

Reading: 1 John 3:1-10

## **BACK TO BASICS**

### **10. VICTORY IN JESUS !**

Someone once asked General Douglas McArthur what is the most important lesson a soldier fighting a war needs to learn ? And Douglas McArthur replied, “ *He must learn quickly that there is no substitute for victory.* ” No statement ever uttered has been more true about the Christian life than that one. If you try to substitute anything for victory as you live for the Saviour, you’re going to pull the plug of joy right out of your Christian life. Too many of us Christians are sailing to heaven on the gospel ship waving the white flag of defeat, instead of the red flag of victory. My .... how are you doing in your war against sin ? How are you doing in your war against Satan ? These verses that we have come to this .... deal with the Christians incompatibility with sin. You see, your heart is a bit like Dodge City at high noon, its not big enough for sin and the Saviour

Now keep in mind the background of this little letter. John is writing like this because of what was happening at Ephesus and perhaps further a-field. False teachers with Gnostic like concepts were coming in, and they were teaching a dualist doctrine, which taught that the flesh was evil, anything material or physical was evil, and the spiritual world is righteous and good. So they concluded that because the material was evil, it does not matter what you do in the flesh, because the flesh will perish, and it will only be the spirit that lives on. *As long as you are right in the spirit you can do whatever you like in the flesh.* Another name for this was Antinomianism which means “ ***Anti-law.*** ” This was a reaction to the Judaisers who were coming into the church and teaching that you have keep the law of Moses, you have to keep rules and regulations, so a group of people said, “ *No we’re not going to keep the rules of the Word of God or even the N.T. principles of Christ. All that matters is the spiritual we can indulge the flesh.* ” Do you see now what was going on ? There were those running around, taking the name of Christ and living a degraded existence in the flesh. So the apostle John now deals with this problem in this section and brings before us the subject of “ **Victory in Jesus.** ”

Have you not been told many times that salvation is in three tenses ? We have been saved from the penalty of sin, we are being saved from the power of sin, and someday we will be saved from the presence of sin. *The problem is too many of us are still too tense about the second tense.* We hear that we are being saved from the power of sin, but for many of us, if that statement is true, than our salvation hasn’t yet taken full effect. Now John is saying that no born again Christian should be satisfied with anything less than complete victory over sin and over the devil day by day. “ **Victory in Jesus,** ” is not just for the preacher, not just for the evangelist, not just for a few spiritual superstars, it is something that all believers should experience. My .... are you tired of sin getting the best of you ? Are you

tired of Satan running roughshod over you ? Do you want to know how to get a lasting day by day, moment by moment victory over sin ? Do you want to have “**Victory in Jesus,**” and not just sing about it ? Well, I believe that John gives us some clues here. “**Victory in Jesus,**” how ? Through,

## **(1) THE WORK OF THE SAVIOUR**

Look if you will at ( 3:5 ) You see, a Christian cannot practice sin because it is incompatible with the work of Christ. Why did the Lord Jesus die ? To sanctify, to make holy the believer. ( Eph 5:25-27 ) So John is talking here about the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross. Now,

### **(a) THE NEED FOR HIS ATONING WORK:**

Is obvious ! John says in ( 1:4 ) The word that John uses here for sin speaks of a violation of God’s law (anomeeah ) Here we are given a simple definition of sin, one of many definitions of sin in the Bible, because sin is a many headed monster. ( James 4:17 Rom 14:23 ).

*Sin is the most powerful three letter word in the English language.* It is the reason that the world is in such a mess today. It is the reason why our jails are full and our churches are empty. In one word it explains why God sent Christ, why we need Christ, and why so many people reject Christ. Now John describes sin in one word .... *lawlessness* ! Sin, in a nutshell is the breaking of the law of God. Sin is when God says, “*Thou shalt do this,*” and you say to God “*I will not.*” Sin is when God says, “*thou shalt not,*” and you say to God, “*I will so.*” Someone has said, “*sin is a clenched fist in the face of God.*” Sin is rebellion against God. It is a blunt refusal to accept the authority of God over our lives ! The story is told about little Judy who was riding in the car with her father when she decided to stand up on the front seat. Her father told her to sit down and put on the seat belt, but she declined. He told her a second time and again she defiantly refused. “*If you don’t sit down immediately, I’ll pull over to the side of the road and spank you,*” her father said.

