

## Sunday Morning Message

April 25, 2021

1 John 3:1 - 12

*Positional Righteousness Pushing Us Unto Practical Righteousness*

*Part One – Living Righteously*

Series – 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> John

Text – 1 John 3:1 - 10

Congregational Reading – 1 John 3:1 - 3

### Introduction

This new chapter was introduced back in concluding verses of chapter two:

*"(28) And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. (29) If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." (1 John 2:28-29)*

In chapter three, John will be discussing the righteousness of God, which dwells within each believer in what the Bible refers to as “the new man” (Ephesians 4:24. Colossians 3:10), or the “new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17). The new man or new creature is actually a new nature given to the believer through the indwelling Holy Spirit of God.

This happens when a person is born-again. This is what Jesus was talking about with Nicodemus in John 3:

*"(1) There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: (2) The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. (3) Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (4) Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? (5) Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (6) That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is*

*born of the Spirit is spirit. (7) Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." (John 3:1-7)*

When a person trusts Christ as Saviour and is saved, his spirit, which was dead in trespasses and sins was quickened or given life to by the presence of the Holy Spirit of God. He is now a new creature in Christ, and has a new nature. This new nature is sinless and completely holy and righteous: it is the nature of God. This is what the Bible refers to as imputed righteousness:

*"(21) But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; (22) Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:" (Romans 3:21-22)*

The problem is that your old, Adamic, sinful nature is also still present. Now you have two natures within you that are at war with each other. God, who is perfect and sinless, is drawing you to holiness; while the old man still wants to do what it wants to do (see Romans 7:14 – 25).

As we grow in the Lord, He sanctifies us, or sets us apart, exclusively for Him. He conforms us to the image of Himself, meaning, as time goes by, we become more like Him as less like us. We will still have our unique personalities and mannerisms, but without all of the sin. We will never achieve sinless perfection, while still in this fleshly body, but we will become more like that new nature, the new man that we received when we born into the family of God.

Someday, when we get to Heaven, we will be just like Him, in the sense that we will no longer have the old sinful nature.

**Transition** - This third chapter of 1 John will show us that the new nature within the believer will push him to do two things: live righteously and love righteously. Today, we will examine the first ten verses of this chapter and see how the position of the righteousness nature within us will push us to living righteously.

- I. **A Present Position that Purifies (vs. 1 – 3)**
  - A. **Your Position is Because of God's Love (v. 1a)**

*"(8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)*

*"(16) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)*

*"(13) Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)*

*"(1) And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; (2) Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: (3) Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (4) But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, (5) Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;); (6) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (7) That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (8) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:1-9)*

Notice that He loved you so much that you became a son, not just a servant.

*"(12) But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12-13)*

*"(14) For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (15) For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (16) The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: (17) And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Romans 8:14-17)*

## **B. Your Position is Unknown to the World (v. 1b)**

The world does not get it. They do not understand who we are in Christ, because they do not know Christ.

## **C. Your Position Is Present Today and Will Be Perfected When You See Him (v. 2)**

## **D. Your Present Position Will Purify You (v. 3)**

When a believer comprehends all that he has and is in Christ, it changes him. The purification process is our sanctification, that transformation that takes place gradually as we are conformed to the image of Christ. Justification is the beginning of salvation, and happens in an instant, but sanctification begins at salvation and continues through our life here on earth, but won't be perfect (or complete) until we are in His presence in Heaven.

1. I have been saved (past tense) from the penalty of sin.
2. I am being saved gradually (present tense) from the power of sin.
3. Someday, I will be saved from the presence of sin.

If you have been saved, you are now in that purifying, transforming process, where God is gradually making you more like Him, and less like this world.

## **II. A Past Problem that is Being Purged (vs. 4 – 5)**

Here is verse four, we see one of the definitions of sin – the transgression of the Law. When we break God's Law, we have sinned against Him. There are also other definitions of sin given in the Bible:

*"(4) An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin."  
(Proverbs 21:4)*

*"(9) The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men."  
(Proverbs 24:9)*

*"(23) And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Romans 14:23)*

*"(17) Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."*

(James 4:17)

*"(17) All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death." (1 John 5:17)*

We have a sin problem, but Jesus Christ came to take away our sin. He who was and is sinless, took our sin upon Him.

