

Series: The Confident, Loving Church – week 14

CDOBC – beginning on 2/14/10

Title: **“Whose Side Are You On?”**

1 John 3:7-10 ~ June 13, 2010

OBJECTIVE: To encourage believers to live in a way that agrees with their identity as God’s children – and to live in a way that sides with Christ – not the Devil in the ‘cosmic’ spiritual battle (Eph. 6:12).

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- VBS begins tomorrow...pray!
- Could you please announce a reminder about making payment if you have already reserved a Ticket. Also, reminder about Women of Faith and an Invitation to join us. Oct 1-2,2010... US Airways Arena... \$89/Ticket...ALL Payments and Ticket Purchases MUST be made by 7/15....so that is only 4 weeks away.
- Child Dedication – next Sunday – Father’s Day
- MUCC – Men Under Construction for Christ – Thursday nights

Opening Prayer

Famous Feuds:

Biblical rivals...

Moses vs. Pharaoh

David vs. Goliath

In our nation...

North vs. South

Hatfield’s vs. McCoys

In the sports world...

Yankees vs. Red Sox

Tiger vs. Phil

U of A vs. ASU

In the cartoon world...

Tom vs. Jerry

However, on a serious note – the greatest feud or battle is between:
God vs. Satan

The big picture of reality as revealed by Scripture gives us a clear distinction between God and Satan – a clear distinction between good and evil.

Ephesians 6:12

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

In the eyes of God, there are no shades of gray – you are either for Him or against Him. Jesus said:

“...for whoever is not against us is for us.” Mark 9:40

“Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God...” 1 John 3:10

This is the picture John paints for us in the verses before us this morning.

This does not deny that there are shades of gray in life and even shades of gray in certain areas of doctrine – but John is not trying to discuss those areas – it’s not the purpose of his letter and it’s not the problem he was trying to address as he wrote. The questions: *“What is the Gospel”* and *“How can I be confident of my faith”* were the primary questions he was addressing. This was no time for nuanced explanations – clarity was needed – direct and unambiguous statements were the only remedy for the sick churches throughout Asia Minor...and the same can be said of many churches and many Christians today. So many in modern Christianity have made the gray areas of life and faith their primary focus – while subjugating to secondary status the clear teaching in Scripture on sin, righteousness, grace, love, and judgment.

Turn to 1 John 3:7-10

Read passage

Paternity dictates behavior...behavior reveals paternity.

vs. 7-10

John begins vs. 7 with a caution – “Don’t let anyone lead you astray.” His great concern was that the believers would accept false teaching about righteousness – and what God expects from His children.

Generally speaking, it is easy to identify someone by their looks or behavior.

A sports fan by the clothing they wear

A body builder by their body type

A business man / woman by their suit

An auto mechanic by their clothing or the greasy hands

A construction worker by their vehicle

For the believer, this principle also applies. For the person who claims salvation in Christ, they must also have traits that identify them as being in the family of God. As John has stated throughout the letter – faith and behavior are connected. This may seem like an obvious point to some – its logic is obvious, but for many people in the first and second century – and for many people today – this is not an automatic connection they make in their mind. Many people see life as the Gnostics of the first and second centuries saw life. They saw two distinct “compartments” in life – one physical and the other spiritual – and the two had little to do with each other.

If you don’t think this is a common way of thinking today – just consider how many people pursue a party lifestyle and indulge themselves in numerous vices and sins throughout the week and especially on the weekend – but then on Sunday they attend church – they perform a few rituals – say a few prayers – and they leave church thinking everything is

great with God – no problem – slate is clean, ready to be soiled again with the week's activities!

This scenario has some small differences from true Gnostic philosophy, but its result is the same – faith is viewed as a separate area from the rest of life – their faith has no influence on the person's behavior or attitudes throughout the week.

Do you think this way? Is this how you view your faith in Christ – like a spiritual garbage man who takes away your trash that has gathered throughout the week so you can get back to filling up the garbage can again with more trash?

The Apostle John makes a clear argument in these verses that our paternity dictates our behavior. What do I mean by this? Paternity simply refers to who your father is...and John is saying that if your spiritual father is God, then you should act like it. The converse is also true – that if you don't act like God but act like the devil (sin / unrighteousness) then you are acting as if Satan is your father.

As a father myself, I have expectations of my kids. They know what my expectations are – and when their behavior matches my expectations, people will see the uniformity between father and child.

As God's children, we should reflect the character and nature of our God who is our spiritual Father.

