



## Sermon Title: 1 John Part 10 – The Righteous One

### IN Opportunities to connect and pray as a group

1. What movies can you name which deal with the cosmic battle between right and wrong? Any favourites?
2. Tell of a time when you've had to be very direct and/or blunt in speaking to someone. What happened? What was the conclusion?

### UP Time that is devoted to the Word of God

1. Pastor Henry said that the Apostle John is direct and blunt in this portion of his letter.

Have someone read these verses without saying 'dear children...dear friends....dear children.'

What words do you hear that are very direct and blunt? Why was it necessary for him to be so explicit?

2. According to 1 John 3:8 ...'the devil has been sinning from the beginning.' Isaiah 14:12-14 tells this story. What specific words spoken by the Morning Star imply the 'lawlessness' that John speaks about in 1 John 3:4? What attitudes do the Morning Star's words display?
3. From the passage in 1 John, what characterizes a person who is a child of God? What characterizes a person who is a child of the devil?
4. John uses the two phrases 'continue in Him' (1 John 2:28) and 'continue to sin' (1 John 3:9) (NIV). What does each phrase mean (compare wording in other translations)? Is Apostle John saying that believers do not sin? (see 1 John 1:9)

What attitudes does each phrase imply?

What actions should be evident as we "continue in Him"?

### OUT Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community

1. Have your actions and attitudes this past week reflected that you are a 'child of God' or merely a distant relative?
2. How did Pastor Henry's illustration about the front lawn with all the weeds encourage you and/or help you understand how limiting a judgmental attitude is?
3. What is God asking you to do about changes you need to make?

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### THE WORD (NIV)

#### 1 John 2:28-3:10

<sup>28</sup> And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

<sup>29</sup> If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

**3** See what 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. <sup>2</sup> 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, <sup>[a]</sup> we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup> All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

<sup>4</sup> Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. <sup>5</sup> But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. <sup>6</sup> No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

<sup>7</sup> Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. <sup>8</sup> The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. <sup>9</sup> No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. <sup>10</sup> This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.



The series of 1 John continues: the letter the Apostle John wrote in response to the heresy of Gnosticism infiltrating the early church, aspects of which are bleeding into some churches today. Those who embraced this false teaching believed that true spirituality is all about the mind and special knowledge. They kept a low view of the body: what you did with it was not important. This meant they were unconcerned with sin or immoral behaviour. For them, secret and esoteric knowledge was more significant than a right view of God or Christ, or righteous behaviour. While this passage is considered one of the most difficult passages of Scripture to understand and absorb (**1 John 2:28 – 3:10**), John is direct and blunt as he confronts these falsehoods with clear teaching on what it means to be a Christian.

A popular and economically successful phenomenon is the Avenger and related Superhero movies, started 40 years ago by the Star Wars movie series. They share a similar plot – conflict between good and evil. Is there deep within us a sense of justice and of what is good and evil? We don't tire of watching, nor do the writers and studios tire of making them. Yet the downside is some people may conclude the Biblical story is also fictional and its characters imaginary. Some people today question the Biblical assertion of a spiritual realm as real as the natural or earthly, realm. Or that there is a cosmic struggle between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, as each kingdom is seeks the worship and allegiance of every person on this planet. Others try to ignore or explain away this passage. The Bible teaches that we live in 2 realms: a visible physical realm and an invisible spiritual realm. We are not just physical bodies and souls – we are also spirit, **2 Cor 4:18**. When the Apostle John writes, 'The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work' (**1 John 3:8**), does that not sound like a battle between Christ and the devil?

