

Place: Lurgan Baptist: 14:5:2006

Reading: 1 John 1:1-10

BACK TO BASICS

2. LIVING IN THE LIGHT

I want to begin today by asking three questions. The first question is this.

(1) Can a Christian sin ?

Well, the Bible says that all Christians sin. As a matter of fact, according to the Word of God, there is only One who has ever lived and never sinned, and that was the Lord Jesus Christ. As we study the lives of God's people, we find that they sometimes sinned. David was "*a man after God's own heart*," yet David committed sin, and brought tragedy and heartache to his life. Moses was a great leader, a man of God in many ways, yet because of the sin of disobedience, he was not allowed to go into the promised land. Simon Peter, a man who preached on the day of Pentecost, an intimate disciple of the Saviour, yet even he denied that he knew the Lord. Now sinning saints are not mentioned in the Bible to discourage us, but to warn us. An angry church member came to her pastor and said, "*why do you keep preaching to us about sin ?*" *After all sin in the life of a Christian is different from sin in the life of an unsaved person.*"

"Yes," replied, the pastor, "*it is different, its much worse.*" But not only does the Bible tell us that Christians sin, but experience tells us that Christians sins. Who willing to raise his hand and say as a Christian I do not sin.

My next question is. **(2) If a Christian sins, can he lose his salvation ?** Now I believe that the Bible gives an unequivocal and emphatic "*No*," to that question, but are those who believe that a Christian can lose his salvation. I think we'll discover as we study this epistle that a believer cannot lose his salvation.

The third question is this. **(3) When a Christian does sin, what does he do, what can he do, what should he do ?** John is concerned with answering that question and so he writes this passage. Now remember that salvation in the Bible is given in three tenses. There is a past, present, and future aspect to salvation. You see, I have been saved from the penalty of sin, I am being saved from the power of sin, and one day I shall be saved from the presence of sin.

I have been saved from the penalty of sin, by the death of Jesus Christ, I am being saved from the power of sin by the life of Jesus Christ, and I will be saved from the presence of sin by the coming of Jesus Christ. Now John is dealing with the second tense of salvation, the problem of sin in the life of a believer. *You see, he talks about two relationships with God in this letter.* One is the relationship of sonship, which has to do with being in the family of God. Do you recall what he says in his gospel ? "*But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the*

sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” (1:12) This relationship is an eternal relationship and can never be broken. The second relationship is the matter of fellowship. Now all Christians have sonship, they are in the family of God, but all believers do not necessarily enjoy fellowship, being in the favour of God. It is possible for our fellowship to be broken and for us to “*walk in darkness,*” instead of “*walking in light.*” Now its to this them of “***Living in the Light,***” that John directs out mind in these verses. Notice, that he talks about,

(1) THE REVELATION THAT DECLARES OUR FELLOWSHIP

The basic premise is this simple statement. “*God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*” (1:5) John is contrasting light and darkness. God is light, sin is darkness. Now this is the basis of our fellowship. Later on in this letter we have another statement about, “*for God is love.*” (4:8) Now this is the basis of our sonship. So its possible for us to be sons of God because God is love and its, possible for us to have fellowship with God because God is light. Look at that premise,

(a) POSITIVELY:

No matter how we look at it, no matter what angle we view it from, here is a positive affirmation of who God is Now John does not say, God has a light, or God is a light. No ! God in His nature is light, God’s essence, His being, is light. Do you recall the words of the Psalmist ?

“*The Lord is my light and salvation.*” (Ps 27:1) Paul talks when he writes to young Timothy about God,

“*who only hath immortality dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.*” (6:16) Now when John says that “*God is light,*” he has in mind several truths.

1. He is speaking Physically of the Glory of God:

Have you ever noticed in the Scriptures that every time God comes on the scene there is light. For instance in

(Gen 1) we are told that “*darkness was upon the face of the deep.*” (1:2) Then “*God said, let there be light and there was light.*” (1:3) Is this not what the children of Israel discovered as they journeyed mile after mile through the desert en route to the promised land ? “*And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light.*” (Exod 13:21) Can the same not be said of the Shekinah cloud in the tabernacle and the temple.

(Exod 40:34) The light was a token reminder that God was in their midst. And so on a physical level, light represents the glory of God.

2. He is speaking Intellectually of the Knowledge of God:

For the Bible explicitly states that God has all knowledge. He knows everything. It was Elihu who said, “*He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.*”

(Job 36:4 Ps 73:11) There is nothing God can learn because He is omniscient. 1. 2.

