

Sermon

March 16, 2025

The Children of God ABIDE

I John 3:1-10

A FATHER KNOWS HIS KID

Growing up in a middle-class Oklahoma City neighborhood, any afternoon after school we had an accumulation of kids playing it out on someone's front yard. It was usually ours since we had a bigger front lawn. Football was usually the preferred game. Then at 5:30 sharp you would start to hear this: DRUUUUUUUUUU, followed by "a long whistle" and short bursts of: MIKE – MIKE – Mike. One by one each kid, when they heard their call, stopped what they were doing even in the middle of the play, and they sprinted home. It was dinner time. Every kid heard and knew the call from their father, every kid knew where their home was.

A father knows his children and the children know their father.

READ I John 3:1-10 (Lydia Hodges)

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. ^{ESV}

THE WRITER AND THE REASON

There is a lot of preaching in his passage. I will talk about why this was written, who are the children of God and what do they do.

The writer is John. Does not identify himself but several clues lead us to believe it was the Apostle John. Why is it important we know who he is?

This is the beloved disciple, one of Jesus's closest (philo) friends. Traveled with Jesus for over three years. Probably written later in his life; late first century, after the destruction of Jerusalem temple. Message and language has the same style and flow as the Gospel of John.

Why did he write this book? What is it he really wants us to know?

Last week Chuck Wysong preached a very encouraging sermon in Roman 8 – NO CONDEMNATION for all IN CHRIST (abide) Jesus. It was encouraging because the Apostle Paul wanted to reassure Christians that the work of Jesus was complete, and we are free from the law.

John wanted to give 1st century believers assurances of who they are in Christ, and second, he needed to warn them about some bad teaching and doctrine in the church. These assurances and warnings are still very relevant to us today.

PRAYER

1. Give assurance to believers in Christ

1 John 2:12

I am writing to you, dear children,
because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.

3: I See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!
And that is what we are!

2. Combat bad doctrine and its impact

- "Let no one deceive you" V.7
- **Gnosticism.** Dualism between spirit and matter.

Corrupt teaching and ideas infiltrating the church. Our body(matter) is evil but God (spirit) is good. Different gyrations of this belief. Salvation is the escape from the body, not necessarily by faith in Christ, but by special "higher" knowledge. The outcome is a license to sin. Since the body is evil, sin has no moral consequence since "real life" is in the spirit realm and is good. This is bad doctrine drift—poison to the believers—and within just a few decades since Jesus ascended into heaven.

Can you think of a modern-day example? More than one adult has told me they knew they were practicing sexual sin, but explained he left that at the front door of the church and left it outside while he worshiped. Don't laugh, this type of dualism is practiced often in our "church" culture because it is a common belief of culture in general.

WHO ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD?

3: I See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!
And that is what we are!

How do we know we are the children of God? Isn't all humanity "children of God"? Important to make a distinction between "being created in the image of God" (Genesis 1:27) and "children of God" Image not a "picture". God is spirit – we are a human. God gives us a spirit and that is the image we bear.

There were many other ideas and religions floating around in the first century about the children of God and still are today.

Galatians 3:26-27

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

John 1:12-13

Yet to all who did **receive** him, to those who **believed in his name**, he gave the right to become children of God—children born **not of natural descent**, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

All Israelites assumed they were children of God by heritage.

John wants us to **know** (v.10 "it is evident")who is a child of God.

I. V. 6 -. No one who **abides in him (GOD)** keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him

What does that mean "abides in Christ"? Abide (dwell, makes a home)

The Greek verb "μένω" (menó) primarily means to remain or stay in a given place, state, or relation. It conveys a sense of persistence and continuity, often implying a steadfastness or enduring presence.

This abiding is not merely a physical presence but involves a spiritual and relational depth, akin to the rabbinic tradition of disciples remaining with their teacher to learn and emulate their way of life. Strong's Lexicon.

"keeps on sinning" – "makes a practice of sin". What does this mean? Some versions say if differently. Deliberately, knowingly, habitually continue in sin – AMP. If it means a Child of God stops sinning altogether...we are all doomed! It doesn't mean we will stop sinning. Or if it does – is anybody there yet? Well, what is sin?

The verb ἁμαρτάνω primarily means "to sin" or "to miss the mark." In the New Testament, it is used to describe the act of **violating God's law or falling short of His standard**. The illustration is a stone from a sling or an arrow from a bow being errant from the bullseye of the target. (prop)

John is addressing this bad doctrine and practice of sin. It is not okay to keep sinning because we Trust in Jesus. We cannot separate our spiritual practice and our body practices.

