

LIVING A SANCTIFIED LIFE

Speaker: Prof. Joseph John

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Scripture: 1 John 2:1-2, 1 John 2:15-17

1 John 2: 1-2

¹ My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have One who speaks to the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

This is the first portion I thought we'd look at – this particular word 'sin'. In the bible, there is a lot of confusion about this particular word. Our friends and colleagues might have a very wrong understanding of sin, and very often, we Christians too do not have a clear understanding of what this word sin means.

When the Bible uses the word sin, it has about three different implicated meanings:

1. **Missing the mark.** Very often we always think of sin in the negative sense, i.e. doing something wrong. But we forget about this sin of omission, and missing the mark brings that out well. Doing the thing we should not have done and also not doing the things we should have done.

For example, we are supposed to love our neighbors and we don't do it. We often forget that omission, but immediately tune in to doing something wrong. So, missing the mark brings both sin of omission and sin of commission.

2. **Iniquity:** The word iniquity very often implies when people don't do things the straight way, but do it the crooked way. Sometimes we also can have that kind of an attitude. Maybe we don't want to do things straight. God says, "Do this," and we don't want to do it; we want to find our own way of doing it. So, iniquity is kind of a bent to do evil.
3. **Transgression:** You often see this sign, "Transgressors will be prosecuted". And we know that if you do it, you will be prosecuted.

In the very first verse John writes, "My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin." Now, each one of us, we have this bent to go wrong, to miss. What we can do from our side is to be intentional every day. Right when you get up in the morning, one of the first things you can do is to commit the day into the Lord's hands. Thanking God – Lord, thank You for this day you have given me. Help me to live this day pleasing to you, to live a sanctified life.

So, being intentional about living that kind of life, moment by moment. That's what John is telling us here. "I write this to you so that you will not sin," that intention not to sin, not to displease God. But he is very quick to add in the very next sentence that he writes. "But if anyone does sin, we have One who speaks to the Father in our defense, Jesus Christ, the righteous One.

All of us, in spite of our best intentions, might fall into sin. So what should we do? The answer is there two verses earlier, which we often say. 1 John 1:8-9, "*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*"

If we fall into sin, be quick to confess. I have always found that God understands us. God's Spirit would immediately tell you why you fell into that sin in spite of you being intentional to avoid sin. God's Spirit gives you insights how to avoid it next time. Jesus said, "Watch and pray that you do not fall into temptation. If you fall, don't justify, but be quick to ask God for forgiveness. The verse says, "He is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." That's God's job. Jesus died for just that. Don't ever try to live the Christian life in your strength. You will totally fail. But be quick to run to God every time.

So, always have a heart to please God, be intentional about it, do not sin, and trusting yourself and going out for God.

1 John 2: 15-17

¹⁵ Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. ¹⁶ For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of the eyes, and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷ The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives for ever.

We should always remember that one of the biggest enemies we have is the world. What do we mean by the world? Last Wednesday, Pastor brought this thought very nicely. Let's go through what he said. Revelation 14 has this word *Babylon* coming again and again.

Babylon stands for all that the world can offer. For example, in Revelation, Babylon was a word actually used for Rome – all the power, all that the world is after. It's a kind of symbol of worldly standards and fame and success, but opposed to God and His ways. And that's what we should remember. So, sometimes when we are in our secular settings, in work or in our studies, etc., we are bombarded by peer pressure from our friends, colleagues, and maybe sometimes from our relatives also, to take shortcuts. That's the way the world is, and that's what we need to be careful of.

The world always says, "You don't need God. You can make it on your own." That's the kind of promptings we get on a day-to-day basis from the world, from whatever we hear from others. And that's what you would hear everywhere.

But when we received Jesus into our hearts and made Him the Lord of our life, we are acknowledging that He is the Lord of our life. Therefore, before we do anything, we need to check whether we are violating anything God has given in His Word. That's why it is so important that we align ourselves on a day-to-day basis, not to follow the ways of the world, but to follow what God has asked us to do. That will be a daily struggle, and we need to realize this. We must always remember that when you became a Christian, you are actually getting on a battlefield. It's not easy. But God has promised His presence with us.

Therefore, we must make it a point that as we go through different kinds of temptations and tests, we check that whatever we are doing is in alignment with God's revealed will and His Word. Are we by any chance following or rather violating anything God has written? Any of His principles? We need to check constantly.

According to what we read here, we are loving the world and its ways. We were warned here, "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." That's it! there is no neutral position. You either love the world or you love the Father. And that's why it's so important for us to cross-check this aspect.

1 John 3: 1-3

3¹ How great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ Everyone who has this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

This passage gives the secret of Living a Sanctified Life. As God's children, when we live in this world, our hope should not be in this world, what fame we get or the property or the money or whatever we can get in this world. That should never be a hope. But instead, we must remember that God has promised us rest for His children. There is God's rest.

