

1st JOHN BIBLE STUDY

1 John 1:6-8

Lesson #2

Introduction

Last week we began our study of this general epistle of John to the churches. We noted that it was written against the backdrop of emerging gnosticism, and all of the thoughts and behaviors that this movement spawned. One of the most insidious of the concepts of Gnosticism was the argument that Jesus Christ couldn't have really been a flesh and blood human being, because Gnosticism claimed that all matter had to be evil and only spirit could be good, so Jesus couldn't have possibly been flesh and blood. Maybe He did do all those things we're told, but still, He couldn't have been a real man, He could've only been some kind of illusion. We dealt with this last week as we discussed John's opening words where he says he saw, and heard, and touched the Lord Jesus Christ, and both he himself and the other apostles testify and affirm that Jesus was indeed a flesh and blood tangible man. Because, any arguments to the contrary are to challenge the very words of God Himself, who testified regarding his Son, and the personal cost to Jesus for His sacrifice, and the ultimate validity of His atonement on behalf of humanity.

Now, along this line of thinking, there were probably some, maybe even many, who meant no ill will or offence by accepting this teaching, but simply went along with the popular thinking because to them, as long as this teaching didn't outright deny Jesus Christ, or His work, then what was the harm? They simply hadn't taken the time or effort to think this teaching through to its logical conclusions. It didn't occur to them that the humanity of Jesus was an absolutely essential element of his atonement on behalf of a flesh and blood humanity. To compromise on either his humanity or his divinity is to compromise on the efficacy of his atonement. And this kind of very loose and lazy, even whimsical kind of thinking has characterized the church from its very inception.

And we see this very same thing happening today, but with different issues. We find a great many professing Christians who are perfectly willing to accept Darwinian evolution as a valid possibility. They simply merge it comfortably into the Genesis account and perceive no significant problems. But even a minimal amount of logical consideration makes it perfectly clear that such a concept requires the willing abandonment of the biblical concepts of life and death, and original sin, scriptural inerrancy, human morality and depravity, and divine sovereignty and authority, just to name a few. But this isn't the topic of this lesson, so let's move on to the next point.

Another one of the aspects of Gnosticism was the Greek influenced idea of a kind of higher knowledge. This wasn't meant to be a more thorough knowledge, through study and understanding, but a kind of otherworldly spiritual knowledge, like the Eastern religions that embrace the term "enlightenment." And, while these terms are close to the ideas depicted in scripture, nevertheless there's one major difference, and that difference is the source of this knowledge. To the Christian, it's an understanding that's bestowed upon him by the workings of the Holy Spirit, but to the Gnostic and the pagan religionists, it's a knowledge that he gains through the workings of his own mind. To the one it's source is external, to the other it's source is internal. And John will deal with this concept as he unfolds his epistle. But then there's one more issue that's probably the one John speaks about the most.

Although the word itself isn't said to have been used before the latter part of the 16th century, when Martin Luther first used this expression, antinomianism, to refer to the views of his friend, Johannes Agricola who taught that the moral law of God was in no way binding upon those who are justified by faith alone, so Christians are entirely free from the moral law of God because that's what the blood of Jesus abolished. And it was just such thinking is this that formed the backdrop against which John wrote this general epistle. Understanding these issues makes it much easier to properly interpret the things that John says, and understand just exactly why it is that he said them. As I've said many times, when it comes to reading and interpreting the Scriptures, or any other literature for that matter, context is everything. Now, before we read our verses again this week, I want to remind us of something that I said last week, which is that John wrote this epistle with the express intent that it be absolutely crystal clear, so he speaks very much in absolute terms. He intentionally leaves the readers with no alternative interpretations of what he's saying. So let's continue, the title of this week's lesson is:

Walking in the Light

1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have observed, and have touched with our hands, concerning the Word of life — 2 that life was revealed, and we have seen it and we testify and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us — 3 what we have seen and heard we also declare to you, so that you may have fellowship along with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

5 Now this is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in Him. 6 If we say, "We have fellowship with Him," and walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. 7 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. 8 If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say, "We have not sinned," we make Him a liar, and His word [of life] is not in us. 1 John 1:1-10 (HCSB)