Judy did what she was told. She obeyed him. But they had travelled only a short distance down the road when Judy turned and whispered to her father, “*Daddy, I may be sitting down, but I am standing up inside.*” Is this is not exactly what sin is ? It is rebellion against God and God’s will for your life ! Tell me, do you know something of its power in your life ? Do you know something of its influence in your heart ? (a) But look at,

### **(b) THE NATURE OF HIS ATONING WORK:**

#### 1. Christ came to deal with SIN:

John says in ( 3:5 ) The word “*manifested,*” means “*to render apparent,*” “*to reveal.*” “*Take away,*” is also an interesting phrase. It’s a word that means “*to lift up and haul off.*” What day do the “*waste disposal technicians,*” call at your

home ? The bin-men ! Do you know what they do ? They call at your home, gather up all of your garbage, and haul it off for you never to see it again. Is that not what Christ did ? He took all of the garbage and trash in your life and hauled it off for ever. You see, the wonderful thing about being saved is, that when God hauls off all your sins, the Devil can never drag them back up. Do you recall what the Psalmist

says ? “ *As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*” ( 103:12 ) How far is the east from the west ? Its an immeasurable distance. You see, when God hauls away your garbage, not only does He haul it off, you can’t even find the dump. For when Christ died on the cross, He took all of your sins, past, present and future, and you have been delivered from them all ! 1.

## 2. Christ came to deal with SATAN:

Do you what John says in ( 3:8 ) ? Is this not another reason why you must not practice sin ? Because Christ came to destroy the works of the arch-sinner Satan. That word “ *destroy*,” means to “ *render inoperative*.” My .... the Devil has been defeated at the Cross, and he is a vanquished enemy. *Do you realise that you’re not here to fight for victory, you are here to fight from victory ?* We are the victors, he is the vanquished and we can have victory over sin and satan through our Lord Jesus Christ.

There was a General Wainwright during World War 2 who was taken captive by the Japanese and he was beaten and emaciated and just treated terribly. One day a plane landed with the news that the war had ended. The next day, however, the Japanese soldiers out of sheer habit came to the compound where General Wainwright was staying and they began to torture him and beat just as always, for they that had forgotten that the war was over, and that the General was now on the victory side. So just as the soldiers came in and started to beat him, he said, “ *Wait a minute, put down your weapons, I am in charge now and you are my captives.*”

They put their weapons down because that was fact. What had changed ? They were in the same environment, the same forces, what had changed ? What had changed was a historical fact. The Allies had won the war. Is this not what happened at Calvary ? The fact of the matter is Christ is the Captain of our salvation. Satan is the Captive of our salvation, and we are no longer under his powers. My .... while the devil at times may throw you to the ground, praise God he cannot pin you to the floor ! My .... do you realise that Christ has made it possible for you to have victory over daily sins in your life ? How ? (1) Every time you’re tempted to sin, get by faith to the cross, and realise that those are the very things that caused Christ to groan in agony on the tree ! **Victory in Jesus !**  
(1)

