



FBC Dickson

UNFAILING LOVE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES • WHY CHRIST CAME • 1 JOHN 3:4-10 • 7/12/2020

MAIN POINT

To examine why Christ came to earth.

INTRODUCTION

The last lesson John pointed his readers toward the 2nd coming of Jesus to rekindle their hope. In this lesson, we will see John point his readers back to the first coming of Jesus to remind them why Christ came the first time.

Why is it important to remind ourselves often of why Christ came the first time?

Before John reminds his readers of why Christ came, he first warns them that their life not be marked by habitual sin.

Read 1 John 3:4

How does John define "sin" in this verse?

Sin is our great enemy. It is our primary problem. John here defines sin as lawlessness. This means "against the law of God". Sin is anything not compatible with God's laws or God's standards. In it's truest sense, sin is rebellion. Rebellion against God and his ways, will, and law. One writer defines sin as "cosmic treason against the Sovereign of the universe".

You can't begin a conversation of why Christ came without a deep understanding of our sin. Because that is the primary reason he came.

UNDERSTANDING

This passage gives us 3 primary reasons Christ came.

1. To Defeat Sin on the Cross

Read 1 John 3:5-6

How did Christ "take away sins"?

What do you think in v. 6 John means when he says "everyone who has been born of God does not sin"?

There are two primary truths from verses 5 and 6 focus on here. First, Christ died so all our sins might be forgiven. Christ came to take away sins. This was the message heralded from the very beginning of John the Baptist's ministry "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world". Christ's death paid our ransom. For those in Christ, their sins aren't counted against them because Christ has already been punished for them. Only Christ could do this. Why? Because there is no sin in Him. He was sinless. He is righteous, he is pure.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21

What do we gain by Christ taking on our sin on the cross? What does that mean for us?

Secondly Christ died to break our bondage to sin. Follow the logic of John here. Because Christ destroyed the work of sin, because Christ himself is sinless, therefore, his people should not live lives of habitual sin. The influence that sin had over us has been broken. We are no longer slaves of sin but slaves of righteousness. Before trusting in Christ our struggle was against God and His law. Now our struggle is against sin. . To continue to abide in sin (habitually) is a sign that someone was never in Christ. It sounds harsh, but to John those who lived lives of unrepentant sin were not in Christ.

How do these two truths help us in our battles with sin?

2. To Destroy the Works of Satan

Read 1 John 3:7-8

Who does John identify those who practice habitual sin with in v. 8?

So what works of the Devil did Christ destroy?

John says in v.7 "let no one deceive you". John knew that people were being led astray by false teachers. They were perverting the fundamentals of the faith. This is dangerous because bad theology leads to bad practice. Doctrinal impurity leads to moral impurity.

John calls God's people to a higher standard. He tells them to do what is right, and thus prove that they belong to Christ. If the Righteous One, Christ, has changed your heart, then righteous words and actions should flow from that. Christ is the pattern we should mimic.

John equates habitual sinning to being aligned with Satan. The source of sin and false teaching is the Devil. He sinned from the beginning. Satan is the original rebel. To make a practice of sin is to live a life resembling the original sinner, Satan. Satan has nothing to lose. He is doomed, and there is no hope for Him. His only job is your destruction. He has nothing else left to do with the time he has left but to defame the name of Christ and destroy the church, God's people. And he is restless in doing this. But Christ has defeated this enemy of God's people.

Read Genesis 3:14-15

What was God's curse on the serpent?

What would come and ultimately defeat that serpent one day?

Satan has been a crushed foe since the beginning of time. Christ's death on the cross fulfilled this promise. Yes Satan struck His heel, but Christ crushed His head. So sin no longer has power over a believer, and neither are we subject to the tyranny of Satan.

How does the reality of Satan's defeat motivate us in pursuing righteousness?

3. To Impart a Distinguishing Love

Read 1 John 3:9-10

In verse 9, why does John say that a true believer's life can't be defined by habitual sin?

How should our love for each other distinguish us from the world?

John is making the case in this whole passage that those who are God's children do not go on sinning. That is they don't continue in a life of sin. The work of Christ on the cross frees us and the work of the Spirit in our hearts enables us to live rightly. That's what "born of God" means. We can't continue in sin because we have experienced a new birth. John is saying that a believer can not continue in his sin because God himself has taken up residence in them. You once loved sin, now you loathe it.