John speaks here about the saints being in fellowship with Jesus Christ and his Father. What does he mean by that term? In what respect can the saints be in fellowship with invisible parties which they've never met? In its noun form fellowship is defined by one popular dictionary as "a community of interest, activity, feeling or experience." Also as "the state of being a fellow or associate." In its verb form its defined as "to join in fellowship, especially with a church." These definitions that I've just read were taken from a popular secular dictionary, and they're not incorrect, but we realize that they don't really capture the essence of the term "fellowship" as it's applied to the Biblical relationship between the Father, the Son, and the children of God. Conspicuously missing from the definition is the idea of some kind of common agreement. Fellowship certainly is relational and emotional in its nature, but that relationship has, as its foundation, a common basis of agreement. Biblical fellowship is very much a relationship between parties who all agree on certain absolute truths. It is this common agreement on, and passionate affection for, truth that constitutes the fellowship.

And this is exactly what John was speaking about in his opening sentences when he said that he and his comrades had been eyewitnesses to the Word of life, and that life was revealed, and they had seen it themselves, and now they were sharing it with all who had an ear to hear it. And it is the belief of this testimony concerning the Word of life, that was revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, that is the basis of truth upon which Christian fellowship rests. While it is possible to have a kind of secular fellowship, based entirely on feelings and emotions and community, it's absolutely not possible to have Biblical fellowship apart from faith, which is a common belief in the truth. But unfortunately, it's very common to see the one mistaken for the other because of their external similarities.

In fact, it's all too common to see churches voluntarily sacrifice Christian fellowship for the sake of maintaining secular fellowship. Secular fellowship is a lot easier to maintain. Just ignore all the issues relating to truth and keep the feelings and emotions of comradery and community. This has become standard operating procedure in very much of evangelical Christianity. But when this becomes the churches' definition of fellowship, then truth, holiness, and obedience to the word will soon depart. It simply cannot be otherwise. Oh they still might have fellowship, and be a very loving group by all appearances, but it won't be the Biblical fellowship that we find in the holy scriptures. Which brings us to the very point of verse six:

Verse 6:

6 If we say, "We have fellowship with Him," and [yet] walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth.

We see here in this verse that having "fellowship with Him" means something more than an emotional attachment, or a sense of comradery and community. This verse says, in no uncertain terms, that being in fellowship with Him has a definite affect on how we think and behave, and furthermore, a failure to demonstrate those effects makes us an outright liar concerning our actually being in fellowship with Him at all. John says, in very plain language, that if we walk in darkness, which means, that if our thinking and behaviors are not in common with those of our Lord, then we're saying one thing but practicing another, which proves us to be liars, and the truth is not even in us. In as plain language as it can be stated, John says that if our behavior is not similar to His (God's) behavior, then His life is not in us, period. The unregenerate, cultural Christians filling the pews are going to scream bloody murder at this, but the word of God stands immovable. And, like we warned in the beginning, John's epistle pulls no punches nor leaves grey areas.

Now there may be some who are inclined to argue that walking in darkness simply means Christians who have not yet come to a mature knowledge of holy Scriptures. That this darkness is only concerning knowledge rather than behaviors. However, this argument completely disintegrates in light of the next two verses, which speak specifically about the confession of sins committed, and the Lord's forgiveness for those sins. Certainly intellectual knowledge, or specifically the lack thereof, is included in the term "walk in darkness" but the primary emphasis is clearly the "walk" which always means the resultant actions and behaviors. To the best of my knowledge the term "walk" is never used to specifically signify intellectual knowledge or understanding itself, but rather always regarding the resulting actions and behaviors that are the manifest effects of such knowledge. Certainly this is the case in these verses that we're studying now. And John uses the converse of this idea in his next sentence so as to make it absolutely clear and beyond debate.

Verse 7:

7 But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, [then] we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Here we see the application of the principle. For those who are familiar with computer programming we have an "if / then" statement here. IF one thing is true THEN something else will happen. IF we ourselves walk in the light, meaning our behaviors are similar to His behaviors, THEN we will be in fellowship with one another, AND the blood of Jesus, God's Son, will cleanse **us** from all sin, just as He is free from all sin. Here we see two things that will result IF we walk in the light as He is in the light.

First, we will have fellowship with one another. Here we have a very clear application of the definition that we discussed earlier, where we said that Biblical fellowship is much more than just an emotional sense of comradery and community, it's a relationship that's based on a powerful bonding agent, which is a common faith and belief in Jesus Christ and all those things that He told us. When we all share this same faith, then we are in fellowship with one another in a way that the world cannot really perceive.

