

Round Top Church Christian Fellowship

Sermon Series in 1 John

Children of God Practice Love

1 John 3:1-11

June 25th, 2017 A.D. ~ Pastor Matthew Diehl

1 John 3:1-24

References to Deity	40x
(Father, God, Jesus, Spirit, He, Him, His, His Son, Jesus Christ, Son of God)	
Sin, sins, sinned	11x
Practice(s)	6x
Know(s)	11 x
Children of God 3x / Little Children 2x / Children Devil 1x	
Love	9x
Command, Commandment	4x
Righteous, Righteousness	4x
Born of God	2x

1 John 3:1-11 TEXT

1 See how great a **love** the **Father** has bestowed upon us, (love 9x)
that we should be called **children** of **God**; (children of God 3x/ 1x of devil)
and *such* we are.

For this reason the world does not **know** us, (know, knows 11x)
because it did not **know** **Him**.

1 John 4:19 (*We love, because He first loved us.*) and John 3:16 obviously can be paired with 1 John 3:1. Love and grace go hand-in-hand. Grace is unmerited favor. We do not earn what God has given us, and the love of God is surely not earned. For love that is earned is not love, but bought allegiance sustainable to the next higher bidder. God's love is free just as His grace is. Love contains what we all see as a deep affection, adoration and fondness. Love also delivers devotion and attachment which is part of believing. Love and grace are two eternal attributes of God that are irreversible and irrefutable.

God's love and grace are extended to everyone in the creation from the beginning, and He does not desire to lose one person (Romans 1:18-20; 2 Peter 3:9). His plan from the beginning is for no one to perish. Just think about what God has done. He provided Adam and Eve a safe, fruitful environment. They did not have to plant one

tree. They were “gatherers” of God’s garden. They then rejected God’s provisions and traded them for their own choice, their own god (themselves). Adam and Eve are the examples of what we all have made a choice to do.

From reading 1 John, we see once again that God is in the restoration business. If man will just turn and acknowledge God’s love and grace, the evil in the world will pale by comparison. Satan cannot match God’s grace and love; he can only counterfeit love which means he cheapens it with greed and jealousy. This is exactly what Satan did with Adam and Eve. Satan does not have the compacity to create, dispense or put forth true love or grace. Satan is a taker. The version of love Satan puts in front of us leads to destructive behavior as with David’s choice for Bathsheba.

This is why John can write “*how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us*” (1 John 1:1). In this chapter, John uses the word “love” nine times. God elected us, because His perfect knowledge saw that we will surrender to His Spirit. This is why God chose (elected) us to be with Him for an eternity. God does not desire for anyone to be with Him for an eternity that does not want to be. God elects those that choose to surrender to Him.

(Matthew 24:22, 24, 31; Mark. 13:20, 22, 27; Luke 18:7; Romans 8:33)

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are **children** of **God**, (children 6x)

and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be.

We still struggle with sin in a fallen world.

John drives home the point that Believers are “**children of God**” (3x). We are the elect. However, we are not fully developed yet. We are not what we will be when the Lord returns. This we hold as our hope. But hope here is not a wish. Hope is a guaranteed future. Our name (hope) is written in God’s Book of Life from the foundation of the world. We (our names) are in God’s will that is recorded in Heaven. Look at it this way, if your name is in a will recorded in the courthouse then your future inheritance regarding that will is a fact not just an earthly hope. This is why we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Ephesians. 1:13-14

¹³ In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory.

1 John 3:2 continued

We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him,

because we shall see Him just as He is.

³ And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him

purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Again, John identifies his audience as **Children of God** and with this title gives an expectation of behavior and thought from the heart. The reason the title “**Children of God**” is used is because there exists a **love relationship**. With this existence as a Child of God, we recognize that we still live in a fallen world and are subject to temptation. We slip from time to time. This slippage is noted in the first chapter of 1 John. John tells us that all sin. However, Jesus is faithfully there to forgive those who seek forgiveness and repentance. Our future is even brighter, because when we are finally joined to Christ, when He comes for the saints, we shall have matured to be like Him. Our sanctification process blooms us into a glorified state.

2 Thessalonians 1:10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed - for our testimony to you was believed.

1 John 3 continued in verse 4

⁴ Everyone who **practices sin** also **practices** lawlessness; (practice(s) 6x)
and **sin** is lawlessness. (sin, sins, sinned 11x)

⁵ And you know that **He** appeared
in order to take away **sins**;
and in **Him** there is no **sin**.

⁶ No one who abides in **Him** **sins**;
no one who **sins** has seen **Him** or **knows Him**.

