

The Practice of His Righteousness I John 3:4-24

To fix our eyes on the stunning, saving, purifying love of God - Jesus Christ the Lord - is to cancel out any unloving, ungodly options that may be before us. To make ourselves at home in Christ is to live and move and have our being in the One Who has no sin in Him, in the One Who also came to take away our sins and destroy the works of the original sinner, the devil. Make yourself at home in the devil and you will sin. Make yourself at home in Christ, the Victor over sin and the devil, and you will not sin, for no sin can come out of Christ in you. Jesus is forever saying to us, "Abide in Me where sin is conquered. Abide in Me where the devil is defeated. Abide in Me and My righteous love will find it's practical expression through you." Neither Jesus nor John said that is impossible for a Christian to sin (refuse to abide fully in Christ and see what happens!). But they are saying that it is possible for a Christian NOT to sin (abide fully in Christ and see what happens!)

How do we know if we are fully abiding in Christ? How do we know if we are deriving our works from Christ or the devil? John says, "We have a simple test for that. For those who abide in Christ and derive their works from Him, the practice of righteousness will be consistently demonstrated." And what does that look like? "It looks like love. This is how we know the Love of God - He laid down His Life for us. This is how we know the love of God at work in us - we lay down our lives, our rights, our resources for the sake of others." Neither sin nor the devil can ever use the love of God for their evil deeds and dark purposes.

Those learning to abide in Christ, the Love of God, do not live for themselves any longer. (Sin and living for yourself are pretty much the same thing.) In fact, isn't a rebel merely someone who cannot or will not love? A "self" who lives for himself? Whether the rebellion looks like indifference (3:17), hatred (3:15), or murder (3:12,15), the Love of God can never take you to such places. When God who is love is our Source, the One who freely gives Himself and abundantly bestows His gifts upon the undeserving, we are being divested of everything that is not love so that everything that is congruent with His love can find it's expression in and through us. With the sacrificially Loving Life of Christ abiding in us, we have no excuse for sinning, for any work of the devil to be expressed through us. In fellowship with Christ we are fully equipped to lay down our lives for one another. We have no logic by which to say with our lips, "I abide in Christ!", yet speak indifference, ill will, and murderous thoughts with our lives. The two are mutually exclusive.

How do we know we are abiding in and by the truth of Christ's Loving Life? We will know the peaceful assurance of the Holy Spirit when we are in step with His poured our life. (3:19) We will experience the witness of God's joyful pleasure as His Life for others is flowing through us. (3:22) And there will be a simplicity to our walk of faith - trustfully abiding in Christ and faithfully loving one another are a simple expression of living by the Spirit of God graced to us when we first believed. (3:23,24) When we are saying to Him, "Live Your Life, Love with Your Love, have Your way in, through, and as me today", we are practicing His righteousness.

- **Tax-deductible contributions** -
may be made to *One In Christ, Inc.*
13820 NW 172nd Ave, Alachua, FL 32615
- **Messages and sermons by Steve** -
www.stevepettitmessages.com
- **Conferences and events led by Steve** -
can be arranged by calling Steve at 352-672-1275
- **To receive this newsletter electronically** -
email your request to OICnewsletter@gmail.com

Praise Reports & Prayer Requests



Please inform us of any changes to your address



Greetings

I continue to do counseling and mini-conferences by Zoom or Skype, yet hope and pray daily that such "venues" are coming to an end. They "work", God is not limited by some of the frustrations, and I am grateful for the opportunities to keep bearing witness to the liberating truth of "not I, but Christ" and "Christ in you, the hope of glory." A few actual meeting dates are tentatively taking shape in the weeks and months to come and we will try to keep you as current as possible. Some happen rather spontaneously, so there is no time to get the word out.

However, I plan to be speaking in person most Sundays in April, May, and June at Parkview Baptist in Gainesville. Feel free to drop in (masks and distance protocols are in place), either in person or online for live streaming (10:45 a.m.) or recorded messages at parkview-baptist-church.org. If you have any questions about that, contact me.

We pray you are finding grace to endure these different and, at times, difficult days. We pray you are learning by faith to thank God in all things (I Thess 5:18), and rejoice in Him always (Phil 4:4), especially on the not-so-good days. Resist being careless in these days when things seem a bit safer. Resist being fearful when the indicators go in the opposite direction. Stay lost in the perfect love of God and find yourself walking in His peace that empowers you to glorify Him and lovingly bless others, no matter the "externals"!

Hope to see you face-to-face soon!


CALENDAR

Most of our events for April - June are currently cancelled or delayed. However, our first event will hopefully be in Way-Mart, PA July 9-11. Contact Don Frantz for the latest details at 607-239-5006

Praise & Prayer

  The Gift of Perfect Love - Jesus Christ

  The Command Invitation to Abide in Christ

 To meet another's need with the love of Christ

 To serve the Lord with gladness

NONPROFIT
US POSTAGE PAID
ALACHUA, FL
PERMIT NO. 11

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

One In Christ, Inc.
13820 NW 172nd Avenue
Alachua, FL 32615