## **(2) THE WALK OF THE SAINT**

Someone told of a church that believed in sinless perfection, once you trusted Christ and were baptised. A visitor to the church heard that teaching and asked to be baptised. He was tired of dealing with his habitual sin without any success. Unfortunately, it was in the middle of the winter and the river was near frozen. The man with much persistence got the elders to baptise him in river. After the man and the two elders came out of the freezing cold water, the man was so excited he said, “ *I feel so good, I’m not even cold.* ” One elder turned to the other and said, “ *He’s lying we’ll have to do it again.* ” Now some have understood these verses to teach that it’s possible to live a life of sinless perfection. The fact is, when we compare these verses with what John says in (Ch 1:8-10 ) it is clear that John is not flying the flag for such an impossible and unrealistic experience this side of glory. How then are we to understand these words ? Well, John is speaking here about the walk or conduct of the Christian. Notice that this walk is,

**(a) DESCRIBED NEGATIVELY:**

What this walk does not involve ! *It does not involve sinning.* Look at ( 3:6 ) Now the verb for sin ( 3:6 ) is in the present tense which in the Greek denotes continuous action. So literally that verse says, “ *No one who abides in Christ continuously sins.* ” The sense conveyed here, is the idea of habitual, constant sinning. Sin will not be the constant habit of his life. Now it does not mean that you will never ever sin again. Do you recall what John says in the opening chapter ? “ *If we say that we have not sinned we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.* ” ( 1:10 ) John is simply say that when you abide in Christ, when you are walking closing to Him, obeying Him, ( Jn 15:10 ) sin will be an occasional stumbling, not an habitual experience. You *see, when you are saved, God does not fix you that you cannot sin any more, He just fixes you where you cannot sin and enjoy it any more.* The unsaved man leaps into sin and he loves it. The saved man lapses into sin and he loathes it. The lost man occasionally does what is right, but habitually sins, but the saved man habitually does what is right, and only occasionally sins.

Now when a professing Christian, a man who says he is saved, lives a life of habitual sin, John’s pronouncement is absolutely clear, salvation never took place. Do you see ( 3:6 ) ? “ *Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him neither known Him.* ” My ..... as a professing Christian what is your attitude to sin ? How do you treat it ? How do you view it ? Do you keep on sinning ? Oh, you may have raised your hand at an evangelistic meeting, you may have signed a decision card, you may have been baptised and joined the local assembly, but what is your attitude to sin ? *Sure, we are not sinless, we never will be this side of heaven, but are we sinning less and less as times marches on ?* When the Emperor arrested Chrysostom one of the early church fathers, and tried to make him recant he shook his head. The Emperor said to his guards, “ *Throw him into prison.* ” “ *No,* ” said one of them “ *he will be glad to go for he delights in the presence of God in quiet.* ” “ *Well, execute him,* ” said the Emperor. “ *He will be glad to die,* ” said the soldier, “ *for he wants to go to heaven, I heard him say so the other day.* ” “ *There is only one thing that can gave Chrysostom pain, and that is to make him sin, he*

*said he was afraid of nothing but sin. If you can make him sin, you will make him unhappy.”* Is this how you view sin ? Is this your attitude to sin ? (a) Notice that this walk is,

**(b) DESCRIBED POSITIVELY:**

Look if you will at ( 3:7 ) You see, these counterfeit Christians were trying to convince true believers that a person could be “ *saved*,” and still practice sin. Now John does not deny that Christians sin, but he does deny that Christians can live in sin. Would you like to know how close you really are to the Saviour and how near Christ really is to you ? Well let me ask you,

1. How SENSITIVE are you to Sin ?

You see, the closer you are to the Lord Jesus, the more sensitive you will be to sin, because the one thing that God hates, the one thing that Christ loathes is sin and the closer you are to Jesus, the more sensitive you will be to sin.

2. How SEPARATE are you from Sin ?

For the man is truly saved and abiding in Christ does not even want to be around sin. Is that not what John is really saying in ( 3:7-8 ) ? The one you are close to is the one you will be like. If you are living like Christ, its because you are close to Christ, if you are living like the Devil, its because you are close to the Devil. You see, the test of a man’s Christianity is not his profession but rather his practice. It’s the lifestyle that makes the difference. Do you remember what Christ said ? “ *By their fruits ye shall know them.*” ( Matt 7:20 ) **Victory in Jesus !** How ? (1) (2)

**(3) THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT**

Through the evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives. You see, here is another reason why Christians cannot practice sin, it is incompatible with the ministry of the Holy Spirit who has imparted a new nature to the believer. ( Jn 3:5-8 ) You see, John tells us two things that are true of a genuine born again Christian.

