

The Purpose of His Purity  
I John 3:5-7

May 20, 2007

A. Introduction — the Context

- 1. first, in I John 1:7-9, we learn that
  - a. Christians are
  - b. all Christians
  - c. Christ has
- 2. second, in I John 2:29-3:2, we learn that
  - a. Christians are
  - b. John 1:12-13, we are this because
  - c. Romans 7:21-23; yet, in us there is
- 3. third, in I John 3:3 we find that Jesus is

B. He is Pure, To Take Away Sin . . . . . I John 3:5

- 1. I John 3:4, sin is defined as
- 2. which means
- 3. but Christ is
- 4. Hebrews 10:7, Luke 22:42; because
- 5. taking away sin means
  - a. taking away the

- b. taking away the
- c. taking away the

6. but it also means

- a. Romans 6:14: we are not
- b. Romans 6:15-17: we are free to
- c. Romans 6:18-19, Ephesians 1:6: we are free to
- d. Romans 6:20-22, 8:2: we are free to

C. He is Pure, So We Will Not Practise Sin . . . . . I John 3:6

- 1. Who helps in our fight against sin?
- 2. Does this mean we never sin?
- 3. Why should I worry if I practise sin?

D. He is Pure, So We Will Practise Righteousness . . . . . I John 3:7

- 1. How can we practise righteousness?
- 2. What absolute righteousness do we possess?
- 3. John 15:5; how can we practise righteousness?
- 4. What can we do apart from Christ?
- 5. How can I improve my abiding relationship with Christ?

—{1}. **1 John 3:5–7** . . . . . **The Purpose of His Purity**

A. Introduction

1. The Text, 1 John 3:5-7: “And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;” (NAS)

2. The Context

a. let us not leap into this text without considering what John has already written

- (A) that is always a danger when we spend some time in studying a book in the Bible in our Sunday services
- (B) remember, this was a letter written by John to some Christians; probably to those in one specific church and then it was circulated among the churches
- (C) it was written by a beloved apostle to some very dear friends; friends who were undergoing stress & distress
- (D) how do you read such a letter when you receive it – a sentence at a time and then leave it? ... no, your read it all the way through, at one sitting – then study it
- (E) so, let us consider some facts John has already given

b. first, 1 John 1:7–9:

- (A) “but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (NAS)
- (B) so, right up front in this letter John makes it clear
  - (1) Christians are meant to have fellowship
  - (2) sin spoils fellowship
  - (3) Christians all sin
  - (4) Christ has provided an ‘out’ when we do sin
  - (5) This ‘out’ is our confession of our sins and His forgiveness and cleansing us from our sins

- (C) remember this: we sin, if we confess then Jesus Christ will forgive our sin and will cleanse us
- c. second, 1 John 2:29–3:2:
- (A) “If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him. See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.” (NAS)
- (B) John is speaking to Christians in this letter
- (1) those who are named as God’s children
  - (2) not just named, but actually are God’s children
  - (3) not just at some future time, but right now
  - (4) because through faith and in receiving Christ, we have been born into God’s family
  - (5) “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12-13 NAS)
- (C) so, in what follows
- (1) John is primarily addressing us with respect to the new nature which we have by the new birth
  - (2) not the old nature, the old carnal nature which the Bible calls the flesh or the old man or old self
  - (3) and, as we noted two weeks ago, between these two natures this is ongoing conflict which will not be resolved until ‘*we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.*’ ... or, as Paul says
  - (4) “I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.” (Romans 7:21-23 NAS)
  - (5) so what John is about to say is that, indeed, we have a problem if we cannot say with Paul, that ‘*I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man.*’
- d. third, 1 John 3:3
- (A) “And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” (1 John 3:3 NAS)

- (B) Jesus Christ is the pure One
  - (1) this is in the present tense
  - (2) it was true when Jesus walked as a man on earth
  - (3) but it is eternally true, for Jesus is God
  - (4) and, Habakkuk 1:13a, describing God says, '*Thine eyes are too pure to approve evil, And Thou canst not look on wickedness with favour...*' (NAS)
- (C) and His purity has a purpose: that we should be pure

