer me for His sake."

•c. **(READ 5:16-17) THE LIMITATION OF PRAYER.**

- 1) We are to pray for each other. We need to pray intercessory prayers for one another, **vs. 16**. When we see a brother sinning a sin, a sin that he has not yet conquered, we need to pray for him.
  - a) We are not to pray for deliberate sins or continual sins.
  - b) But the sins such as those mentioned in **1:7**. Those sins which Christ's blood cleanses. (More on this later)
  - c) This teaches that our prayers (Christian prayers) can cause God to forgive sins in our brothers in Christ.
- 2) Now if he is sinning that sin in view of death, then we are not to pray for him.
- 3) We need to pray intercessory prayers for each other. **Read Luke 22:31-32**
- 4) Paul wrote very few letters that he did not say, "Brother, pray for me." **1 Thess. 5:25; Heb. 13:18-19; Col. 4:2-3; 1 Tim. 2:1; Jas. 5:14, 16**. There is need for intercession.
- 5) There is need for confessing of faults so that we can pray for each other.
  - a) Example of preacher who lied. Had a problem with exaggerated tales to cover his tracks.
  - b) When I found out, it wounded my faith.
  - c) What if he had asked me to pray for him not to tell lies?

- 6) The primary reason we don't do this may be pride.
  - a) We are not humble enough to confess and admit our sins.
  - b) John says we can't be forgiven unless we can confess our sins, **1 John 1**
  - c) When we get together to talk about our problems, and we do not confess our faults to one another, then we are kind of saying what John said we say when we make ourselves liars, **1 John 1:8**.
- 7) We think we are pretty good people. I don't need to talk over my problem with anyone else. We deceive ourselves with this kind of thinking and the truth is not in us. We need the intercession of our brethren.
  - a) How can you intercede for me if you don't know my needs?
  - b) We lose a great value when we are not close in our fellowship. Christianity was meant to make us so close that we love each other in spite of our weaknesses.
  - c) In our text, we are able to pray for our brother's weaknesses whether he asks or confesses or not.
- 8) James says, "**Confess one to another**" not publicly, though public confession is all right.

•2.