Worldly fellowship rests on a foundation of human feelings and emotions, and there's no denying that these can be very powerful, but at the same time they're also very fragile, because feelings and emotions can change in an instant, and what was fellowship can quickly become intense conflict, and even hatred. I speak this from experience, because I've seen this happen, and been on the receiving end of such an emotional flip from friend to enemy in a matter of minutes. At the utterance of one sentence a friendly and loving church business meeting can turn into a bitter war of words and emotions, and the man who called you "brother" yesterday is screaming for your crucifixion today. If you've been in a church very long then it's almost certain that you've seen this happen, or even been the recipient yourself. I acknowledge that there are probably a few exceptions, but all too few I'm afraid.

But, the fellowship we're discussing in this verse is not the kind that rests on an emotional bonding, but one that issues forth from a deep and heartfelt commonality of belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and is authenticated by a persistent walk, meaning behaviors and attitudes, that are like His behaviors and attitudes. When we consistently think and behave as He himself behaved, THEN we are in common fellowship of that light that Jesus Himself demonstrated. And here we get to the aspect of understanding. When we truly understand who Jesus is, and the magnitude of what He has done on our behalf, and the undescrivable gifts that He has bestowed upon us, then our commonality isn't about our own emotions, it's about His own glory, and the glorious gifts He's promised us. This is Biblical fellowship, and it's very different from secular fellowship at its foundational level, even though it might appear on the surface as being very similar.

When we visit a new church, everyone will be on their best behavior, and go out of their way to be friendly and loving, so it's often impossible to distinguish the secular from the Biblical at initial contact, but time will certainly prove the validity, and when the church is under pressure the difference between the two will become very clear. Now we've discussed the first of two points in this verse concerning fellowship with one another.

The second is the declaration that *the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin*. This verse uses Jesus as the model, and speaks of His walking in the light, meaning both perfect knowledge and perfect behavior. Remember, this verse is an IF/THEN statement.

IF we walk in the light, as He Himself is in the light, THEN the blood of Jesus cleanses **us** from all sin, just as **He** is free from all sin. This verse keeps making a comparison between Jesus and us. Our resultant conformity to His walk initiates us into a fellowship that we're told in verse three: *is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ*. But such a fellowship demands that: *the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin*. God will not have fellowship with that which is unclean. So, a complete and effectual propitiation must be made prior to any fellowship of a divine Being with any human beings.

And irregardless of any personal theological concepts, John says that this only occurs in those who persistently demonstrate a walk that is consistent with Jesus' walk. And in verse six John also said straight up, that any claims to fellowship of this sort by one whose walk isn't consistently like Jesus' walk, is simply an outright lie. If we don't practice the walk, then all we have is talk. The inescapable conclusion to this is that there is an inevitable and indispensable **affect** upon the recipients of genuine saving faith, which **effect** is - a persistent demonstration of the regeneration and transformation of the attitudes, affections, beliefs, and behaviors in all of those who have genuinely received it.

Now, for all those poor souls who are so blind as to perceive this as "works salvation" and argue that any other perspective is simply a distinction without a difference, I simply point out that this is a Cause and Effect situation, and everything that we've discussed is the Effect, not the Cause, of saving faith. Saving faith absolutely and inescapably **causes** some things to happen, and a resultant walk that is consistent with Christ's is one of those **effects**, so says the Apostle John in these verses, and many more to come. God's regeneration of our spirit, through saving faith, is the cause for this new attitude and behaviors, not our own tenacity, or determination, or decision, or strength of will power.

And furthermore, just because we can't **fully** attain to the stature of Christ while in this body, and walk to the full measure of His perfection, doesn't in any way diminish the fact that our walk is very much changed from that of the world, and is ever striving for, and growing in, conformity to His perfection. And this inability to attain absolute perfection of conformity in this age is the reason that John goes on to say in verse 8 that:

Verse 8:

8 If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Not one of His disciples, and by that I mean us who follow Him today as well as those in the past, would ever claim equality with Him in any way, it is our highest aspiration to be in close proximity at best, and it's this kind of conformity for which we strive and hunger in our daily walk. (Rom 8:29; Eph 4:13) And it's this kind of conformity about which John speaks when he says that our walk must be like His or we aren't in genuine fellowship with Him. And while some genuine evidences of conformity are essential to authentic fellowship, nevertheless, that we all fall short of perfect conformity is immediately conceded by this verse that we're examining.

