

What Makes Christianity Genuine

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Preacher: Bill Story

[0:00] All right. Take out your Bibles, please, and turn with me to 1 John 1. We're going back.

We're going back over all that we've covered so far, which is... I was thinking, should have done this review a little bit earlier.

Got more to cover this time, so... But we don't have to cover it all. Well, it's our desire to... You've heard the messages from 1 John.

Now it's time to dialogue about that and interact about that, see how that's sitting with you. We feel that it's important not only to hear the Word, but to interact with it, to discuss it, to ponder it, to let it settle in.

And then we feel like it's valuable to take time every few weeks and then just talk about what we've been hearing, what we've been seeing in John, how that's hitting us.

[1:08] Is it hitting you? What's not penetrating, maybe? What's... Or how it's affecting you. So I think that's valuable. We desire not just to teach the mind, but to hit the heart.

Right? To get into... We don't expect folks... I never expect folks to hear everything that's said in a sermon.

There's a lot. But I think it's the cumulative effect, week after week after week, of the Word coming. But I also think that we learn not just by hearing.

In fact, a number of you probably are not good at learning audibly. I'm a visual, so that's why I need to take notes. I need to see it to really connect.

Some people need to move. I mean, there are dynamic learners, right, Zach? They need to move. And that's how they... Sorry, Zach.

[2:18] I don't think you mind. And maybe you need to do that during the sermon. Maybe you need to get up and walk around or something if that helps. I recognize different learning styles.

Right? So... So, and then vocal, right? So then to talk about it. It helps us connect these things.

So that's what we're attempting to do today. So I want to start by reading the first two chapters. Hey, the first chapter is only ten verses. So that's almost like a verse.

And then the second chapter is, what, 29 verses. That's like 12. So really, like 13 verses all together. It's new math. All right.

So if you're able and willing to stand as I read, and if you get tired, you can sit down. Or if you're not hearing anymore, you can walk around. Okay? It's just...

[3:15] All right. 1 John chapter 1, verse 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1! 1.
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He is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know him.

[5 : 39] If we keep his commandments. Whoever says, I know him, but does not keep his commandments is a liar. And the truth is not in him.

But whoever keeps his word in him, truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him.

Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you've heard from the beginning.

The old commandment is the word that you have heard. At the same time, it is a new commandment that I'm writing to you, which is true in him and in you because the darkness is passing away.

And the true light is already shining. Whoever says that he's in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light and in him there's no cause for stumbling.

[6 : 48] But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

I'm writing to you little children because your sins are forgiven for his namesake. I'm writing to you fathers because you know him who is from the beginning. I'm writing to you young men because you have overcome the evil one.

I write to you children because you know the father. I write to you fathers because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you young men because you are strong and the word of God abides in you.

And you have overcome the evil one. Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh, the desires from the eyes, the pride in possessions is not from the father, but is from the world.

[7 : 58] And that world is passing away along with its desires. But whoever does the will of God abides forever. Children, it is the last hour.

And as you have heard that Antichrist is coming, so now many Antichrists have come. Therefore, we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us.

For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you have all knowledge. I write to you not because you don't know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.

Who is the liar? But he who denies that Jesus is the Christ. This is the Antichrist. He who denies the father and the son.

[9 : 02] No one who denies the son has the father. Whoever confesses the son has the father also. Let what you have heard from the beginning abide in you.

If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the son and in the father. And this is the promise he made to us.

Eternal life. I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. But the anointing you have received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you.

But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true and is no lie, just as it is taught you, abide in him. And now little children abide in him, so that when he appears, we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him. We'll stop there.

[10 : 17] That's two, right? It keeps going, but I was tempted to keep going. Let's pray. Father, help us this time as we process and discuss and interact with this word that we've been hearing the last ten weeks.

Grant us that anointing of the Holy One. Grant us your spirit within us to illumine and teach and convict and reveal.

Help us to teach each other today. Help us from our different perspectives to give illumination to the application of these truths.

Help us to discuss, Lord, and interact on the meaning of these things. What John has said, what John means, and what difference it makes today.

And Father, give us the wisdom to sort out today's interaction with this truth. That, Father, we might see how your word gives us light for this very day.

[11 : 26] We ask in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. You ever heard the phrase genuine article? That's the genuine article?

Well, it might be said a little different than that. I don't know where I got that. Or that's the real deal. What's an example of that? What's an example of the genuine article contrasted with a fake article?

Mother. Mother. Leather. Leather. Yeah. Mother, I thought was going a different way. Yeah, the imitation leather, right?

You got the, remember Ricardo Montalban used to do the commercials, right? The Corinthian leather. Sounded, woo, that's really good then, huh? Just imitation Corinthian.

