

**WALKING IN THE LIGHT- First John and the Path to Living Deeply in Christ - Part twenty-seven**

Sunday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - 10:00 a.m. - Teaching #2121

Pastor Don Horban, Cedarview Community Church, Newmarket, ON

**KEEPING THE SPIRIT OF BONDAGE OUT (continued)**

**IPAD TEXT - 1 John 5:18-20 - "We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. [19] We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. [20] And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life."**

The central point from last week's teaching was the complete inner antithesis between the new life of Christ in the heart and the presence of continued sin. The Christian may be tripped up by sin at some point, but he never lives there. He confesses. He weeps. He draws near again to Christ. He nourishes his weak heart with the word and prayer and the strength of fellowship with the body of Christ.

But there's more. John doesn't just want me to **get** clean. He wants me to **stay** clean. That's where we're going in today's teaching. We'll pick up today with point number two:

2) **HOW THE SPIRIT OF BONDAGE IS KEPT OUT OF YOUR LIFE**

**IPAD TEXT - 1 John 5:18 - "We know that everyone who has been born of God *does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.*"**

It's interesting to see how different translations state the last part of verse eighteen:

**NKJV**      **"...but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him."**

**NASB**      **"...but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him."**

**CSB**      **"...but the One who is born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him."**

**NIV**      **"...the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him." - IPAD TEXTS**

I've had people ask me questions about those verses. Some are really troubled about that fact that some translations make it look like *I must keep myself*, while others make it look like *Jesus is the One who does the keeping*. Which is it?

We know from other passages of Scripture that both the **Lord** and **I** are involved in the protecting and nurturing of my life. It's important to get the whole picture here because there are different sets of verses in the New Testament. There are verses that emphasize **God's** protecting, keeping work:

**IPAD TEXT - John 10:27-29 - "My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. [28] I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. [29] What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand."**

**IPAD TEXT - John 17:11-12 - "And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, *protect them in your name* that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. [12] While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled."**

**IPAD TEXT - Jude 24 - "Now *to him who is able to keep you from falling*, and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing...."**

But there's also ***another side*** to the keeping of spiritual life in the Scriptures. There are verses that make the life of holiness appear to be completely ***our*** responsibility:

**IPAD TEXT - Proverbs 4:23 - "*Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.*"**

**IPAD TEXT - 1 Corinthians 9:25-27 - "*Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. [26] So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; [27] but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.*"**

And there's still more. You will also find other passages that teach ***both*** sides of how spiritual life is kept vibrant in the ***very same verses:***

**IPAD TEXT - Philippians 2:12-13 - "*Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; [13] for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*"**

**IPAD TEXT - 2 Timothy 1:11-14 - "For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, [12] and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that *he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him.* [13] Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. [14] *Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.*"**

Perhaps we can wrap this up by noting how John ties several issues together with the keeping of spiritual life:

- a) ***There is opposition, so care must be taken.*** The whole world lies ***"in the power of the evil one"***(19). It's not just that Satan has some ***influence***. He's in ***control***. He dominates. He orchestrates things against the course of God and God's people.

While John makes it clear Satan doesn't have open, direct ***access*** to God's children, he does hold great ***influence***. And he wields it skillfully. This world is ***constructed to divert my attention from God and especially His Son, Jesus Christ.*** Listen, there is nothing ***passive*** or ***neutral*** about the spiritual state of this world.

The world doesn't just sit there. It is always ***making suggestions, questioning*** God, and ***minimizing*** His holiness. The world is constantly ***bargaining with you for your loyalty***. The process of the temptation of Jesus by Satan in the wilderness is repeated every day on different terms - ***“I’ll give you all this if you’ll worship me.”*** That game continues constantly.

**Martyn Lloyd-Jones** - "The 'world' is a very inclusive term in the Scriptures. But it is ultimately anything that tries to make us feel ***satisfied without God*** - without fellowship and communion with God."

John has already described this process in detail in **1 John 2:16** - ***“...for all that is in the world--the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches--comes not from the Father but from the world.”*** - IPAD TEXT

- b) ***Only Jesus Christ can deliver us from Satan and his dominion over this world.*** While certain levels of ***moral reform*** are possible for anyone, nowhere in his epistle does John offer any hope for ***spiritual life*** apart from God's grace in Jesus Christ:

**IPAD TEXT - 1 John 5:11-12 - "And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and *this life is in his Son*. [12] Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."**

Every person must come to terms with this specific truth. I can no more give myself *spiritual new birth* than I could, by an act of my will, give myself *physical birth*. The whole New Testament is written to emphasize the work of **God** in giving spiritual life in Christ Jesus:

**IPAD TEXT - Colossians 1:12-13 - "....giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. [13] *He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son....*"**

**IPAD TEXT - 1 Peter 2:9-10 - "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who *called you out of darkness into his marvelous light*. [10] Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."**

- c) ***When I come to Jesus I must follow Him into all righteousness.*** I've been so helped by wise old words of ***Robert Candlish*** throughout all of these studies on 1 John. Let me wrap up this message quoting him again on how spiritual life is to be cherished and kept aflame:

***"The risk of relaxed diligence in 'keeping ourselves as born of God' lies mainly in this: our ceasing, that is, becoming less fully conscious, to regard sin as exceedingly sinful, and the doom of sin as inevitably certain. Hence, in order to keep ourselves, it is of the utmost consequence, first of all, that we truly and fully apprehend that we are to keep ourselves as being born of God. And it is of equal consequence, secondly, that we truly and fully apprehend the absolute incompatibility of our sinning with our being born of God."***

***"Understand where the temptation lies. The temptation is very strong to begin to think that, in some form or degree, sin may not be altogether damaging to our spiritual life, as born of God, or altogether fatal to our heavenly calling, as having eternal life. The instant such a thought finds harbor in our minds, all our faithfulness in keeping ourselves is gone."***



***"I will keep myself in due proportion as I apprehend, with growing vividness, all the holy blessedness that there is in being born of God, on the one hand, and, on the other, all that there is in sin, in one sin, in any sin, of deep and deadly malignity, making it the essence of foulness and separation from God. If this is done in my heart with increasing sensitivity, I will be keeping myself as one born of God."***

So it's not just a matter of knowing I'm born of God. Without much care and diligence I can come to know that doctrine almost unconsciously. Rather, spiritual maintenance is a matter of ***dealing with myself*** as one born of God. The Apostle Paul described it as ***"reckoning"*** ourselves alive unto God and dead unto sin.

That's it exactly. It means ***seeing this world as a place lying in the control of the wicked one and planting my flag each day in Christ's camp***. And that will always come with a price tag in a world dominated by the power of the enemy. God help us relearn these truths - for our soul's sake.