

Place: Lurgan Baptist:

28:5:2006

Reading: 1 John 1:1 ..... 2:2

## BACK TO BASICS

### 3. DON'T ..... BUT IF YOU DO !

Calvin Coolidge was the President of the United States of America away back in the 1920's. As a man, it has to be said he was not the world's greatest conversationalist. He was renowned for never using an unnecessary word. He was a person who kept his counsel to himself. One Sunday as was his custom, he went off to church. When he came back someone asked him what the preacher had spoken about in his sermon. Coolidge replied, "**Sin.**" The frustrated questioner should have known better, but he went on to pass the comment, "*Well, well, that was it ? What did the preacher say about it ?*" The President's response was typical of the man. He replied, "*He was agin it.*" Billy Sunday the famous evangelist once said, "*I'm against sin, I'll kick it as long as I have got a foot, I'll fight it as long as I have got a fist, I'll butt it, as long as I've got a head, and I'll bite it as long as long as I have got a tooth. And when I am old and fistless, toothless and footless, I'll gum it, till I go home to glory and it goes home to perdition.*"

When we read the opening verses of this letter we discover that the Lord and the Washington preacher and old Billy Sunday are reading from the same script. They are all against sin. Do you recall that one of the four reasons why John wrote this letter was to prevent sin ? He says, "*My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not,*" John was a perfectionist, but in the next breath he says, "*And if any man sin,*" that makes John a realist ! As we study the lives of God's people through out the Word of God, we find that they sometimes sinned. We think of Samson, David, Moses, and Peter. Sometimes the average Christian and especially the young believer gets confused about the Christian life. Here is a young Christian who has just received the Lord Jesus as Saviour and shortly afterwards he does something he ought not to do. At that moment Satan rushes in to accuse his heart. His conscience also condemns him. He is frustrated and confused.

He thinks, "*Well, now that I am a Christian I should not sin any more.*" Because sin has entered his life he grows discouraged and thereafter lives a defeated life as a Christian. You see, all of us must be clear about what can be done when we sin. It is entirely possible for us to come to grips with the problem of sin in our lives as believers, to have victory over it, to recover and be a useful and fruitful Christian. My .... we do not have to stay down in the mud. We do not have to remain in the ditch when we disobey the Lord and bring shame on the Saviour. It's possible for us to pick up and move on again. So this .... I want to talk to you on the subject, "**Don't .... but if you do.**" And I want to begin by drawing your attention to,

## **(1) A MASTERY OVER SIN**

A victory over sin if you like ! Look at ( 2:1 ) *Do Christians sin ? Yes ! Should Christians sin ? No !*

John's aim is that they sin not. Now we need a definition of sin ! What is sin ? Well, John gives the answer in this letter. He says, "*sin is the transgression of the law.*"

( 3:4 ) Sin is lawlessness. In other words, sin is man's refusal to submit to God's law, that is God's Word. It is insubordination. And sin is serious because it suggests that we have the nature of Satan rather than God. John is very blunt on this score. He says, "*he that committeth sin is of the devil,*" then he adds, "*whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.*" ( 4:8-9 ) Now he is not talking here about perfectionism that would contradict

( Ch 1 ) the reference here is to a life of sinning. Of course the spin doctors put a nice slant on everything. Is that what you do with your sin ? Lying becomes economical with the truth, deceit is just getting along in your business affairs, adultery is a harmless escapade, stealing is helping yourself to the perks of the job, embezzlement becomes creative accounting, loosing my temper is righteous indignation, lust is love, staying away from the assembly meetings is stress instead of blatant disobedience yet John tells us that we can enjoy a victory over sin ! I heard about a man who was standing at a grave crying his heart out. The grave digger approached him to see if he could help. As he approached he heard him cry out repeatedly, "*Why did you die ? Why did he you die ?*" The grave digger said, "*You must have known this person well.*" "*No,*" said the man "*I never met him.*" "*Never met him,*" said the gravedigger "*Well, who he is ?*" "*My wife's first husband.*" The truth is none of us are perfect without sin, so what does John mean here when he says "*My little children .... that ye sin not.*" Well, he is speaking here about,

