

## **WALKING IN THE LIGHT: Reflecting the Family Resemblance**

1John 3:4-10:

April 15, 2018 @ BCC

3:4: *Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.*

3:5: *But you know that **He appeared so that He might take away our sins.** And in Him is no sin.*

3:6: *No one who lives in Him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen Him or known Him.*

3:7: *Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is RIGHT is RIGHTEOUS, just as He is RIGHTEOUS.*

3:8: *He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.***

3:9: *No one who is BORN OF GOD will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because He has been BORN OF GOD.*

3:10: *This is how we know who the children of God are (those BORN OF GOD) and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is RIGHT is not a child of God (not born of God); nor is anyone who does not love his brother.*

### **Introduction:**

#### **Do you resemble your Father?**

When people look at you can they tell which family you belong to?

Can they tell who your Father is?

**Object Lesson** – family picture showing family resemblance.

(Get Franz and Matthias to stand up – people will see the family resemblance)

You have probably heard the expression: You are a chip off the old block.

Someone who knew one of your parents said that, because they could tell by your speech or mannerisms who you belonged to.

The apple does not fall far from the tree.

Someone might say – you look a lot like your mother or father.

The family resemblance gave you away.

Often people can tell which father you belong to by your resemblance, whether in speech, mannerisms or looks.

How much do you and I resemble our Heavenly Father?

Can people tell by observing us that we are children of our Heavenly Father?

In these next few verses John is going to unpack how it is we can know that we are children of God.

Are you a child of God? How do you know that? How do other people know that?

We will learn that there were 2 things that needed to happen before we could be called children of God.

Both of these are identified by the phrase: “He appeared”-speaking of Jesus.

John makes clear that Jesus appeared for 2 reasons.

#### **Jesus appeared – 1)to take away sin and 2)to destroy the devil's work:**

1. *But you know that He appeared so that He might take away our sins (5).*

2. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work (8)

Jesus came to deal with sin and He came to deal with the devil so that we could become children of God.

**A. The Problem of Sin and the Solution– 4-7**

**B. The Problem of the devil and the Solution 8-10**

10 x the word "sin" is found here.

The devil is referred to 4 times.

**Jesus came to deal with sin and He came to deal with the devil.**

All sin begins with the devil therefore Jesus goes back to the root cause.

**Question:** can you deal with sin and with the devil on your own?

Absolutely not!

That is what Jesus came to do.

**The devil and sin are the big problem; Jesus and righteousness are the big solution.**

Note that there are only 2 groups of people: children of God and children of the devil.

**Children of the devil:**

sin and break the law

They keep on sinning

have not seen Jesus, or known Him

Therefore they sin.

Don't do what is right

Don't love their brothers and sisters

**Children of God:**

don't keep on sinning

have seen Him and know Him

Therefore they cannot sin

Do what is right

love their brothers and sisters

There are only 2 kingdoms and 2 masters.

Jesus and the kingdom of light; the devil and the kingdom of darkness.

Everyone on this planet belongs to one of these kingdoms.

Everyone on this planet is helpless in dealing with the devil and with sin on their own.

Oh people try; religion, good deeds.

These people have been deceived by the evil one – they are barking up the wrong tree; their ladder is leaning against the wrong wall.

**A. The Problem of Sin: 4-7**

**1. Solution: Jesus appeared to take away our sins: 4-6a**

Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

But you know that **He appeared so that He might take away our sins.** And in Him is no sin. No one who lives in Him keeps on sinning.

Can that be said more plainly.

This is what Good Friday is all about.

**Song:** Jesus loves me He who died, heaven's gate to open wide; He will wash away my sin, let His little child come in.

**Song:** What can wash away my sin? Nothing! You can't wash away your sin and no other person on the planet can do it for you. On your own you are doomed and without

hope. You are still in your sin, heading for eternal separation from a loving Heavenly Father.

Nothing - But the blood of Jesus.

**1 John 1:9:** *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

**1 John 2:2:** *He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

**John 1:29:** *Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*

**1 Timothy 1:15:** *Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst.*

**Application:** Do you know that your sins are washed away. Can you say with the song writer: Gone, gone, gone, gone, yes my sins are gone.

Unless you come by way of the cross you cannot be a follower of Jesus – you are not part of His kingdom.

## **2. The Harsh Reality: 6b**

*No one who continues to sin has either seen Him or known Him.*

**Matthew 7:21-23:** *Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?" Then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers."*

## **3. The Tender Assurance:7**

*Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as He is righteous.*

Notice again with what tenderness and concern the aged apostle writes to these folks. Does the doing make a person righteous or does the being righteous help a person to do what is right?

What comes first? The chicken or the egg?

Being righteous or doing right?

John's focus is family resemblance – so that is why he is wanting to assure them that yes, they are righteous as evidenced by their actions – they are a child of God on the basis of their resemblance to their heavenly Father.

It is one thing to claim that you are righteous, but what settles the argument is the fruit of righteousness. We all know how easy it is to talk, and how much more difficult it is to walk. *By their fruit you shall know them.* And that is what John is getting at here.

