

Sin, the Enemy of Assurance

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[0 : 00] I want you to take your Bibles this morning and open them to John, the Apostle John's first epistle or letter.

The Apostle John, I really believe, clearly, is writing to a group of churches. It's not addressed to any particular church or any particular person.

So he's writing to a group of churches in Asia Minor. Today that would be Turkey, modern Turkey. Kind of amazing when you think about it.

All the churches that have been planted, some of them by the Apostle Paul and others, in that part of the world that today is almost 100% Muslim.

John is living in Ephesus and also in Asia Minor and writing to the churches there in that region of the world. And because of the region in which these churches were located, primarily Gentile world, there were Jews settled there, scattered around that part of the world.

[1 : 32] Still he was writing to a Gentile audience primarily, I think. Gentile believers. So he's writing to believers. It's important for us to understand that as we look at what John writes in the letter.

It's always important to know the audience, the original readers. And they were believers. And they were, again, primarily Gentiles.

And to go a step further, as we were talking about last time, a couple of weeks ago, John was writing to churches who were being greatly influenced by false teachers.

False teachers. As was the case in many of the churches, the early churches, as is the case in our day. And I guess in between, for the last couple of thousand years, since the birth of the church, there have been false teachers.

So being attacked from within, even those who professed to be members of the church, professed to be believers, they were teaching false doctrine.

[2 : 39] And among other things, their false teachings were an assault upon the believers' assurance of salvation. This was the issue that John was addressing.

True believers who were wavering, wobbling, so to speak, in their faith, and were losing assurance, didn't have assurance of their salvation, a kind of a no-so salvation.

That's why when you get to the end of the book, end of the letter, John basically states his overall purpose for writing. In chapter 5, verse 13, in 1 John, these things I have written to you, who believe in the name of the Son of God, so writing to believers, I write these things to you.

Why? That you may know. That you may know that you have eternal life. And so the issue is assurance. And so John's primary purpose, though we can find some other purpose statements in the letter, but they all connect under that primary purpose, to give them full assurance, full assurance of their salvation, or a no-so salvation, that they would have a no-so salvation.

And that's what every believer needs. That's what you need. What I need. Full assurance of our salvation. And this is the answer to what so many people are looking for.

[4 : 05] What real life is. What life in Christ really is all about. And it is a confidence, an assurance of our salvation.

Because John is teaching us in this letter that real life is intimate fellowship with, as he said, the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

Intimate fellowship with him. And an intimate fellowship that produces in us an assurance.

That's what we need. An assurance of our salvation in Jesus Christ. And it is an assurance that results in a joy. So these issues kind of gradually move to these other issues from intimacy and our fellowship with God and in Jesus Christ that produces in us an assurance, a kind of no-so salvation, a confidence, not in ourselves, but in the Lord and in his salvation that he's promised us through Jesus Christ.

And it is that assurance that leads to joy. Ever-increasing amounts of joy or levels of joy in the life of the believer that one day will be complete.

[5 : 29] Will be full. Full joy. And this is something that John mentions in verse 4 of this chapter. Alright, so this is his purpose. Full assurance of our salvation.

And so in our passage for this morning, John identifies, I believe, the chief enemy of all that. The chief enemy of our fellowship with God and therefore the enemy of our assurance and of our joy in the Lord here in this life.

And that enemy is identified in our text by John's repetitious use of a very familiar, familiar to all of us, three-letter word. And so let's read the passage to find out what that word is or what that enemy is.

So if you'll look there at John, 1 John, 1st epistle of John, chapter 1 starting with verse 5. And I'm going to read all the way through to verse 2 of chapter 2, though we're going to take a couple of Sundays to really unpack all of the truth in this passage.

Starting with verse 5, this is the message which we have heard from him, him capital H, that's heard from God, from the Lord, and declared to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

[6 : 50] If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son cleanses us from all sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us. My little children, these things I write to you so that you may not sin.

And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous, and he himself is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.

