

**4-18-21**

Sermon- Ancient Words, Ever True

Scripture- 1 John 3:1-10, CTW PS 4

Hymns- 44, 102, 460

Theme- The Christian life is meant to be a process of becoming more and more like Christ. This process will not be complete until we see Christ face to face, however knowing that it is our ultimate destiny should motivate us to keep going toward purification. You are a loved child of God in the process of becoming like Christ. Please, believe it and live it! It's the only way you can overcome the sin in your life and become all that God wants you to be.

### **I. So, Who Are You? John wants to Know!**

Charlie Chaplin was a huge movie star in the silent-picture era. He was so popular that several Charlie Chaplin look-alike contests sprung up all around the country. Contestants attempted to imitate Chaplin dressed as the "tramp" character he made popular in his films. Even the young up-and-coming actor, Bob Hope, entered such a contest in Cleveland, Ohio, and won! Chaplin himself entered a look-alike contest in a San Francisco theater. Amazingly, Chaplain failed to even make the finals!

#### **A. Sometimes people don't recognize the real thing even if it's staring them in the face.**

That's the way it is with God's children, believers in Christ. Many people don't see them for who they are, and some of God's children themselves don't KNOW who they are. That's because they're struggling, or they've messed up; they've sinned, and they're not the person they want to be.

Perhaps that describes you, and you wonder how do I overcome my sin and become all that God wants me to be?

**1 John 2:29** says "If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him." (ESV)

**B. The practice of righteousness does not come from your own self-effort.** It comes as the result of being “born of God.” When you trust Christ with your life, the Bible says you are born again (**John 3:3-8**), born into a new family, God’s family, and you are His child (**John 1:12**).

That means His righteous DNA has been implanted in you; and because of that, you can “practice righteousness.” Before you could only practice sin; but now, as a child of God, you can practice righteousness.

So, if you want to overcome sin and become all that God wants you to be, then:

## **II. KNOW WHO YOU ARE!**

**A. Appreciate your relationship with our righteous Lord and be confident that you are His child.**

**1 John 3:1** says: “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.” (ESV)

Only those who know Christ can truly appreciate who His followers are. They are children of God, dearly loved by our Heavenly Father Himself.

C. S. Lewis once put it this way: “Remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would strongly be tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare.”

Folks, You are not merely mortal. You are a child of God; and because of that, it doesn’t really matter what people see when they look at you.

Our Heavenly Father only sees His child. People may not recognize it, and some may not appreciate it, but that is what you are if you have trusted Christ as your Savior.

**B. So believe it. Count on it!** Appreciate the fact that you are a child of God, dearly loved by God Himself, if you want to

overcome the sin in your own life and become all that God wants you to be.

That's a picture of God's love for you. He entered the cesspool of your sin, and died to save you from those sins. That's how much God loves you!

You are His child, and that's the only reason He needs to love you. Please, believe it! It will make a huge difference in the way you live your life.

### **C. It helps to understand how we look at God.**

First, you can view God as the Supreme Ruler of the Universe. For those who have only that perspective, their relationship with Him can be little better than their relationship with any traffic cop.

If a policeman were to catch you speeding and breaking the rules of the road, you would be punished. If he failed to catch you or if he just gave you a warning, letting you off, you might be relieved and grateful, but you would never love him for that...

That's the problem with seeing God as the Divine Policeman. If salvation simply means him letting you off... then relief and gratitude is all you have, but you can never really love the God who is essentially just the Ruler.

In fact, those who have this point of view, find it very hard to relate to such a god.

The picture changes entirely, though, if God is fundamentally the most kind and loving Father, and only ever exercises his rule as who he is – as a Father. In that case, living under his roof is not like living in some sort of confinement at all, but like living in the household of the sort of caring father John's passages in this letter describe.

What is your view of God? Is He your Ruler and you His subject? Or is He your Father and you His child? Your perspective makes a real difference in how you relate to God. If He's a ruthless dictator, you try to avoid Him. If He's your loving Heavenly Father, you want to please Him.

So if you want to overcome the sin in your life and become all that God wants you to be, then know who you are today! As a believer in Christ, you are a loved child of God.

Furthermore, if you want to overcome the sin in your life...

### **III. KNOW WHAT YOU WILL BE IN THE FUTURE.**

**A. Appreciate the fact that you will be like Jesus someday. Be confident that you will one day reflect the beauty of Christ.**

**1 John 3:2** says: "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." (ESV)

When Jesus appears at His Second Coming, we'll see that we are just like Him! **Romans 8:29** tells us that God, our Father, is in the process of conforming us "to the image of His Son." In fact, **2 Corinthians 3:18** says, "We **are being** transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory!"