As if, yeah, anyway. Yeah, so you got imitation leather. What else you got? What other fakes do we have today? News. Fake news.

[12 : 28] Fake news. Bacon bits. Bacon bits. Now, I'm on a diet where I'm doing things that are like, yeah, not cheese.

Yeah. Right. That's the same color. It's not that it's fake. It's just different. Sugar.

Sugar. Fake sugar. Egg beaters. There's all kinds of things that are imitation fake, right? Pseudo. Counterfeit money.

Counterfeit IDs. Got some of it's serious kind of stuff. What's authentic? How do we tell what's authentic? And then you have advertising that just magnifies this sometimes.

You've got huge discount. Fine print, you know. As long as you buy 80 million of these, that's huge discount. We've got spam in our emails, right? And we're learning to just delete those before we open them.

[13 : 36] But sometimes you open them. Or sometimes you see little ads that just kind of say, you know, hey, this is from the IRS. You need to, you know. As if the IRS is going to just contact you personally like that by email.

Or your bank. Oh, your funds. You need to get check in real quick. I like this. I like the product that says, doctor's stunned. At this healing, like, what doctor?

Self-proclaimed doctors? Or what were they? Because I'm not going to ask my doctor. She doesn't know what I'm talking about. So, you know, money waiting for you. Just open this link.

So, the world is filled with fakes, scams, false imitations, right? And so, the world has become, and we have become skeptical.

Cynical. Right? We see the ads and go, yeah, yeah, right. Yeah, yeah. Fat burning process. Speeds up the fat burning process. Just pop this pill.

[14 : 41] Cool. Million testimonials, too. Yeah, great. So, we start, you know, what do we believe? And so, in a world that's so skeptical and cynical and unbelieving and not buying it, where does the Christian fit?

How will they ever buy what we believe? How can the world sort out what's a genuine Christian?

Because they've seen plenty of fake. They've seen plenty of counterfeit. So, what's the real deal?

What's the real deal? When we first came to Little Log, we had been through some stuff in Illinois, and we'd seen some fake Christianity, to be blunt.

My kids had seen that. My kids had seen that. And when we got to Little Log, I found a couple of people I pointed my kids out to. That's the real deal right there. One of them used to stand right up here.

[15 : 51] I hope he can stand up here again. And that's the real deal right there. Because I've seen things he's gone through, what we've been through as a church.

And he didn't leave. Anyway, there's real deal. I want you to keep your eye on that one, because that's the real one. We have plenty of them here now, and I point them out to my daughter as well.

Well, that lady there, you need to watch her, because she's real. So, when we talk about our own Christianity, is it real?

Is it genuine? Is it authentic? And that's what John is getting at. His whole purpose for writing is at the end of the book where he says, in 5.13, I write these things to you who believe.

So, he's writing to believers. To you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know. Why am I writing to believers? That you, believers, might know that you, in fact, have eternal life.

[16 : 58] So, assurance. How do you know you really have eternal life? What can you look to in your life to know, I have truly been converted? I'm not a fake.

Because we all have times in our lives where, oh, man, I'm failing. I'm failing a lot. I'm struggling. Is my faith even real? Right? How do I know?

And how Jesus says, they will know you are my disciples, right? By this. It will prove to the world that you're genuine.

That you're distinctive. Right? By your love for one another. So, John's going to give us three tests. And that's what we've been finding. He talks about three different marks.

Ways to look at my life and say, is that true of me? Not am I perfect in that by any means. Because John is clear that if you say you're not a sinner, you know, you're lying.

[17 : 58] So, he's not talking about perfection. But he is talking about a process. And he's talking about a pattern in your life. Can I find another P word?

A process, a pattern, a practice. Righteousness. And that word actually is quite helpful in John. Because you're practicing righteousness. It's like doctors. They're still practicing.

They're trying to hone it, right? Teasing doctors. But it's actually true. And we're the same way. We're learning. We haven't perfected it.

We don't know everything. But we're practicing. And which means it's intentional. Right? I'm working on it. Not there. But I'm working. So, what I want to do is discuss some things today.

I want to kind of talk to you. You can see on your outline where we've been. The first four verses talk about, set the tone for the whole thing.

[18 : 55] John is simply defining what is the gospel. Right? He says it in a very repetitive way. He talks about this very thing, which is from the beginning.

It's not an it. It turns out to be a him. Right? A him who was with the Father. Now visible and tangible and touchable and seeable and hearable.

A real deal. Not just an idea. Not just a... He is a real person who's eternal. Who took flesh.

And we verified that. He was eyewitnessed and proven over not only years, but after his resurrection, another 40 days of verification.

So, this is not a whim. This is a historical, verifiable reality. Okay? So, our faith is based on not something made up later.

