



1 John 5

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Tape #8236
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now in our Bibles to First John chapter five. We finish First John this week and next week, we take the little epistle of Second John. Just one chapter long and only thirteen verses but he does tell you how to deal with Jehovah Witnesses. So Second John next week. John tells us,

Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Messiah is born of God (5:1):

Jesus spoke of being born of God. He said to Nicodemus, "You must be born again" (John 3:3). Telling him that it was necessary for him to have a spiritual birth if he wanted to enter the kingdom of heaven. In John's gospel chapter one, John says that "as many as received Him, He gave the power to become the sons of God, even to those who believed on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12,13). Speaking of the new birth, the spiritual birth.

In James 1:18, James said, "Of His own will begat he us with the word of truth." Jesus spoke of the word as being the seed, planted in our hearts, bringing forth new life. So, "Of His own will, He begat us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creation" (James 1:18). Peter in the first chapter, verse three, said, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). So they are all speaking about this experience of being born of the Spirit of God, of having a spiritual birth. And how does that come? "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Messiah is born of God."

When Jesus said to Nicodemus that he had to be born again, He said, "Don't marvel that I say unto you, you must be born again. Nicodemus asked how that could be. Not really understanding what Jesus was talking about, he referred again to his physical birth from his mother's womb. And Jesus in answering the question, how can a man be born again when he is old? Jesus said, As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the son of man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:7-16). So Jesus twice gave the method by which a person is born again and it is through believing in Jesus as the Messiah. So John opens the fifth chapter by saying, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Messiah is born of God."

Here in chapter five, we actually enter into the third section of the book. The first section John reveals God as light. In the second section, John reveals God as love. And in this last section of the book, he will introduce God as life. God is light, God is love and God is life.

and every one that loveth him that begat (5:1)

That is, we've been begotten of God. And if you love God, then John said, *we love also those that are begotten of him (5:1).*

In other words, we love one another. Jesus said, "By this sign shall men know that you're my disciples, that you love one another" (John 13:35). In the last chapter, John said, "If you say you love God and you hate your brother, you're a liar. How can you love God whom you have not seen and yet hate your brother whom you have seen" (1 John 4:20)? And so John is again pressing this point. "Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Messiah is born of God. But those that love Him who has begotten them will also love those who have been begotten by Him."

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and we keep his commandments (5:2).

John all the way through this little epistle has been giving us sort of tests. How we can know what we know. And how do we know that we love God? It's when we keep His commandments. Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. And he that loveth me shall be loved of the Father, and We will come and manifest ourselves to him" (John 14:21). Keeping the commandments of

God. You see, you can say I love God but if you don't keep His commandments, then your words are inconsistent with your life, with your actions. And it's important that they line up together. Not just to say that I love God but also that love is manifested by my keeping His commandments.

And just what are His commandments? In John 13:34 Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34). In 1 John 3:23, "And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment." In 4:21, John said, "And this commandment we have from Him, That he who loves God loves his brother also" (1 John 4:21). So John is actually repeating himself and that is for emphasis. You say that you love God, your love for God is manifested in your love for the brethren, your love for each other. "By this we know we have that assurance that we are the children of God, that we love the children of God when we love God and keep His commandments."

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous (5:3).

Some people may think so. You may think that it is very difficult and almost impossible that God has commanded you to love one another. But that's because God's love is not yet perfected in you. How important it is! This is the heart, this is it. If you don't have love for the brethren, then you really have no proof or assurance that you're a child of God. "For he that is begotten of God also loves those who have been begotten by Him."

For whatsoever is born of God (5:4)

Again, we're talking about this new birth. "Whoever has been born of God,"

overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith (5:4).

In Revelation chapters two and three, as Jesus is addressing the churches, to each of the churches He has a special promise to those in the church who are overcomers. Overcoming the world, overcoming our flesh and overcoming the devil. We are told, "Be not overcome with evil but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). And so John is telling is, "Whosoever is born of God overcomes the world." We live in the world but we are not of the world! The world is attractive, it is very alluring. All that is of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life are very alluring. But whoever is born of God overcomes the world, the temptation, the allurements of the world. And what is the victory? What is the place of victory? It is our faith that gives us victory over the world! And John goes on to say,

Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God (5:5)?

A little earlier, he told us that "whosoever believes that Jesus is the Messiah is born of God." "Who is he that overcomes the world, he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God." They are tied together. The fact that Jesus is the Messiah is the proof that He is the Son of God. God promised that He was going to send His Son as the Messiah. The promise is, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given," and he goes on to describe the reign of the Messiah, "the government will be upon His shoulder, His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

And as you read the writings of the rabbis, the early rabbis, they did believe that the Messiah would be the Son of God. It's in their writings. You remember when Jesus said to the disciples, "Who do you say that I am? Peter said, You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:15,16). They were tied together.