All right? Now, obviously, the often repeated word is what? Sin. You probably guessed that.

Anytime you're talking about the Bible and talking about the teachings of the Bible and you mention a three-letter word, you know exactly what it is.

[8 : 06] It's sin. Sin, you see, is the problem. The word appears actually eight times in as many verses. And in addition to that, it appears, I think, two times the concept of sin appears metaphorically in the word darkness.

darkness. So, clearly, the subject is sin and clearly the enemy of our fellowship with God and therefore the enemy of our assurance in our salvation and the consequent joy that we experience, the enemy is sin.

S-I-N sin. It's always sin. Sin is the problem. And we need to know that if we don't already know that. And I don't think any of us are fully convinced that sin is the problem.

We need to know that and we also need to deal with that. And so, John addresses this issue in our passage. And that's why, again, I think John concludes this segment of his letter with this purpose statement there in chapter 2.

These things I write to you. What? So that you may not sin. So that you may not sin. Sin in an ongoing pattern of life. All right, so we can divide, I think, what John says about this into two parts.

[9 : 29] And we'll look at the first part this morning and the second part next Sunday morning, Lord willing. Here are the two parts to this passage. First of all, the reality of sin we must not deny.

That's number one. That's what we'll focus on this morning. The reality, I might even add the word full reality of sin that we must not deny. We must not deny.

And then second, and we'll look at this next Sunday, the remedy for sin. The remedy for sin we must not deny. The remedy for sin we must not deny.

So let's look at the first one this morning, the reality of sin. We must not deny. I want you to think about this. If you want to teach someone about sin, if you want to teach someone about the reality of sin, the full reality of sin, the sinfulness of sin, where would you begin?

Well, where does John begin? He begins with God. And that's the place we ought to begin. In order for us to fully understand sin, we need to understand who God is.

[10 : 41] And so John then begins there. And so the idea is to fully comprehend, to grasp the full reality of sin, we must first of all see the glorious character of God.

And in one little short sentence, John gives us that, reveals that to us. It was revealed to him, the glorious character of God. That's where John begins in his subject on sin, in dealing with the full

reality of sin.

Verse 5, he says, this is the message which we have heard from him and declare to you. So let me stop right there a minute and say that this was no speculation on John's part.

He's not just kind of putting two and two together coming up with this. This is not some conclusion, some standard conclusion that John and all the other apostles simply came up on their own.

This is something that was divinely revealed to them. This is a truth that's divinely revealed. And what was the truth revealed to the apostles? Well, John says that God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

[12:00] This is talking about the glorious character of God. In God, or that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. Now, what does that mean?

You say, well, it's obvious, isn't it? Well, is it? What's John talking about here when he says that God is light, uses the word light, and in him there is no darkness.

There is the opposite of light. What is he talking about? Well, light and dark are obviously metaphors. All right, he's using these words as metaphors to highlight or to convey a divine truth.

Light and darkness. John loved to use those two metaphors. In fact, when you read through the gospel of John, you'll find that quite often that John brings up the word light, uses the word light and darkness and day and night and it's rather interesting if you were to do a study through the gospel of John and find where John uses those metaphors to convey a divine truth.

And he also uses it here in his first letter. So there are metaphors but then the question comes back, what is his meaning? Light and darkness.

[13:17] Well, some would say that here John means for light to represent or refer to truth. That light is truth and so then obviously what?

Darkness is error. truth and error, light and darkness and so the idea being that God is absolute truth and in him is no lie, no error, no error exists in him and that is certainly true, isn't it?

I mean, you can't deny that about the nature and character of God. He is truth. In fact, Jesus said, I am the truth, truth personified.

So there's no denying that but is that what John means here? Some others would say that light here refers to life in the sense of eternal life, spiritual life and so then obviously darkness would be a reference to death.

So light is life and darkness is death or the absence of eternal life, lostness and that is certainly true. I mean, that could be true, couldn't it?