3. He is speaking Morally of the Holiness of God:

And this is the primary reference here ! John is making a statement about the character of God. He is saying that God is absolutely holy, God is totally moral, nothing whatsoever in God is wrong. (James 1:13) Thomas Binney put it like this,

***“ Eternal Light ! Eternal Light !
How pure that soul must be
When, placed within Thy searching sight
It shrinks not but, with calm delight
Can live and look on Thee.”***

(b) NEGATIVELY:

“ And in Him is no darkness at all.” (1:5) Now in the Greek text it's a double negative. There is not no darkness in God. That's not good English, but its good theology. There is no imperfection whatsoever in God. There is no spot on the character of God, no blemish on the being of God, not one shadow of suspicion. The Bible calls God, *“ the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness (that is, He does not change) neither shadow of turning.”* (James 1:17) My its important for us to have right concepts about the character of God.

You see, our concept of God will determine the kind of life we live. If we have a low concept of God, then we will live a low life. If we have a high concept of God, we will be challenged to live a high and noble life. Do you know how Ezra came into the presence of God ? With these words on his lips, *“ O Lord God of Israel, Thou art righteous.”* (Ezra 9:15) When Isaiah got a glimpse of the glory of God he heard the seraphim cry, *“ Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.”* (6:3) My do we appreciate the holiness of God ? When we come to worship the Lord, do we come in an attitude of reverence and respect ? When we go out to live for the Lord, do we realise He cannot and will not tolerate sin ? (Hab 1:13) So here is the basis of our fellowship. *“ God is light at all.”* (1)

(2) THE REGRESSION THAT DESROYS OUR FELLOWSHIP

When we regress we go back ! Is that not what John is speaking of here ? You see, when we sin our sonship is not affected, but our fellowship is ! Did you notice here how many times John uses the phrase *“ If we say.”*

(1:6 1:8, 10) There is a problem with any Christian whose walk does not measure up to his talk. An old timer once said, *“ the problem with many Christians is, they quote Scripture by the yard and live it by the inch.”* What happens when our walk does not match our talk ? When our practice does not equal our profession ? What happens when we sin ? Well,

(a) IT DISRUPTS COMMUNION:

Look if you will at (1:6) John does not mince his words. He calls a spade, a spade ! He knows only to well if we play with fire, we end up getting badly burned. My we are only kidding

ourselves if we think that we can live some sort of compromise existence with one foot walking in the light with God, and the other foot remaining in the darkness of the world. *Now remember that John wrote this letter to deal with a heresy that was rampant in his day.* There were false teachers abounding and maybe some even in Ephesus who started to believe that you could walk in spiritual and moral darkness and still have fellowship with God. People were living in sin and claiming that they were in fellowship with God. John says “ *Impossible.* ” Someone has said “ *you might just as well live in a coal pit and claim that you’re developing a sun tan.* ” Its crazy, its impossible ! Now remember John is not dealing with **Sonship**, he is dealing with **Fellowship** ! Sonship is a matter of life and death, fellowship is matter of light and darkness ! Once you are born physically, you can never become unborn. Like wise once you are born spiritually you can never become unborn. You see, when a believer sins, he does not fall out of sonship with God, but he falls out of fellowship with God. When your children do wrong they don’t come to you and say, “ *Dad, will you make me your son again ?* ” They don’t say that because they never quit being your children. Rather they come to you and say, “ *Dad, I am sorry I did wrong and I want to make things right between us.* ” You see, they never fell out of sonship, but they did fall out of fellowship. My has unconfessed sin disrupted your fellowship with God ? You say, “ *how can I know ?* ” By one simple

test ! Have you lost the joy of your salvation ? You see, when we fellowship with the Father and the Son our joy is made complete. But unconfessed sin disrupts that fellowship. It disrupts that fellowship horizontally with your brother and it disrupts that fellowship with your God. When that happens joy is cut off, and there is one thing that can rob you of the joy of salvation and that is sin, and there is only one kind of sin, that can rob you, of the joy of your salvation, your sin. (a) What happens when we sin and conceal it ?

(b) IT DECEIVES SELF:

Look if you will at (1:8) There is a teaching going around certain circles today known as sinless perfection. Its says that its possible for a Christian to go the rest of his life without ever committing sin. Now though it is true that a Christian does not have to sin, it simply is not true that a Christian will never again sin. (Phil 3:12) *You see, when the Lord saves you, He does not make you perfect, He just makes you forgiven.* I heard about a man in a testimony meeting who was standing up talking about his sinless perfection and how he had reached a state of perfection and he just never sinned any longer. It sounded pretty good as he was giving his testimony, until a little lady stood up at the back of the building, who was his wife and she shouted out, “ *Remember John, I’m here.* ” The Bible says, “ *To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.* ” (James 4:17) Lets not get so puffed up with out spiritually that we do not realise that there is always the seed of sin that lurks somewhere in our heart, against which we must always be on our guard. So when we sin and hide it, (a) (b)