When Jesus was before the high priest being cross-examined by the high priest, the high priest said, Are you the Messiah? Tell us plainly, I adjure you by the living God. Tell us plainly, Are you the Messiah? And Jesus said, You have said it. He said, Are you then the Son of God? And again Jesus said, You have said it" (Matthew 26:62-64). There was that tying together, the Messiah is the Son of God.

Now there's been a radical change in the belief of the modern rabbis from the ancient rabbis. Today they will tell you that the reason why they reject Jesus as the Messiah is because of His claim to be the Son of God. And they will tell you that they do not believe that the Messiah will be the Son of God. For Moses said, "And there shall be a prophet like unto myself; and to Him shall you give heed" (Deuteronomy 18:15). Therefore, Moses was a man, the Messiah will be a man.

And so this is a whole new tact that the rabbis have taken and they no longer believe what the earlier

rabbis believed, that Jesus would be the Son of God. However, they have great difficulty with the prophecy of Isaiah where God said, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given," and in Psalm 2, where it says, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." And "For unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O Lord, is for ever a sceptre of righteousness" (Psalm 45:6). But the interesting thing when you will ask then the rabbi, if He is a man, how will you recognize Him as the Messiah? And they will say, He will lead us in the rebuilding of the temple.

Interesting, because Daniel prophesied concerning the prince of the people that would come, who will create the abomination, which will create the desolation, that this prince of the people that will come will make a covenant with the nation of Israel and no doubt that covenant will include the rebuilding of the temple which will cause the Jews to acclaim Him as their Messiah.

Jesus said, "I came in My Father's name, and you did not receive Me: another one will come in his own name, and him you will receive" (John 5:43). So the idea of the Messiah being the Son of God is tied together in the scriptures was believed by the early rabbis and it is only of recent vintage that they have changed their belief because, of course, their desire to fortify their position that Jesus was not the Messiah.

"Whoever overcomes the world is he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God." Earlier, "that Jesus is the Messiah are the ones who are born of God." Speaking then of Jesus,

This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth (5:6).

How do I know? Because the Spirit has borne witness to our heart. God's Spirit bears witness to our hearts that we are the son of God. And He is the Spirit of truth who bears the truth to your heart that Jesus is the Son of God.

What does it mean He came by water and the blood? We remember that when Jesus was crucified that because it was the day that they were preparing for the sabbath, they did not want the body hanging on a tree on the sabbath day. So they came to Pilate for the permission to break the legs of those that were hanging on the crosses in order to hasten their death.

Death by crucifixion was usually death by suffocation. Hanging on the cross, it is hard to get your breath as the muscles of your body begin to give way, the bones begin to slip out of joint, hard to catch your breath. And there was a block upon which the feet were nailed. The knees were bent slightly. And to catch a breath, you'd have to push against the spikes in your feet to push yourself up so that you could open your lungs to get a breath. And then of course, you would sort of collapse again. But by pushing yourself up, you could get that gasp of air but death usually came by suffocation.

Now by breaking their legs, it prohibited them from pushing themselves up on the spikes to get their breath. The excruciating pain of your bones being broken there in your leg would preclude your pushing yourself up and so it hastened the death.

And so they came and they broke the legs of the two malefactors that were hanged on either side of Jesus. But we read, When they came to Jesus He was already dead. It is interesting that Jesus had said, "No man takes my life from me, I give my life. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again" (John 10:18). And we read in the scriptural account that when Jesus hanging there on the cross said, It is finished, Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit, that He dismissed His spirit (John 19:30). He had the power to lay it down. He said to His spirit, Okay, you may go now.

He said, "I have the power to lay it down, I have the power to take it up again." And so when they came to Jesus, they found that He was already dead so they did not break His legs and of course, that was a fulfillment of the scripture that said, "Not a bone of Him shall be broken" (John 19:36). But instead, just to make sure He was dead, the soldier took his spear and he punctured the heart of Jesus, pressed it through His side and we read, "There came forth blood and water" (John 19:34). The water indicates that Jesus actually, if you were a coroner and you examine the body later, you'd say, He died of a heart rupture. Because when the heart ruptures, the sac around the heart fills with sort of a watery kind of fluid. And the fact that there came forth blood and water indicates the heart rupture or you might say, He died of a broken heart.