*"(21) For he hath made him to be sin for us, **who knew no sin**; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)*

*"(21) For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) **Who did no sin**, neither was guile found in his mouth:" (1 Peter 2:21-22)*

*"(15) For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, **yet without sin**." (Hebrews 4:15)*

*"(6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6)*

Now, our sin has been removed positionally. He doesn't see it. He declares us completely righteous. But also, sin is being removed or purged from our lives in a practical way as well. We are new creatures in Christ because we have a new nature living within us, and He is changing us, transforming us into the image of Christ.

### III. A Persistent Pressure that Paints a Picture (vs. 6 – 10)

These are among those "scary verses" that we have already seen and discussed from 1 John. On the surface, it seems to teach that anybody who commits any sin cannot possibly be saved. Some theologians have called this wrong thinking "sinless perfection." In other words, your salvation covers your past sin, but if you have and sins in the present or future, you either have lost your salvation or were never genuinely saved in the first place. However, this is **not** what these verses are teaching.

John has already plainly stated in chapter one of this epistle that believers will still commit sin after they are saved:

*"(8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."* (1 John 1:8-10)

There are two streams of thought regarding these verses:

1. These verses are speaking of habitual, continual sin. In other words, the Bible here is not saying that if a man sins once, he is not saved, but that if a man continuously or habitually sins, he cannot be saved. The problem with this theory is that the Greek provides both words that would clearly teach that idea, and yet they are not present in these verses.
2. The second common thought regarding these verses is that your new nature – the saved part of you - cannot sin. The old, Adamic nature that you were born with – your flesh – can still sin, and desires to do so.

Taking both of these ideas together, we get the idea that when we are born-again, or saved, God implants a new nature within us that immediately begins a transformation process, gradually conforming us to the image of Christ. As we grow in the Lord and mature, we sin less, and reflect more the nature of God instead of the fallen nature of a lost sinner.

Notice in verse 10 – as we are yielded to the Holy Spirit within us, we manifest the fruit of the spirit – love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and mercy. These attributes are the characteristics of God and they prove that we are in fact His children.

The position of the new nature within us proves that we are in fact – children of God and not children of the devil, or unsaved. Remember, Jesus called told the Pharisee that he was of his (the Pharisee's) father – the devil (John 8:44).

## Conclusion

This blunt conclusion that John draws here is no different from what we have been taught by every other New Testament writer:

Paul said:

*"(17) Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)*

James wrote:

*"(14) What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? (15) If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, (16) And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? (17) Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. (18) Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. (19) Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. (20) But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? (21) Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? (22) Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? (23) And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. (24) Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. (25) Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? (26) For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (James 2:14-26)*

The presence of the Holy Spirit – the new nature within the believer is evidence of a genuine salvation. This does not mean that a genuine believer cannot sin or yield at times to his flesh, but he will not be able to stay in that condition. A saved man cannot continue successfully in sin – God will simply not allow it. The Holy Spirit will make that man who tries to do so completely miserable on the inside.

Illustrate – The Prodigal Son – He could not remain in the hog pen.

### 1 John 3:1

**ἴδετε ποταπὴν ἀγάπην δέδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ πατήρ,**

You all observe / what kind or quality / love / he has given / to us / the Father

ἴδετε - verb – 2<sup>nd</sup> Per. Pl.; 2<sup>nd</sup> Aor Act. Imp.; ποταπὴν - adj – Acc., Sing, Fem.; δέδωκεν – 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing.; Perf. Act. Ind.

**ἵνα τέκνα θεοῦ κληθῶμεν.**

in order that / child / of God / to be named or called

τέκνα – Acc. Plu. Neut.; κληθῶμεν – 1<sup>st</sup> Per. Plu.; Aor. Pas.

**διὰ τοῦτο ὁ κόσμος οὐ γινώσκει ἡμᾶς ὅτι οὐκ ἔγνω αὐτόν.**

Because of / this / the world / not / he or it knows / us / because / not / it knew / not / Him

γινώσκει – Pres. Act. Ind. 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing; ἔγνω – 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sin. Aor. Ind. Act.

**Translation - Observe the quality of love the Father has given to us, that we were called the children of God. Because of this the world does not know us, because it did not know him.**

### 1 John 3:2

**Ἀγαπητοί, νῦν τέκνα θεοῦ ἐσμεν,**

Beloved (Voc. Masc. Plu.) / even or now / children (Nom or Acc Pl) / of God / we are

**καὶ οὐπω ἐφανερώθη τί ἐσόμεθα:**

and / not yet / it was revealed / what / we will be

ἐφανερώθη – 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing. Aor. Pas. Ind.; ἐσόμεθα – 1<sup>st</sup> Per. Plu. Fut. Ind.

**οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ἐὰν φανερωθῇ,**

we know / but / that or because / if or when / he or it revealed

οἶδαμεν – Pres. Act. Ind. 1<sup>st</sup> Per. Plu.; φανερωθῇ = Aor. Subj. Pas. 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sin.

**ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα,**

like or resembling (Adj. Nom Plu. Masc.) / in him / we will be

**ὅτι ὁψόμεθα αὐτόν καθὼς ἐστι.**

That or because / we shall see / him / just as / he is

ὁψόμεθα – 1<sup>st</sup> Per. Plu. Fut. Mid. Dep. Ind.

**Translation - Beloved, we are now the children (neuter) of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we will be: but we know that if he is revealed, we will resemble him, because we shall see him just as he is.**

**Exegetical Comments** – “ἐὰν φανερωθῇ” – KJV – when he appears. ἐὰν rarely is translated “when;” mostly “if.” ἐὰν is a conditional particle. According to Thayer’s : “ἐὰν with the subjunctive aorist is used of things which the speaker or writer thinks will certainly take place.” The “if” in my translation would not indicate the possibility that He will not appear, but would indicate the uncertainty of the timing. The King James translators wanted to remove any doubt.

### 1 John 3:3

**καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἔχων τὴν ἐλπίδα ταύτην ἐπ’ αὐτῷ ἀγνίζει ἑαυτόν,**



and / each, every, whole / Rel. Pro. - who that whom / to have / hope / this / in / him / purifies / Ref. Pro. himself

ἔχων – Pres Act. Part. Sing. Masc.; ἀγνίζει – 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing. Pres. Act. Ind. = moral purity

**καθὼς ἐκεῖνος ἀγνός ἐστι.**

Just as / that or he / pure / is

**Translation – And every [man] who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure**

### **1 John 3:4**

**Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν,**

Each or Every / that, who or whom / does or practices / sin

ποιῶν – Pres. Act. Par. Nom. Sing. Masc. – practice, continue doing

**καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ,**

and / without the Law, outside of the Law, in violation of the Law / he does

ἀνομίαν – Noun – Acc. Sing. Fem.; ποιεῖ - 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing Pres. Act. Ind.

**καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία.**

and / sin / is / outside of the Law

**Translation – Anyone who practices sin, does so in violation the Law, for sin is the violation of the Law.**

**Exegetical Comments – “ποιῶν”** has the idea of continuous action, more than merely a singular act.

### **1 John 3:5**

**καὶ οἴδατε ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ἐφανερώθη,**

and / you all know or understand / that or because / that or he / was revealed

οἴδατε – 2<sup>nd</sup> Per. Plu. Pres. Act.; ἐφανερώθη – 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing. Aor. Pas.

**ἵνα τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν ἄρῃ:**

in order that / sins / our / he remove or take away

ἄρῃ - Aor. Act. Sub. 3<sup>rd</sup>. Per. Sing

**καὶ ἁμαρτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστι.**

And / sin / in / him / not / is

**Translation – And you all understand that He was revealed in order that he could remove our sins, and sin is not in Him.**

### **1 John 3:6**

**πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει:**

each or every / Rel. Pro. - who that whom / in / in him / remains or abides / not / he sins

μένων – Pres. Act. Part. Nom. Sing. Masc.; ἁμαρτάνει – Pres. Act. Ind. 3<sup>rd</sup>. Per. Sing

**πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτόν,**

each or every / Rel. Pro. - who that whom / to sin / not / he has seen / him

ἁμαρτάνων - Pres Act. Part. Nom. Sing. Masc.; ἑώρακεν - Perf. Act. Ind. 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing.

**οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν.**

Neither / he has known / him

ἔγνωκεν – Perf. Act. Ind. 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing

**Translation – Everyone who abides in him does not sin: everyone who sins has not seen him, and neither has he known Him.**

**1 John 3:7**

**Τεκνία,**

Little children,

**μηδείς πλανάτω ὑμᾶς:**

no man (Adj. Nom. Sing. Masc.) / deceive / you all

πλανάτω – 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing. Pres. Imp.

**ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην δίκαιός ἐστι,**

that or whom / that does / righteousness (Acc) / righteous / is

ποιῶν = Pres. Act. Ind. Part. Nom. Masc. Sing

**καθὼς ἐκεῖνος δίκαιός ἐστιν:**

just as / that or he / righteous / is

**Translation – Children, Let no man deceive you, he who does righteousness is righteous: just as he (possibly He) is righteous.**

**Exegetical Comment** – the he is righteous is referring to the person who does righteousness. I do not think it is a reference to the Lord (He). I think the idea is that a person who does righteousness is righteousness, and also a righteous person does righteousness.

**1 John 3:8**

**ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἀμαρτίαν ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν,**

that or whom / does or practices / sin / from the devil / is

ποιῶν – Pres. Act. Par. Nom. Sing. Masc. – practice, continue doing

**ὅτι ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς ὁ διάβολος ἀμαρτάνει.**

that or because / from / the beginning (noun – Gen. Sing. Fem. / the devil / sin

ἀμαρτάνει – Pres. Act. Ind. 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing.

**εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ,**

for / this / was revealed or manifested / that or whom / son / of God

ἐφανερώθη – 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing. Aor. Pas. Ind.

**ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου.**

In order that / he may (subjunctive) destroy / the works (Acc. Plu) / the devil

λύσῃ - 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing. Aor. Act. Subj.

**Translation – Whoever practices sin is from the devil because the devil sins from the beginning. For this reason the son of God was revealed, that he may destroy the works of the devil.**

**Exegetical Comments** – destroy is subjunctive. The devil is destroyed through the revelation of the Son of God. The works of the devil are destroyed the more the Son of God is revealed.

### **1 John 3:9**

**Πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ,**

each or every / that or whom / is born spiritually / from God / sin / not / does

γεγεννημένος – Part. Nom. Sing. Masc. Perf. Pass.

**ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει:**

that or because / seed / his / in / him / abides or remains

**καὶ οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν,**

and / not / power / sin

δύναται – Pres. Mid. or Pas. Dep. 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing.

**ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται.**

That or because / from God / is born

γεγέννηται – Perf. Pas. Ind. 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing.

**Translation – Everyone who is born spiritually from God does not sin, because the life giving power (Thayers) remains in him: and has not power to sin because he is born from God.**

**Exegetical Comments** – The new man cannot sin. The life giving power (seed KJV) is the Holy Spirit of God. The flesh or old man can sin, but the new man does not have power to sin.

### **1 John 3:10**

**ἐν τούτῳ φανερά ἐστὶν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου:**

in / this / manifested or revealed or recognized / are / the children / of God / and / the children / of the devil

φανερά - Adj. Nom. Plu. Neut.

**πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ,**

each or every / that or whom / not / does or practices / righteousness / not / is or are / in God

ποιῶν – Pres. Act. Par. Nom. Sing. Masc. – practice, continue doing

καὶ ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ.

And / that or whom / not / he loves / the brother / his

ἀγαπῶν – Pres. Act. Part. Masc. Sing.

**Translation – In this are the children of God and the children of the devil recognized: everyone who does not do righteousness is not of God, also he who does not love his brother.**

**Exegetical Comment** – the word “φανερά” here can have the idea of distinguishing. Something that is completely manifested or revealed can easily be distinguished from something else. The idea here is that the children of God can be distinguished from the children of the devil.

### **1 John 3:11**

**Ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἠκούσατε ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς,**

That or because / this / is / message / that / you all have heard / from / the beginning

ἠκούσατε – 2<sup>nd</sup> Per. Plu. Aor. Act. Ind.

**ἵνα ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους:**

in order that / we should love / one another

ἀγαπῶμεν – 1<sup>st</sup>. Per. Plu. Pres. Act. Subj.

**Translation – Because this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.**

**Exegetical Comments** - The subjective mood is indicated by the “should.”

### **1 John 3:12**

**οὐ καθὼς Κάϊν ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν,**

not / just as / Cain (proper name) / from / evil or wicked (Adj. Gen. Sing. Masc.) / he she or it was

**καὶ ἔσφαξεν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ.**

And / killed, slaughtered, murdered/ the brother / his

ἔσφαξεν – 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing. Aor. Act. Ind.

**καὶ χάριν τίνος ἔσφαξεν (see above) αὐτόν;**

and / for what reason / murdered / him

“χάριν τίνος” – for what reason

ὅτι τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ πονηρὰ ἦν,

that or because / the works / his / wicked / he, she, or it was

τὰ δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ δίκαια.

The [works see above] / but / the brother / his / righteous

Not as Cain who was from the wicked one and murdered his brother. And, why did he murder him; because his works were wicked, his brother’s works were righteous.