**(a) THERE IS A NEW LIFE WITHIN YOU:**

Look at ( 3:9 ) You know, when a person receives Christ as his Saviour tremendous changes takes place in him. He is given a new standing before God, being accepted as righteous in God’s sight. This new standing is called ***justification*** and it never changes and is never lost. The new Christian is also given a new position, he is set apart for God’s own purposes to live for His glory. This new position is called ***sanctification***. But perhaps the most dramatic change in a new believer is what we call ***regeneration***. He is “ *born again*,” into the family of God. Justification means a new standing before God, sanctification means being set apart to God, and regeneration means a new nature ! Peter speaks of being “ *partakers of the divine nature.*” ( 2 Pet 1:4 ) John speaks of the divine

“ seed, “ in us.

So a Christian has an old nature from his physical birth, and a new nature from his spiritual birth. The old nature produces sin, the new nature produces godliness. A converted Indian explained it like this, “ *I have two dogs living in me, a mean dog and a good dog. They are always fighting. The mean dog wants me to do bad things, and the good dog wants me to do good things. Do you want to know which dog wins ? The one I feed the most.* ” My .... which nature are you feeding the most ? You see, as long as we are abiding in Christ we can be victorious over sin ! Now John is very confident about this. For in ( 3:6 ) he tells us that a Christian does not continuously sin, then in ( 3:9 ) he tells us that a Christian cannot continuously sin. Why ? Well, in ( 3:6 ) he speaks of *our being in Christ* and then in ( 3:9 ) he *speaks of Christ being in us*. Now in any battle the most important advantages you can over your enemy is have a superior position and have superior power. The U.S.A. Civil War turned on one battle the Battle of Gettysburg. There, the Union Army had superior position, they were on top of a ridge and the Confederates had to climb up hills and slopes to get to them. But they had also superior power, they had more guns, more ammunition, more soldiers. Nathan Bedford Forrest had this motto, “ *Get there firstest with the mostest men.* ” “ *Get there firstest,* ” **is the position.** “ *With the mostest men,* ” **is the power.**

My .... do you realise in your battle against sin you have a superior position ? You are in Christ ! But you also have a superior power. Christ is in you ! And John says,

“ *Greater is He that is in you, than He that is in the world.* ” ( 4:4 ) Do you understand what I am saying ? You are in a battle against sin and satan, but you have superior position and you have superior power and as long as you stay in your position and utilise your power sin cannot win ! (a)

### **(b) THERE IS A NEW LOVE WITHIN YOU:**

For when you are born again and become a child of God, you not only have a new love from the Father, you have a new love for the Father. You see, an unbeliever who sins is a creature sinning against His Creator, but a Christian who sins is a child sinning against his Father. When a lost man sins he breaks God’s law, but when a saved man sins he breaks God’s heart. The unbeliever sins against the law of God, the believer sins against the love of God. And no child who really loves his Father wants to do anything that will displease him.

Victory in Jesus ! How ? Through (1) (2) (3) An old Methodist evangelist taught the doctrine of holiness and it was said that he came closer to practising it than most folks do. Someone said to the preacher one day with tongue in cheek, “ *Dr. Morrison have a reached a point in your sin where you cannot sin ?* ” Dr. Morrison wisely replied, with a twinkle in his eye, “ *No, my brother, I have not arrived at such a place, but I can tell you where I am right now, I have come to a place where I sin but cannot enjoy it.* ” Is that where you are today in your relationship with the Lord ? Have you come to such a place in your life ? A place

where you sin, but cannot enjoy it ?