

(1Jn 2:1~6)

Are you obedient to God? Are you...obedient...to God? I want you to ponder that question as we look at this passage before us this morning, because the subject here concerns the matter of “*obedience to God.*” I can’t tell you how troubled I am over the condition of the church today, and the lack of obedience of many who identify with it. Sure, there may be “big crowds,” but there is very “little commitment.” And sadly, in our day, it’s been accepted as the norm. In our day, whether or not a man is obedient, is irrelevant. In our day, as long as he professes to “*believe in God,*” and has “*walked the aisle,*” and “*been baptized,*” he’s good! As far as submission to Christ, and obedience to God’s will...well, that’s optional!

ARE YOU KIDDING ME? Just think logically about that for a moment... Before a man comes to Christ, he rebels against God, serves his own will, his own desires, his own ambitions, lives for this world and the things of this world... Are you telling me, that he can still do those things, and be saved? Beloved, Christ died on the cross to reconcile rebellious sinners back to God. To say a man can continue to live in “disobedience to God” and still be saved, is a ludicrous thought in my mind. I cannot even begin to rationalize that thought. The very meaning of reconciliation is to bring back together, to restore, to reunite. And when we’re talking about God and man, we’re talking about man being reconciled back to his rightful place before God, humbly bowing before the Lord, and worshiping Him as Lord and serving Him as Lord. That is what defines a man as being “Right with God,” when he is back where he should be, the creature serving the creator. Knowing that, how on earth can anyone say, that a man who is out here still living to his own will, walking in his own ways, living for the here and now, which is walking in rebellion to God’s authority in his life, how on earth can anyone say that man is “*Right with God?*”

Well, according to what John says here in this passage...any man who does not walk in obedience, is not “*Right with God,*” regardless of what he may say. The truth that John makes very clear here is that the proof of whether or not a man truly knows God, and has fellowship with him, is by obedience to Him. If he’s not obedient, then John says...he doesn’t know Him.

Let’s look at this, John begins...¹*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not...*(stop right there). I want you to see this. We need to break down verse one into two parts, because if you don’t, there’s a good chance we’ll miss the whole point John is making here. We start by recognizing that John starts this section with a commandment, “*not to sin*”...That’s what he’s saying there, right? ¹*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not...* “*You are not to sin.*” That might seem like an odd way to start off here, but given what he’s just said in the previous verses leading up to this one, ***about our being sinners,*** you realize he has to say this. Just prior to this, John says, 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.* Six times in four verses, John makes reference to our sin. The point there is clear, John is merely pointing out the fact that we are sinners!

Having said that, given that we are sinners, does that mean that if we sin then, it’s no big deal? God forbid! Just because the message of Christ is a message of grace and mercy, in no way means it’s ok to sin, that sin is no big deal. Nothing could be farther from the truth. There are some in our day who see it that way, perverting the gospel of grace to mean that it doesn’t matter how a man lives, or whether or not he’s obedient to the Lord, just as long as he’s walked the aisle or been baptized, he’s fine.

Well, as we shall see here, nothing could be farther from the truth... True we are sinners, but a man cannot know the Lord, and continue in sin. According to John, it is impossible. As John says here in this passage, he that walks in sin, which is in disobedience to God, simply reveals they don’t know Him as they claim. ⁴*He that says, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

It all comes down to whether or not a man “**Keeps**” His commandments, as to whether or not he truly knows God, John says. If any man continues to “*transgress against God’s commandments,*” it simply reveals that he doesn’t know Him. Biblically, that’s how you define “**Sin,**” the transgression of God’s commandments. (1Jn 3) ⁴*Whosoever commits sin transgresses the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.* And given God gave the law, sin becomes a transgression against God. To suggest that a man can continue to “*transgress against God,*” and he still be right with God, is absurd. According to what John says here, anyone who does merely reveals they don’t know Him as they claim. We’ll look at that closer in a minute, but for now, I want to go back to verse one here. That should help us better understand what John is saying here.

(Vs 1) *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not...* I write unto you that you **no longer walk in transgression against God...** but that you walk in obedience to Him, serving and doing His will in your lives. That’s what John is saying here.

Before we came to Christ, and were reconciled back into fellowship with God, we walked continually in transgression against God. We lived for self, serving our own wills, our own ambitions, doing our own thing. Simply put, we walked in rebellion against God’s authority in our life. But for anyone to come to Christ, they must repent, they must turn from those things, if they are going to follow Him. We must humble ourselves, by lay our wills, our desires, our ambitions down...to pursue His. I mean, doesn’t that only make sense? I can’t live two lives at the same time, right? I can’t live to me, to my will, my desires, etc, and live to Christ’s will and His desires at the same time right? When you understand it, you realize that to do both is impossible! It will be one or the other. You and I will continue to walk in sin, by continuing to transgress against God, by walking in rebellion to God’s will and desires, to live to our own...or...we’ll walk in obedience to God, by denying ourselves, taking up the cross and following Him!