[19 : 54] As liberals like to talk about, oh, yeah, all that was made up centuries later. No, look at the evidence. It's too profound. And the writings of John go back to the very first century.

So, not talking about later centuries. This is real. The world doesn't want it to be real. Because if Jesus is true, then I'm in trouble.

But I also have hope. So, the first four verses of that. And then from 1-5 on, he begins to go through the tests. And we went through one and two-thirds cycles of tests.

So, the first three tests, right? Test one, walking in the light. Test two, chapter two, loving your brothers. Test three, the end of chapter two, confessing the truth versus denying the truth.

And then, at the end of two, into three, begins the second cycle, right? Practicing righteousness. So, what he called walking in the light the first time, now he calls, at the end of chapter two, practicing righteousness.

[21 : 01] So, different terms, but same idea. And then what he called loving your brothers in chapter two, in chapter three, he calls it laying down your life. So, it seems like in the first round, he's kind of talking in general about these truths.

And then, in the second round, he's going to define it and picture it. So, what does walking in the light look like? It means practicing righteous deeds.

Because walking in the light, I can make that mean anything. I'm walking in the light, whatever that means. And I feel good. Okay, pressing it too far. So, now he's going to say what's practicing righteousness.

And then, loving your brother. What does that mean? What is love? What do we even mean by that? So, he gets to chapter three and he says, oh, here's what love is. It's he laid down his life. And we do the same.

That's what I'm talking about. That's the boundary God puts on love. It's not however I want to define it. It's how God defines it. And then, he gives us an illustration. Laying down my life, when am I ever going to do that with somebody?

[22 : 04] Right? And I don't get called to sacrifice my life to others. And he puts it into a simple observation. If you see your brother in need. And you have the resources.

And you close your compassion against him. Where's your love? So, he makes it real practical. Laying down your life is as simple as seeing my brother with a real need.

I have the ability to meet that need. And do I close my splankna? That's the word, Kenny. Splankna.

Do I close my guts? Do I close my affection and compassion? Right? Do I shut that off? Okay. So, anyway. So, that's kind of where we're going. So, where do you want to go?

I got to stop talking so you can talk. What do you want? We can go anywhere. No, we're going to have to go through the list. Or we've been there. Where are you thinking?

[23 : 04] How's John affecting you? What thoughts, questions do you have? What impressions do you have? Just a high level thought.

Okay. Or, in my world, high level thought. There you go. I might be a low level. You know, I just never had a real good hand on, you know, your assurance of salvation.

And then you introduced me to this first John series. He's pretty specific. It's pretty specific. It's pretty amazing. Yeah.

That's the purpose of the book. We don't see a lot of assurance. You know, we see a lot of stuff in the Bible that challenges it. But how do I know? And that's exactly what John's addressing.

I think, or I actually feel after listening to the preaching and actually reading the book, he's kind of giving us a map of how to live a poor life and how not to live.

[24 : 10] Yeah. And that's my feeling. Oh, I think that's a good way to say it. Yeah. I like that. Map. But that's an M word. See, I'm on P's.

So you go with the M words. I'm teasing. No, I'm teasing. Yeah, map. You can go with method. You can go with meaning, manifestation. Oh, that works. Okay.

It's how I think. Sorry. I'm weird. What else? How's it affecting you? What are you thinking? What's challenging you? Anything in here challenge you?

I mean, John's pretty easygoing, right? He's pretty kind of gray. Right? Doesn't have a really strong opinion on things, it seems like. Yeah, Rick. No, I just, I think 1 John answers the question to the scariest verse in the Bible, which is in Matthew 7, 21 through 24.

Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, cast out demons in your name, and do mighty works in your name?

[25 : 23] And then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. So, that's really scary. So, the whole issue with these folks in Matthew 7 is they weren't saved, but they thought they were.

They did things that convinced themselves that they were saved, but in God's eyes, there was no relationship, they were not saved. So, 1 John answers that question.

What does that relationship look like? And how can I have confidence to be able to stand before God when covered in the blood of Christ, not in my own work?

How can I do that? And I think 1 John answers that very, very important question. Thanks, Fred. Crystal?

So, along with that, where it says that God is light and there is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him, we walk in darkness, we lie, we do not practice the truth.

[26 : 30] And I think that just kind of opened my eyes, that when you are choosing to walk in sin or choosing to do things you shouldn't do, you are forsaking Christ.

And then you're not walking with him and he's not. So, I just think for me that was really just kind of eye-opening. You know, even just in simple things, you know, like what I'm choosing to watch or what I'm choosing to know.

And I'm like, okay, I think that was just really eye-opening. Great to make. Yeah, and he's getting to it, right? I have fellowship with him. If I say I have fellowship, which means I have a relationship with God.