[14:30] I mean, God is the source of eternal life, right? And apart from him there is no life, right? Now, who could deny that?

It certainly is a concept, a truth that is taught in scripture. Absolutely. A third possibility is that light in this passage is a reference to holiness.

holiness. The holiness of God or to put it another way, the absolute moral perfection of God.

And so then, on the other hand, darkness, the opposite of that, darkness, would refer to sinfulness, wickedness, the absence of moral perfection.

So, you bring that together, God is absolutely holy. In every possible way, he's holy. But certainly, in the sense of his moral perfection.

[15:37] and no sin exists in him. No sin whatsoever. No unrighteousness. No iniquity.

No moral imperfection to any degree exists in God and that is certainly true. Absolutely. Now, which is it?

It can't be all three. I mean, one of the primary rules of biblical interpretation is that the scripture means one thing and it meant what the means, what the author intended it to mean.

So, what did John mean at this time? I mean, you can certainly see that all three are valid. Valid in terms of their relationship to the character and nature of God.

I mean, God is truth and God is life and God is holy. All three of those apply to God, certainly. And so, we can see that all three in terms of the character of God, nature of God, all three are true.

[16:39] But they don't, John didn't mean three things. He meant one thing. And so, what did he mean? Well, I think based upon the context, which is, again, what?

Sin. Sin. And based upon the context, I believe that the primary meaning here is the holiness of God. the absolute moral perfection of God.

This is where John begins. He's holy. You see his impeccable logic here. The reality of our sinfulness, the full reality of our sinfulness, your sinfulness, my sinfulness, it can only be fully

understood when seen in the light of God's absolute moral perfection.

And to see it in any other light is to minimize the full reality of sin. To see it, we must see it in the light of God's absolute holiness.

I mean, just ask Isaiah about that. I think Isaiah would agree with us. Isaiah chapter 6, that very famous passage, Isaiah went into the temple, remember? And it says, he said, he recorded that he saw the Lord high and lifted up and he heard the angel say, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.

[18:08] And how did Isaiah respond to that? Oh, woe is me. And you and I would be no different. Came into the very presence of the holy, thrice holy God.

He said, woe is me, I am undone. That's the word used in the King James and New King James. It means I'm destroyed. I'm destroyed.

Why? Because I am a man of unclean lips, he said. It was just another way of saying I am sinful all the way through. I'm a man of unclean lips and my eyes, but my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

Paul spoke of God's holiness in 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 15. He said, he who is the blessed and only potentate, the high King, the King of kings and Lord of lords, Paul said, who alone has immortality.

And then he says this, dwelling in unapproachable light. He's speaking of his holiness. It's unapproachable. Unapproachable light.

[19:21] Whom no man has seen or can see to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen. This is what Paul wrote to Timothy of the holiness of God.

So this is where John begins in his discussion of sin, the glorious character of God. He begins with God's holiness. His holiness. And that's where we need to begin.

And isn't it interesting, I think, and perhaps you know this, but you know the church growth experts of our day, they're saying that the message, God is holy, just won't work.

Won't work today. Just not popular. And they say that if you want to draw large crowds and you want to grow huge churches, then the message, make your message, God is love.

God is love. That's what people want to hear. Our message is God is love. But his overarching nature and character is his holiness, his absolute holiness.

[20:29] And we need to preach that. We need to teach that. We need to see our world in light of that. We need to see, more importantly, see ourselves, who we are, in light of God's holiness.

holiness. That's what the church marketers today are doing. They're really having us focus away from ministry of the word to marketing. Pastors today are to be marketers.

We're trying to reach a religious consumer. And so the church is consumer-driven rather than truth-driven.

But have people come face-to-face with the living and holy God? Have they then in turn come face-to-face with their own sinfulness before him and absolute and utter dependence upon him? So John starts with the glorious character of God. In his dealing with the reality of sin, we start with God and who God is.