[Clarification on **practicing sin** contrasting **practicing righteousness**]

Gospel of John 3:21 "But he who **practices the truth** comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

practices- present active in John 3:21 and 1 John 3:4,7,8,9

Many of you know that I, like so many other public servants, had a close-up view, a hands-on experience with those that practiced lawlessness. This emphasis is on the word “**practice**”. People who wake-up every day with intent in their heart to be a lawless person are “practicing sin”. We are surrounded not only by people but whole industries that are lawless. To name a couple of industries, we have the movie industry that produces immoral productions, and we have the

illegal drug industry. Lawless in the since that they live a life opposed to God's plan. In addition, they live a life that practices things that violate the man-made laws. We have so many people who practice lawlessness in America that our prisons are full. America incarcerates more people than any other country in the world (2.3 million).

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2017.html?gclid=CNii-PWw19QCFQ6paQodqCgPCg>

When you add up those people who have committed crimes involving drugs, sex, gambling and financial fraud schemes, you can fill most other countries prisons with those offenders alone. Drug incarcerations account for 25 % in America. However, criminologist will tell you that most crimes are drug-related figuring as high as 70%; meaning that a burglar committed the crime to get money to buy drugs. The drive-by homicide was a drug war for turf.

Half of the **world's prison population** of about nine million is held in the US, China or Russia. **Prison** rates in the US are the **world's** highest, at 724 people per 100,000. In Russia, the rate is 581. At 145 per 100,000, the imprisonment rate of England and Wales is at about the midpoint **worldwide**.

There are more than 2.2 million prisoners in the United States of America, more than 1.65 million in China (plus an unknown number in pre-trial detention or 'administrative detention'), 640,000

in the Russian Federation, 607,000 in Brazil, 418,000 in India, 311,000 in Thailand, 255,000 in Mexico and 225,000 in Iran.

<http://www.prisonstudies.org/news/more-1035-million->

In state prisons alone America, spends almost 40 billion dollars per year.

<http://www.cheatsheet.com/personal-finance/what-are-americas-prisons-costing-you.html/?a=viewall>

It is easy to point to prison populations and say that those are the lawless ones. However, to have that many people in prison, others share part of the blame. Absentee parents and the welfare system have contributed. **At least one political party in America has purposely entrapped many minority populations on the government plantation with their slave masters being their congressman and local politician and welfare worker.** It is recently reported that the whole state of Illinois is about to go bankrupt. This can only happen when the one party in charge over the past half century practiced lawlessness. They have committed fraud after fraud in the wealthiest country in the world.

What about the Church? Again, to have that many people in prison, the Church, or at least part of the Church, shares responsibility. The witness of the Church overall has been crippled, because we know

that leaders in many denominations have succumbed to the powers of the world and do not preach and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They have capitulated to the social and cultural demands of the fallen world. When the men of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19) pressed on their doors they let them inside and, not only handed over victims to be assaulted, but they themselves became part of the despicable acts by omission or commission. This is the case in churches near our own geographic location.

Therefore, America's population is confused, not finding refuge in the Church for they see them as not only hypocritical but a frightening and harmful place to bring their families, their children. In reality, there are only a minority of Churches who still preach and teach the Gospel. The rest practice lawlessness.

So, with whole denominations practicing lawlessness and too many others preaching pop-psychology, what shall we expect? We expect our prisons to be full and overflowing.

John does not want us to be deceived. John calls sin what it is and properly assigns its master, the Devil. Talk like this drives a righteous spike into the hearts of evildoers. This is why the Bible has constantly been under attack. However, God's book has stood the test of time and is more present now than at any time in history. God's book has outlived every nay-sayer in history and will outlive current

opposing voices. God's Word will be here when the age comes to a close. Why? Because, in reality, God/Jesus/ Holy Spirit is the Word who at one time came and lived with us in the flesh (John 1).

1 John 3 continued . . .

⁷ Little **children**, let no one deceive you;

the one who **practices righteousness** is **righteous**,

just as **He** is **righteous**;

⁸ the one who **practices sin** is of the devil;

for the devil has **sinned** from the beginning.

Isaiah 5:20-25

²⁰ Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; **Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!**

²¹ **Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And clever in their own sight!**

²² **Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine, And valiant men in mixing strong drink;**

²³ **Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!**

²⁴ **Therefore, as a tongue of fire consumes stubble, And dry grass collapses into the flame, So their root will become like rot and their**

blossom blow away as dust; For they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

²⁵ On this account the anger of the LORD has burned against His people, And He has stretched out His hand against them and struck them down, And the mountains quaked; and their corpses lay like refuse in the middle of the streets. For all this His anger is not spent, But His hand is still stretched out.