So He came not by water only but by water and the blood. There came forth water and the blood and it is by the blood of Jesus Christ that we are cleansed from our sins. John tells us that the blood of Jesus Christ

cleanses a man from all sin. So “this is He that came by the water and the blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.”

John emphasizes the importance of witnesses to establish the truth and to establish the facts of a case. The Bible said, “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established” (Matthew 18:16). And so we read that Jesus spoke much of the witness. Jesus said in John 5:31, “If I bear witness of myself, you will say my witness is not true.” They would not accept a person’s witness of himself. But He said, “There’s another that bears witness of me; and I know that what He witnesses of me is true. You sent unto John, and John bore witness unto the truth. But I have a greater witness than that of John: the works which the Father has given me to finish, the same works that I do, they bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me” (John 5:31-33,36). So Jesus said John bore witness but there’s even a greater witness and it’s the works that I do. They bear witness that the Father sent me.

When Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, he said, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God: because no man can do the works that You are doing, except God be with him” (John 3:2). The works that Jesus did. As Jesus said, “The works that I do, I do not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake” (John 14:10,11). He appealed to the works that He did, the miracles that He performed.

When John the Baptist sent his disciples to Jesus to ask Him, Are you the One we’re looking for or shall we start looking for someone else? Jesus in the same hour healed the blind that came, healed the lame, healed all that came to Him, and He said, Just go back and tell John what you’ve seen. The blind are seeing, the lame are walking and unto the poor the Gospel is being preached (Luke 7:19-22). In other words, that’s the witness that I am the One you’re looking for. I’m the Messiah. Jesus went on to say, “And the Father Himself, which sent me, He has borne witness of me. But you have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen his shape” (John 5:37).

In John 8:18 He said, “I am one that bears witness of myself, and the Father that sent Me bears witness of me” (John 8:18). In John 10:25 “Jesus answered them, I told you, and you believed not: but the works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me” (John 10:25). And then He finally said to His disciples, John 15:27, “And you also shall bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning” (John 15:27). So John said, “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you” (1 John 1:2,3). We’re witnesses. So the Spirit of God here is witnessing, bearing witness. The Spirit is true.

Now there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one (5:7).

There is a controversy over this particular scripture as to whether or not it was in the original manuscripts or was it added by one who was copying the scriptures later on? This particular verse does not appear in the majority of the manuscripts. And so there is a question whether or not this is a part of the original manuscripts. As you know, we don’t have any original manuscript of the Bible. All we have are copies that were made of copies. There were no printing presses. The Bible was never printed until Gutenberg had invented the press. And so all of the copies were handwritten copies of the Bible. We really don’t have any very early manuscripts in whole. About the earliest manuscript in whole that we have is dated to the year about 400 A.D.

We do have partial manuscripts. We do have quotations from the manuscripts by the early church fathers. And in their sermons and in their writings, we have quotations from different passages of scriptures. And so in putting together all of the fragments, parts of manuscripts, they have compiled as best as possible what is known as the Received Text or the majority of text taking what the vast majority of these old texts say and holding that the majority rules.

There is another school of thought led by Wescott and Hort, that the oldest, whole, manuscripts rule and that happens to be Codex Sinaiticus, and there is a real question as to the value and the authenticity of the Codex Sinaiticus. They believed that there were many deletions made in that manuscript. But the other side says, No, there are additions in the Received Text. So whether or not there are deletions or additions is a position that the scholars take and we’ll let them argue about that.

I said that to say this: There is a question as to whether or not this particular verse was a part of the

original manuscript of John, which we don't have, because it is not found in the majority of the manuscripts. There is only one manuscript in which it was found. But what he declares is consistent with the other scriptures. As Paul wrote to Timothy, 3:16, first book, "Great is the mystery of godliness: for God was manifest in the flesh, and justified in the Spirit" (1 Timothy 3:16). When Jesus was baptized as He came up out of the water, the voice of the Father spoke from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And the Spirit in the form of a dove descended and lighted upon Him" (Luke 3:22).

Paul said, "May the love of Christ, the peace of God, and the blessed communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14). So the three are mentioned elsewhere and this text is not necessary to prove the tri-unity of God that they are three persons but one God. But then in verse eight, and this is in the manuscripts,

There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one (5:8).

Agree to what? That Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.