The world doesn't see it yet; but when Jesus comes, everybody will see you for who you really are – a holy, pure child of God.

**1 John 3:3** says "And **everyone** who thus hopes in **Him** purifies himself as **He** is pure." (ESV)

When you know who you are and what you are becoming, it makes a difference in the way you live your life; it purifies you!

That's the way it was when God found you. You were disfigured and discarded by the world, but God saw something in you that nobody else saw. Then He adopted you and gave you new life in His Son.

Now, He is removing the tumors and healing the scars that hide the beauty of Christ within. Everything about you is changing, and one day everybody will see you for who you really are!

You are a loved child of God in the process of becoming like Christ Himself!

So know that we are called to a different kind of life, to:

### **IV. LIVE LIKE WE BELIEVE IT!**

**A. Be who you are as a child of God becoming like Christ, and practice righteousness, not sin, in dependence upon Him.**

**1 John 3:4** says "Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness." (ESV)

Sin is breaking God's Law.

**1 John 3:5** says "You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin." (ESV)

Jesus came to take away your sins, literally, to lift them up and out of your life. You see, when you trust Him as your Savior, He not only takes away the penalty of your sin; He takes away the power of sin in your life, as well, so you don't have to sin anymore.

**B. Before you knew Christ, you were in bondage to sin; you did not have a choice but to obey your sinful lusts.** Now that you know Christ, you are no longer in bondage to sin; you can now choose to obey God (or not).

**1 John 3:6** says: "No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him." (ESV)

Sin is a product of ignorance and blindness towards Christ, but "No one who abides in him keeps on sinning;" literally, "all who dwell in Him are not sinning." In other words, You cannot dwell in Christ and sin at the same time.

When you stop dwelling in Christ, you fall into sin every time! When you neglect your relationship with Him, you sin, but when you dwell in Christ, you do not sin. So you have a choice! You can dwell in sin, or You can dwell in Christ. Which will it be for you?

**V. WE NEED TO CHOOSE TO DWELL IN CHRIST.**

**A. Choose to live in dependence upon Him, so you don't go against God's plan for you.**

You see, abiding in Christ is not something you DO! It's a place to BE! It's being IN Christ; not doing FOR Christ. It's living your life with the conscious awareness of His presence.

And when you do that, you do not sin! So if you want to overcome the sin in your own life, choose to dwell in Christ.

**1 John 3:7-8** reminds us "Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil".

**B. Before you trusted Christ with your life, your old father was the devil, who tied you up in sin.** Then Jesus came into your life and untied you from your sin. He rendered the devil's work inoperative and ineffective. The problem is too many Christians live as if they're still tied up.

They remind me of the story of circus elephants, whose trainers shackled them with heavy chains attached to deeply embedded stakes when they were young.

The young elephants cannot break free, so they learn to stay in their place. Then when they grow older and more powerful, with the strength to pull the stake and walk away, they never do. Their conditioning has limited their movements.

In fact, after a while, all the trainers have to do is attach a small metal bracelet around each elephant's foot attached to nothing, and those elephants stand in place even when the stakes are actually gone! (James Belasco, Teaching the Elephant to Dance; [www. PreachingToday.com](http://www.PreachingToday.com))

That's the way some believers choose to live their lives. They're still tied to their habits. They're still tied to their sins, conditioned to believe that they could never break free.

Yet nothing is further from the truth! If you're a believer, Jesus loosed you from those bonds; He untied you from your sins and severed your connection with the devil. Satan is no longer your father. Now, God is your Father.

**1 John 3:9-10** concludes: "No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the

devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.” (ESV)

## **VI. Conclusion.**

**A. Remember this: your real family is God’s Family.** GOD is your Father, not the devil! Your DNA defines who you are, not your circumstances. The “seed” which comes from your Heavenly Father determines your identity, and that seed is a righteous seed. So choose to live as a child of God, not as a child of the devil.

You are a loved child of God in the process of becoming like Christ. Please, believe it and live it! It’s the only way you can overcome the sin in your life and become all that God wants you to be.

Think of it this way, for those of you who have ever parented or helped to raise, or mentored a child: When you find yourself with that kind of responsibility, you find that you are in it forever, good or bad, rain or shine.

Love and devotion remain when all else fades away. I have seen this with my own family: Chad and Maggie with Brandon, Ben and Emily with Lily, and Paul and Katie with Finley. You are in it to win it and there is no going back...you have been changed forever! Love needs to always take the lead.

So it is with your Heavenly Father: He is your dad forever! He sees you in all your brokenness and still loves you with a love that never changes based on your performance or lack thereof.

In fact, He is proud you. Tell me, with that kind of a Father, how can you not succeed!

Amen? Let us pray...