### **(a) OUR PERSONAL AIM:**

We will never attain a state of sinless perfection this side of heaven, but that should not deter us from making it our goal and our aim. It should be our goal to live without sin. Do you remember Noah ? The Bible says that he "*Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations and Noah walked with God.*" ( Gen 6:9 ) Just means that he was a righteous man, and His righteous life was evident in that he was "*perfect in his generations.*" It does not mean that he was without sin, but that his life was without blemish and stain. Do you remember Abraham ? The Lord said, "*I am the Almighty God, walk before Me and be thou perfect.*"( Gen 17:1 ) That word "*perfect,*" conveys the same idea. The Lord was telling Abraham not to let anything soil or stain his life. Do you remember Paul ? What was the aspiration of his heart ? Full conformity to Christ ! Perfection ! That's why he says, "*Not as though I had already attained either were already perfect, but I follow after ....,*" ( Phil 3:12 ) Paul is pounding down the road aiming for perfection ! Is the same true of us ? Is this your goal ? Is this your objective ? To sin not ? To hate iniquity ? To sin less and less ? (a)

### **(b) OUR CONTINUAL ALLY:**

He says ( 2:1 ) In other words, John believes his letter can keep them from sinning. ( 4:5-6 ) My .... we have the means of victory over sin at our disposal. We have the Son of God as our

Saviour, the Spirit of God as our Comforter, and the Word of God as our Guide. The Bible is not just another book, it is the living Word of God, full of divine life, power and authority. ( 1 Pet 1:23-25 ) The lovely story is told of John Wesley that, when he left home for the first time, his mother Susannah is said to have written some words in the flyleaf of his Bible. She penned, “ *this book will keep you from sin and sin will keep you from this book.* ” That’s sound advice ! The old man John had weathered many a storm, but down through the years he came to appreciate more and more the power of God’s Word to defend His people from the attacks of the enemy and to inspire them to holy living. That is why he picked up his quill and wrote such wise words on the parchment. Do you recall what the Psalmist said, “ *Thy Word have I hid in mine heart that I may not sin against thee.* ” ( 119:11 ) John says, “ *I am writing you this book so that you will not sin.* ” My .... do you know anything about victory over sin in your daily life ? If not, is it because you are neglecting the Word ? Are you no longer taking time to be holy and speaking oft with your Lord ? Does sin dominate you because the Word no longer permeates you ? (1)

## **(2) A MISERY FROM SIN**

“ *And if any man sin,* ” ( 2:1 ) *Saints should not sin, but saints do sin !* Two little boys were out playing together and one little boy was trying to tempt the other little boy to do wrong. But he would not do it. The little boy said,

“ *Ha, your afraid that your Daddy will hurt you.* ” The other little fellow said, “ *Not really but I am afraid that I will hurt him.* ” You see, the more you love the Lord, the more you want to avoid doing anything that would hurt Him. Is this not a misery from sin ? David when he was beating out his confession in ( Ps 51:8 ) said, “ *Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation.* ” You see, when God saved you He didn’t fix you up where you couldn’t sin anymore. He just fixed you up where you could not sin and enjoy it. The most miserable man on earth is not an unsaved man, the most miserable man on earth, is a man out of fellowship with God, a man who is a Christian, but who has sin unconfessed and unforgiven. “ *And if any man sin,* ” John knows that even though our goal is to sin not, it’s a goal that we will often come short off. For there is,

### **(a) *The TRUTH we must ALL Face:***

We do sin ! Indeed John tells us here,

#### **1. We are Sinners by NATURE:**

Look if you will at ( 1:8 ) You could translate it,

“ *If we say that we have no sin nature, we deceive ourselves.* ” Do you see what kind of person John is referring to ? John is describing the one who denies that is a sinner by nature. Such a person excuses himself and says, “ *I am not such a bad guy, I am basically a pretty good person.* ” Is that what you are saying ? Have you ever acknowledged that you are a sinner by nature ? A scorpion being a very poor swimmer, asked a turtle to carry him on his back across the river. “ *Are you mad ?* ” said the turtle. “ *You’ll sting me while I’m swimming and I’ll go down.* ” “ *My dear turtle,* ” laughed the scorpion, “ *If I were to sting you, you would go down and I would go down with you. Now where is the logic in that ?* ” “ *You’re right,* ” cried the turtle “ *hop on.* ”

The scorpion climbed aboard, but halfway across the river gave the scorpion a mighty sting. As they both sank to the bottom the turtle said, “ *Do you mind if I ask you something ? You said, there is no logic in stinging me why did you do it ?* ” “ *It has nothing to do with logic,* ” the drowning scorpion replied, “ *its just my nature.* ” 1.

