

Congregational handout; outline sermon text on following pages
Sermon Notes & References. The Test of a Christian
“#1: Dealing with Sin”

1 John 1:5-2:2

July 5, 2015

A. First John

1. 1 John 5:13, the reason for the letter’s being written is ...
2. assured knowledge of eternal life comes to believers when their lives ...
3. the focus question: what shows in my **L**_____ that I am truly a **C**_____?

B. Christianity’s Essential Result

1. from God perspective is that ...
2. in 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Paul’s essential result of preaching the gospel is that people be ...

C. Fellowship ... an aspect of relationship

1. often is understood to mean ...
2. its root idea is to be **U**_____ in a common **P**_____ and **A**_____;
in this context, particularly with **G**_____ and with His people

D. 1 John 1:5-7 – this part of the test is, “Do I _____?”

1. If we walk in darkness, then ...
2. If we walk in the light, then ...
3. what is it to walk in the light (references: Psalm 31:5, Isaiah 5:20, John 3:19, Hebrews 12:14?)

E. 1 John 1:8-10 – this part of the test is, “Do I _____?”

1. What was the Nicolaitan heresy (cf Romans 6:1, as named in Rev 2)?
2. In what ways do people (unsaved and saved) deny sin?
3. What does sin not do to you if you are a Christian?
 - a. 2 Timothy 2:13: You are not
 - b. John 10:28: you are not
 - c. John 5:24: you are not
4. What does it sin do?
5. What is the remedy in verse 9?

F. 1 John 2:1a – this part of the test is, “Do I _____?”

1. Hebrews 12:1; what should we do about sin?
2. Romans 6:14; God promise in this regard is ...

G. 1 John 2:1b – this part of the test is, “Do I _____?”

1. “Paraclete” means (reference: John 14:16)
2. in reference to our sin, the Paraclete is our
3. what is emphasised here concerning propitiation, Christ’s sacrifice?

H. What is interfering with my fellowship with my Saviour God? ... what am I going to do about it?

A. First John – a Letter of Assurance

1. John explains his reason for writing this letter near its end with these words, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:13)
2. now I want you to notice the specifics given to the readers, so that they may KNOW that they have eternal life
 - a. firstly, it is for those who believe in the Name of the Son of God – that Name is Jesus, the Christ – it applies only to Christians
 - b. the second is that this assured knowledge comes not just because they profess a belief, but that the belief they possess aligns with all that which has been written in this letter, not just this single verse
 - (A) a believer cannot have full assurance if he sets his life contrary to the instructions given in this book
 - (B) Jesus asked, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46)
 - (C) to live that way is to substitute presumption for assurance
3. some 8 years or so ago, we looked at this epistle in some detail, and, as we did so we noted in passing a check list given to Christians to see if they truly believed: that is that theirs was a saving faith
 - a. there were at least seven items on this check list, maybe more
 - b. and we mentioned at that time that we should like to return to these to focus upon them more specifically
4. today we are beginning a series of messages that will be given, Lord willing, this July and August, titled, "The Test of A Christian"
 - a. the focus being on the question, "What should I see in my life, that shows, to me and to others, that I am really a Christian?"
 - b. of course, to find the answers to that question, we need first to recognise what is ...

B. Christianity's Essential Result

1. now, some view and preach salvation – becoming a Christian – as simply being a fire-escape from the punishment of hell on the one hand, and the entrance way into heaven on the other
 - a. it is presented simply from man's perspective

- b. what will it do for you and me if we are saved?
2. but the Bible presents the purpose of salvation from a higher and deeper perspective, that of God Himself
- a. "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will (or, desire; OE, pleasure) they existed, and were created." (Revelation 4:11)
- (A) mankind, along with other things, was created to satisfy the desires of the Creator God
- (B) in our adult Bible class, in looking at the first few chapters of Genesis, it was pointed out that mankind was created in order to have a special relationship with God
- (C) and that sin destroyed that relationship, separating mankind from the holy, living God
3. in 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Paul recounts what is the essential result that is sought in his preaching the gospel
- a. "17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)
- b. the same essential result is sought by every preacher of the gospel
- c. reconciliation: the restoration of man's relationship to God
- d. first, the gospel brings to the believer forensic righteousness
- (A) so that he or she may stand righteous in God's court of justice
- (B) not because of good works that he or she has done, but by the great work on the cross that Jesus Christ has done
- (C) that there He bore our sin, our guilt, and our punishment
- (D) so that God now looks on us through Christ's righteousness
- (E) and we are able to approach God with a frankness, His child coming to our Heavenly Father, God
- e. but the second, with which John's epistle is concerned, is that the Gospel should also result in the believer's practical righteousness
- (A) what is its effect on our relationship to God?
- (B) let us consider for a moment this matter of fellowship