If we receive the witness of men (5:9),

And isn't it interesting how we receive the witness of men? Some of you will go home tonight and you'll watch the news, and you're going to believe what they're telling you. I don't believe the liberal media at all. President Clinton will get on and tell you why, how important it is, and you're going to believe him. We receive the witness of men, they'll get on there and tell you what a good deal you can get on a used car if you come down to their lot. You're going to believe it. "We receive the witness of men," and yet there's a lot of reasons not to believe the witness of men. There are some of those news commentators I don't even listen to anymore because they are just trying to promote their own agenda. The truth isn't, they give you only parts of truth and they tell you only what they want you to hear and they leave out so much.

We received e-mail from some of our missionaries there is Yugoslavia talking about the bombing of a kindergarten, of a hospital there in Yugoslavia. And yet, they say all we are aiming at is military targets. Then our aim isn't too good. But as they said in the e-mail, you'll never hear about this in the press in America. And you haven't, have you? And you won't because they'll hide that from you.

You might guess that I have some real reservations about what's going on over there now. I have reservations about sending our troops into that kind of a situation. I don't think that they've really proved their case. If we're so interested because a couple of thousand people, Albanians in Kosovo, were killed and we have this great heart of a humanitarian and we're not going to stand by and see this genocide, 2,000 people killed, then why did we stand and watch a million being slain in the Sudan? The genocide that went on there is far greater than anything that has happened in Kosovo. And people who were aware of what was going on, were pleading with the president to do something. I could get into that.

But "we receive the witness of men," but let me tell you this,

the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he has testified of his Son (5:9).

This is the witness. We ought to believe it!

He that believeth on the Son of God has the witness in himself: he that believeth not God has made him a liar; because he believes not the record that God gave of his Son (5:10).

So you that believe on the Son of God have the witness in yourself. "His Spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we are the sons of God. The Spirit bearing witness with our spirit has given to us that Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father" (Romans 8:14-16). But this is the record that God has given of His Son. What is God's record? This is it!

This is the record, God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; and he who has not the Son has not life (5:11,12).

Straight! Clear! Concise! Eternal life is only in the Son. God has given us eternal life but this life is in the Son and he who has the Son has this life but he who has not the Son has not life. He has no hope of eternal life. In fact, you really have no hope in coming back, being reincarnated and giving a second, third, fourth, fifth chance until you finally make it. God's record! God's witness! The witness of God is greater!

The witness of man is saying, All roads lead to God. God will honor your sincerity and that's the important thing. Jesus is not the only way, there are many ways. That's the witness of man. And

unfortunately, sadly, tragically, people often listen to the witness and believe the witness of man. That if you're just good and you're just sincere, God will surely receive you. And it's interesting to me how that so oftentimes these horribly wicked people out of Hollywood, when they die, as they give the eulogies and all, they see them up in heaven and all. Yeah. How deceived! "He that hath not the Son hath not life." That's God's witness. I believe that over the witness of man. So John said,

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that you have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God (5:13).

Two things. He has written these things that you might believe on Jesus Christ. He has written these things that you might have assurance that you're saved. It is interesting that there are many people who believe that you cannot have assurance of your salvation until you die. What a horrible time to find out! I don't want to wait until I die. I need the assurance now. And "His Spirit bears witness with my spirit that I'm a child of God." The witness of God within my heart. And so John said, "I write these things to you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you might believe on the name of the Son of God."

When John wrote his gospel, there at the end of the gospel he said, "Many other things Jesus did that I did not record. But these things were written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, and that by believing have life in His name" (John 20:31). John always had a purpose in writing the gospels, writing his letters, and the purpose was to bring to you a faith, a belief that Jesus was God's promised Messiah. And he gave the witnesses in the gospel of John, he selects various miracles of Jesus to prove that He was the Messiah. And then John said,

This is the confidence that we have in him (5:14),

We have the assurance that we're His children. Now we have confidence in our prayer. Where does that confidence come from?

if we ask any thing according to his will, he hears us (5:14):

We have that confidence. If I ask God anything according to His will, He hears us. But what a qualifying statement, according to His will. A lot of things that we ask for are not according to His will. So many things we ask for are according to our will. But God never did intend prayer to be an instrument by which you can get your will done on earth. It was to be an instrument whereby we might cooperate with God in getting His will done on earth. And that is why when Jesus prayed in the garden, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but Thy will be done" (Matthew 26:39). He said, "I came not to do my own will but the will of Him who sent me, and to finish His work" (John 4:34).

The thrust of prayer should always be that the will of God be done. I have an unwritten agreement with God and that is, if I ask God for anything that is not according to His will, He can just ignore it. And if I get upset, if I start to make threats, get angry, begin to pout, just ignore it! I want Him to do what He knows best. Sometimes I think I know best and I've discovered I don't. The older I get, the more I discover that. The more I've come to just say, Lord, accomplish Your will in me. Accomplish Your will through me. But we have this confidence in prayer, "If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." But then it goes one step further.

