

Remaining in Jesus 1 John 3:1-10

We got through the 2nd half of the 2nd chapter of 1 John last week, looking at loving God and His kingdom rather than loving the world and it's kingdom, and we were warned concerning the Anti-Christ. How many were here last week and got to study with me about the Anti-Christ? I was wondering this week if perhaps there might be some who walked away with the thought that an Anti-Christ rising to power who leads from a new nation state alliance, who imposes a mark for those who wish to buy and sell, who wages war against other nations- maybe you were thinking that all that sounds just a little out there and too sci-fi crazy for anything like that to ever happen. Just in case you had that impression, let me mention a few things that are happening right now in real time that would allow with ease a person to govern over a new political entity nations alliance state in this manner.

- mRNA Stargate project, it's a 500 billion dollar project aimed at building artificial intelligence infrastructure in the USA, with a focus on the idea of custom vaccines designed by artificial intelligence. In other words, there is a huge initiative to entrust machines with the decision to determine health outcomes in individuals

- the TSA is currently in the process of a large biometric overhaul, expanding the use of facial recognition and digital identity technologies for travelers

- ICE is currently using facial recognition as well to track those who have entered the USA illegally

- All around the world AI surveillance towers that scan the highways are being installed

- Just this past month, the Trump administration announced a new health data-sharing initiative involving major tech companies including Google and Amazon, in order to create a national health data network that allows Americans to share personal health data and medical records across private platforms and health systems.

- Palantir is a 400 billion dollar software company specialized in gathering and tracking data. Use cases include predictive policing, tracking people and

health situations on a global scale (Palantir was involved during Covid), the consolidation of different data information systems all into one system, and artificial intelligence used to guide militaries in what actions to take during a war. Palantir software is currently being used in 30+ federal agencies, as well as in Amazon and Microsoft.

-The USA (as well as other nations around the world) have been toying around with the idea of a digital dollar crypto currency, one that could unite other payment systems and could be controlled by the government much easier than cash.

-Just a couple weeks ago, Canada hinted at making a change in their views concerning the situation in the Middle East, and the USA responded by saying if that's how they see things, then we'll drastically up their tariffs. In other words- the USA said if another country doesn't agree with our world political motivations and views, then we're going to make it very difficult for them to buy/sell with us.

-Last week Trump posted on social media that any city or state who chooses to boycott an Israeli company over what is taking place in Gaza, then they will be cut off from any Federal disaster relief funds. I think he's since walked that back in reaction to the outrage, but the idea again is- if you have a differing opinion than the government entity, and believe something wrong is taking place- if you do not support the wrong and are vocal about the wrong- then you can be penalized financially.

All these things, whether right or wrong, whether the intent is for good or for evil, in each of these things you can begin to see the potential for how quickly a governing force could take control of the world at large, with minimal resistance, and could take control of who gets to buy or sell, who gets to eat or not eat, who gets to travel or get locked down, who gets to live or die.

And so God's word doesn't tell us to *fear* this happening, but commands us to simply remain in Jesus, living boldly for Him so that when Jesus appears in the sky coming back for His people, slaying the Anti-Christ and the beastly nation state- then we won't have any regrets or shame over our choice to remain in Him. We are to remain in Jesus so that we won't be deceived, remain in Him so that we won't have any shame when He appears at His second coming, remain

in Him so that we obtain the reward of eternal life. And so after these commands, and warnings, it's nice once we get to chapter 3 to be reminded of some encouragement, to be reminded of the *benefits* of remaining in Him. Look at **verse 1** with me...

John says, "Let me remind you, let me draw your attention to this fact, make sure you are aware of this- he says: See and know how much God loves you! That's something we'll have to remind ourselves of if we happen to experience life on earth under the Anti-Christ's control. Remember God has called you His children, and God's word states here that that's not just an empty title- it's actually true. It's not just that we are "called" His children, we actually truly are considered as His children. This is a pretty heavy statement. During this time period, amongst the Greeks and Romans, the idea of being a son or a daughter of one of the "gods" was a big deal. During the time, you had people worshipping Ares, Hermes, Athena, Artemis, etc- sons, daughters of the gods. Even the emperor during the time in which Jesus walked on Earth, Caesar Augustus, entitled himself as "son of god" and had statues built with that inscription. From a Christian perspective, it would have been a big deal as well as a follower of Jesus to read this during that time and to realize that the title Jesus carried was also being shared with His followers. A son of God, a daughter of God. This was, this *is*, a huge deal. Do you realize that if you've surrendered to Jesus in your life, if you are remaining in Him- then you are a son, a daughter of God? This has massive implications, but for the small passing time period of life here on Earth- our association with God does alienate us a bit from the rest of the world- as the end of this verse 1 states- the world doesn't know us, because it doesn't know God, and we are with God. Those of "the world" don't understand us, because they don't understand God. There is a little bit of "rub" between us and those of the world, because there is "rub" between them and God. **Verse 2...**