To try to skirt the issue of our walking like He walked, by claiming the impossibility of perfection, is wholly negated by the very existence of these two back to back verses, that first declare our necessity to walk as He walked, and then the additional requirement to confess our sins because we're incapable of **perfectly** doing so. The fact of the matter is, this verse right here is a divine concession that we are sinful and flawed and only the blood of His Son, Jesus can close that gaping wound on our behalf. And what I wanted to point out in the preceding verse, but apparently missed, is that the shed blood of Jesus cleanses us from ALL sin. So that in essence, we are actually perceived by God as being what His Son Jesus is, not what we are. The most important aspect of the atonement isn't how it makes us feel, its how it makes God feel about us. It isn't us who need to be appeased, it's God who must be appeased, and be perfectly 100 percent satisfied with the substitutionary atonement of His Son on our behalf, with absolutely no residual wrath or anger or resentment.

And on this point, it is impossible that God will chose to be anything less than 100 percent pleased and appeased by the enormous and selfless sacrifice of His beloved Son on our behalf. God the Father will never ever so denigrate the work of His beloved Son, and dishonor His accomplishment and sacrifice, by counting it less that absolutely perfect and complete in every way and for evermore. For God the Father to still hold any resentment or wrath toward the redeemed is in essence to tell His Son that His work was less that totally effective. And for this reason, for the sake of Jesus Christ, not for the sake of man, Christ's atonement is forever unquestionable as to its degree of efficacy or its duration of time on behalf of all for whom He died on that cross.

If any for whom He died we're ever lost, then it would be His character, and work, and word, that is impinged upon, and the Father will not let that happen ever, period. So, for the sake of His beloved Son, our sins are 100 percent forgiven, because it honors Jesus Christ, not because it honors men, or even because it's a gracious thing to do. Although it must be remembered that it was God's loving grace, and nothing whatsoever else, which moved Him to ask for such a horrific sacrifice by His beloved Son on behalf of a mankind that He created from the dirt of the ground, but loves with an everlasting love.

Now, so that we don't overlook an aspect of this verse, let's consider John's warning that if we say we have no sin we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. While I don't have a background in that sector, there was, and maybe still is, a group who perceives that a regenerate man or woman can actually live sin free on this earth. A noble thought, and it seems to have some support from Romans 6, verses 16-18, which speak of being freed from our prior slavery to sin and made a slave of righteousness. But, the same Paul who wrote those verses in chapter six, then subsequently went on to write chapter seven, which is a classic description of the regenerate spirit still living within a corrupt flesh body, that subverts our innermost desires and causes frustrating lapses into doing some things that we don't, in or heart's want to do. So, to take a position that perfection is really within our grasp, if we try hard enough, is certainly noble and well intended, but it always proves impossible for a fallen man to grasp onto, and the scriptures refute this concept, though they do in fact demand that as our standard of reference.

We are told not to sin, and then immediately told what to do when we do sin. So why does God tell us not to sin when He knows full well that we're going to do so anyway? Does this mean that He intentionally tells us to do something that He knows that we can't do? This idea seems to shock the living daylights out of many people, and causes them to recoil in what they deem as righteous indignation at a perceived blatant assault on God's righteousness. But the simple, and undeniable truth is, that the whole of scripture is a repeated call to mankind to do what God knows we can't do. So why then does He demand it; because **we** don't know that we can't do it, and it's imperative to God that we learn this first hand, on our own, by trying and failing, over and over again, until we finally get it, until we thoroughly understand and accept what He already knows. We were never designed to get anywhere on our own apart from Him.

Every parent has intentionally asked their children to try to do something that they know their child can't do. We don't do this to be mean or harmful, we do this to be instructive. This isn't some strange and mysterious concept, this is simple parenting 101 folks. And God, as our Parent, has put us here, and given us instructions that we soon learn, by experience, are much more difficult than we thought. So, we throw up our hands and look at Him for help when we find ourselves in over our heads. And that's the whole point, it's precisely at this point of crisis that we're ready to hear and receive instruction. Do we think He does this so He can have an excuse to punish us? I have news for you saints, if that were what He wanted, He wouldn't need any excuses. Do we take lightly the verses that tell us that all things work out for the ultimate good of those who love God? (Rm 8:28) Do we think this is just some kind of encouraging rhetoric? I'm afraid all too often we do, and must confess that I sometimes might be one of them, so we confess our sins, and seek repentance and cleansing for our failures.