And if God is light and I'm walking in darkness, how can, you know, something's not working there, right? So, Sarah? I just think that it really challenges the cultural Christianity that tries to pull us away so much, like you were saying, the fake Christians.

And it first causes us to look inward to see if we're a part of that. Right. And then looking to see if we're being deceived and pulled away from the truth. And I think it's important to always check that because I know it's nothing new, but our culture is really claiming Christianity to be one thing, and it's not the Christianity of the Bible.

[27 : 44] Right. Right. Especially with young children, that's constant even in Christian claiming things. Right. Right. So, I'm with you.

I think this book really makes you look at yourself. Yes. Not point fingers at others, but start with yourself and put yourself into the context of God.

And Christ and the Holy Spirit, which is coming out. And how are you doing? James?

What scares me is the raising of the bar as far as loving your brother goes. And murder. Wait a minute.

If I don't love my brother, suddenly I'm a murderer? Yes. Wow. Yeah. That was last week. I'm kind of swirling stuff right there.

[28 : 49] Because I'm thinking, okay. You and your boy. Yeah. Yeah. That challenge of the criteria of, do you love people or do you hate people?

And I'm thinking the Lord needs to do some more work in me with that. Yeah. That's pretty hard words. But I can't do it yet.

But I need to. Yeah. Yeah. That's strong. I mean, John is very strong. And it's one way or the other.

Two kinds of people. Those that like Neil Diamond. No, he doesn't do that. That's something else. Yeah. But it's either love or hate. And then he moves it to murder.

Right? It's either love or murder. It's like, no, I'm not there. I just don't like them. I just don't pay attention to them. I just withhold my love from them. I'm not killing them. Or am I?

[29 : 54] So it's kind of your flesh. He's thought very deeply about these things. I think John is just, there's clearly a pattern he's writing.

And there's clearly a development. Right? He generalizes some truth. Then he puts it in different terms. And gives us definitions and descriptions. And then in the third round, when we get to the third, it'll be kind of, he's going to mix them all together.

Because these three areas of our life, our walking, our loving, and our confession, are dynamically interweaved. Not separate things.

So he's letting us kind of get pictures. And then he's going to, okay, how's it work now? So, yeah. There you go. Pastor, only one more thing. And it is about love.

That's a challenge to me also. But I've had a lot of conversations mainly with him because he's also made me a human being.

[30 : 49] And there can be people in my life which have treated me miserably, horribly. And then yet I'm supposed to love them in the hopes of trying to convert them to the Lord.

Or trying mainly to show them that I am a Christian. And I can love you.

But then there is my huge but. No matter how you've actually treated me. And I really struggle with that.

It's not a natural thing, is it? It's not a human being. But yet it's very black. That's really abnormal. Yeah. And there are times that I don't, well, I know what I'm supposed to do.

Right. But sometimes I just can't. Right. You know, I would much rather not have a relationship. And so that's kind of withholding love.

- [31 : 56] Maybe too far. Yeah, I wouldn't go that far. Yeah, no. Although John says you already have. Right? Yeah, yeah. My motives are still the same.
- My motives are the same as a murderer. Yeah, that's right. So I feel really convicted there. Oh, this, yeah. If you don't read 1 John and feel a little bit of, ooh, he really makes me uncomfortable.
- Yeah. Or he slays me. Then you're not reading 1 John. For an old man, you know.
- 90-something years old. The old man, they called him. He's a pretty straight shooter. Kind of like Peter was.
- Kind of like Jesus was. Okay. I guess I get where he's coming from. Any other thoughts? Questions? Struggles? Is John 2 black and white?
- [32 : 59] At times, if you read just certain sections without reading the whole book.
- You know? If you're practicing righteousness, you're in the light. If you're practicing sin, then you're of the devil. So, ouch. What if I do both?
- Where am I? Well, John says there's no middle. So, how do I deal with that? He doesn't... Back to chapter 1. Back to chapter 1. Okay.
- Okay. I got to remember. He did say no perfection. He didn't say... Yeah. And he said... And here's the other thing that's just fascinating. We think, before I get into God's pure light, I better clean up.
- Right? I mean, that's what the Jews had to do before they got to the temple. They got to... You know, they can't go. Don't even think about going across that border. Right?
- [34 : 01] So, we think the same thing. We think, I've got to clean up. And what John says is, no. If you walk in the light, as he is in the light, you have fellowship with one another.
- So, this is not an individual. This is something we do together. And what's the consequence? If we are all walking in the light, the blood of Jesus' son does what?
- Cleanses us from sin. What does that mean? It does mean forgiveness. But what does it mean about me coming to the light? Being in the light?
- You're ready. I need to fellowship with my brothers. It does mean those things. But what does it mean about my sin nature? It's clean. Forgive me. If I'm getting cleansed in the light, what does that mean?
- I mean, I must be coming into the light dirty. I must be coming into the light as a sinner. I'm not cleaning up first. I've got to walk in the light to get clean.
- [35 : 02] In other words, Christians aren't faking their sin. That make sense? Not faking your sin. My sin doesn't hold me back from coming into the light.
- In fact, my sin is only cleansed when I come into the light. My natural tendency is to hide. Right? I want to keep that in the dark.
- Okay, I'll go talk to Jesus privately. I don't want to talk about it in the men's group or anything. And yet, he says, if we're walking in the light together. So some things we talk about together.
- Not everything. Some things we talk about together. And there's a special cleansing that happens this way. Anyway.
- Because that's kind of confusing. That seems counterintuitive. Right? Like, I've got to get clean before I come to his holy light. But that's, it's the opposite.
- [36 : 08] I've got to come into the light. So. Dirty. I bring my dirt to him.
- Because I can't purify my heart. I can't clean. I can't. Only he can. So that's just so refreshing for me. Come. Come as you are.