## 2. We are Sinners by PRACTICE:

Look at ( 1:10 ) God has repeatedly told us in His Word about our sinful condition and what could be more wicked than to call God a liar ! There is the root of sin and then there is the fruit of sin ! My .... have you faced up to the sin problem in your life ? Have you confronted your sins, confessed your sins and been cleansed of your sins ? (a)

### **(b) The TEMPTATION we must ALWAYS Fight:**

The temptation to conceal sin, rather than confess it ! We have noted already that John uses the phrase “ *If we say,* ” on three occasions. ( 1:6,8, 10 ) John is saying that its possible for Christians to cover their sin by lying. Firstly you lie to yourself ( 1:6 ) then you lie to others ( 1:8 ) and finally you lie to God. *Now if you cover your sin, God’s response to your life will be chastisement.* For when we sin we are bringing shame on the name of the Lord Jesus, and God will not let us get away with it. He loves us too much to permit us to sin and get away with it. The Bible says, “ *For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.* ” ( Heb 12:6 ) The chastisement of God can take many forms. Sometimes the Lord chastens us,

### **1. PHYSICALLY:**

Because of our sin ! Now I do not believe that all sickness is because of sin ( Jn 9:3 ), nor do I believe that every time someone gets sick its because they have not had enough faith in God, or because they are out of the will of God. I don’t believe that every believer in the hospital is there because God is chastening them, but I do believe that many saints experience physical difficulties because they are out of the will of God. God is chastening them and trying to bring them back to Him. David experienced this. Do you recall what he says after he had sinned ? “ *Day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me.* ” ( Ps 32:4 )

### **2. MENTALLY:**

Do you remember Lot ? Down in Sodom, compromised and worldly in his daily life. Do you know what Peter says about Lot ? “ *For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.* ” ( 2 Pet 2:8 ) What was wrong ? The Lord was disturbing Lot mentally.

### **3. SPIRITUALLY:**

Do you remember Peter when he denied the Lord ? He lost the joy of salvation, and when he saw

the look of the Saviour it nearly broke his heart. Why ? God's hand touched him spiritually, and he saw his sin ! Some Christians shorten their stay on earth because they let sin get in their life and they cover it, instead of confessing it, and the Lord says, “ *All right, I will have to take you home and remove your inconsistent testimony from this earth.* ” My .... are you covering your sin rather than confessing it ? If you are, you are on dangerous ground, for God could remove you ! Now when you confess your sin as a child of God, a number of things take place in the unseen spirit world. For I notice here not only (1) (2)

### (3) A MINISTRY FOR SIN

You see, when we sin, there is provision made for our sin. What is this provision ? It is found in “ *Jesus Christ the righteous,* ” ( 2:1 ) Now the word “ *Jesus,* ” means Saviour it's the name associated with ***His Humanity***.

“ *Christ,* ” speaks of Him as “ *the anointed One, the Messiah.* ” That reminds us of ***His Deity*** and the two natures of Jesus Christ, His humanity and His deity are brought together in a wonderful way when John describes Him as “ *the righteous one.* ” As to His eternal Deity He is righteous by definition because He is God, as to His earthly Life, He is also righteous, in contrast to sinful man. Now this, according to John is what enables Him and equips Him “ *to speak to the Father in our defence.* ” The Lord Jesus was absolutely sinless, He is perfection personified and that's why He can plead our case as our heavenly advocate. Because He is “ *Jesus Christ the righteous,* ” He is to the believer,