(c) IT DISHONOURS GOD:

Look if you will at (1:10) For a Christian to say he hasn’t sinned when he has, for a believer to sin and then try and conceal it, or rationalise that sin is to make God a liar. Now, have you noticed how sin evolves in the life of the Christian ? In (1:6) **he will first lie to others.** There are people

who come to church Sunday after Sunday and they pretend that all is ok ! They may sing heartily, gave generously, listen attentively, but they are not right with God. They know and God knows, they are not in fellowship with God. There's sin in their life and they are living a lie. They pretend to be one thing, and they practice another thing. You see, first you lie to others and then John tells us you lie to yourself. (1:8) You convince yourself that whatever you've been doing has not been a sin. You rationalise that sin. What God calls pride you call self confidence, what God calls fornication you call sowing your wild oats, what God calls drunkenness you call having a good time, what God calls lust you call love, what God calls selfishness you call standing up for your rights. So you start off by lying to others, then you begin *to lie to yourself*, (1:8) Eventually *you lie to God* and deny that you sin at all. Is this you ? Is your fellowship with God broken ? Is the cry of your soul this “ *Where is the blessedness I knew ?* ” (1) (2)

(3) THE RESTORATION THAT DEVELOPS OUR FELLOWSHIP

When it comes to sin in a Christians life, he has one of two choices. You can conceal it, or you can confess it. Now restoration,

(a) COMMENCES WITH CONFESSION:

What does it mean to confess ? Does it mean just saying, “ *I am sorry.* ” The Greek word for “ *confess,* ” means “ *to say the same thing.* ” It means to say about sin, what God says about it. It means to take sides with God about a sin in your life. It means to look at sin from God's point of view. Now how are we to confess our sins ?

1. CONTINUOUSLY:

The verb “ *confess,* ” is in the present tense and that means continuous action. We are not to let our sins snowball and stockpile. Confession is to be a day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, moment by moment activity in the Christian life.

2. COMPLETELY:

John says “ *if we confess our sins,* ” Sins are day by day wrong doing we incur in every day life.

3. CONFIDENTLY:

How can we be sure when we confess our sins, that God will forgive us ? Well, John says the character of God is at stake. “ *He is faithful,* ” when God promises to forgive us when we confess our sins, we can depend on Him to honour His Word. “ *He is just, or righteous.* ” You see, the justice of God requires Him to forgive because the debt has been fully met. The “ *old account was settled long ago.* ” The hymn writer put it this way,

“ *Because the sinless Saviour died*

*My sinful soul is counted free
For God, the just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me."*

I heard about a man who came to his pastor one day and he was tormented by the ghost of guilt. There was a horrible sin he had committed in his former days. The pastor said, " *Well, have you confessed it to the Lord ?* "

He said, " *pastor I have confessed it a thousand and one times.* " The wise pastor said, " *You should have confessed it once and thanked God a thousand times for forgiving you.* " (a)

(b) CONTINUES WITH CONSECRATION:

Do you know what that means ?

1. A WALKING in the Light:

" *But if we walk in the light,* " (1:7) that means to keep short accounts with God, that means no cloud between us and our Father, that means, we are on speaking terms with God. The Psalmist says, " *Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.* " (Ps 119:105) God's Word is His searchlight of holiness, which He shines on us to reveal our sin. That's why its vital to have a quiet time, because " *this book will keep you from sin, and sin will keep you from this book.* " 1.

2. A WASHING in the Blood:

" *But if we walk in the light sin,* " (1:9) There is an initial cleansing at conversion (Rev 1:5) but this passage speaks of a continual washing, for the blood has eternal efficacy. It will never lose its power, and we are ever in need of the crimson tide and will be until we sin no more ! Tell me, have you been washed in the blood ? Has the precious blood of Christ been applied to your heart ? Are you living in the light ? Many years ago the famous preacher C.H. Spurgeon was crossing the street one day, and he suddenly stopped in the middle of the road. It looked as if he was praying and he was. One of his deacons who was waiting on the other side of the street said to him, " *You could have been run down by a carriage, what were you doing ? You looked as if you were praying.* " Spurgeon said, " *I was praying.* " The deacon said, " *Well, could it have waited, was it that important ?* " Do you know what Spurgeon said,

" *Indeed it was important a cloud came between me and my Saviour, and I wanted to remove it before I got across the street.* " ***Tell me, is that the way your cherish your fellowship with the Father and the Son ?***