[21:40] And then second, he moves to the erroneous claims of man. And these were claims made back in John's day by the false teachers that had infiltrated the churches there in Asia Minor and really not confined just to that region.

False teachers. This is what he's addressing their claims concerning sin. But really, these claims that they were making then we can still see today in various forms, various degrees.

So we need to understand that. So again, the churches to which John was writing, they were under the attack of Satan. And his attack was being waged through the false teachers coming from within the false teachers inside the church.

And these false teachers were causing the true believers to become, really we could say, wobbly in their faith. Kind of uncertain in their faith. Uncertain not only in what they were believing, had been originally taught and believed in, but also wobbly in their own confidence and assurance of their salvation.

That's what false doctrine does to believers. So, not only were they beginning to question the incarnation of Christ, that's a big topic that John deals with in this letter, and we'll get back to that several times as we study through the letter.

[23 : 11] But they were also, the believers there, were beginning to question the reality and the seriousness of sin.

They were becoming soft on sin. And a believer can do that. And so, consequently, this was robbing them of their fellowship with God, because it always does, because sin is the enemy of our fellowship, and we don't see sin correctly and deal with sin correctly, then it breaks off that vital fellowship we have, not our relationship, but our fellowship with God.

And so, it was robbing them of that, and therefore, it was robbing them of their assurance of salvation, their no-so salvation.

That's amazing how John deals with this. Because John, first of all, he exposes, directly exposes and rebukes the false teachers and their teachings, and along with highlighting and rebuking their teaching, John then offers the true believers the truth about sin.

The truth about sin. And so, this message, this is a message of rebuke to the false teacher, and at the same time, a message of hope and restoration to the true believers in the church.

[24 : 34] Not to restore their salvation. You need to understand that. They hadn't lost their salvation because they started to believe and were beginning to waver in their beliefs concerning the subjects that the false teachers were teaching.

They weren't losing their salvation. So, he's not restoring them to true faith. He is restoring them to full assurance of their faith. And the basis of it.

And so, the believers, I guess we could say they were becoming weebles. How many of you ever remember the commercials back in the 70s?

Now, you have to be born sometime before the 70s to remember this. Do you remember the little jingle? Weebles wobble, but they don't fall down. Okay. And believers will never completely fall down because of the grace of God.

Your salvation is secure in Christ. But you can wobble. And we often do wobble. And they were wobbling in their faith because of the false teaching that infiltrated the church.

[25 : 40] They were beginning to question things, beginning to waver on some things, beginning to doubt some things. And among those things, even their own salvation, what they had believed originally. They were wobbling that they hadn't fallen down.

And so John is writing to do what? To bring them stability. To bring them strength. So John rebukes the false teachers, and he does so through a series of, well, grammatically they're called conditional clauses.

Three conditional clauses. Or, if we say clauses. clauses. And there are three of them.

Verse 6, verse 8, and then again in verse 10. If we say thus and such about sin. All right, so each conditional clause identifies what the false teachers were teaching concerning sin.

The reality of sin. All right, so let's look at these three. Number one, what they were teaching ignores the significance of sin.

[26 : 50] I mean, that's just very basic. Basic of their teaching. I mean, serious, but each one builds in seriousness.

And here's where they began. They ignored the significance of sin. Verse 6 says, if we say that we have fellowship with him, that is with the Lord, and walk in darkness.

So if we say we have fellowship with him at the same time, we're walking in darkness, what does John say? We lie. We lie, and that's serious.

You're never more like the devil than when you're lying. We lie, and do not practice the truth. All right, so this is what the false teachers were saying. They were saying, listen, listen, folks, here in the church, sin is not a problem.

Sin has nothing to do whatsoever with our relationship and fellowship with God. That's basically what they were saying. We have fellowship with God, walk in darkness, he said, and yet you're walking in darkness.

[28 : 01] Sin is not a problem. I mentioned this a couple of weeks ago, but these false teachers were part of the kind of the early developments of what would later be called Gnosticism. Some of you have heard that term.