C. Fellowship

1. as we read through the first chapter of this letter, did you not notice the number of times that the word “fellowship” is repeated
 - a. it isn’t talking about a social time together
 - (A) although “table fellowship” with other believers is important
 - (B) as is the fellowship around the Lord’s table, spending time in communion with our Lord, as we have done this morning
 - b. but rather the root idea in that word fellowship is that of union and having a commonality of purpose
2. fellowship with God and with the church of Christ
 - a. is a description of our relationship as believers
 - b. with God, because we are in Christ, abiding in Him, united with God because Father, Son and Holy Spirit dwell in us as God’s temple
 - c. with the people of God, because we are united one with another as brothers and sisters, as part of God’s family, as His children
 - d. and in both cases united in a common purpose and activity
3. how important is this fellowship to us?
 - a. do our words, thoughts and deeds strengthen or weaken fellowship?
 - (A) that is, “Am I truly in fellowship with God, or deceiving myself?”
 - (B) the tests in this letter help us answer that question; they are based
 - (1) not upon how we feel ... our emotions
 - (2) nor upon what we think ... our ideas and opinions
 - (3) but upon concrete facts
 - (C) the first test is very simple, “How do I deal with sin?”
4. To examine this first test, let us break it down into four parts:
 - a. “Do I align (unite) my life with God?”
 - b. “Do I acknowledge my sin?”
 - c. “Do I attack my sin?”
 - d. “Do I accept my Saviour’s work for sin?”

1. ⁵ And this is the message which we heard from Him and are announcing to you: that God is light and in Him there is not any darkness at all. ⁶ If we should say that we are having fellowship with Him and yet we are walking in the darkness, we are lying and we are not doing the truth; ⁷ But if we should walk in the light even as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus His Son makes us clean from all sin. ^{RGH}
2. in these verses, John makes these points:
 - a. if we walk in darkness, we must then, necessarily, be out of fellowship with God
 - b. if we walk in the light, then fellowship is possible, not only with God, but with God's people
3. what is it, then, to walk in the light?
 - a. walking? a figure of speech for who we live: how we act, speak, think
 - b. light: God is light and absolutely so
 - (A) one: light is a figure for truth
 - (1) light reveals, discovers, displays the truth
 - (2) but God is the God of truth in whom we can trust, "Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, O Lord, God of truth." (Psalms 31:5)
 - (B) two: light is a figure for moral purity
 - (1) "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; ..." (Isaiah 5:20a)
 - (2) "... the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil." (1 John 3:19b)
 - (C) three: light dispels fear
 - (1) the dark shadows in a room at night can assume frightening shapes in a child's imagination
 - (2) you may know Stephen King as the author of many horror tales. He has said that he only writes in the morning; why not at night? "Are you kidding? Not with the stuff I write." Even Stephen King knows the fearful power of the darkness. ^{-{2}}.
 - c. so to "walk in the light even as He Himself is in the light"
 - (A) is to align oneself with God and his will
 - (1) walk in truth – truth is not just something known, but something that is done, practised, performed,

lived?

(2) seek purity: Hebrews 12:14 says "Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord."

- (B) directly opposite to being aligned with the world; be on guard
- (C) against seeking its pleasures or living by its standards
- (D) for to do so is to be walking in darkness, rather than with God

E. "Do I acknowledge my sin?"

1:8-10

1. ⁸ If we should say that we have no sin, we cause ourselves to err and do not possess the truth. ⁹ If we should confess our sins, faithful is He and righteous, that He should forgive us the sins and should cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we should say that we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar and we do not possess His word. ^{RGH}
2. in NT times, as now, some people claimed sin didn't matter
 - a. the Nicolaitans, mentioned in Revelation 2, denied that Christians had any moral obligations and lived dissolute lives
 - b. they ignored the teaching, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be!" (Romans 6:1)
 - c. such people say, in effect, "I am not sinning"
3. there are a number of ways that we can deny sin
 - a. our society, around the world, denies sin by making it to be legal – legalized euthanasia and other murder, legalized prostitution, legalized substance abuse, and so on
 - b. we can do so by saying that our Christian life is spiritual, our spirit cannot sin and what our flesh does is of no consequence
 - c. we can deny it by redefining sin to be those practices we see in others but of which we ourselves are not guilty
 - d. we can deny it by using situational ethics which justifies sin by circumstance, situation, heredity, etc.
 - e. but, says John, all such denials – no matter how politically correct they may be today – are a direct affront and an attack on the integrity and truthfulness of God – "we make Him out to be a liar"
4. What does sin NOT do to you if you are a Christian ^{-{3}}.

