

—{1}. **1 John 3:7–10** **The Parenthood Test (#5)**

A. Introduction

1. Our scripture reading this morning, from Romans 8:28–39 was intended as a reminder that our salvation, from beginning to end, is according the gracious workings of the Triune God. In particular, that the work of justification, that accounting the believer to be righteous, is not a matter of the believer’s actions but of God: **‘it is God who justifies’** (Romans 8:33, NKJV). This is important as we consider our passage in 1 John this morning – that when John speaks of our practising righteousness, he is talking about the actions that will flow naturally from the one already justified, the one accounted as righteous, before God.
2. our text is 1 John 3:7–10 (NAS): **7 Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practises 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. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 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.**
3. these verses tell us
 - a. there are two possibilities (only two)
 - b. what marks the Devil’s children
 - c. what marks God’s children
 - d. and what Christ has done
 - e. we will look at the verses in that order

B. The Two Possibilities

1. **7 Dear children, let no one deceive you: ... 10a Hereby are manifest {this word is repeated several times, so let’s define it: it means to make known, clear, apparent, visible, obvious; to appear} the children of God and the children of the devil:...**

2. Several times throughout this letter John pauses to address his readers in the affectionate terms of a parent to a child
 - a. this was not only appropriate because many of these had come to salvation through John's ministry, but also that he had thereafter nurtured them as his spiritual children
 - b. he recalls their intimate spiritual relationship with himself
 - c. because he is going to speak against
 - (A) false teachers and their teachings
 - (B) who would deceive, lead astray, seduce Christians
 - d. it is legitimate for John as a teacher to say
 - (A) you know me: you know my life, my manner of life
 - (B) you know my history and my perseverance in faith
 - (C) so take that into account when you weigh my teaching against what these other teachers are teaching
 - e. for some were teaching that salvation and a person's way of life were unrelated, even as now some abuse the Biblical doctrine of assurance, as we have remarked, misapplying that phrase, 'once saved, always saved' – 'simply believe, then live as you like and you will go to heaven'
3. John (and the other New Testament writers, as well) says no:
 - a. there does exist, there must needs exist, a distinguishable difference between the regenerate and the unregenerate
 - b. Paul, in instructing Pastor Titus (3:5) saying 'He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit' (NAS) going on to state that we are 'justified by His grace' (verse 7, NAS) and then to the logical conclusion of these facts, verse 8: 'This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.' (NAS)
 - c. salvation changes a person's manner of life
 - (A) his or her habitual activities will change
 - (B) in this chapter, when writing concerning sinning and doing righteousness, John uses tenses of the Greek which indicate, not individual actions, but continuing, repeated, ongoing practices

(C) these inevitably change by the Holy Spirit's indwelling

C. The Mark of the Devil's Children

1. 8a the one who practices sin is from the devil, because from the beginning the devil is sinning. 10b Hereby are manifest ... the children of the devil: everyone that does not practice righteousness is not of God, as also he that does not love his brother.

2. sin is the mark of the Devil's children
 - a. we do not like to think this, to talk of this
 - b. we see a baby and we exclaim, 'precious innocent'
 - c. yet every one of us, since the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, has been born with this mark upon us
 - d. it is not a physical mark, but that fallen nature of which David speaks in Psalm 51:5, '[Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.](#)' (NAS) this is not a comment on David's mother, but on our natural inheritance as mankind
 - e. God gave the world to be man's dominion – read Genesis chapters 1 and 2 and you find this to be true
 - f. but Satan, in successfully tempting Eve and Adam, usurped man's authority, so he is called '[the prince of this world](#)' (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11)
 - g. and, until God's salvation has '[transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,](#)' (Colossians 1:13, NAS), we remain subject to '[the domain of darkness](#)', to the Devil

3. God tells us, Job 38:4–7, that the sons of God – His heavenly host of angels – were present and shouted for joy when He laid the foundations of the earth – and, from such passages as Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 – we believe that Satan, the Devil, was one of those sons of God, an angel: indeed a chief of them
 - a. but Satan, in pride, rebelled against God
 - b. so becoming the author of sin (God did not create sin; Satan did, for sin is rebellion against God)
 - c. so sin is the hall-mark of Satan; his calling-card, and,
 - d. so sin marks the unregenerate, the unsaved, of mankind
 - e. and, therefore, these cannot show real righteousness, real love for the brother – it just is not possible

D. The Mark of God's Children

1. [7 Dear children, let no one deceive you: the one practising righteousness is righteous, according as even He is righteous ...](#) [9 Everyone who has been begotten from God does not practice sin, because His seed abides in him and he is unable to be sinning because he has been begotten from God.](#) [10a Hereby are manifest the children of God ...](#)

2. Righteousness is to be the mark of God's children
 - a. this is the fifth test (at least by my way of counting) that John gives us to see if we have fellowship with God
 - b. being born as God's children means there should be a family resemblance; we should give evidence of the new, spiritual birth, the Holy Spirit birth from above
 - c. in particular, as we saw in negative terms looking at verse 10, this righteousness is manifest in the love that Christians will have one for another, for the brother
 - d. this is practical righteousness (not some theory) shown in the deeds that one does for one's brother (check this out in James and we will find it later in this epistle of John)
 - e. how can this be so?

3. because God's Seed – the source of new life – the Holy Spirit – abides, dwells, lives in the believer
 - a. the mark of seed – whether animal or vegetable – is that it begets according to its own kind
 - b. a kernel of corn does not produce an apple tree
 - c. a dog does not give birth to kittens
 - d. so, the Holy Spirit, does not, cannot, give birth to sin
 - e. and the growth of this seed in our lives is inevitable
 - f. some of you may have new (or newer than ours) asphalt driveways – one day you may go out to find a small hump in that driveway – you hammer it down with a mallet – two days later, up it comes again – left alone, eventually a dandelion will make its way through the pavement
 - g. so it is also with the work of the Holy Spirit, because of ...

E. What Christ has Done

1. [4 And you know that He was made manifest in order that He might take away sins, and there is no sin in](#)

Him. ... 8b This is why the Son of God has been made manifest that He should destroy the works of the devil.

2. I read verse 4 which falls before our text
 - a. so we can see two distinct works of Christ on the cross
 - b. the taking away of sin – that through his death we should have our sins forgiven, we should be cleansed, we should be justified, made fit for the Presence of God in our lives, made fit to enter the Presence of God in heaven
 - c. the destruction of Satan's works –
 - (A) those results of Satan's Garden of Eden victory
 - (B) that subjugates mankind to sin
 - (C) this is why the Son of God entered into Satan's domain that He might enter the '**man's house**', and '**spoil the strong man**' (Cf Matthew 12:22-30 & parallels)

F. Our concluding word is from Romans 6:12-14, '**12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, 13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.**' (Romans 6:12-14 NAS)

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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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