

## 1 John 2:24-29

“A Family Resemblance”

How much can I sin and still be saved? Is it possible to cross the line whereby I forfeit my *salvation* and fall into *condemnation*? Let me tell you that if you entertain those kind of questions you're already in a dangerous place. What kind of heart is shown, what is it that can be said of the heart that wants to know how far away from Christ it can get and still reap the rewards of the righteous? “I know Jesus died *for* me, shed His blood and suffered on behalf of me because He wants a relationship *with* me and wants to spare me the penalty of eternal torment, and I'm all for that, I don't want to experience eternal torment, I want to go to heaven. Yet as long as I'm here I want to experience as much of the world as I can as long as I still get to go to heaven.” What a sad and dangerous place to be in, “Jesus I want to reap eternal benefits *from* You, I just don't want to lead my life set apart *to* You.”

There is a debate that rages on in Christian circles concerning *eternal security*. Can I forfeit my salvation? Once I'm saved am I always saved? People wanna know, so they search the scriptures. However I believe that some people don't want to know for any other reason than they want to know if they can have a license to sin all they want and still go to heaven in the end. I would say to that, that 1<sup>st</sup> of all if you have a heart that wants to sin and rebel against the *righteousness* of God and the instruction of the *word* of God you would do well to make your calling and election sure in the 1<sup>st</sup> place. Because when you come to Christ, when Jesus has your heart you don't *want* to sin against Him, you have a desire to lead your life set apart *to* Him, you want to live your life *for* Him. You understand where you've been, what you've done, who you are, yet Christ has loved you and given Himself for you, His goodness has drawn you to repentance and now you just want to *serve* Him and avail yourself *to* Him. You're done with that old life, that guy, that gal is dead; you find the words of the apostle Paul resonating in your own heart, “*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*” Gal 2:20 That guy I was before Christ rescued me is dead, it's good riddance, I couldn't get rid of him fast enough. Here's my point; if you're trying to hang on to a life that finds its fulfillment in the things of this world you do well to make sure that Christ has your heart. Because Jesus said, “*For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.*” Matt 16:25 As a believer you don't *have* to worry about your eternal security, you don't *have* to wonder whether or not you're going to make it. There is a safe place; there is a security blanket that eliminates the questions, Jesus revealed it to us in John Ch 15, and John will spend the remainder of Ch 2 of this his 1<sup>st</sup> epistle encouraging us in the same way. We're to *abide in Christ*.

That's the safety zone, you abide in Christ and you'll never have to worry, you'll never have to wonder, it won't be a question, it's when you want to entertain sin that you have the worries, you wonder where you're at with the Lord and all of that. Don't see how far from Jesus you can get and still be saved, see how close to Him you can get, how near to Him can you draw, how much can you grow, how intimately can you know Him?

Don't seek to live on the edge of an "acceptable" Christian walk; what sad testimony. Get as close to Jesus as you possibly can, go for it with all your heart, love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your strength, with all your mind, and with all of your soul. Look at Vs 24

Vs24

Perhaps you recall from our last study that the confession of Jesus as the Christ goes beyond a simple acknowledgment of Jesus as Messiah. It also agrees with His relationship to the Father, it consents to His deity, it realizes that He and the Father are one, that to receive Jesus is to receive the Father who sent Him, they're a package deal. To reject Jesus is to reject God, you cannot have One with out the other.

Here in Vs 24 John is making a contrast between you who are *in* the body of Christ as opposed to those who have gone out *from* the body of Christ, who really aren't apart *of* the body of Christ. Remember Vs 19? (read)

However as for *you* (John is saying), it would be more accurately rendered that way here in Vs 24. John is saying, "*As for you, you* let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning." The point being that those who went out from them did not. The phrase is in the imperative mood meaning that really it's a command. John is saying, "They didn't abide in the truth, they didn't allow the truth to take up residence in them, however as for you, let the truth of the gospel (that which you heard from the beginning) abide in you." They may've subscribed to the doctrine of Christ initially, but they departed from it ultimately. However you and I are to *remain* in the truth, and we're to allow the truth of God's word to remain in us. We're to hold fast to the truth of the gospel. That's what he's referencing when he says, "That which you've heard from the beginning" he's speaking of those fundamental foundation truths of the gospel that had been delivered to them.