Gnosticism, and it really represents a kind of wide range of heretical beliefs, non-biblical beliefs. But this was kind of the early stages of Gnosticism before it became kind of a full-blown problem.

And it was a problem. But we can say this at this point in the evolution of Gnosticism that their foundational belief was that everything in the material world is evil.

That's basically what they believed. Of course, that foundational belief would lead to a number of other very problematic things concerning false doctrine. So their foundational belief is that all the material world, all physical matter, is evil, it's wicked, and only that which is part of the spiritual is good.

And the physical and the spiritual, they're not connected to one another. That's just about as simplified as you can make it. Their view, the Gnostic view of physical as opposed to the spiritual. [29 : 19] They're really not connected in any way. All right, so with that foundational belief that all physical matter is evil, then Christ could not have been a real flesh and blood human being.

It's not possible because flesh and blood is wicked. And Christ certainly could not be wicked. You see their reasoning, their rationale there. And so either he appeared to be human, remember I covered this a couple weeks ago, either just simply visually appeared to be human, which is called extreme docetism, that's the terminology for that heretical view.

He either appeared to be human or the spirit of Christ simply came into the man Jesus at his baptism and then departed just before his crucifixion.

That is technically called Serentian docetism, propagated by a man by the name of Serentius, who was a contemporary of John, Apostle John by the way.

So this is what they were teaching, this is what they believed because all of it on that foundational belief that all physical matter is evil. It's wicked. So Christ could not have come in the flesh.

[30 : 35] Not possible. But we have to take that a step further and they certainly did and this is where it intersects with what John was dealing with here in the passage. Because our own bodies are also physical, flesh and blood, then our bodies are evil.

Right? Because all physical matter is evil. Can't be anything else but evil. All physical matter is evil. And since only the spirit matters, because only the spirit is good, and there's no connection between the spirit and the physical, then it doesn't matter what you do with your physical bodies. You see the logic, I mean it's ridiculous, but you see their logic. So sin all you want to. Hey, good news, huh?

Body's wicked anyway, so whatever you do in the flesh doesn't matter. Only the spirit counts. So I can have fellowship with God in my spirit, but the flesh continues to be evil, so it doesn't matter what you do with the body.

It has no significance at all in our relationship with Christ, our fellowship with Christ. And John says very dogmatically, if you believe any version of that, you're a liar.

[32 : 06] That's what he said. Pretty blunt. If you believe that, you're a liar. You're a liar. And what chiefly are you lying about?

Well, you're lying about your fellowship with God. It's a lie. It's not true. Because you cannot walk, this is what John says, you cannot walk in darkness.

What does that mean? That is, you can't live in ongoing sinfulness and have fellowship with God. Claim to have fellowship with God. It can't be true. It's a supreme contradiction. To profess one thing and then to live in absolute contradiction to it is to lie.

It's to lie and, as John says, not practice the truth. That is the truth of God's Word that speaks very emphatically and very explicitly about sin and the reality of sin and the implications of sin in your life in relation to fellowship or any kind of relationship with God.

So, they ignored the significance of sin and people are doing that today as well. What else?

[33 : 30] Well, the false teachers were teaching, number two, what they were teaching rejects the existence of sin or we could say maybe the nature of sin, a sin nature, the very existence of it.

And this is what they basically are claiming in verse 8. If we say that we have no sin, no sin, that is no sin in us, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

And this is just basically saying I am not a sinner. That is, a sinner is not what I am. That's not who I am. That's not my nature. It doesn't exist in my nature.

It doesn't exist in me. I'm not a sinner by nature. And there are those, were those in John's day and certainly in our day that were teaching a level of spirituality where sin no longer exists in our nature. A teaching in our day. A kind of sinless perfection. Some use the term an entire sanctification. An entire sanctification, basically glorification that can happen this side of heaven.

[34 : 57] a sinless perfection. Or maybe to put it in these terms a gradual spiritual maturity that so fills the heart with love for God that sin effectively no longer exists in you.