Now, having said that, does that mean we’ll walk in sinless perfection? No, that’s not what John is saying. If that were the case, then he wouldn’t have added the second part of this verse here. *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not... BUT...John says...* if you do...*if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*

Let’s make sure we understand this. The first part, is a call to strive with all that is within us, **not to sin...** That ought to be the mindset of every true believer. BUT...John says, if you do...all is not lost... *we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:* That word “*advocate*” speaks of an “*intercessor,*” speaking of someone who acts on our behalf. It also carries the meaning of “*consoler, comforter.*” When understood, there’s a beautiful picture here. In our “*Walk with God,*” if we do stumble, all is not lost, for we have Christ, the “*righteous one,*” who will help us up, and not just help us up, but put us back in “*right standing with God.*” That is a most beautiful picture of the role of Christ in our walk with God! We have a helper, who walks with us, to help us through this journey! Praise the Lord...

In the very next verse, John reminds us of the cost of sin, and what Christ did to atone for our sins... ²*And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* “*He is the propitiation for our sins*” John says. That word speaks of atonement, which carries the meaning of covering. The reference here is to how His blood, covers our sin. No don’t miss what John is saying here... I want you to notice, that he associates Christ’s death on the cross, the shedding of His blood for our sin, with this call for our obedience. In other words, as we walk, our Lord and what He did on the cross, is to be the motivator for our obedience. Knowing the price for sin, knowing what Christ endured for our sin...¹*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not...knowing that the redemption of our sin, was the precious blood of Christ.*

I love the last part of what John says there, ²*And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* John says not only is His blood the propitiation for our sins, those of us who are the church, but His blood covers the sins of the whole world! Think about that, John says that the blood Jesus shed on that cross, made atonement for every sin, and every sinner. Is John saying that

everyone in the world is saved. No, not at all. The appropriation of the His atonement is only imparted to those who walk in faith. Unbelievers will be held accountable for their sins, the bible is very clear about this. John is merely saying that the sacrificial offering of Christ, is enough to cleanse the whole world! It speaks to the preciousness and power of His blood...it's enough to cleanse the whole world of sin!

Story... A young preacher was preaching one night on the atoning blood of Christ, and how His blood cleanses us of our sin, and at the end of the message, a young man stood up and said, are you trying to tell me that the offering up of this one man's blood, is sufficient to cleanse the sins of all men? Is that what you are trying to tell me? And the preacher replied, yes sir it is. The young man chuckled, and said, do you really expect us to believe that? That the death of this one man, can cleanse the sins of all of mankind? You've got to be kidding? Do you really expect us to believe that one man could do this? The preacher paused for a moment, looked at the young man, and said, first of all, thank you for asking that question. And again, the answer is yes, He can. For you see, here's what you don't understand sir. You could take all the gold, all the silver, all the diamonds, and all the other precious metals and stones of this world...and take with that all the monetary wealth of this world, and all those considered of high notoriety and prestige of this world, along with all their achievements and accomplishments, and their wealth... You could take all of that, and place it on one side of a scale, and HE sir, would outweigh them all! He is of more value and more worth than all of that combined!

Beloved, we are redeemed by the priceless, precious blood of Christ...¹*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*²*And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

(Vs 3~4) John goes on here in the following verses, continuing to emphasize the matter of *obedience*...³*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*⁴*He that says, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

Now here's where the passage gets even more interesting. John continues his emphasis on obedience, and takes it to the next level. Here John declares that "*Obedience to His commandments*" is THE "**Mark or Evidence**" of true, genuine fellowship with God! Now I want to go slow here, because I want to make sure that we fully understand what John is actually saying here. Let's look at again...³*And hereby we do know that we know him*"... "*By THIS,*" John says, "*this is what validates our claims, or this is what bears witness* (you might say)...*that we know Him*"....."*...if we keep his commandments.*" That's what that is saying, right? Then that is contrasted with the other side of that truth.⁴*He that says, I know him...and keeps not his commandments*.....well John says, this bears witness that this man...*is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

It is in these two statements here, that we glean a better understanding of what John meant there in the opening statements of his letter, concerning the analogy of "*light and darkness.*" Simply put, those who walk in obedience to His commandments, walk in the light. Whereas those who don't walk in obedience to His commandments, walk in darkness.

John declares it all comes down to *obedience*... Now those are some pretty bold claims, don't you think? I mean that's pretty cut and dry. John isn't like most in our day, who try to explain away with all kinds of reasons or excuses, as to why a "*professing believer*" isn't obedient to God, by serving Him, by following His will... John simply says, if he's not obedient, then it reveals his claims of knowing God are not true. "**He that saith, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.**"

Now, if what John is saying here is true, (and it is)...then that makes "*Obedience to God*" a very serious matter! Wouldn't you agree? You might say, "*It's a matter of life and death.*" Because according to what he just said, a profession of faith, without obedience, is worthless.