Also within this verse, is the likelihood that some of the Gnostic's were teaching the saints that they could freely indulge their fleshly lust to their heart's content and it was not a sin to do so, because it only affected the flesh and not the soul. So John says that to repeatedly and unhesitatingly practice anything that's inconsistent with the behaviors and teachings of Jesus himself is to practice sin, and the truth was not in those who embraced contrary teachings and practices. Furthermore, their claims to a fellowship of common truth with the Father and the Son, while continuing to wantonly practice gross immorality, and claiming that they have no sin, proves that person is a liar, and the Word of life and truth is not even in them at all.

Now some might ask, why do some people seem to be able to abstain from sin more readily than others? This is a complex question and the answer is equally complex. First, there's two groups that present themselves as Christians. There's the wheat and there's the tares, and both claim to be authentic. And among both of these groups there's the apparently successful and the apparently lesser.

Regarding the tares, there's little reason for discussion other than to say that they're acting on emotions and feelings, and personality. Some people have more control of their faculties than others, and are able to present a better face before the public than others, but that's all it is, a front for public display and self appeasement or gratification. So let's not spend any more time with these.

The other group is the genuine Christians. And there are distinct and obvious levels of response that display themselves here also. Some people show an immediate and rapid response to the gospel, and others a slower more measured pace. If we've been around for awhile we've also sometimes seen these two types end up reversing, and the fast starter slows down and the slow starter ends up the faster in the long run. The fact is, we don't really have a reliable indicator of how anyone will finish, or even if they will finish, because so many who once profess Christ, eventually fall completely away as time goes by. But the true and faithful, whether fast or slow starters, will all show the beginning signs of regeneration, and their behaviors will begin a lifelong transformation process into Christlikeness, that won't stop or fizzle out with time.

And there's not only levels of response, but also levels of relationship. Jesus had a small inner group that He shared some things with that He didn't with the others. If that seems unfair to you then you'll just have to reconcile it in your own mind, because it's true and it can't be denied. Nowhere do the scriptures even hint at why Jesus chose those three: Peter, James and John, to be among His inner group, but He did. It is what it is, as the contemporary saying goes, but we aren't told why. Why do we ourselves have some very close friends, and others who are only casual friends?

Nevertheless, the true elect will endure to the end, every time, no exceptions. (Mat 10:22, 24:13; Mk 13:13; Jn 6:39) And their persistent daily behaviors will mimic those of Jesus Christ, because they've been regenerated at the very core of their being, and their behaviors and attitudes have begun a transformation into Christlikeness because that's what they truly desire, not just because they're told they should, even if they don't want to. But it's the "wanting to" that's been changed in the born again heart, and for that reason they will obey Jesus Christ, because they really and truly want to.

To the multitudes of unregenerate church goers this is just pretty words. They've heard them a hundred times before and still can't relate to them. They're immune to the effects, and have grown callous to the truth they convey. So they struggle along trying to live the regenerate life, but secretly hating it all the while, and wishing they were still free to practice all those old things they still love and desire. And they've convinced themselves that everybody else is just like themselves, and if they aren't, then it's just because they haven't figured it out yet, that the whole thing about being changed in the depth of the heart is just a myth, just pretty words to restrain the morals of the members.

Most of these will continue like this right up to the end of their lives, and be absolutely astonished when they're told to depart from Christ's presence, because they've never experienced a change of ownership and enslavement to sin into a new ownership, that is characterized by a heartfelt desire for, and practice of, righteousness and obedience to Christ Jesus. (Mat 7:21-23)

The truly regenerate heart must confess its sins, it cannot resist the agony of denying or concealing them for long. Sin is like an anchor weighing on the soul of the true believer, and getting rid of it is his pressing desire. It hampers fellowship and nullifies worship attempts, and the effect is as that of death to the soul of the born again. We must repent and confess our sins, or we're miserable, and our lives become dismal and joyless and hopeless. Repentance and confession are a sweet release from sin's cruel enslavement of guilt, to the soul of the redeemed, and therefore not burdensome, but beautiful and sweet and desirable.

My dear listener, if these are just pretty words of fiction to your ears, and not the experiential reality of your life, then I adjure you to confess your sin of self deception, and plead to our loving God for the reality of saving faith that makes everything that's been taught in this lesson a reality in your heart. Only He can grant it, you can't acquire it by your own self determination, or your simple decision, and if you'll confess that, and seek it with a true and pure heart, firstly acknowledging Him as your absolute Lord and Master (Rom 10:9-11) then He says He won't turn you away; and these pretty words will become beautiful realities, that will transform your life and change your heart, in spirit and in truth.