The David Crowder song. Come as you are. Come. Come dirty. Come filthy. Come. It's not like, I'm going to shock God. I didn't know you were so dirty.

Right? Okay. God doesn't talk like that. That was weird. All right. So. Eh? Anyway. What else?

What else? What else? Yeah. Debbie. Well, it's sort of, I really relate to what everybody said. Especially Don.

[37 : 06] But it reminded me of the scripture. I haven't looked it up. In 2 Corinthians 5.16. So from now on, we regard no one from a worldly point of view.

That's, to me, says the same thing. You know. We have to look at them through Christ's eyes. And, you know, I don't want to do that.

I mean, apparently he doesn't see what I see. So it's. Oh, he knows about it, but he's overlooking it, isn't he? So it's just. Still my child. And that's in the section about ministry of reconciliation, which I guess is a whole separate thing from forgiveness.

I don't know, but it's a challenge. Well, identity. Everybody's about identity today, right? But John was about identity, too.

Paul was all about identity. Jesus was about it. Who are you? Who do you really think you are? Who do you believe you are? If I listen to my soul, I think I'm a dirty sinner.

[38 : 14] But if I listen. That's the Lord Daigle song. I'm quoting songs today. You know, you say. I think I'm not loved, but you say. I think I'm falling apart, but you say.

Right? What do I believe about his word? He says I'm holy. He says I'm loved. It's not something I feel. Right?

Yeah. Wait, you said last time that was it. Along with loving, does that mean you have to also totally forgive them?

Is it like a package to do? So what I'm hearing. What I'm hearing is, is there a loophole? I think so.

I think so. You're two of the three. So can I just go this far? Jesus, how many times do I have to forgive? Come on. Really? Seven is a really perfect number, isn't it?

[39 : 19] Times. Seventy times seven, which Peter couldn't add. You know, I mean, he can only count so many fish at a time. Isn't there a scripture, and maybe misunderstanding it, where you are having a conflict with a person, come with, I think it states another person.

So if your brother sins against you, if he listens to you, you've won. If he doesn't listen to you, bring two witnesses, right? Yes.

Does that apply only to, like, in church? Oh, that applies to, if your brother sins against you, you go to your brother. But isn't there also the statement that says, if they haven't repented, or that you don't have to be in a relationship with them?

No, it doesn't say that. It just says you treat them as a tax gatherer and a sinner. So if they don't repent. Does that text say you don't have to forgive them?

No. What does the text say? I just want to make sure I'm understanding. I got you. It's okay. No, I'm playing with you a little bit.

[40 : 33] I get it, because you're... I'm not trying to be silly. No, no, I know you're not. You're asking what everybody asks. You're fine. Okay. You're asking very normal questions. Right? So...

Thanks. Do we have to forgive? Yes. What do you think? Yes. Yes? Yes? Do you think? Yes. We have to be forgiven you. Ever? Always? Yes. Always do we forgive?

Always? I got some always. I'm sorry, Bart. A little louder? Yes. Yeah, it is. If you are to be forgiven, you must forgive. Yeah, Jesus said, right?

Jesus said we pray that daily, right? Forgive us as... So I can only expect that daily forgiveness to be as much as I've forgiven. So if I'm holding a grudge, I'm telling the Father, yeah, hold back on this one.

Because he said... Because I've already been forgiven everything. Right? So he's talking to a believer. So I'm not about forgiveness that gets me into heaven. This is about the daily cleansing with the Father.

[41 : 39] Forgive us as we forgive. Right? So the measure... Right? And then Jesus adds to that, if you do not forgive from your heart, you will not be forgiven.