### **Illustration:**

Let's imagine that the pear tree could talk and it really isn't too excited about the fact that it is a pear tree. How much better to be a cherry tree. So before the blossoming season begins it says continually, "I am a cherry tree."

People who don't know better might be impressed but as soon as the blossoms and the fruit begin to appear the pear tree can talk as much as it wants, or shout as loud as possible, but the fruit will make it obvious what it really is.

*By their fruit you shall know them.*

Your actions will give away whose child you are.

## **B. The Problem of the devil: 8-10**

### **1. Solution: Jesus appeared to destroy the devil's work: 8**

He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.**

What a stark contrast from the previous verse:

*He who does what is right is righteous, just as He is righteous.*

But note that he refers here as well to actions not to being.

*He who **does** what is sinful.* It is by his actions that he shows himself to be sinful and a child of the devil.

Again John is very clear that we are either children of God or children of the devil.

Jesus came to this earth to destroy the works of the devil.

How did He do that? The same way that He took away our sin (5).

The Cross:

#### **Colossians 2:13-15:**

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

**Hebrews 2:14-15:** *Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

### **2. Born of God: The second, spiritual, supernatural birth (9)**

No one who is **born of God** will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because He has been **born of God.**

What does it mean to be born of God?

**John 3:3-9:** *No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.*

Nicodemus is at the top of the religious elite – he knew the OT, especially the Torah very well – yet he can't grasp what Jesus is saying. It seems he has never heard of this before.

How can a man be born when he is old? Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!

I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

In other words you can't get to heaven unless you have 2 birthdays.

Your physical birthday and your spiritual birthday.

Flesh gives birth to flesh – that refers to our physical birth.

The Spirit gives birth to spirit – that refers to our spiritual birth.

When you were born physically your parents made that happen – they were responsible. You and I were not – we had absolutely nothing to do with it.

When Jesus was talking about being born again, He was speaking of a spiritual birth, Again we were not in charge – it is the Spirit who makes this possible. It is supernatural.

### **John 1:12-13:**

Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become **children of God**. God makes it happen. My responsibility is to believe – to put my trust in Jesus.

**Children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.**

It is not a physical birth. It is also not a decision my parents could make for me. Children of God are born of God; not of any human being.

After you were born the first time did you cease to be a child of your parents? There might have been times where your parents wanted to disown you, but they didn't. Yet there are parents who disown their own children when they experience the 2<sup>nd</sup> birth – when they convert to Christianity - they are treated as if they were never part of that family. Some are beaten and even killed.

It is not the physical birth that made the difference, it was the spiritual birth, that which Jesus refers to as being “born again.”

When these converts move from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light they have been freed from the bondage of sin and the devil. Jesus has forgiven their sins and has destroyed the devil's work in their lives.

This causes division between 2 kingdoms.

The family sees them as having cut themselves off from the family because they have experienced another birth and with that another Parent – a Father in heaven. They have become part of another family – the family of God.

Until we are born again we are not children of God, rather we are children of the devil. We are part of the evil one's kingdom.

3:8: He who does what is sinful **is of the devil**, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning.

We cannot escape this kingdom on our own. We need supernatural help and that is why Jesus came:

3:8b: The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

**Hebrews 2:14-15: Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.**

So if we are born of the devil, then we will act like the devil – we will keep on sinning. But if we are born of God, then we will act like God – we will not sin, but will be righteous.

### **3. Sinless perfection?**

As we read these verses it sounds like he is talking about sinless perfection. Once our sins are washed away and Jesus lives in us we don't sin anymore.

3:6: No one who lives in Him keeps on sinning.

3:9: No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because He has been born of God.

In practice is that really true?

It is almost as if there is a dual reality - seems like a conflicting reality.

Yes, we are righteous, because He is righteous.

3:5: But you know that He appeared so that He might take away our sins. And in Him is no sin.

And yet all of us know that we still sin.

Why all the instructions in the Scripture for believers as to how they should live and the many warnings of what not to do. So the Bible is clear that we are not yet perfect.

We are all in process:

1 John 1:8: If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:10: if we claim we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar and His word has no place in our lives.

1 John 1:9: If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**Read 1 John 2:1-2**

I believe John is talking about sinning habitually.

#### **4.Family Resemblance (9-10)**

3:9: No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

Matthew 7:16-20: Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit, is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus by their fruit you will recognize them.

3:10: This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is RIGHT is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

We act like the one whose child we are – we bear, we reflect the family resemblance.

John 13:35: By this all men will know that you are My disciples – if you love one another.

How is your and my resemblance to our Heavenly Father?

**Prayer:**

**Song: O for a Heart to Praise My God**

1 O for a heart to praise my God,  
a heart from sin set free;  
a heart that always feels Thy blood  
so freely shed for me:

2 A humble, lowly, contrite heart,  
believing, true, and clean,  
which neither life nor death can part  
from him that dwells within:

3 A heart in every thought renewed,  
and full of love divine;  
perfect and right and pure and good —  
a copy, Lord, of thine.

4 Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart,  
come quickly from above;  
write thy new name upon my heart,  
Thy new best Name of love.