

Talk – 1 John 1:5-2:2; 4:10 – Forgiveness & Sin

Purpose of the Series:

The Christ is Jesus – and in him you may know that you have eternal life.

Central Truth

Sin is serious, and even Christians can live as if it isn't!

Purpose

I want to listener to know that forgiveness is a central truth behind what it means for Jesus to atone for our sins.

Bible Reading

1 John 1:5-2:2

Although the sermon considers: 1 John 1:5-2:2, 12; 4:10 (3:5-6, 9, 5:18)

Today's issue:

Sin is serious but we (even Christians) don't live as if it is.

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Outline

The 'S' word!

We love it! We hate it!

The 'F' word!

We want it! We need it!

1 John 2:¹ My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ²**He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins**, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 2:¹² I am writing to you, dear children,
because **your sins have been forgiven on account of his name**.

1 John 4:⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent **his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins**.

What does John ask of you?

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CHECK TIME

Talk

The 'S' Word

Good Morning/Afternoon.

Our topic today is something I know a lot about! And not because I have studied it well, but simply because I am just very good at it!

The 'S' Word - Sin!

Let's open a topic that few like to talk about, and many of us would like to think was a problem for others before it was a problem for ourselves.

Sin is serious, and even Christians can live as if it isn't!

Prayer

Let's pray,

Lord and Father,

Help us to look at a topic that make many, if not just ourselves, feel fairly uncomfortable.

And help us to look at what you have to say from your letter of 1 John.

Amen

I be Naughty!

- A friend of mine told be on an exchange he had with his 5-year son after his kid had done something wrong.
- He told his son 'If you choose to be naughty, then you will lose your DVD's'
- The son went away, downcast, and then returned a few minutes later – this time with a stack of DVD's.
- Offering them to his Father, he said 'I choose to be naughty'!

- I wonder if that is the way that we think about 'sin'.
- We recognise that there might be consequences, but it is not *that* serious and so we look for trade-offs to minimise the impact that our sin might have upon us – and hope that the one we are sinning against is not too fussed.

- Sin, is not a particularly popular topic now days (I am not sure it ever has been!)

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- For many what the Bible calls sin and what we use to keep hidden, is now what is flaunt in full view of anyone and everyone.
- And because so much of what was seen to be ‘sin’ is so approved, when someone like a Christian to say a word against it, they are accused of being judgemental or unloving.
- I have read a few contemporary Church planting or ministry books which have suggested that we should keep the language of sin out of our conversations and out of the pulpit!
- Which presents me with a problem as we look at the letter of 1 John – because in five short chapters, ‘sin’ is mentioned twenty times!
- We need to talk about it – because *sin is serious and even Christians can live as if it isn’t!*
- As we have looked at 1 John, we have seen several overlapping themes [**Visual** – ‘Sin and Forgiveness’ 1 John Flower]
- So far, we have looked at the big themes of *love* and *truth* and *obedience* – all based on the perfect character of God as revealed in his *Word*.
- Last time we considered the call upon all Christians in 3:23 to ‘believe in the name of the Son Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us’.
- John, reflecting what Jesus said about the greatest commandment, wants believers to *know and love God* and to *love and serve others*.
- John also gives us the setting in which believers are to live out their faith – it is in the world. Yet he says in 2:15 this [READ 2:15-17] – do not love the world.
- So we have a tension and a tension highlighted by the presence of sin all around:

How do imperfect people, live in an imperfect world, and serve a perfect God?

Walk in the Light!

- John’s answer – be people who walk in the light!
- Flip to 1 John 1:5 [READ 1:5]
- What does it mean for God to be light – it is another way of saying that God is perfect.
- ‘Light’ is a good analogy (and one used by lots of different religions not just Christianity) – to speak of something that is *good* and something that is *true* and something that is *righteous*.
- Something that the good, and true and righteous, when placed against something that is not, shows up the imperfections.

Illustration:

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Have you ever dressed a bed in a white sheet, or covered a table with a white tablecloth – it looks lovely, and clean. But then when you turn the light on, it shows up the imperfections, the sheets are really slightly yellow or the tablecloth has some discreet stains.

- That is the idea here when John says God is light – anything, no matter how good it looks to the world, when placed under God’s light shows its true colours and imperfections.

So how does an imperfect person, who lives in an imperfect world, stand before a perfect God?

- John says – be honest about your sin!
- Notice that what follows verse 5 are three false claims that a Christian must avoid.
[READ 1:6-10 – emphasis ‘If we claim’]
If we claim to have fellowship, but walk in darkness, we lie
If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves
If we claim we have not sinned, the word has no place in our lives.
- John calls people to walk in the light – yet he does that fully aware that our default position is that we are sinners and that we can not cover over that fact!

What is Sin?

- Let’s take a moment to talk about what sin actually is.
- Sin is something that we love, yet it is something that we should hate.
- Sin is whatever we do, think or say that displeases God.
- Sin is lawlessness (3:4)
- Sin is an offense – it breaks/hurts the relationship between two parties – be that between to people or between a person and God himself.
- Sin is something that you know in yourselves – but yet you often more easily identify in others.
- Sin is putting yourself or your desire before God.
- Sin may indeed be doing something wrong (5:17), but it is also failing to do something right. We often think of the things that we shouldn’t do, but sin is also those things that we haven’t done but should have.
- Sin shows each one of us to be imperfect.
- And unless something is done to deal with our sin, then sin is the reason we are separated from God permanently.
- The issue for John is not that we sin – it is if we ignore the sin that is in our lives.

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- Walking in the darkness is what happens when a person has no intention to walk with God in a particular area of their lives.