Though we are children of God, we don't yet fully have possession of everything that comes with being children of God. Our final state of existence will be so much better than anything we can possibly experience here in this life. This verse says that when Jesus appears (at His second coming, which is described in Revelation 19, after the tribulation) at that time we will be changed in form to be like Him. Concerning this subject, Paul agrees and says in **1 Corinthians 15:49** that "*Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.*" He then continues to explain more fully by saying in

verses 51 and 52 that *“we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”* Yes, when Jesus appears at His 2nd coming, those who are dead who followed Jesus, their dead bodies won't sleep in the ground forever, but will rise from the graves and will be transformed into new, eternal, glorified Christ-like bodies, and those of us still alive will be transformed into our new, eternal, glorified Christ-like bodies- and we will all together in our new eternal forms ascend to meet Him in the air as He is descending down to meet us. It sounds crazy right?

It sounds like some sort of super hero, Marvel Studios movie story or something. I think actually the reason those type of hero movies resonate with so many people is that there's some truth planted in there (though heavily distorted), but there's some truth that connects into our inner beings that agrees and says, yes, we were meant to be, we have a desire inside, we are designed as eternal beings, who were meant to be strong, not limited in so many ways, unaffected by bad things and death, sickness, accidents- we were meant to enjoy adventure and prosperity, and amazing deep friendships in a world that we could take care of and nurture with goodness, love, and power. That seemed to be kind of the idea in the Garden of Eden, but mankind traded that opportunity for a lie of “being more like God”- and it completely backfired. Believing that lie, giving into selfishness, listening to the wrong voices, giving into the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, giving into pride- actually resulted in mankind becoming *less* like God. Mankind unplugged from the power source. The connection to God was severed. And we've been in a downward spiral ever since. But part of us inside knows how things *should* be, we have a desire inside for things to be more like they were originally intended by God to be. And you see, the Bible tells us that God, through Jesus, has given mankind a second chance to live in the type of world that our hearts crave. Get rid of the type of rebellion that displaced us from the Garden of Eden, surrender to Jesus and remain in Him, and live as a child of God who will one day soon be transformed into a super hero body, who will live in King Jesus' super hero kingdom of God's goodness. **Verse 3...**

And so if this super hero body is your hope, if living in this super hero kingdom is what you are waiting for- as it says at the end of verse 3- all those who have this belief system, all those remaining in Him: purify themselves. They purify themselves because Jesus is pure, and in order to be with Jesus for

eternity- you have to be like Him. And so what does it mean to “purify” oneself? Well, the following verses explain the context of what is meant by purifying, **verses 4-10...**

The context is that of *purifying oneself from sin*. It's the idea of burning off impurities as when one purifies gold or silver. It's the idea of filtering out contaminants in drinking water with a water filter. It's the idea of getting rid of bad quality air by using an air purifier. One who is expecting to live with Jesus forever in His Kingdom, as a child of God, in a new transformed body- while they are still on Earth they are to be about the business of purifying their lives by getting rid of sin. And what exactly is sin? Verse 4 defines sin for us- it is lawlessness- sin is breaking the law. Now is the Bible talking about Roman law, or laws we now have in the United States? No, sin is in reference to *God's law*, the lawlessness mentioned here is lawlessness against God's law. Ok, what then is God's law?

Well, generally speaking, we could probably sum up much of God's Old Testament law through the 10 commandments. They're listed in Exodus 20, as well as in Deuteronomy 5, but I'll list them here for you quickly: 1. *Have no other gods before the Lord God*- He's the only God there is. 2. *Don't make or worship any idols*- again, He's the only God there is and only *He* is worthy of our worship. No other gods, peoples, things, possessions are worthy of our love and affection 3. *Don't take the Lord's name in vain*- and that doesn't *just* mean don't use God's or Jesus' name as a swear word, but that extends also into treating His name with respect and not taking spiritual matters lightly, not invoking His name in a prayer and then afterwards dishonoring Him with our behavior. 4. *Remember the Sabbath day*- work 6 days a week and on the seventh day of the week rest and honor the Lord in particular fashion 5. *Honor your father and your mother*- respect them, obey them, care for them 6. *Do not murder*- and for those curious the Hebrew word used in this place conveys the idea of killing someone *unjustly*. And Jesus referenced this commandment in the New Testament, extending it to even include unjust *anger* in ones heart towards another, and even wrongfully name calling others. Jesus basically told us the idea was not just following specifically what God's law said, but also following the intent, the spirit of God's law 7. *Do not commit adultery*- Jesus spoke on this command as well, expressing that this law was not to be broken even in one's mind and inner thoughts. 8. *Do not steal*- don't take something that doesn't belong to you, that you haven't gone through the right means of obtaining 9. *Do not give false testimony against your*