John says, "Dear friends, now we are children of God. And what we will be has not yet been made known." We don't know. And that's going to be a mystery. But this verse says, "But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

What a glorious hope! We shall see Him as He is. We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him. Only if we have that kind of hope, this v.3 will be applicable. Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure.

So, why do we live a sanctified life? Because we want to enter that rest. And we cannot do it on our own. But God says to live that kind of an intentional life. Not following the pattern of this world, but an intentional life. Therefore, remember that God has promised something and we don't know what it is going to be. but we shall see Him as He is.

If we try to live a sanctified life, you will fail. One of the mistakes I did as a young Christian was that I thought God's grace and God's love is only available up to the point of receiving Jesus and salvation. And that's it. after that, it's all about myself. What a foolish knowledge I had!

Always remember that God's grace, God's love is going to be available to us throughout. Each time you are tempted, you feel discouraged, always remember this first verse: How great is the love the Father has lavished on us. Lavish love. Each one of us sitting here is loved with a lavish love; not a simple love, but a lavish love. And that continues till the day of our death. Therefore, never be discouraged. You can always run back to God.

In the first service, we sang "What a friend we have in Jesus". I think that's such a wonderful hymn to remember. Always make it a point to run to God with everything, small things, big things. For big things, we always go to God. But do we go to God with our small, small problems, small, small challenges, small, small worries, small anxieties? Run to Him, ask God. And God's Spirit would help us how to navigate. That's the important thing. That's the first thing I want to say.

Don't try to live a sanctified life in your strength. You will fail. But divine resources are available. One of the most important things we need to do from our side is to invest heavily on God's word.

Loving God versus Loving the World

1. Beware of too much technology (social media)

When we say “do not love the world”, it looks very abstract. Let me try to bring in some practicality. I’m sure all of us love technology. We should be thankful to God that we are living in modern times, a lot of time-saving. But always remember that technology is not neutral. Why do I say that?

1 John 5:19 is a very interesting verse. *“We know that we are children of God and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.”*

I’m sure all of us enjoy technology, and one such thing is WhatsApp. We are all in many, many groups, including family groups. I don’t know how people have time to forward so many kinds of videos; I don’t even have time to delete them, forget about looking at them. Why am I telling you this? We are all bombarded with technology. Watch out! When you say do not love the world, this is something you can think about. How much time are you looking at all this? I’m not saying not to use it. But use it with discretion. This is a big problem all of us are going through.

Maybe it’s not a bad idea if you can note down the amount of time you’re spending on social media versus the time you’re spending on reading God’s word. When you ask somebody how much time you want to spend reading God’s word, they will say 10-15 minutes. And the time spent on social media? You will be shocked. On an average, each one of us spends about 2 hours daily. Next time you’re tempted to spend too much time on WhatsApp, you can say, “No! I don’t need it.”

God’s Spirit is our counsellor, our helper. I love to read God’s word typically in the morning. That’s been my pattern. But recently I found that lunchtime is also a good time to read God’s word. Once, when I was very tired, and then I read God’s word, I was so refreshed. Evening is also a good time to read the word. What I’m trying to say is we need to be intentional. If you really want to live a sanctified life, read small doses of God’s word, and meditate and ask God.

We need to be intentional. That’s one way of loving the world versus loving God. Satan is also in the world. Satan knows that he cannot take our salvation but he will try everything to make us ineffective. Everything. Morning till evening. And that’s where we need to run back to God. That’s where we need to make valid choices. Be careful next time when you look at any technology. None of them are neutral; they all come with an aspect for evil. And we need God’s grace, God’s strength, God’s Spirit’s anointing.

2. Prayer.

We need to pray for one another. Ask for prayer and also pray for others. We are so blessed that, as a church, we are now praying regularly. So, if you are not, please enlist yourself into the Friday prayer. Pray for others.

3. Build one another.

The church community is a divine resource. We need to have fellowship with one another. We need one another, because God has brought us together. We sometimes think we come to church just to worship. No. We also need to encourage and build one another. All these are God’s resources – God’s Spirit, God’s word, prayer and fellowship.

Make it a resolution to be intentional. As John said, “I will not sin,” so also, I will be intentional. I will love God. I will be careful not to love the world. We have a wonderful reminder of what God’s amazing love is – Jesus. What He did for us on the cross! That’s a wonderful way to remind ourselves, each one of us, the costly price Jesus paid for each and every one of us, so that He could forgive us our sins and make us His children.

Always be assured that God has His very best for you, including your professional life. And I can see that in my own life. God thought far more about my professional life than I thought about myself.

That's the kind of God we have. We are all sons and daughters of the Most High God. Therefore, make it a point to love God and spend time with Him, and saturate ourselves with God's word so that we can grow in Him.

Let's pray.

Amen.