Isaiah 59:1-4 1 Behold, the LORD's hand is not so short That it cannot save; Neither is His ear so dull That it cannot hear.

² But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden *His* face from you, so that He does not hear.

³ For your hands are defiled with blood, And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken falsehood, Your tongue mutters wickedness.

⁴ No one sues righteously and no one pleads honestly. They trust in confusion, and speak lies; They conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

1 John 3:8 continued

The **Son of God** appeared for this purpose,

that **He** might destroy the works of the devil.

Jesus/God/Holy Spirit is more powerful than the Devil and the law of sin and death. We are set free from sin and death by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Rev 20:10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

⁹ No one who is born of God practices sin,

because His seed (indwelling H.S.) abides in him;

and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be reborn of Spirit (John 3).

When we witness the Gospel to others, we must be clear on this point.

A person must be born-again. This is a mystery to the fallen world.

How do we explain this born-again event in a person's life, in our life?

We all have a personal account of what took place. I was once told that if I could not give the date that I was born-again then I was not saved.

I found this analysis of salvation to be shallow and legalistic. Some

groups even issue Born-Again birth certificates. Okay, if you have

one, great. I, like many others, can remember the time of walking the

aisle at a church service and publicly professing my faith in Christ. I

have the Bible that my friends gave me commemorating the event.

However, I had been 'in process' for some time prior to that evening. I

could not tell you the date that I was transformed. I have the date that I

made my public profession of faith by walking the aisle. However, it was many years prior to that I was water-baptized. This was partly due to not having a membership in a local church. In addition, I did not fully understand what was happening to me in my conversion walk with Christ. There was a sanctification process ongoing. I did not use that word at that time in my life, but that was taking place over a period of several years.

I believe that many people have a similar experience to becoming Born-again. There was an internal stirring of our spirit being convicted by the Lord's Spirit. Then one day, it grows to the point where there is an outward expression. The power of God's Spirit grows in us to the degree that we are empowered to make public statements and actions. You may be a person whereby this happened all at once. The end result is the same. Thank goodness for those of us who took longer to bake in the oven, that did not get "*runned-over-by-that-dang-ol-train*".

The good news is that in our fallen condition we made a choice to surrender to God and allow Him to work on us. We responded to God's work and became one of His children. We look back over our life and see God picking us up and carrying us through adversity, trial and error, through storm and hard-times. We often see God's hand more clearly in the past than in the midst of the present.

Born Again Biblical Example:

Look at this man Nicodemus. It is recorded in John 3 that he came to Jesus at night. Jesus told him that he had to be re-born of Spirit to see or enter the kingdom of God. This appears to be in the early part of Jesus' three and one-half year ministry period. However, we see Nicodemus reappear in John 19:39.

John 19:38-39 ³⁸ And after these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. He came therefore, and took away His body.

³⁹ And Nicodemus came also, who had first come to Him by night; bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight.

In John 3, the text does not reveal that Nicodemus got saved after Jesus witnessed to him. When Jesus died on the Cross, we see Nicodemus simply reappear with Joseph of Arimathea to prepare Jesus' body for entombment. At this point, Scripture tells us Joseph of Arimathea was a **secret disciple** of Jesus. Remember, Nicodemus came secretly by night to see Jesus in John 3. Nicodemus' appearance here in John 19 lends to his re-birth just as Jesus told him had to take place for him to see or enter the kingdom of God. It is reasonable to assume that Nicodemus became "saved" at some point after he met with Jesus the first time. There is no Biblical record of him being water-baptized or any other acts representing salvation. However, we

can strongly assume that his 'saving' faith empowered him to go with Joseph of Arimathea and claim the body of Jesus. That was a brave action, because the followers of Jesus, for the most part, were in hiding and not wanting to be associated with a crucified man. Peter denied knowing Jesus, but Nicodemus came to claim Jesus' body. By this action, Nicodemus practiced righteousness, because he loved Jesus.

In the midst of the Roman-Jewish persecution, would you claim the body of Jesus? It seems reasonable that God was behind their mission to get Jesus' body prepared to be in the tomb. Therefore, they would be protected. Faith in doing what God has called us to do is that strong. Action-faith empowers and can protect the Children of God. We know that God may call us to action and that action may cost us our freedom and/or lives, but, after all, the kingdom of God where we belong is not of this world.

1 John 3 continued . . .

¹⁰ By this

the **children** of **God**

and the **children** of the devil

are obvious:

anyone who does not **practice** **righteousness**

is not of **God**,

nor the one who does not **love** his brother.

¹¹ For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning,

that we should **love** one another;

AMEN . . . to be continued next Sunday.