neighbor- in other words do not lie about anyone else. And Jesus mentioned this command as well, basically saying don't even set yourself up for the possibility of lying to God or others by vowing to do something that you might end up *not* being able to do 10. *Do not covet-* in other words do not lust after, or highly desire after something that someone else has that belongs to just them. Breaking any of these commandments, qualifies as lawlessness against God's law, which qualifies as sin.

Now, many of you know that Jesus was asked what the greatest command was, and Jesus' response was *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."* 38 *This is the great and foremost commandment.* 39 *The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'* 40 *Upon these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets."* **(Matt. 22:37-40)** So in other words, the whole foundation of God's law is based on wholly loving God and loving your neighbor as yourself. And the reason I draw your attention to this is because *that* seems to be more where John's mindset is rather than the 10 commandments and the Old Testament law. In 1 John 2 verses 7 and 8 we saw John stating that he is writing not a *new* commandment, but an *old* one; yet in a different way it *is* to be considered as a new commandment. And then he talks specifically about not hating your fellow Christian brothers and sisters- in other words- loving your neighbor as yourself. The 10 commandments were old, they had been around for a long time at this point in history, but the way Jesus summed them up into loving God and loving others was much newer, but shouldn't really be that new to these believers he was writing to. And the last half of chapter 2 (from last Sunday) started off talking about loving God verses the things of this world. And without stealing from anything from what Pastor Dave will be speaking about next Sunday, the last half of this chapter 3 also focuses in on loving Jesus and loving our brothers and sisters in Christ. I'll just steal 2 verses, skip ahead and look with me first at verse **23...**

This is really interesting that Jesus defined the foundation of God's law as the command to: love God and love one another, but John states it here as this: *Believe in Jesus Christ* and love one another. I think the point John is making is that loving God is interchangeable with believing in Jesus (trusting in Jesus, following Jesus, loving Jesus, obeying Jesus). Believing in, trusting in, following,

loving, obeying Jesus is *how* we fulfill loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind. And then **verse 24...**

The one who keeps His commandments remains in Him- which commandments? The commandments just mentioned: believing in Jesus and loving one another. This is how we remain in him, this is how we purify ourselves of sin, this is how we protect ourselves during the time of the Anti-Christ- we stand firm in our belief/love/trust in Jesus, loving Him well by obeying Him, and loving the other believers around us. Ok, let's circle back up to verse 5...

Jesus took away sins- that was one of the prophecies concerning the Messiah, mentioned in the Old Testament, in Daniel chapter 9; and He was sinless, fulfilling what *Isaiah* said of the Messiah- that he would bear the sins of others and be killed, though He Himself had done no violence and did not have any deceit in His mouth. Verse 6...

Notice that in this verse the NASB has the word *continually* in italics. What that means is that the word continually is not actually present in the original Greek. The original Greek reads more like "Anyone remaining/abiding in Him does not sin, anyone sinning has not seen Him and has not known Him." Now if that's the way the original language reads, does that mean that we can become sinless and that any presence of any sin in our lives is automatically an indicator that we are not saved, not right with Jesus, not knowing Him? There have been people and groups in history, and I'm sure there are still today some Christians who have this mentality, thinking that you can reach a certain enlightenment in Christianity where you are no longer capable of sinning. Well, while God sees us as sinless in *His* eyes because of Jesus, and while yes we are told over and over again in the New Testament to continually get rid of sin in our lives and pursue a life that is advancing in holiness here on Earth- while these things are true the answer is no, no we can't become sinless this side of Heaven, that can't be what the intent of the original language was. And how do we know that?

Well John has already told us that and clarified that in his introduction to this whole letter. In the first chapter he already addressed this subject, in **verse 8**: "*If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.*" John's already told us that sin is still present even for the follower of Jesus, but he tells us to walk in the light, to live in a way that admits we sin, and to

expose that sin so that it doesn't remain a secret in darkness. So that is why the NASB and some other translations attempt to better convey the concept John is trying to emphasize, by adding a word like continually. The idea is that we are to remain in Jesus, NOT remain in a state of sinning. Because you can't live in Jesus *and* live in sin at the same time. Us humans, we are not omni-present- we are totally incapable of being in 2 places at once. I can't be here at One Church in this moment and also at the same time be sleeping in my bed at home. Jesus said a good tree doesn't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree doesn't produce good fruit. In modern day terms we have a similar expression: if it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck- it's a duck. Right? It's not a cat if it barks like a dog. John is trying to describe how we can't remain in, abide in, live in unity with Jesus, while at the same time remain in, abide in, live in sin. It's incompatible. We can't be pure and dirty at the same time. We can't live with Jesus who is pure without us being pure ourselves. That's what this passage is saying, look again with me at verses **7-10...**