So is that conditional salvation? No. No, it's just, what block am I going to put between me and God?

He's ready to forgive. Am I... Am I ready to forgive? Am I ready to forgive? And that's one of the hardest things to do. That's just totally unnatural, absurd.

Right? You see these court cases where something horrific has happened. And most of the family members are like, Burden! I hope he... I hope he...

Right? He needs to be... He deserves to be punished to the utmost. And every once in a while you hear somebody say, I forgive him. And nobody gets that.

[42 : 41] Like, what? What's wrong with that person? I forgive them. I let it go. How do they do that? Well, they must have experienced forgiveness of the like kind.

Right? The talent picture, right? The slave that owns the Lord or master, right? Kazillion dollars, right?

And the master forgives him out of his... Splunk now. Out of his... Compassion. He felt... So just wiped it clean. Apparently he can afford to...

Lose a... Several million dollars. Then the slave goes out and... To the fellow slave that owes him about \$10,000. Same. They won't forgive.

Right? So then it comes back. It's like, I just... I forgave you something so... Inconceivable. And you're not... You're going to hold on to this? That's what it reflects.

[43 : 50] If I can't forgive... So the only... The power to forgive goes back. I got to go back to the cross. And I got to go... Okay. Help me see the full picture of you forgive. How you've forgiven me.

Out of that... I'll find the grace to forgive. And then there's the... The whole consequences thing. If I don't forgive... What happens to me?

If I hold the grudge... Am I hurting that person? They probably don't even know. I'm hurting me. And Paul says...

I'm giving a foothold for the evil one. Where he can just... Gotcha. And snare me. Just not worth it.

It's not easy. I get it. Some things are just... Logically, totally unforgivable. They're just... How do I do that?

[44 : 51] It's the only way. I can do it. So. So do I have to? Well, we talk about...

So John mentions that word ought, right? Duty. It doesn't mean legalism. It means I have a responsibility. Right?

I have a duty to him. Not to save me. Right? It's simply because... I owe him everything. So ought I love like he is?

Oh, yeah. I'm not going to argue that with him. Ought I walk like him? Yeah. Again, I should do that. Yeah. Well, that's also the command he gave us.

Right. But I'm sensitive to commands and legalistic language. Right? Folks have been ashamed and been abused under legalistic teaching.

- [45 : 49] So I'm sensitive to that. But that's not what John is saying. He's not saying you ought. Right. He's saying you ought. Given what he's given you.
- He's my daddy. I do what daddy says. Right? Because I love my daddy. And I want to be like my daddy. Yeah?
- What else you got? There's a lot here. And there's issues like that where we could just...
- Okay, we could... We could go down that road further, too. Because that's... There's heavy stuff in here. It's a hard thing to do.
- Very hard thing to do. It's impossible. To walk like Jesus walks... To love like Jesus loves to... Right? That's impossible.
- [46 : 52] Do we have any indication that Jesus forgave Caiaphas? Yes. Jesus forgave Caiaphas, the high priest? Yes. He set on the cross.
- Well, who is he talking about on the cross? Those who were failure. I mean, that's kind of an open question. At least he's talking about the Roman soldiers who are doing the brutal deed.
- But he may be talking about the whole nation who've just said, put it on our head. Put his blood on my head.
- But if he chooses not... If Jesus chose not to forgive, I mean, he's God. You know? God chooses to do a lot of stuff that...
- Right. ...isn't for us to choose. Right. And he may have just been doing that personally. I don't know. To not bear the grudge. Maybe he's just doing that. Right?
- [47 : 50] Some things Jesus forgave just personally. Like Stephen, when he's dying, right? Lord, don't hold this against them. Stephen's being stoned and he... Yeah. Lord, don't hold this against them.
- He didn't say don't hold all the other stuff. He just... Don't hold this one. And Jesus may have been saying the same thing. Don't hold this... I don't... Did he forgive Caiaphas?
- Forgive them. They knew what they did. Right. Yeah. So... I... I think Caiaphas knew what he did. He was doing, though. But...
- Couldn't swear to that. I think the Sanhedrin knew what they were doing. There's clues that it says they knew. He's going to take our power if we don't get rid of this guy. Yeah.
- So I... But that's how much they understood is enough. That's not for me to judge. Yeah. But yeah. Did Jesus forgive? If Jesus had a choice to forgive or not forgive, what did he do?
- [48 : 49] Of course he did. Of course he did. So... Yeah. The common sense thing would be said. Yeah, he did. He must have in some way. But not to confuse salvation with... No. That personal...
- Personal choice. Not going to hold that grudge. Right. Right. Although John says that. John says Jesus was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, right? What's the whole world?
- Not to be debated here. Yeah. Because there's two ways to look at that. Yeah. Yeah. Right after that sentence where he says he's the propitiation for the whole world, he also says...
- I was looking at it this morning. What verse was that? The propitiation. 2-2. Um... But then he goes into verse 4.
- Whoever says, I know him, but does not keep his commandments as a liar, the two's not in it, which speaks against the whole world. Meaning... Right. Well, if he's... There's the conundrum, right?