Now, some may struggle with what John says here, suggesting that he is declaring a "*works based*" salvation, saying that "*our deeds, our works*" determine whether or not we are truly saved. But to struggle with what John is saying here, simply reveals a misunderstanding of the gospel of grace. Again, many

have the notion that sin is no big deal, that obedience to God is no big deal. In their mind, “*How you live*” really makes no difference, as long as you quote “*believe*.” Well, If that is true with you, you need you to listen closely to me, because it does matter how you live. John couldn’t make it any clearer, if a man’s not obedient, John says it reveals he doesn’t know God as he claims.

By declaring that “*Obedience*” is the “**Mark**” of someone truly knowing God, John is basically sharing the same truth James did in his letter. True, no one will be justified before God by his/her “*Works in the Law*”...**BUT**...whether or not we are just before God, WILL BE determined by our “*Works of Faith*.”

Remember what James said, “¹⁴*What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? James says, “**If a man professes to believe in God...ain’t that enough? Isn’t the fact that he/she “believes”...isn’t that enough to save him?***

James answers that question, with an analogy... ¹⁵*If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶And 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?*

Explain Analogy of “Empty Words” ... (To SAY and not DO...is Worthless/Vain/Empty)

The moral of that story is ... ¹⁷*The same is true with faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.* Simple point...Faith has Works...and without them, it’s not genuine faith! “*Faith without works is dead.*” When it comes time for man to be judged before God, He is not going to judge us on our “Profession” of faith in Him, but rather, the proof of our faith, by **what we did, the way we lived.**

Jesus put it this way in Matthew...Mt 16...Jesus said, ²⁷*For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*

Jesus made that statement immediately following his call for men to deny themselves, take up the cross and follow Him. Which requires a man to turn from living to this world any more, to follow Him. Jesus asked His listeners what it would profit them if they gained the whole world? When Jesus states there that “*He shall reward every man according to his works,*” He’s referring to the fact that men will be judged as to whether they truly lived a life of faith or not. Whether they turned from living to this world, and the things of this world...to follow Him! “*Our lives*” will reveal what we are living too...they are “*Works*” that we will be judged on! Not some “*superficial profession*” of faith in God!

And when you understand what John is saying here, you realize it’s basically the same thing. When you fully understand what John is saying, you realize his point is very simple. I need you to listen very closely to me, because what John is saying here in these few verses can be summed up in one statement.

John can be emphatic that “*obedience*” is the proof that a man truly knows God because, “*obedience to God*” **reveals a CHANGED HEART!**

Simple truth is...if they are not obedient, then it simply reveals their hearts not been changed. Whereas, the one who walks in obedience to God, reveals that his hearts been changed. And understood, John’s statement here has not so much to do with the individual per say, but rather speaks more about the work of God in that individuals life! Salvation is a “*God thing*”. Through the message of the cross, God turns the hearts of sinners, back to Himself. It is merely to say that any sinner, who encounters the grace of God, in the person of Jesus Christ, leaves a different person. His heart has been turned away from this world, away from the things of this world, away from rebellion against God’s authority in his life...back to God! You could say that “*obedience*” is the evidence of the “*New Birth*”.

Now in closing, I want to look at the final statements John makes here, which will bring all this together.

(Vs 3~6)...³*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴He that says, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But whoso keeps his*

word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. ⁶*He that says he abides in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

Now notice, first John declares that a man's obedience is what validates his claims of knowing God. Then, John immediately declares how true obedience to God reveals itself, what it looks like. ⁵*But whoso keeps his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

Here John declares for us, who it is that KEEPS His commandments...(true obedience.) Those who are obedient to God, are MARKED by love! Listen, it's important we understand this. True Obedience is not just "Right actions" by one's obedience to God's Law, but rather, it's about a changed heart, "Right heart" a heart that LOVES... The Pharisees and Scribes claimed to be obedient to God, by their obedience to His law. And when you study them, you realize, they were very obedient to His laws. They were meticulous right down to every jot, every tittle. But the problem was, it wasn't true obedience. Manifested by the fact they didn't love, with the love of God. Oh outwardly, they appeared to be these righteous men, again, the result of their obedience to God's law. But the truth was, they were not obedient. True obedience to God results in an ever, increasing growing in true godliness, by growing in His LOVE! ⁵*But whoso keeps his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.* ⁶*He that saith he abides in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.* John says, those who keep His commandments are continually growing in the GRACE of God. They see sinners differently, they view sin differently, and as a result, rather than judge and condemn those in sin, they lay down their life to reaching them. (Which is what John speaks to in the verses following these, verses 7~11. That is for tonight.