This is such a timely word for us here in America because we seem to be a people fascinated by *new* things. A new restaurant opens up and people flock, the latest gadget comes out and people buy it up, it's *new* and we *love* new things; if it's the latest it's the greatest, right? Not necessarily and definitely not when it comes to *new truth*, or the latest craze concerning spiritual things or doctrinal revelation. But we're fascinated by new things, if I were to stand here this morning and say, "I'm about to share something with you that God has revealed to me that's brand new, no one has heard this before God just revealed it to me and I'm going to share it with you." You would do well to empty this sanctuary just as fast as you could, but I suspect a significant portion of you (leery though you would rightfully be) would stick around just to hear what I had to say. We love the latest thing, we're fascinated and enthralled with things that are *new*.

But John says that when it comes to your spiritual safety net, your spiritual health and well-being, don't look for the new but rather cling desperately to that which is true which you heard from the beginning. It would suit me just fine if the buzz about me was simply this, "Every time we go to Calvary Chapel of Joplin all that Jeff tells us is what's in the bible. That's all he has to say, 'the bible says this, the scripture declares that.'" I'd receive that as a complement of the highest order. We're to let that abide in us which we heard from the beginning, the same gospel message that *saved* you will be the same message that *sustains* you.

You should also be aware of the fact that this word "abide" carries in it more than the simple idea of "to remain." It speaks of more than simply letting the basic teaching concerning the Person of Jesus Christ to remain in you. It speaks of the truth being *alive in* you and have access to every part *of* you. It should be at home in you and have access *to* you, you and I are to nurture the stability and growth of the doctrinal truths of the word of God through a holy life and a determination to cling to them and remain true to them.

The foundational, fundamental truths of the word of God will serve as an anchor to your soul, they'll foster and facilitate your spiritual growth and maturity. Don't be tossed to and fro by various "new" winds and waves of doctrine that blow through the church. Proverbs 23:23, "*Buy the truth, and do not sell it, Also wisdom and instruction and understanding.*" Paul exhorted the Colossians, "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*" Colossians 3:16 The author of Hebrews said, "*Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.*" Hebrews 2:1 You see over and over again the bible exhorts us to hold fast to the fundamentals of the faith, anchor yourself to solid bible doctrine.

As we mentioned last week there is no short supply of “religious” options out there for you to choose from. It’s incumbent upon you to know the truth and reject the lie. Paul ran into this same problem with the Galatians. He said, *“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.”* Gal 1:6-8 The word which saved you will sustain you, you don’t need anything new, anything more, anything else. This world is filled with people who are “searching for God,” some genuinely some not so much. But if you really want to *abide* that is *live in God* and have a relationship *with* God John tells us how. Let the message of the apostles, the truth of Jesus Christ live in you.

Now don’t misunderstand me; John didn’t say, “If you know God’s word, you know God.” People can have a bare intellectual knowledge of the word and still not know God. John said that God’s word has to *live* in us, if God’s *word* lives in you, then *God* lives in you. Jesus said, *“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”* John 6:63 His word has got to *abide* in us, it’s a non-negotiable aspect of the Christian life. *If* His word is abiding in you it will be shaping you, molding you, forming and fashioning you more and more into His image. You might think of it like this: abiding is a *live in* kind of relationship... Jesus said this, *“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.”* John 14:23

John says here that if the word of God abides in you, than you abide in the Son and in the Father. Again Jesus said in John 15, *“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”* John 15:9-10 As you abide in Christ, and His word abides in you there’s a beautiful promise that comes along with that, notice...

Vs25

God, who cannot lie has promised eternal life to the one who will abide in Christ and allow His word to abide in him/her.

What is eternal life? We find the promise of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ all throughout the NT. What is eternal life? Well, I’ll tell you what it’s not, it’s not mere immortality. Every human being is immortal, in the sense that your soul will live forever, be it in heaven or in hell (that is the lake of fire); so eternal life doesn’t simply mean “a life that lasts for eternity.”

Ultimately eternal life isn't bound up in a place, it's found in a person, the person of Jesus Christ. That's why it's so important that you receive that life now, because even though eternal life has a reference to life beyond this world it doesn't begin when we die. If you don't have eternal life now, you won't get it when you die. Oh you'll still be immortal, but you'll not be *with* Christ, you'll be separated *from* Christ. In John Ch 17 Jesus said this, "*Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*" John 17:1-3 You see, eternal life isn't about a place, it's about a Person, and that Person is Jesus; the promise comes to the one who is *abiding* in Christ and in His word (who has a living, loving and lasting union with the Son of God).

