

## Walking Victoriously

1 John 2:1-10

May 27-28, 2017

There is some debate as to who wrote this letter since he doesn't specifically tell us. However, there is so much similarity to the Gospel of John that most Bible scholars believe this is none other than John the apostle.

John, along with his brother James, and of course Peter, were the three disciples closest to Jesus and many believe that John was the closest of all. In his Gospel, John refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. In fact, when Jesus was dying on the cross, he asked John to take care of His mother.

He was the disciple sitting closest to Jesus at the Last Supper. When Jesus said that one of them would betray Him, the disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking. Peter therefore whispered to John, "Ask Him who it is."

After the resurrection, when the women came and reported that Jesus was not in the tomb, both Peter and John ran to the tomb and John makes a special point to tell us that he ran faster than Peter. Although when they arrived at the tomb, John only looked in, while Peter immediately entered the tomb.

John spent his later years ministering in Ephesus until he was exiled to the island of Patmos where many believe he wrote this letter as well as the book of

Revelation. At this point in his life he is considered an elder statesman and as the last living apostle who was eyewitness to everything Jesus did and said. He has tremendous authority in the church.

John writes this letter to strengthen them in their walk of faith. False teachers are troubling the church and Paul warns them of their dangers, but he knows that the greatest impact will come when he strengthens their faith and draws them to a closer relationship to the Lord. In fact, drawing near to the Lord and walking in His love is perhaps the greatest theme out of this letter.

These themes are a great follow-up to Welcome Weekend where many made professions of faith and many recommitted their lives to the Lord. God wants us to walk victoriously as we live out our days on this earth and this letter gives us some of the greatest keys to that victory.

## **I. You Have an Advocate with the Father**

- Verse 1 – The reason John writes, he tells us, is that you may not sin. The brothers, James and John, were called the sons of thunder and you get a sense of John’s straightforward ‘son of thunder’ boldness in this letter.
- Frankly, we need to be bold when it comes to the topic of sin. What I mean by that is that we live in a culturally sensitive time where

it's not politically correct to talk about sin. After all, we don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, we don't want anyone to feel badly.

- You know what makes people feel badly? It's when sin messes up their lives and destroys relationships, when they feel ashamed and humiliated and they feel lost and alone; like God no longer loves them.
- John is actually doing us a big favor when he talks so straightforwardly about sin.

A. If you sin, you have an advocate

- The word in the Greek is paraclete, and it literally means, "called alongside to help."
- First, he tells us that if anyone sins, he has an advocate with the Father.

**Illus – If you were in trouble with the law, God forbid, you would be extremely thankful to have a great attorney. Some people think they can represent themselves, but there's an old saying, "Anyone representing himself has a fool for an lawyer." No, you would need someone to stand alongside you in the courtroom and advocate on your behalf. Can you imagine if Jesus were your attorney?**

- That's especially true when it comes to your relationship to God, your Father.

- Verse 2 - He Himself is the propitiation for our sins. In other words, God has mercy, withholding judgment against us because Jesus took that judgment upon Himself.

**Illus - Last week in the pastor's note, I illustrated that very point. Pioneers were traveling west across the Great Plains and at one point saw smoke rising before them across the horizon. Instantly they knew the prairie had caught fire and was racing toward them. They burned the grass behind them and moved the entire company onto the charred blackness of the burnt ashes. As the flames raced toward them, a little girl cried out in terror, "Are you sure we shall not all be burned up?" Her father responded, "The flames cannot reach us here, because we are standing where the fire has already been!"**

- You can imagine Jesus advocating for you before the Father, saying, "His debt has been paid in full, I paid it Myself, Father." Your sin has been forgiven in its entirety because your debt has been paid in full.

B. Now go and sin no more

- John is writing these things so that we may not sin. If you do sin, you have an Advocate with the Father, but that doesn't allow you to sin at will.

- Sin messes up lives, brings shame and humiliation, it destroys relationships, and drives a wedge between you and God.
- God is concerned for us and would very much want to us turn away from those things which are so harmful to us and hurtful to others.