And one of the primary evidences that you are indeed a child of God who has experienced the new birth and is no longer bound by sin is this: you love the brethren. Our love for each other is a

distinguishing mark and a distinguishing love different from the world. This is exactly what Jesus desired for his people.

Read John 15:9-17

What does this love look like? It sacrifices for the good of others. It warns them of sin and helps pull them out of it when they fall. It mourns with those who mourn and rejoices with those who rejoice. It takes food to the hungry and clothes to the naked. It speaks truth in love and calls sin sin for the sake of each other's eternal soul. It comforts the sick and dying. It prays for and visits the persecuted and suffering. It links arms with other brothers and sisters for the sake of the Great Commission.

APPLICATION

Christ has defeated your two greatest enemies. How does that motivate you daily?

How can we encourage each other with these truths?

How does Christ imparting a distinguishing love in his people help unify the church?

PRAYER

Write a prayer for your small group here.

COMMENTARY

1 John 3:4-6

The verb "commits" in the Greek conveys the idea of making sin a habitual practice. Although genuine Christians have a sin disposition, and do committ and need to confess sin, that is not the unbroken pattern of their lives. A genuinely born again believer has a built-in check or guard against habitual sinning due to a new nature. "Sin is lawlessness". The first reason why Christians cannot practice sin is because sin is incompatible with the Law of God which they love. The term "lawlessness" conveys more than just transgressing God's law. it conveys the

ultimate sense of rebellion, i.e., living as if there was no law or ignoring what laws exist. (Taken from John MacArthur, the MacArthur Bible Commentary)

Jesus appeared in order to take away sins, not only so that sin might be forgiven but also that it might cease to exercise its tyrannical bondage. "in him there is no sin", is a reminder that God is light and his Son embodies his sinlessness. (Taken from ESV Study Bible)

1 John 3:7-8

Beware of self-deceit. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, and to be a follower of Christ, shows an interest by faith in his obedience and sufferings. But a man cannot act like the devil, and at the same time be a disciple of Christ Jesus. Let us not serve or indulge what the Son of God came to destroy. (Taken From Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary)

"Of the devil", this phrase gives the source of the false teachers' actions. The term devil means "accuser" or "slanderer". Not only does Satan ("adversary") oppose God and His plan, but he is the originator and instigator of sin and rebellion against God and His law. Therefore, all of the unsaved are under the diabolic influence of Satan. Their sinful lifestyle reflects their satanic origin. John contrasts the children of God with the children of Satan in terms of their actions. While those who are truly born again reflect the habit of righteousness, Satan's children practice sin. (Taken from John MacArthur, the MacArthur Bible Commentary)

1 John 3:9-10

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin - This passage must either mean that they who are born of God, that is, who are true Christians, do not sin habitually and characteristically, or that everyone who is a true Christian is absolutely perfect, and never commits any sin. If it can be used as referring to the doctrine of absolute perfection at all, it proves, not that Christians may be perfect, or that a "portion" of them are, but that all are. But who can maintain this? Who can believe that John meant to affirm this? Nothing can be clearer than that the passage has not this meaning, and that John did not teach a doctrine so contrary to the current strain of the Scriptures, and to fact; and if he did not teach this, then in this whole passage he refers to those who are habitually and characteristically righteous. (taken from Barnes Notes on the Bible)

Renouncing sin is the great proof of spiritual union with, continuance in, and saving knowledge of the Lord Christ. Beware of self-deceit. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, and to be a follower of Christ, shows an interest by faith in his obedience and sufferings. But a man cannot act like the devil, and at the same time be a disciple of Christ Jesus. Let us not serve or indulge what the Son of God came to destroy. To be born of God is to be inwardly renewed by the power

of the Spirit of God. Renewing grace is an abiding principle. Religion is not an art, a matter of dexterity and skill, but a new nature. And the regenerate person cannot sin as he did before he was born of God, and as others do who are not born again. There is that light in his mind, which shows him the evil and malignity of sin. There is that bias upon his heart, which disposes him to loathe and hate sin. There is the spiritual principle that opposes sinful acts. And there is repentance for sin, if committed. It goes against him to sin with forethought. The children of God and the children of the devil have their distinct characters. The seed of the serpent are known by neglect of religion, and by their hating real Christians. He only is righteous before God, as a justified believer, who is taught and disposed to righteousness by the Holy Spirit. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. May all professors of the gospel lay these truths to heart, and try themselves by them. (taken from Matthew Henry's Concise Bible Commentary)