Vs26-27

We touched on this last week, how the Holy Spirit takes us and teaches us, leading us into all truth. There will be those who seek to deceive you, and that's why it's so critical that you be careful concerning whom you seek to associate with. Listen to this: Proverbs 12:26, "*The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.*" It blows my mind that lack of discretion and/or discernment that people will use today in aligning themselves with other people for the sake of a friendship, or relationship of some kind. Despite the fact that the bible warns us over and over again concerning the friends that we choose; I'm not saying that we're to be stuck up, or snobs, but exercise a little wisdom you know, not everyone is good for you, even if they have a likeable personality. As it says in the NASU, "*Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals.'*" 1 Cor 15:33 That person may be real "likeable" but if they're not in Christ and you seek to get in tight with them and have a close friendship with them 9-10 times it's not that you'll pull them up it's that they'll drag you down.

There are others who will simply try to deceive you, and they'll use big words, or pseudo intellectual arguments. Again Paul said, "*Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*" Colossians 2:8 John is saying here that those guys are out there, but you don't need anyone to teach you, to show you the "enlightened path" because the Holy Spirit is in you, in Christ you've received the anointing that will teach you concerning all things. Now I'm not trying to overwhelm you with scripture references today but again when Jesus was sharing with His disciples concerning the sending of the Holy Spirit after His ascension He said, "*However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth;*" John 16:13

One of the aspects of the Holy Spirit's "job description" is to teach us, and to lead us into the truth. When you give your heart to Christ the Holy Spirit is given to you, He's not the private property of a few super spiritual Christians. Sometimes when we pray we pray for a special "anointing" and though what we mean is that we want God to move in a special way, according to a strict scriptural perspective we already have the *anointing* of God with in us as believers. What's important is not that the Spirit line up with what we wanna do, but rather that we get in line with what He's already doing. But the anointing abides *in* us, it doesn't need to be imparted *to* us.

Now, couple of things real quick here; one of the fingerprints of a cult is that you need them to teach you, they require that you learn from them and if you ever stop learning from their teaching you won't be able to learn the truth. I was telling someone the other day that I never fear what people might come up with by simply reading their bible. You will never become a JW by reading your bible, you will never become a Mormon by reading your bible. The only way you become a J.W. is by reading the literature *they give you* to "explain" the bible, the only way you'll become a Mormon is through reading their literature or reading the book of Mormon.

But don't complicate the issue, as you've received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him (Col 2:6). Now again this doesn't set aside the need for men whom God has gifted and given to the church to teach the word of God, Paul taught constantly, John is teaching here, the apostles taught people all the time, Eph 4 acknowledges that God gives Pastors/teachers to the church. The idea here is that of a continuous action, "You don't need anyone to be continually teaching you all the time as though your learning is at their mercy." (Really loose paraphrase). John is simply informing us that no teacher, even a God appointed teacher, is the only and ultimate source of the believer's instruction. You have the Holy Spirit, you have the word of God; it's the Holy Spirit that brings illumination to God's word; it's the Spirit who leads us into all truth.

Now why is the anointing called "true"? "The same anointing teaches you concerning all things, *and is true*," Because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, Jesus is the Way, the Life and the *Truth*, the Spirit takes the things of Christ (who is the truth) and gives them, or makes them known to us.

You might also note that the last 5 words of Vs 27 are in the present imperative, it's not a predictive future (meaning "you will" as in "one day") but rather it's a command. "You *will* abide in Him." The command is to abide in Christ. You see how is it that believers are at times led astray by false teachers or cults, cultic authors or whatever? They're not *abiding* in Christ, that is, they don't remain in living, loving, and intimate fellowship with Him.