- a. You are not disowned, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself." (2 Timothy 2:13) – in salvation you are born by the Holy Spirit into the family of God, given eternal life: that doesn't change
- b. You are not dead, "and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand." (John 10:28)
- c. You are not condemned, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life." (John 5:24)
- d. but sin does have consequences in a believer's life: it brings guilt, remorse, defeat, lack of fellowship with God, lack of fellowship with God's people, a cloud on our testimony – no wonder Satan's snares are set to trap us this way; but ...

5. the God who brought us salvation from sin on the cross

- a. has provided a way of restoration for us He has saved
- b. God does not condone sin, but God does forgive sin
- c. He is both a faithful and a righteous God
- d. "If we should confess our sins, faithful is He and righteous, that He should forgive us the sins and should cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- e. this verse is often used to bring the seeker to confession of sin – which is legitimate because it is based upon the work and character of Jesus Christ – but this book and passage is addressed to Christian believers
- f. how do you deal with sin: do you acknowledge (confess) it? ... this is the way to keep short accounts with God and restore fellowship
- g. today, as we partook of the Lord's Supper, I trust that you took this opportunity to pause to confess sin, that it be indeed a service when communion with the Lord is refreshed and restored

F. "Do I attack my sin?"

2:1a

1. ^{1a} My dear children, I am writing these things to you in order that you should not sin. ... ^{RGH}

2. Clearly, part of this first test that John gives to us to see if we are indeed in fellowship with God has to do with our attitude

a. do we casually accept the sin in our lives?

(A) after all, it is so easily forgiven

(B) we have just been told that it is impossible not to sin

b. Hebrews 12:1b encourages us "... let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us"

3. part of John's first test on how we deal with sin is do we strive against it?

a. do we simply accept it as an inevitable part of the territory?

b. becoming numbed to its continuing presence, self-satisfied?

c. or do we claim God's promise, "For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace." (Romans 6:14), that by the power of the Holy Spirit we overcome temptation?

G. "Do I accept my Saviour's work for sin?"

2:1b-2

1. ^{1b} ... Should anyone sin, we have a Paraclete in the presence of the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous One. ² Now He Himself is a propitiation on behalf of our sins, and not on behalf of ours only, but also on behalf of those of the whole world. ^{RGH}

2. Note that these words are not simply referring to past events; not just the cross; not just our conversion – nor at some future events

a. it is most strongly expressed in the present tense; applies to right now

b. "... we have ... He Himself is ..."

3. "We have a Paraclete"

a. this is just the Greek word written as an English word

b. Paraclete: Comforter, Helper, Advocate; one called alongside to help

c. Jesus used in of the Holy Spirit when promised "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever" (John 14:16) ... Son & Holy Spirit thus are One in essence

d. Jesus Christ, our Paraclete, our Advocate, our Defender, stands up at this moment to sweep away the charges against us

4. "Now He Himself is a propitiation ..."

a. Greek is one of those languages where you do not have to use the verb 'to be' – as I am, you are, he is – so it is generally omitted

b. but here it is present, clarifying or emphasizing that

- (A) the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as punishment to turn away God's judicial wrath against the sinner
- (B) is not only a historical fact but a present reality
- c. so, when I mess up, sinning in thought, word or deed
 - (A) I come, guilty and miserable, seeking forgiveness
 - (B) yet by accepting my Saviour's work for sin
 - (C) I can realize that my sin has been already punished
 - (D) God "... cancelled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross."
(Colossians 2:14 NLT)

H. What Shall We Say in Conclusion?

1. How do I deal with sin? Let us ask those questions in other words
 - a. "Am I seeking to walk in His ways every day?"
 - b. "When I sin do I confess it and find forgiveness?"
 - c. "Are sin and I uncompromising enemies?"
 - d. "Am I trusting that Jesus Christ can at this, and any, instant help me to deal with sin?"
2. To seek to answer "yes" to these is to pass the first test of the Christian, that of dealing with sin; and to know fellowship with God

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2. Adapted from message "Walking in the Light" by Rev. J. David Hoke – Kerux sermons #2623
3. From a message by Rev. Michael D. O'Neal, "What Happens When Christians Sin?" – Kerux sermons #13552