#### (a) ***THE SACRIFICE THAT DELIVERS US:***

John gives two interesting titles to the Lord Jesus here. Lets begin with *Propitiation*. What is propitiation ? *Propitiation is the work of Jesus Christ on the cross by which He satisfied God's holiness so God could extend mercy to lost sinners !* The word “ *propitiation,* ” in the Old Testament is “ *mercy seat.* ” The mercy seat was the golden slab on top of the ark of the covenant, which held the broken law of God. It was there that the blood of sacrifice was applied. You see, what stood between the broken law that man could not keep and the righteous wrath of God was the blood of the Lamb. You see, God is light ( 1:5 ) and therefore He cannot close His eyes to sin, but God is also love ( 4:8 ) and therefore He wants to save sinners ! ***How, then can a holy God uphold His own justice, and still forgive sinners ?*** The answer is in the cross ! For Christ died on the cross, and satisfied the law of God and the justice of God, and now God is free to extend pardon and mercy ! Because of the “ *mercy seat,* ” you can saved from hell ! Are you ready to give up ? Are you ready to quit ? Has sin got such a hold on your life that you don't what to do ?

William Cowper was a discouraged, nervous man ready to give up. But one day when he was extremely distraught he flung himself into a chair and seeing a Bible picked it up. The verse he read was this, “ *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.* ” ( Rom 3:25 ) He said, “ *I saw the sufficiency of the Atonement Christ had made. My pardon sealed in His blood. In an instant I believed and received the peace of the gospel.* ” He wrote these words, “ *There is a fountain filled with blood.* ”

My .... have you availed yourself of the sacrifice of the cross ? Have you found redemption through the Saviour's blood ? (a)

**(b) THE SAVIOUR THAT DEFENDS US:**

Now mark the designation for God here. “ *We have an advocate with the Father.* ” It does not say “ *with God,* ” but “ *with the Father,* ” meaning that if a Christian sins, God is still His Father. Now the word “ **Advocate,** ” is parakletos which means “ *one called alongside to plead our case.* ” Let me give you a mental picture of what is being described here. You see, the book of the Revelation describes Satan as the “ *Accuser of the brethren,* ” and how he accuses us before God day and night. ( 12:10 Job 1:6-12 ) I can imagine that we sin Satan rushes into the presence of God and says, “ *Look what he or she did. You call them your child. Just look at what they have done.* ” Then the Lord Jesus says,

“ *Yes, Father but look at Me. On the basis of my shed blood I plead for the remission of that sin.* ” You see, the Accuser is met by the Advocate and all Christ has to do is raise His pierced hands and Satan is silenced .... That is how effective Christ's finished work is ! My .... Christ represents us before God's Throne. As our High Priest He sympathizes with our weaknesses and temptations and gives us grace ( Heb 4:15-16 ) But as our Advocate He helps us when we sin. He stands before His Father in heaven and every time we sin He does not make a new propitiation. ***He does not die again and again.*** Instead He opens his portfolio and lays the exhibits of Good Friday on the bench before the Judge. Photographs of the crown of thorns, the lashing, the mocking soldiers, the agonies of the cross, the precious blood, the cry of triumph, “ ***It is finished.*** ” You see, what He pleads on our behalf in heaven is the on going effects of His own death.

***“ Though the restless foe accuses  
Sins recounting like a flood  
Every charge our God refuses  
Christ has answered with His Blood.”***

Thank God for the “ *finished work of Christ,* ” Christ giving His life as a sacrifice for sin, but today He has an

“ *unfinished work,* ” in glory, as He represents us before the throne of God. My .... is He not a wonderful

Saviour ? Surely we should cry this .... “ *Hallelujah what a Saviour,* ” but did you notice how John ends this passage. He will not let us forget others ! “ *And He is the propitiation for our sins,* ” that's the **Efficiency of Christ's work,** “ *and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world,* ” that's the **Sufficiency of Christ's work.** For His work on the Cross is Sufficient for all, but Efficient for those who come ! This is the world for which the Saviour died at Calvary, and we must never forget we were once an integral part of it.

Is this not why we tell the world about Christ ? Why we reach out into our community ? Why we share the gospel with our family and friends ? Why we travel to the ends of the earth and into regions beyond, this is the reason why, because we believe no-one need be excluded from the vast

company assembled before the throne of the Lamb. “ *The whole world,* ” is this your goal ? “ *Our world,* ” in this community, “ *your world,* ” in your family. Tell, are you really seeking to reach them for Christ ? Can you say honestly this .... ?

***“ E’er since by faith I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply  
Redeeming love has been my theme  
And shall be till I die.”***