Application

- Let's see if we can apply this to ourselves.
- Note, that those who John is writing to here are believers – this is not calling unbelievers to account, this is a word for believers – those who claim to have fellowship with God.

a. it could be that John has in mind the person who says that it is possible to live without sin! *A sinless perfectionism.*

What a lovely picture that would be – imagine how perfect life would be.

How good would it be to get to the point where sin was no longer an issue for you!

Illustration: A story is told about C.S.Lewis (Narnia) who when confronted by a proponent of sinless perfectionism, picked up the massive 'Websters dictionary' off the end of his desk and dropped it onto the foot of the person – and then following the person reaction, suggested that he still had a way to go to reach 'sinless perfection'!

It is a totally unrealistic picture.

In fact, that is closer to the picture our secular world holds Christians too – 'You Christians think you are so perfect and so much better than us' – and yet I am still to meet a Christian who thinks they are so much better than everyone else!

b. It is more probable that John had in mind the believer who is a fake!

The person who says and does all the right things – but when away from the eyes of others is so captivated by some sin that there is no evidence of a person walking in the light.

This is not the person engaged in the battle against sin – for some there are various battles that plague them, as they continue to stand before God struggling to work through those issues.

The person John has in mind is the person who has no intention to live in the light – the person who does not or will not be accountable to any other and embraces a sin that simply captivates them – maybe the way you use your *words*, or the way you use your *money* or the way you use your *body* or the way you use your *time*.

If there is a sin in your life that you are unwilling to give to God, that you have no intention of giving up, then that is the kind of sin John has in view.

- Sin is an ugly business.

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- John wants believers to be real about sin (as verse 6 says, not to lie about it)
- He wants believers to, in verse 9, confess sin.
- He wants believers to, in verse 10, avoid covering up sin.
- In fact, he doesn't want believers to sin at all – even though he knows they will.
- *Sin is serious, and even Christians can live as if it isn't!*

PAUSE

The 'F' Word

- Does this not mean, that a believer is caught between a rock and a hard place?
- A sinner called not to sin before a sinless God?

Let's talk about the 'F' Word: 'Forgiveness'.

- You don't have to be Christian, to appreciate the idea of forgiveness.
- Forgiveness is something that everyone wants and in fact everyone needs.

Look at 1 John 2:1-2 [READ 2:1-2]

- John's doesn't want believers to sin, but when they do he also wants them to know that they are forgiven.
- There are three key things mentioned in these verses that should be a comfort for any sinner.

1. Sinners have Jesus as an advocate.

- Sinning against another is not the most effective way to win friends and influence others – in fact you are more likely to lose friends!
- That is how sinners stand before God – as enemies – not as a friend of his.
- But with Jesus, believers have one who is willing to stand by their side – despite their sin.
- The significance of this should not be lost upon us – that standing beside us, no matter how bad, how despicable, we may have been – is Jesus and he is willing to represent us before his Father.
- That is a true friend.
- But it is not just that he will stand by our side;

2. Sinners have Jesus the Righteous One by their side

- For what reason would the Father listen to my case? – because in Jesus we also have the Righteous One.
- 3:5 tells us that Jesus, came to be one of us, yet he was without sin.
- In Jesus, we have one who totally represents us, yet totally pleases God.

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- Why is that important?
 - Let's think about the character of God. If God is so powerful and loving, why can he not just wave his hand over my sin and wipe it clean?
 - Last Sunday, a mother of two little ones was killed in a car accident when she was hit by an out of control stolen 4WD driven by a bunch of teenagers.
 - There is nothing right about this situation.
 - This is a wrong that will have long term consequences.
 - What won't help is for someone to wave a hand over this whole situation and say 'All is forgiven'.
 - When someone sins – they do the wrong thing towards another – and that means another is hurt.
 - It is unjust to simply wipe away the sin, as if that is going to make all things right again, because all it does is clear the offender and leave the offended more hurt.
 - Jesus is the righteous Advocate, which means he stands as a worthy representative for those who cannot represent themselves.
- But simply standing as an Righteous Advocate alongside the guilty, does not clear away sin. There is still a price.

- So third:

3. *Sinners have Jesus, the atoning sacrifice.*

- Here in verse 2 and also in 4:10 John speaks of Jesus as *the atoning sacrifice*.
 - Theologically this is sometimes called the *propitiation* or *expiation*
 - It conveys the idea that God's wrath has been turned away from the guilty towards another.
 - As such the penalty one would have paid, was given to another in their place.
 - John wants to make clear that it is by Jesus that the penalty of sin has been dealt with. When he paid the price, the ultimate price dying on the cross – he took the penalty for sin that he didn't deserve, so that those who did deserve it might go free.
 - He paid what he didn't owe for what we owe but couldn't pay.
 - Jesus took the just wrath of God's judgement so that we would not experience his wrath and instead we would experience his love.
- This is the good news that is the Christian promise and hope – not that believers will be sinless, but that their penalty would be paid
 - In fact ,as verse 2 suggests, so great an act of love this is, that the sacrifice of Jesus would be sufficient to cover the sins of the world.

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- Does that mean that the sins of all the people of the world are covered? Yes, but it also means that his sacrifice is effective only for those who know the son and walk in the light.

- John, knows that what Jesus did on the cross, was not only sufficient to cover anything that we had done in the past, and sufficient to cover anything that we might do today, but that his death was sufficient to cover all that is to come – that is the ongoing benefit of forgiveness.

- So sinners, *your sin is serious, don't live as if it is not.*
- And sinners, walk in the light – because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name (2:12) – it by his blood that you have been purified from all sin (1:7).
- And sinners, confess and he who is faithful and just will forgive your sin and purify you from all unrighteousness (1:9).

Pray