**The emphasis is not to hit the bullseye every time,
rather ABIDE in Christ ALL the time**

2. V.9-. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed (nature, NIV) **abides in them (US)**; and they cannot keep on sinning, because they have been born of God.

What does born of God mean?

We are all born with a nature to sin. All struggle with our flesh. Romans 8.

Jesus told Nicodemus unless you are born again you cannot see the kingdom of heaven. John 3:3 ...must be born of the water and spirit...v.5. Born once out of the womb, now a spiritual birth.

What is God's seed/nature? How does He make his home in us?

In that rebirth God indwells us with His Spirit. The Holy Spirit. And He ABIDES in us. We now have power over sin in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:17 receive the Holy Spirit and are a new creation Roman 6:6-7 no longer slaves to sin. We have his DNA – there is remorse and repentance when we stray from His nature.

**The emphasis is not to hit the bullseye every time,
rather let Christ ABIDE in you ALL the time.**

STORY (WHERE ARE YOU ABIDING???)

As a young teenager (well before driving age) I had friends and acquaintances, both boys and girls. We would often visit each other in our homes or our yards and do stuff together. Yes, we played football outside, but we also did a variety of things inside (ping pong, chess, played music) as well especially during inclement weather. Dan lived 3 doors down to the South - he was a little rough and a little scrappy, somewhere between an acquaintance and friend. Both in the 7th grade. Mom did not have a very high opinion of Dan but gave him the benefit of the doubt and even invited him to church with us. He accepted a couple of times and then declined – he complained the girls were not cute or friendly enough. One day when mom was not at home Dan came over and was always asking about where the liquor was and went on a determined search. I assured him we do not have liquor around the house, and he assured me we do they just hide it. I said I only know one small plastic bottle of rum that was given to them by Uncle Ray because he lived in Barbados for a while. You mean this one he says? He had already found it. Yes, that one. Great let's drink it! No, we are not. Then I'll drink it by myself. No, you are not. Dan goes into a tantrum, claims I am not a not his friend unless we drink this. Dan, you need to go home NOW.

A few days later Dan is back to almost usual, and we are playing basketball on the front driveway and Dan says hey let's go over to my house play some pool. He has a pool table and it's starting to get a bit chilly outside. So, we go over and play pool and asks if I'm thirsty. And then he proceeds to his mom and dad's liquor cabinet and bar and asks what kind of drink I want. I replied I don't want any of your mom and dad's liquor. And in the next several minutes he's trying to

convince me that it's OK we need to get drunk. Goes into a tantrum that I am not his friend. I said gotta go. I've got to get out of here and go to my home.

Kids and youth; don't stick around and be a part of mean or meaningless conversation or activity. Whether face to face or on snapchat. "Friends" don't invite us into sin.

WHERE ARE YOU ABIDING???

Who do you invite into your house? Should they be there? What are they doing? Are you having a positive influence on them or do they have a not so positive influence on you? Speaking here not about people, per say, but about habits, conversation practices, vices and devices. WHO OR WHAT IS ABIDING IN YOUR HOUSE? **GET THEM OUT!!!** If they don't belong in your house. **Almighty God, through His Holy Spirit, abides in YOUR HOUSE.** The two do not and cannot coexist. Do not continue with the delusion that they can.

Further, whose house are you in right now? And whose house do you visit? Now I know you are physically in a church building right now...but what about you thoughts? Your hopes? Your dreams? Where are you? Where do you go for peace? For pleasure? For satisfaction? What places are you abiding in? **GET OUT! FLEE!** You don't belong there as a child of God. Get out and go to your house. Don't visit that place anymore.

Kids and youth: If anybody tells you they are not your friend or un-friends you because you won't do or say something that is wrong... They are correct, you are not their friend, at least in that moment.

Sometimes it matters how we read and write a bible verse. Does this look and sound different?

Whoever is
Born of God
does not practice sin for
God's Seed ABIDES
in us and we cannot keep sinning because we are
Born of God
I John 3:9

ABIDE

ACTION STEPS:

What will I do to Abide in Christ?

What will I do to let Christ Abide in You?

Proximity – get close to Him and His Children (car fob, not remote control)

1. **Read His Word – continually and dwell (Abide) in it**
(Psalms 119:11) (Heb 4:12 Word of God is ALIVE- ACTIVE)
2. **Listen - let His Spirit guide your spirit**
(listen especially for “get up” “get out” and “come home”)
3. **Yearn - to ABIDE in Him**
(lost that yearning? Fixable- it is a proximity/geography issue)

Come home – ABIDE IN HIM – we are the children of God, such as we are, that is who we are.

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! | John 3:1

PRAYER

BENEDICTION