I don't want to offend anybody but John Wesley taught that. Entire sanctification. Even though Wesley admitted that he had never ever reached that point but he taught that it was possible. A sinless perfection. It is basically to say I have no sin. I have no sin. But you know for the believer the opposite is usually the case or should be the case.

In fact some new believers can even become discouraged at some point after a while because of their new kind of sensitivity to their own sinfulness.

They might even start thinking you know I'm a bigger sinner now than I was before I was saved. You feel that way? And that's normal.

[36 : 12] it's a healthy thing contrary to what is being taught by many in our day and in churches like ours.

The more you walk in the light this is why it's so important that we understand sin first of all through the lens of the holiness of God.

The absolute moral perfection of God. Because the more we walk in the light of God's character and nature and holiness the greater is our sensitivity towards sin.

David Jackman is an Anglican pastor in England. He put it this way. He said one of God's projects in the life of every growing Christian is to peel back more and more layers of our hidden depravity and sinfulness so that we start to see ourselves as we really are in God's sight.

And this project has the glorious end purpose in heaven that we should become clean deep down.

[37 : 28] This is the process that we are going through as believers. We become more and more sensitive to our own sinfulness. And so in our eyes and from what we observe we really have become bigger sinners in our eyes and in our understanding than we were before we were saved.

We didn't see sin before. Not in the way that we do through sanctified eyes as we look at our sin in light of the glorious character and holiness of God.

So we're looking at how John deals with sin. sin. The enemy. The enemy of our assurance. First the reality of sin we must not deny.

This is what we need to come to grips with here. The reality of the full reality of sin we must not deny. And to highlight that reality of sin John begins again with the holiness of God.

The glorious character of God. God is light and in him is no darkness at all. And then from there John deals with the erroneous claims of man. He ignores the significance of sin in relation to our fellowship with God.

[38 : 38] He rejects the existence of sin that is in the nature. I'm not a sinner. And then third and finally he denies the occurrence of sin.

This really is the worst of all of them. Verse 10 says if we say that we have not sinned we make him a liar and his word is not in us.

You see up to this point we are lying or we are deceived and now we're actually calling God a liar. If we say that we have not sinned it's basically saying I've never sinned.

That seems inconceivable doesn't it to us. I hope all of us that we could ever come to the place and really believe it and say I've never sinned. I've never sinned.

I have not sinned. And again this is probably the worst lie of the three. If you go back to verse 8 the clause there in verse 8 that's a rejection of the inward reality of sin that's bad enough.

[39 : 42] Terrible. You're a liar if you believe that. But then when you get to verse 10 it is the denial of the outward activity of sin.

That is what I do in my life I'm not sinning. This is not sin. This is the ultimate denial. So what must one do in order to deny having ever committed sin?

Well simple. You have to redefine sin don't you? Which we're doing in our day. I mean we've gone beyond just minimizing the significance of it.

We've gone way beyond just simply saying well you know maybe I do sin but that's not really who I am. Not what I am. I'm not sin in my nature. And we've gone beyond that to say that what I do is not sin.

You know those who call evil good. I've never sinned. I mean that's terrible to think about that. But what do you have to do? You have to redefine sin.

[40 : 53] You know you have to either say well it's just simply you know my environment. And we could name a number of categories a number of excuses that people make for their sins that they are not culpable for it.

You know it's my environment or it's the family I was raised in or it's my economic situation or it's some chemical imbalance that I take medication for whatever it may be.

You know like the guy who robbed a bank or robbed some store or something and burglarized it and later he got off wasn't convicted because he said I ate a Snickers bar and I was having a sugar high and I didn't know what I was doing.

You see what I'm saying? I mean we've come up with all kinds of ways to either blame our sin on our culture our environment our living situation our finances our physical makeup you know whatever it may be and we just what used to be sin or what the Bible calls sin it's not sin.