[49 : 51] If he really is the satisfaction for everyone's sin, if he died in the place of every sinner in the world, then what does God have on anybody to judge?

You don't need verse 4. Right. And clearly the Bible does say some are not going. Some are going to heaven and some are not. Right? So where's the line?

There's a lot more to that whole discussion. It's about... You've got the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Right. And that's the only unforgivable sin. Correct. Which is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is not believing what the Holy Spirit is telling you, leading you to Jesus, that he is the propitiation for your sins.

So you don't accept that, therefore you can't... That's the sin that cannot be forgiven. Right. So ultimately, if you reject Jesus, you're respecting... You're rejecting the Spirit's conviction on your heart that he is who he is, you reject that, that's unforgivable.

Yeah. Because that's your only chance of forgiveness. Right. Yeah. And believe. I mean, it's... John's pretty black and white. I mean, he... Hard to believe. You're either filled with the Spirit of Christ or you're filled with the Spirit of the devil.

[51 : 09] Yeah. There's no good guy and male guy. There's the good, the bad, and the ugly. Yeah. And John just has the good and the ugly.

And I think Caiaphas, you know, denying Christ with the Son of God is pretty much saying that he... Well, that doesn't mean he was forever forgiven, you know.

Right. Because I can deny Jesus for years of my life and then come to light, right? Right. I can walk in darkness for years even though I'm convicted until I'm regenerated.

And that seems... That's the point that John adds, right? He talks about walking in light, practicing righteousness. And then he starts to add things about, okay, who's the one walking in light, practicing righteousness? Well, he's also the person who's been born of God.

So he's got a new nature. Right. And he's also the person who's abiding. So he doesn't just practice righteousness on his own.

[52 : 17] He's practicing righteousness because... Right, Sherry? What? What? What? What? What? What? He's abiding in the vine. Right. Right? He's connected to Jesus.

Get all going. I know. I've got to be careful. I don't do this wrong. Right? So he's a branch on the vine. If you're apart from the vine, you can do nothing.

So on my own, I can do nothing. But if I'm connected, if I'm abiding, which that's the definition of abiding for me. Because that's where Jesus uses the word, abide in the vine.

Right? So John talks about abide in him, which, by the way, John also wrote, John 15, right? The abiding. So I think that's what he means. That kind of abiding that's connected.

I'm intentionally connected to Christ. I'm drawing my strength, my power. I'm not relying on me.

[53 : 13] I'm relying on him. So as I go in the day, I say, Lord, help me keep trusting you. Help me keep abiding in you. Right? When the hard talk comes, it's like, okay, don't know how to forgive this one.

You've got to do it in me. Do the working and the willing within me for your good pleasure. When I'm not willing and when I don't want to work. Do the work, you know, right?

That's how Psalms prayed. That's Psalm 119 was, make me walk. I don't want to, but you make me walk. I want you to make me walk. I want you to take my heart and incline it to good things and not to that selfish stuff.

I want you to, right, take my eyes and turn them away from that sight. That's what the psalmist is saying. You do it because I can't do it.

But I'm pleading with him to change me. Right? That's prayer. That's abiding. Yeah?