You have to know what you want, understand the cost it involves, and ask for it specifically. **True Saving Faith** - that produces repentance of sin and heartfelt obedience to Jesus Christ. (1Pet 1:2)

Conclusion:

In these verses that we've covered in this lesson, the theme is that the true believers will always show evidences of regeneration. John uses the metaphor of walking in the light to symbolize this truth. And Jesus said that every good tree bears good fruit, (Mat 7:17) by which He meant the very same thing, that every genuine believer would show the signs of sanctification and obedience that are characterized by the fruit of the metaphor.

When a worker plows a field, his boss doesn't have to ask him if he did it yet, he only has to look at the field with his own eyes and he can see for himself. Or, when a contractor clears a piece of land with a bulldozer, no one has to ask if the land has been cleared yet, they simply have to look at the land and see. These functions leave observable evidences that are undeniable. And likewise, when the Spirit of God performs the act of regeneration upon the heart of man, there is observable evidence that simply cannot be absent if the work was performed. If the bulldozer operator says he cleared the land, but all the trees and vegetation is still there, then that operator is lying, it's as simple as that. And that's exactly what John has told us in these few verses, that if our "walk" meaning our attitudes and behaviors, aren't in reasonable conformity to that of Jesus, then we're lying, we're not practicing the truth, and we're not in fellowship with Him. The evidence speaks for itself.

Before we close, I want us to understand that what we've been studying isn't just something that kind of popped into John's mind and he wanted to share it with the saints. Everything in this epistle is designed as a response to the encroachment of the Gnostic philosophies that introduced the idea into the church that immoral behaviors weren't necessarily sinful at all. That what the saints did with their flesh and blood bodies didn't really matter, as long as they kept their mind's right with God. John's response is designed so as to expose the gross error of this kind of thinking, and leave no possible question as to the moral and ethical expectations and responsibilities of each and every born again believer of Jesus Christ. And therefore John uses Jesus as the model, and depicts Him as the standard of measure by which all professing believers are to be compared as to the authenticity of their faith. John will permit no vagueness, or gray areas that the saints might fall into, and thus be deceived by Satan's clever tactics, as to their own authentic spiritual condition.

John is writing this epistle for clarification and correction. By using the truth to dispel dangerous and destructive errors and false teachings. Because he doesn't want the saints to be deceived and damaged, nor does he wish to see the good name of Jesus Christ being associated with acts of immorality. And his Holy Spirit inspired teachings are clearly adequate for the task. He's only just begun, but already he's made it very clear that immorality of any kind is not a virtue to be found in the true followers of Christ Jesus, and when we do fall into sin, we are to immediately confess that sin and repent, so that it will be cleansed by the effectual shed blood of Jesus.

Now some may ask, why does John make such a big deal of this, either a person is born again or they aren't, and probably nothing he says is going to make a big difference. The true believers already understand this, and the false will almost certainly refuse to accept it, so what's the point? Well, it's the "almost" that makes the preaching of the word worthwhile. Yes, almost everyone ended up rejecting Jesus, and even called for His crucifixion, but for the sake of that dismal little minority of 120 or so men and women that we see assembled together on the day of Pentecost, and all that would sprout forth out of them later, Jesus was willing to suffer and die for their redemption. For a single lost sheep we will leave the flock and desperately search until we find it.

More than a few preachers, and lay persons, have struggled with the reality that few and far between are the genuine elect. While there's no shortage of people who will answer a contemporary alter call that promises health, wealth, and prosperity, there are very few indeed who will forfeit all they have to follow a Jesus that they've never even seen.

But there are still a “few” who will, because their names are in that book of life, that was written before creation, and only time and the truth of the gospel will bring them to repentance and true saving faith. So, we continue to preach to multitudes who hear us speaking, but don’t really hear us, so that those chosen few will eventually hear the gospel, and the light of truth will ignite in their heart’s, and one more brother or sister will be joyfully added to that number who has received that precious gift of saving faith. Paul told us:

*10 For this reason I endure all things for **the sake of those who are chosen**, so that they also may **obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory**. 2 Tim 2:10 (NASB)*

Therefore,

9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. Gal 6:9-10 (NASB)

To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

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