- 3. let us now consider 1 John 3:5–7 as follows: that Christ is
  - a. Pure, To Take Away Sin, verse 5
  - b. Pure, So We Will Not Practise Sin, verse 6
  - c. Pure, So We Will Practise Righteousness, verse 7

- B. Pure, To Take Away Sin . . . . . 1 John 3:5
  - 1. *And you know that He was made manifest in order that He might take away sins, and there is no sin in Him.*
  - 2. what is sin ... well, John has just defined this in the previous verse: "*Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.*" (1 John 3:4 NAS) – sin is lawlessness
    - a. law, you will find if you read Romans chapters 1 to 3, is the revealed will of God, no matter how revealed: whether written in the Scriptures or upon our conscience
    - b. and lawlessness is to act in disregard to that revealed will of God, to act in disrespect to what is known to be right
    - c. and that is sin
    - d. and Jesus Christ, the pure One, did not have this sin as any part of His nature; of Him we read
      - (A) He says, '*behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.*' (Heb 10:7 NAS)
      - (B) and, '*Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done.*' (Luke 22:42 NAS)
      - (C) Jesus obeyed the Father's will that He should take away sin from us

3. now when we think of Christ Jesus taking away our sin
  - a. we mostly think of
    - (A) His taking away the penalty of sin, of bearing our sin in His body on the cross ... and that is true
    - (B) His taking away the guilt of sin, so that we can stand in Christ and in His righteousness before a holy God ... and that is true
    - (C) His taking away the curse of sin, the condemnation which separates us from our intended fellowship with God ... and that is true
  - b. for these are the aspects of salvation of which we are most subjectively aware when we come as sinners to Jesus Christ to find in Him everlasting life
  
4. but as our context makes plain, there is more than this
  - a. Christ takes away sins that we should no longer be under the power of sin, under its dominion and domination ... turn for a moment to Romans 6 ... <sup>14</sup> For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.
  - b. Christ takes away sin that we should be freed, not to sin, but to sin not: <sup>15</sup> What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? <sup>17</sup> But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,
  - c. Christ takes away sin that we should be free to pursue righteousness and sanctification: <sup>18</sup> and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. <sup>19</sup> I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.
    - (A) sin makes the best of our righteous acts as filthy
    - (B) Christ taking away sin makes us and these acceptable 'in the Beloved' (Ephesians 1:6)
  - d. Christ takes away sin that we should be free to serve God: <sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things

of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. <sup>22</sup> But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. (NAS)

- e. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."  
(Romans 8:2 NAS)

5. no wonder Charles Wesley wrote with such joy & fervour, <sup>-(2)}</sup>.

...

Take away our bent to sinning,  
Alpha and Omega be;  
End of faith, as its beginning,  
Set our hearts at liberty.

...

Finish, then, Thy new creation,  
Pure and spotless let us be;  
Let us see our whole salvation  
Perfectly secured by Thee:

C. Pure, So We Will Not Practise Sin . . . . . 1 John 3:6

- 1. Everyone abiding in Him does not continue sinning; everyone continuing to sin, has neither seen Him nor known Him.
- 2. John's next statement of the purpose of Christ's purity
  - a. follows most naturally from the last
    - (A) if, as indeed is the case
    - (B) Jesus Christ entered history to take away sin
    - (C) to remove us from its penalty, its guilt, its curse, its power, its slavery
    - (D) to free us for righteousness and for God
  - b. then sin should not be our practise
  - c. when the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of holiness, enters our life, as He indeed does the life of every

Christian

- (A) then He will inevitably fight with us against sin
- (B) for He makes our body, our being, His temple
- (C) and God the Holy Spirit will never be content to dwell in a temple that is polluted by sin

3. "Everyone who abides in Him does not sin" (NKJV, cf AV, &c)

a. perhaps that is how your version translates this verse

- (A) for the Greek is in the present tense "is not sinning"
- (B) but the present tense can be expressed several ways
  - (1) I never sin (as an absolute statement)
  - (2) I am not committing a sin (at the moment)
  - (3) I am not going to sin (present progressive)
  - (4) I am not sinning (as a continuing activity)
- (C) a glance at the verses before and following
- (D) as well as our consideration of what John has said
- (E) show that John is not speaking of an absolute ceasing from sin, nor of a sinless perfection
- (F) but of practice, life-style, continuing activity; we now differ from what we were before Christ saved us

b. Jean Calvin rendered these words as 'does not allow sin to reign over him'

c. and Martin Luther, 'does not persist in sin'

d. the sanctifying work of God's Holy Spirit is to cause us to be revolted by those things that were once habitual to us