- [54 : 24] No, just to touch back on what Sarah was saying a moment ago. I think the way that our world works, we want to be politicians more than we want to be followers of Christ.
- And in moving from P to R, we want to rationalize as opposed to have a relationship. I want to constantly tell myself, well, yeah, I know I did this kind of bad thing, but it wasn't as bad as other people.
- Right? Yeah. Going back to Luke 18. You know, I'm not as bad as that nasty tax collector. Right. Thank God I'm not a nasty tax collector. I think we need to adopt John's view of black and white because that's what it is.
- We are following God and we are designing a relationship with him and pursuing that with all our heart. We are not. Absolutely. We don't need to be politicians.
- You know, my friend who's not here this morning, not 50 great him. He is. That's what politicians do, right? I never want to take a stand on anything because I want to be everybody's friend.
- [55 : 32] I want everybody to be my friend. I want to be lukewarm so that I don't really bother anybody. That's not what we're called to do. And not to point at other people and hold them to that standard, but to look in the mirror and hold ourselves to that standard.
- Sherry? As long as we hold ourselves to that standard, we just have to remember God's grace. Amen. Absolutely. Amen. That's why that walking in the cleansing light, that whole concept, get the whole concept.
- I walk in the light because it cleanses me. Because I'm dirty as anything. My soul is always fouled up. That's why Jesus told me to hate my soul.
- I can't trust my soul. I can't trust my heart either. What can I trust? The word. But it's like what you were citing a moment ago in the Psalms. David got to that point.
- David blew it. Right. But David understood that he blew it. He understood that there was no redemption within the law for what he had done.
- [56 : 41] The only thing he could do was throw himself on God's mercy. And he did that because he had a relationship with him. And he could write those words in the Psalms because he understood the black and the white.
- Even when he was part of the black at some point in time. But like David. Right. So David hid for a time. He did.
- He did. He covered it up. A shame. Whatever he was doing. God didn't let him keep doing that. He was notified. And he's not going to let you do that either.
- That's right. And so back to what Mark said. Holy Spirit convicts me. Yeah. And if you feel uncomfortable about something. Yeah.
- And I say this for myself too. I feel uncomfortable because as it says in Hebrews. God in 8. Hebrews 8. God did write his laws in our heart.
- [57 : 40] In our minds. And there's no reason to teach our neighbors about him. Because they know about him. And I believe that's the shadow of the Holy Spirit being given to us.
- You know when it's not right. Right. And if you listen. He is the counselor.
- And he will counsel you and direct you. And if we deny that. Then we have a problem. Relationally with God.
- Yeah. And it's grieving. I was using the case of David because he was under conviction. Yet still doing nothing. Right. Psalm 32 describes this hand was heavy.
- I'm miserable. I feel all this. Right. Draining in my boat. And God still sent somebody. Okay. That ain't doing it. All right. Go tell him a sheep story.

- [58 : 42] Go tell him a little lamb story. That'll get it. Right. He sends the Nathans. He sends the Nathans. And so God will do that to you. If you're his child and you're doing that. Your life's miserable but you're still not repenting.
- He'll send somebody. Okay. Oops. Don't tell the woman. Please. Actually. Somebody else set it up. I don't know. Yeah. Yeah.
- Please don't knock those over. She's watching too probably. Sorry dear. All right. What did he do? Okay.
- There's a lot. There's a lot here. So we will have a chance to do this again. We're going to look at next week. Lord willing. The rest of chapter 3.
- From 19 to the end. We go to the third test again. So the tests are walking or practicing righteousness. Loving your brother. And the third test is about confession and belief.
- [59 : 41] What do I believe about Jesus? And do I believe the right Jesus? And then he's going to add to that. That third test about believing in the name of Jesus.
- There's a contrast. Not believing every spirit. Okay. So he talks about. One of the confirmations that we do believe in Jesus.
- And we know he's right. It's the spirit of truth. Who comes to us. The Holy Spirit. Confirms that we believe in Jesus. And then he says. But don't believe every spirit. So which spirit are you listening to?
- In other words. Oh I know it's the Holy Spirit. How do you know? And that's what John's going to talk about. There's a way to know. There's one Jesus.
- One Jesus. Goes all the way back to that opening thing in 1 John. That's. This is what we're hanging everything on. He's the one from the beginning. He's the one that we touch. He's the one that we heard.
- [60 : 40] He's the one that was revealed. Right? He is the eternal life. He's our only hope. That's the one. Any other Jesus. Don't buy it. I'm told to believe a lot of things.
- And John's going to say. Don't believe this one. Or these ones. Right? So anyway. That's where we're going next. About truth. And notice there's three.
- Right? So it's not just. If I'm walking in the light. Okay. I'm a pretty moral person. I think I'm doing okay. So I must be a Christian. Well you add to that. Are you loving your brother? Okay.
- That gets harder. But I am a pretty amiable loving person. I'm pretty. You know. I think I'm okay. Okay. What do you believe? Oh I believe God loves everybody. You know. My Jesus is this.
- And my truth is that. And. Okay. Three tests. As a whole. Proof who a Christian is. And my hunch is that we struggle in one of those areas.
- [61 : 45] At least one. At least. Right? Our different personalities might relate. I might be more naturally loving. Not me. But you know. You might be. Okay.
- Or I might be a real moral person. You know. I'm pretty. You know. I like keeping order. And keep walking. But I'm not a real touchy loving person. Okay.
- So anyway. Stop. Stop. Stop. Yeah. Let's pray. Father. Thank you for your word. Thank you for this time to talk about it. To dialogue.
- To interact. To kind of sort through. I pray that this time Lord will help some of this truth sink in. That we have another perspective to look at it and grasp it and absorb it and interact with it.
- And ultimately Lord we want this truth to sink down into our heart. Not just our mind but into our heart where it affects how we think and how we act.

[62 : 48] We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.