Remember during this time there was the heresy of the Gnostics floating around. The idea they were spreading was that it's ok to participate in sinful worldly activities as long as you hold onto the truth of Jesus in your mind. False teachers were saying you could be righteous without practicing righteousness- but John (as well as the other New Testament writers) say no- the one who practices righteousness is righteous and is of God; and the one who does not practice righteousness is not righteousness and is not of God. Verse 8 says Jesus came to Earth for the purpose of destroying the works of the devil. In other words- the passage is basically stating you can't have Jesus as Savior unless you have first have Him as *destroyer* in your life. He becomes Savior of your life by you welcoming the act of Him destroying sin in your life. There's a line drawn in the sand here. Remember last Sunday I said a statement that I prefaced with saying that it was going to sound extreme? I said this: *Any attempt to unite mankind in religion, or in earthly kingdoms- apart from Jesus Christ- will be at it's roots a demonic, anti-Christ movement.* What we are reading now confirms that idea. It's either righteousness following Jesus or it's not righteousness and you're of the devil (as verse 8 says). There's 2 options. Jesus Himself expressed it like this in **Matthew 12:30** *"The one who is not with Me is against Me; and the one who does not gather with Me scatters."*

I think this idea rubs us a little, because in today's modern day age we are probably more prone to view this concept in terms of a "spectrum." I think we often see this concept in terms of on one end of the spectrum you have those who are really pursuing Jesus, the ones who are really serious- maybe we view these as the pastors, missionaries, the people heavily involved in church, Grandma who has nothing better to do than to read and pray all day long, etc. And then next to that group of people we have those who come to church regularly, read their Bibles at home, pray at night, maybe hang out in a small group, volunteer for stuff from time to time. And then you have another group of people who we consider as generally nice people, they come to church often, but they don't regularly read, pray, or ever talk about their faith. And we move a little further over on the spectrum you get those who sometimes come to church, and they say they believe in Jesus, but no one would ever know that by observing them. And then there's those who don't identify as Christian, or don't identify with any religion, but are nice people, involved in their community in some way. You move a little further and there are the folks who are a little rough around the edges, they're involved in some shady stuff every now and then, but they still show up for work, feed their families, and you've had some good interactions with them as well. Then there's the group of people who can't seem to stay out of trouble, they keep making the wrong life decisions, but they have their reasons- the tough upbringing, the tough things that have happened, so it's understandable why they do the wrong things that they do- they're good folks who just have had some bad breaks. Then there's the category of folks who have made a whole living out of doing wrong- whatever it may be- but they're just human, trying to get by the best way they know how. And finally on the furthest extreme of the spectrum we categorize the people who are undeniably evil- the serial rapists, murderers, the ones who identifying as witches, the ones who proclaim themselves as devil worshippers. And I think what we often do, is see this extreme, furthest side of the spectrum as the ones who are "of the devil" as verse 8 says, or "children of the devil" as verse 10 says.

But that's not how God's word lays it out. It's like genders, there is only a binary option, there are only 2 realities- no more. There are children of God remaining in Jesus practicing righteousness and there are children of the devil, not living in Jesus, not practicing righteousness. There's not a wide spectrum in-between like we probably most often imagine. You are either living for the Kingdom of Heaven, or you are living for this world. (as verses 15-17 state back

in chapter 2) You are either pursuing Jesus, or you are unknowingly pursuing Satan. You are either placing yourself in God's hands, or you are placing yourself in the enemy's hands.

And my spectrum analogy is not meant to define remaining in Jesus in terms of how often you go to church or volunteer at church. That's not the point of the analogy. You could show up to church every time the doors are open, and it just be a tradition while still living a life that is living for the world and not for Jesus. The Pharisees were pretty good at checking all the right boxes and showing up for the right things and Jesus called them a Synagogue of Satan. Only you in your heart know if you are remaining in Jesus or not. Pastor Dave, Pastor Roger, and I are not always the best judge of that- I mean there are signs and indicators that typically give us a pretty good idea of where someone is in their walk with Jesus, but this is something that you have to evaluate between you and God; and prayerfully ask God and yourself the question of "Am I living in such a way that it could be said of me that I am living in, remaining in Jesus?"