4. Well what about the person professing Christ who continues to practise sin, in whom there is no change in life-style

a. what if that describes me?

b. what if I protest, 'once saved, always saved'?

c. what if sin in my life does not revolt me; grieve me?

d. then this verse tells me three things about myself

- (A) One: I am not abiding in Christ

(B) Two: I have not successfully sought Christ – I have not seen Him, perceived Him, found Him

(C) Three: I do not know Christ by faith as Saviour – I do not know Him, I have no personal relationship with Him; I am not saved; I am lost

e. so my claim, 'once saved, always saved' leaves me with a problem, a condemning problem, an eternal problem

f. and I need to deal with the fundamental sin problem in my life, repent of that sin, and call upon the Lord that in His mercy – He is abundant in mercy – He will save me

D. Pure, So We Will Practise Righteousness . . . . . 1 John 3:7

1. Dear children, let no one deceive you: the one practising righteousness is righteous, according as even He is righteous;

2. you see, this is one of the results of Christ's taking away sin

a. we read of it in Romans 6

b. that we are now enabled

c. instead of the practising of sin to practise righteousness

d. Luther expressed it 'good works of piety do not make a good pious man, but a good pious man does good pious works.'

e. Christ saved us that we might follow Him; that we might obey Him; that we might imitate Him; that we be like Him

f. well I know myself, and I know what I am like and 'I know that in me (that is in my flesh) nothing good dwells;' (NKJV) so how can such a person as I practise righteousness?

3. let us recognize that

a. the only absolute righteousness that we possess is that which God has imputed, reckoned or accounted to us on account of faith in Jesus Christ: it is His righteousness

b. and relative righteousness, acceptable pious acts, will only take place when we abide in our Source of righteousness, Jesus Christ: "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5 NAS)

c. nothing; absolutely nothing; positively nothing without Him

4. it is abiding in Jesus Christ
  - a. having that daily walk with Him
    - (A) spending time in the love relationship He desires
    - (B) learning from Him in the school of prayer
    - (C) feeding on the living Word by studying the written
    - (D) hearing and obeying His commandments
  - b. there is a slender thread here
    - (A) a thread of love binding us to Jesus Christ
  - c. sometimes I take old scrap metal to the scrapyard down Woodbine below the Stouffville Road
    - (1) they give me a cent or so a pound for iron
    - (2) so metal is used rather than ending up in landfill
    - (3) they move great piles, tons of iron, around with a crane and an electromagnet
    - (4) that magnet is powered by a slender wire carrying a relatively small current of electricity
    - (5) that wire must be kept intact or else that large electromagnet will become powerless
  - (B) so we need to keep that slender lifeline to Christ intact
  - d. so that we will be enabled to live so as to please God
  - e. so that we may give acceptable service (Rom 12:1-2)

#### E. Conclusion

1. if this morning you do not know in a personal way
  - a. that Jesus was manifested to take away sins
  - b. let me invite you to Him with Carmichael's words, <sup>{3}</sup>.

The Saviour is waiting to enter your heart—

Why don't you let Him come in?

There's nothing in this world to keep you apart—

What is your answer to Him?

If you'll take one step toward the Saviour, my friend,  
You'll find His arms open wide;

Receive Him and all of your darkness will end,  
Within your heart He'll abide.

2. but you who are in Christ and seek the blessing according to Christ's words, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." (Matthew 5:6 NAS)
  - a. be assured that this is that same loving Saviour's desire for you and for your life
  - b. ask Him for the strength and discipline to spend time with Him each and every day, that you, like Paul ...
  - c. ... may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of {your} own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, that {you} may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death (Philippians 3:9-10 NAS, alt)
  
3. We will sing in closing, "Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness"

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

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2. “Love Divine” by Charles Wesley (1707-1788)
3. “The Saviour Is Waiting” by Ralph Carmichael, © 1958 Sacred Songs (a div. Of Word, Inc.)