**Illus – I mentioned on Wednesday the story of the woman caught in the very act of adultery. You can imagine her shame, embarrassment and humiliation. Jesus is her advocate before her accusers. He literally saves her life, but in setting her free, He didn't send her back to the same life she came from...**

**John 8:7-8, When they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." And again, He stooped down and wrote on the ground.**

**John 8:10-11, Straightening up, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on sin no more."**

- In many ways, we are all represented by that woman caught in adultery. God is gracious to us and sets us free, but we must be careful not

to use our freedom as an opportunity for the flesh.

**Galatians 5:13, You were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh.**

## **II. Let the Love of God be Perfected in You**

- Verse 5 - Whoever keeps His word, in Him the love of God has truly been perfected; by this we know that we are in Him.
- The love of God is already perfect, but he's telling us to let the love of God be completed and matured in us, to completely take hold of us.
- You've no doubt heard the saying that Christianity is not a religion, it's a relationship.
- Religion is outward conformity to give the appearance a person is living by God's standards, without any real change in the heart.
- In other words, if you want to perfect something, perfect the relationship you have with God and the rest will follow.

## A. Loving God is man's highest point

- Have you ever considered this? At what point is man at his highest? At what point is man at his lowest?
- For the woman caught in the very act of adultery, she was at her lowest. She was ashamed and humiliated and her sin was exposed for all to see.
- But Jesus set her free so she could go from her lowest point and begin to move toward that which is the highest. But what is the highest point? What is the greatest place for men to arise to?
- In Buddhism, it is Nirvana, that state of consciousness where one is free from suffering or sorrow, it is freedom from all desires, but it also is freedom from happiness. There is nothing higher.
- In Hinduism and modern psychology it is self-actualization, or self-realization. It is the fulfillment by oneself of the possibilities of one's character or personality; to become his potentialities.
- In materialism, it is to maintain a path of greater and greater obtaining. There is no highest point because there is always more to obtain.

**Illus - I was teaching a class once and someone asked, “Do Christians meditate like in eastern religions?” “No,” I responded, “in eastern religions they meditate to empty their minds to become one with the universe. Christians meditate by filling their minds with the word of God to become one with the creator of the universe.**

- Someone came to Jesus once and asked, “What is the highest and foremost commandment of all that God has spoken?”

**Matthew 22:37-40, And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”**

- In other words, man is at his highest when he loves God with all his heart and loves his neighbor as himself.

**B. Take hold of His word and you will abide in Him**

- Verse 5 – whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him.
- This is the key to walking victoriously. God sends forth His word and those who take hold



of it and hold it fast are those who are moved by its power.

**Illus - Many years ago I read a book by Monty Roberts called, The Man who Listens to Horses. He understood their language to the point that he could take a wild horse and train him to be ridden in 27 minutes. The horse knew the voice of his master and was transformed by it. In contrast, when my wife was young she was riding a horse that didn't understand her voice and did the opposite.**

- Jesus gave a parable, saying that the word of God is like a farmer sowing wheat or barley that falls on different types of soils...

**Luke 8:15, “The seed that fell on the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.”**

- The reason they hold it fast is because it contains the life of God and that's the very thing they desire.

**Illus - The seed of something contains the very life of the thing it came from.**

- The Word of God is living and active and sent in power because it is the very presence of God and the power of God to transform lives.

**John 1:1, 4, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.**

- People who love the darkness don't come to Jesus because there is no darkness in Him. People come to Christ because they're tired of the mess, the pain, and the shame that comes from walking in the darkness. Those who want life come to Him because He is the life.

C. Walk in the light of His glory

- Verse 10 – the one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.
- He equates light to the presence of God and the life that comes from His presence in your life.

**John 8:12, Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”**

- Light and glory are often equated in Scripture and represent the presence of God, the holiness of God, the favor of God, and the power of God.

- The Shekinah glory was the presence of God manifested in the temple and was visible as the light of God's presence became known to Israel.
- When Moses was on Mount Sinai in the presence of God, there was a visible countenance of light on his face when he came down from the mountain.
- There is actually a glory in the believer that is even greater than the glory that was on Moses. His glory was external and faded away, our glory is in the soul and increases as we draw nearer to the Lord.

**2 Corinthians 3:7-8, If the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?**

- Sometimes people say that it's not working for them, they don't see the transformation they were hoping to see.
- Then draw near to God and he'll draw near to you, His presence changes lives because his glory is His power and His character poured out.

- The one who abides in the light also loves his brother- verse 10.