Vs28

I feel like we did a decent job last week setting the stage for the coming of Christ, I won't rehash all of that now. What you need to know is that Christ is coming again, you do well to be found *abiding in Him* at His return, if you abide in Him *now* you won't be ashamed to see Him *then*. There are manifold benefits to be found in abiding in Christ. There are benefits presently (fruit abundantly) but ultimately John is pointing us to a day that's coming specifically, the day of His return for the church. Where it says, "when He appears" it would be better translated "if He appears" the reason it's translated "when" instead of "if" is because the reality of His coming isn't in question, but the idea is that "if He appears today, or if He appears in 10 yrs, if you are abiding *in Him* you will be *confident before Him* and not ashamed." That is it won't be like, "Oh, it's the Lord..." and the realization of the worldly kind of life that they've been living will overwhelm them with a sense of shame and shrinking back at His appearing, they could've lived *for Him*, been used *by Him*, but instead they didn't abide in Him as they could have and as they should have. But rather it'll be "Oh, it's the Lord!!!" and there will be a freedom there an excitement that's He come for them, there won't be a sense of shame but of excitement, freedom and confidence.

You don't want to be in the place of trying to see how much you can sin and still have salvation, there's an awfully thin line between "barely saved," and "almost saved." I would encourage you to do your best not to blur that line. Be diligent to be unashamed at His coming, that the rapture would simply continue your fellowship with the Lord like Enoch who walked with the Lord and was not for the Lord took Him. It was just a crescendo in fellowship.

Again you guys it all comes down to abiding in Christ. Here's a little test for you; if you knew Jesus was coming back next week, would you make significant and substantial changes in your life? Or would you maybe tweak a few things but for the most part it would only be excitement and praise? If you feel like you'd have to make substantial changes if you knew the Lord was coming, you're not abiding as you ought. I'm not saying that you won't be accepted (if you're in Christ you're in Christ) but there's a difference between being "accepted" and be "acceptable." I accept my children, they're my children, but not everything they do is acceptable. Paul told the Corinthians that he made it his aim to be well pleasing to Christ, not only accepted, but acceptable. I don't want to be ashamed, I want to be approved. The Rapture won't be all that great for a lot of people, they'll stand ashamed before the Lord.

Vs29

Now he didn't say that we would be *perfected* in righteousness, but that we will practice righteousness. "If you *know* that He is righteous" this is that intuitive knowledge through the Holy Spirit, you know that God is righteous. If that be the case you'll discern experientially those who are His because they will practice righteousness as well. Those who have been born *of* God will have a likeness *to* God.

I'm going to show you a couple of pics; this one is me, (show) this one is my now 5 yr old son (show) any resemblance there? He's my son, there's a certain likeness of me in him, even so the children born of God will bear a certain "family resemblance."

He is righteous therefore those who practice righteousness have been born of Him. It should be raising a caution flag in your heart if someone claims to be born of Him (a believer) yet they don't practice righteousness. Someone who professes to be a believer but don't lead lives of obedience to God's word, there are no fingerprints of the love of God or the truth of God's word in them is ether deceived or a deceiver. A child will bear the nature of their father. It's what an "abiding in Christ" life looks like. We're to be imitators of God as dear children (Eph 5:1).

Praying a certain prayer, or going forward at an altar call doesn't prove to anyone that your saved, and you shouldn't receive a false sense of security in doing those things. The tell tale sign that your saved will be a life that looks more and more like Jesus as time goes by and you mature in Him. Jesus said, "*You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.*" Matthew 7:16-18 If Christ be *in* you, Christ will shine and show Himself *through* you, you will bear a family resemblance. Abide in Christ, and let His word abide in you...

### Prayer Points:

Lord helps to be in that place of abiding, and to be diligent to maintain our position as such. May we be confident at You appearing and unashamed, if there be something we need to tend to and repent of than quicken our hearts that we might do so even now. We thank You for the Person and the power of the Holy Spirit who teaches us and leads us into all truth. May Your word O God be hidden in our hearts, may the same word which has saved us now sustain us. We Thank You for the assurance of eternal life and the encouragement that You've given our hearts today...

If you don't have that assurance, Christ isn't in you, He's not shining through you, the things that He's about you're not about yet He's dealing with you concerning that and He's wanting to do a work in your life than today you can respond to Him in that way. I don't care if you've prayed a prayer, or went forward at a church or some event, you know that Christ isn't in you because you're *not* walking in obedience, you're not bearing the fruit of righteousness, the love of God doesn't course through you or flow from you, make your calling and election sure today. Open your heart to Jesus, that you might abide in Him, and His word might abide in you...