God did not create the devil. God created a beautiful, powerful angel with a free will who worshiped God, stood for truth and was named "morning star". But this angel became filled with pride. His decline and fall is told in **Isaiah 14:12-15**; note the repetition of the words "I will". John describes this as the heart of sin, and what he means when he says that sin is lawlessness, **1 John 3:4**. It is an attitude of defiance: disregarding or rebelling against God's authority, questioning His goodness, not believing that God's way is best, and determining to do what I want or think is best. God enacted certain laws to ensure a well-functioning world. Satan seeks to unravel all of that: "the devil has been sinning from the beginning," **1 John 3:8**. Since then the devil's mission is to tempt humanity to do the same. When we distrust God and insist on our own way, we not only sin, but we also reflect the nature and characteristics of the devil: this is the heart of lawlessness and sin. The 'morning star' no longer wanted to worship God; instead, he wants to be worshiped. This changed him into the devil. The Bible makes it clear that the devil is real, **John 12:31, 2 Cor. 4:4**. If you don't want to believe in the devil and in sin, you must construct a worldview that explains the terrible things human beings think and do: wars that kill millions, behaviours displayed in the nursery by toddlers; or what goes on in our heart and mind. There is a spiritual, moral sickness in all of us. The devil does not "make us do it"; but he does all he can to tempt us to distrust and rebel against God, **Ephesians 2:2**.

The works of Satan permeated our planet in three ways. **FIRST**, in the form of hatred: a violation of God's agape love; by pride, selfishness, prejudice, sexual immorality, broken marriages and families. **SECOND**, in the growing **darkness** on our planet, manifested in confusion, obsessions, and lack of direction & purpose. **THIRD**, in the **destruction of life** through wars: between our nations, in our cities, even in our homes. Education, political & legislative solutions and law enforcement have had some positive, yet limited effects. We are brought back to our only real hope. Jesus came to us to **destroy** the devil's work, **1 John 3:8**. He who knew no sin, became sin for us and died on the cross to pay for our sins to **make us His own**, so that we could become a child of God (**be born of God**), through faith in Him. Jesus replaced death with His eternal life, darkness with His light, and hatred with His agape love. In the spiritual realm, He took our sins on himself and, in exchange, placed his perfect righteousness on us: setting us free from guilt and shame, and making us spiritually alive and righteous in the sight of God. The love that God lavished on us, **1 John 3:1**, is a spiritual rebirth to become children of God and a friend of God. As every person is born physically into a human family, so every person must be born spiritually into God's family, **John 3:3**. We are not automatically children of God because we are human. We become children of God when we turn to Christ in repentance and faith and ask him to save us, **John 1:12**.

Why, then, are the works of the devil still with us? **Acts 1:8** and **Matthew 28:18** tell us God chose to accomplish His redemptive purposes in the world through us, to the degree that we trust, surrender, and respond to His leading. We are to "continue in Him" (**1 John 2:28**) to grow closer to Him, and so that he can destroy the work of the devil in the lives of others through us. **First**, we continue, or abide, in Christ *by keeping an eternal perspective*. The same Jesus who died and rose again will return in power and glory. We look forward with anticipation, not fear. Our hearts and minds are set on Him, not on temporary interests. The reality of death and the hope of Christ's coming shape, change and purify our values, priorities and behaviour, **1 John 3:3**. **Secondly**, we abide in Christ *by remembering that we are children of God*, **1 John 3:1**. We no longer need to prove who we are; we know we are who God says we are. Further, it is a declaration of who we *are becoming* and *will be* in Christ. This is the heart of what John is getting at in **1 John 3:6-10**. He does not say that we will no longer sin (see **1 John 1:8, 10**); neither is he talking about sinless perfection. He says that no one who lives in Him keeps on sinning; that is, maintains a defiant and rebellious attitude against God. When we put our faith in Christ, He puts His seed – His DNA – in us and we are a new creation, with new wants and desires to love people and please God, **1 John 3:10**. However, we continue to struggle because the old sin nature is still in us, **Romans 7:15**. These struggles show us that Jesus is in us and has turned on the light to make us spiritually alive; changing and using us to impact lives around us. The renovation of a neglected, overgrown yard illustrates this process. As the new owner pulls weeds, digs soil and plants seed, it looks worse long before it starts to look better. More grass is visible, but it still looks like a wreck. Yet, this snapshot judgement as we is out of line – we do not have the full story nor do we see the progress. Just so with our spiritual life. If the change is the real, don't be discouraged: God knows your heart and struggle. He is walking with you. He will never leave you or forsake you. Lean into Him, serve Him, read and meditate on His Word, and hear it taught. Ask, of him and yourself: Lord, what are You saying to me? What do You want me to do about it? And you will know and experience the joy of the Lord in your life.