Sin is treason against Christ. vs. 8

Have you ever thought of sin in this way?

Treason is betrayal, disloyalty, subversion. The opposite of treason is *allegiance*.

When we "practice sin" (NASB, ESV - Greek - present tense), we are acting in the best interest of the devil. When we sin we are

subverting the kingdom of God and siding with God's enemy – the Devil.

John says, the Devil "...has been sinning from the beginning." – which is either a reference to his fall from perfection before creation, or a reference to his activity with human beings starting with Adam and Eve.

The antithesis to the work of the Devil was the incarnation of Christ. The appearance of Jesus – God taking on flesh – was for the purpose of destroying the work of the Devil and to redeem humanity back to God.

With this clear moral view of history, it's unthinkable to John that believers would continuously choose to sin – that they would *practice sin* - because it would be the equivalent of treason against the kingdom of God!

Tomorrow is Flag Day – and for good citizens throughout our nation, they will take great pride in flying the flag and/or seeing the flag flown tomorrow. In a few weeks we will celebrate our nation's 234th birthday on July 4th. National pride will be evident at all the celebrations. How would someone be received if they showed up at a July 4th celebration and started a public call for everyone to commit treasonous acts? Of course, this person would face serious resistance for committing treason is one of the most hated acts a citizen could do.

If this is true in our civic life, why do we fail to see it's significance and offence in the spiritual realm? Why are so many Christians content to live a treasonous life toward Christ and His Kingdom?

The whole reason Christ took on flesh was to destroy the Devil's work – but when we continue in sin, we are siding with Satan against Christ! We are in opposition to Christ and His work!

The believer's birthright against sin vs. 9-10

When you place your faith in Christ – you are ‘born’ into the family of God. Some people wonder where this term “*born again*” comes from. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:5-8

“Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

So, when we talk of being “born again”, we are simply using Jesus’ words that speak of spiritual birth. When a person is ‘*born again*’, they are given a ‘new life’ in Christ.

Many things happen to you when you are ‘born’ into the family of God. Of primary importance, is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in your life – in your soul. John referred to the Holy Spirit’s presence in the believer’s life in: 1 John 2:27-29

“As for you, the anointing you received from Him remains in you...His anointing teaches you...that anointing is real...”

The “anointing” in these verses refers to the moment the Holy Spirit indwells a believer.

The “seed” reference in vs. 9 is the Holy Spirit. Many commentators also believe it can be a reference to the Word of God – but it seems most accurate to see here the Holy Spirit. Why? Because one of the primary roles of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer is to convict them of sin and to guide them into holiness.

John 14:16-17

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”

John 14:26

“...the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

John 15:26

“When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.”

John 16:8

“When He (the Spirit) comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment...”

Our ability to resist sin and embrace holiness is due to what God gives us at our spiritual birth.

When we are ‘born again’ a number of things happen. We not only receive the Holy Spirit, but...

- ◆ Our salvation is secured for eternity (John 6:39; 10:28-29).
- ◆ Our minds are enlightened (John 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:10, 13-14) and we gain the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16) so we can understand spiritual truth.
- ◆ Our will is liberated and freed from sin so we can not only avoid sin, but so we can joyfully choose to obey God (John 6:44, 65; Col. 2:13).
- ◆ When we are ‘born again’ our old life is made powerless because the power of the death and resurrection of Christ is applied to us personally (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:4).

The final phrase of vs. 10, John begins to shift focus to the greatest sin that can occur within the body of Christ – the sin of not loving a fellow believer. For John – one of the great evidences of someone’s faith is their love for other believers. We’ll dig deeper into this in the coming weeks, but for our purpose this morning, we need to realize how important loving one another is. In fact, John states that anyone who does not love his brother is not a child of God!

“For him (John), righteousness and love are inseparable; since they are inseparable in the character of God and in His revelation in Christ, so they must be inseparable in the lives of His people.” (The

Gospel and Epistles of John, by F.F. Bruce, p. 93)

Application

Popular saying over the past number of years – *“Who’s your daddy?”*

This slang saying has a variety of meanings that range from the fairly innocent to the very vulgar.

However, this morning, I want to put a twist on it and clean it up a bit – I want to ask you *“Who’s your spiritual father?”* Don’t *tell* me who your spiritual father is...don’t *tell* someone else who it is...who does your life say your spiritual father is? Who do your attitudes point to as your spiritual father?

Do they point to God...or to the Devil?