We've redefined sin but it's even worse than that and I'll cite one example Robert Shuler some of you remember that guy Robert Shuler wrote a very popular book wasn't popular with me but popular book back in the early 80s entitled Self-Esteem the New Reformation by the way we see a lot of protégés today of Robert Shuler I won't name them by name this is what he wrote self-esteem the New Reformation and in it Shuler redefines sin to mean something other than what the Bible says and teaches and according to Shuler and I'm going to quote several places in his book to define sin as rebellion against God is shallow and insulting to the human being really and he redefines sin as a negative self-image that's that's what sin is the negative self-image he wrote by nature we are fearful not bad original sin is not a mean streak those are the words he used it is a non-trusting inclination

[43 : 20] Shuler taught to be born again means that we must be changed from a negative to a positive self-image from inferiority to self-esteem from fear to love from doubt to trust and he said we ought to pray this way our father in heaven honorable is our name and when we pray that way according to Shuler the foundation is laid for us to feel good about ourselves and that's salvation where does biblical teach the biblical teaching of sin where does that fit into all that what doesn't exist doesn't exist now you know what John then says about that well that not only is that ridiculous it's blasphemous it's blasphemous

John said you make God a liar because God said in his word in no uncertain terms in very clear terminology all have sinned and come short of the glory of God there's none who understand none who are good have all gone out of the way the wages of sin is death the Bible the Bible is very clear on the subject and so this is what God has said in his word and for us to say for anyone to say to any degree or any version of it that I have not sinned there's no activity of sin in my life you're making God a liar and his word is not in you so let's bring this home it's a dangerous thing to deny to deny to any degree the reality of sin let's make it personal the reality of your sin my sin personal sin it's a dangerous thing to deny that in fact it is a damning denial and it was I think for those false teachers

John was rebuking in his letter and they were leading others to kind of waver on that and be wobbly in their faith and begin to question that and there was uncertainty coming into their minds and hearts about the full reality of sin and John is writing to correct that problem you know if you believe that you can actually have fellowship with God and yet at the same time be engaged in ongoing sin which the Bible calls walking in darkness you believe that or any version of that you really have no warrant to believe that you are saved and I'm not talking about the normal struggles that we all have with sin I mean every single one of us struggle with that we do battle with sin against sin every day we don't always win that's not the same thing as persisting in that sin thinking that it's not sin and that you can go on and have your relationship with God and fellowship with him and yet still continue to walk in darkness this is what these false teachers were teaching you know really there are two people addressed here in this passage two groups two kinds of person the unsaved and the saved and so this has a word to say to those who may be right here in this room we're not true believers true born again believers never been saved he has a word to say to you he's addressing those people they came in the form of false teachers they were false professors of their faith of the faith and they were liars

Jonathan self-deceived and also lying to others and calling God a liar and they were void of God's truth they were lost they were unbelieving void of faith he directly addresses those people here that were in the church so he's directly addressing those who may be here this morning who have embraced any version of this about sin that that it's not that significant not that important or really you know it's not really part of my nature or really I don't sin maybe occasionally and then I pray Lord if I have sinned if but then it also of course primarily addresses true believers believers who were becoming wobbly in their faith because of the false teaching they were allowing the error of

these false teachers to creep into their thinking and it was robbing them of assurance blinding them of the full reality of sin now which group are you in that's the question isn't it can you just live in sin some area of sin and just persist in that without repentance and without any conviction or guilt you know you've kind of lapsed into a kind of false assurance and well you know

God must not care about that must not be sin must not be important because you know nothing bad has happened to me the crazy thinking that people have well you know to borrow the words of the great R.G.

[49 : 58] Lee it will be a payday someday you're not getting away with it or are you a believer and when you sin you know the conviction of God in your heart Holy Spirit conviction and you repent confess and repent of it you still struggle with the sin but God deals with you immediately does that describe your life don't you remember something that Adrian Rogers used to say he said God deals with the devil's crowd on credit and with Christians on a cash basis think