And we know that if he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him (5:15).

We know He'll answer those prayers that are according to His will! Now John here brings up an interesting situation.

If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death (5:16,17).

First of all, I think we need to define what is the sin unto death. Jesus said, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven man: except the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Whosoever shall say anything against the Son, it shall be forgiven him: but he who speaks or blasphemes the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come" (Matthew 12:31,32). The sin unto death, the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. But what is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit?

How can you blaspheme the Holy Spirit? Jesus said, “When the Spirit is come, He will testify of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come: Of sin, because they don’t believe in me” (John 16:8,9). Interesting, isn’t it? He didn’t say, Of sin, because they are fornicating. Of sin, because they are stealing. Of sin, because they have murdered or they have robbed a bank. But of sin, because they don’t believe in Me. Do you know that there is only one sin that will take you to hell? And that is the sin of rejecting the witness of the Holy Spirit that Jesus Christ died to take away your sins. That’s the sin unto death, failing to believe that Jesus is the Saviour, the Lord, the Messiah, the Son of God.

When Jesus was talking with Nicodemus about being born again and answering the question, How can a man be born again? After He gave that familiar passage, John 3:16 which we all know, Jesus then said, “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. And he that believeth is not condemned. But he that believeth not is condemned already, seeing he has not believed in the only begotten Son of the Father. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men will not come to the light, because they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil” (John 3:17-19).

In other words, Jesus testified the sin that will condemn a man is the sin of rejecting Him. God’s provision for your sins is through the death of Jesus Christ, God has made no other provision. As we mentioned earlier in the garden as Jesus said, If it is possible, let this cup pass from me. If what is possible? If salvation, the forgiveness of sins, if it is possible for man to come into heaven any other way, Father, let this cup pass from me! And because it wasn’t and isn’t possible, Jesus drank the cup! He went to the cross.

And the sin unto death is rejecting Jesus Christ. What does John mean, “If you see a brother sin a sin unto death, I don’t say you should pray for that?” God, when He created us, created us for fellowship, meaningful relationship. And that is why He gave us the free will. But in giving us the free will, it was necessary that He honor the choice that we make. He cannot force us, well He could, but He will not force us to do something against our will because that would be a violation of our free will. So God doesn’t twist your arm and get you in a choke position and say, Believe in Me or I’m going to cut you off. He doesn’t force you to be saved.

He often brings a lot of pressure on you. It’s like that old song, *He will not compel you to go against your will but He can sure make you willing to go*. It talks about how when Joshua went into land, God sent the hordes of hornets ahead of him, stinging the people (Exodus 23:28). He didn’t compel them to go against their will. He just made them willing to go.

With Jonah there in the whale, and all of the misery that he experienced when that thing was diving down, the seaweed wrapped around and the high humidity and hot temperature and so forth, he said, He didn’t compel Jonah to go against his will, He just made him willing to go. Oftentimes God will bring circumstances into our lives that are designed by God to turn our hearts to Him. Allows us to get in desperate straits so that we might surrender our lives to Him. But He won’t take that final step. He won’t force you. And thus, I can’t say, God, save him. Please save him, Lord. Because God won’t save him against his will.

What I can pray is, God, Satan has blinded his eyes. He’s not being at all rational on the issues of eternal life, on the issues of Jesus Christ. He’s totally irrational because Satan has control of his life and is controlling his mind and has created this heavy prejudice. God, bind the work of Satan! Set him free, Lord, from this coercion of Satan that he might be able to make a free choice!

And so there are sins though that are not unto death. And the glorious thing is that we, as we walk with Jesus Christ, believing in Him, trusting Him, doesn’t mean that we’re sinless or going to be sinless. I saw a bumper sticker today and you’ve seen it. Christians are not perfect, they’re just forgiven. That’s very true.

We’ve all sinned. We’ve all come short of what God would have us to be. None of us have measured up to God’s ideal. But John said, “If we confess our sins, He’s faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. For the blood of Jesus Christ God’s Son cleanses a man and [it’s in the perfect tense] is continually cleansing the man from all sin” (1 John 1:7,9). What a glorious place to be! Trusting in Jesus Christ, believing on Him. There is that continual cleansing from sin, from my shortcomings, from my missing the mark. Now John said,

We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not (5:18);

That is better translated, does not live in or practice sin. It's no longer the practice of my life. I do slip up. I do sin. But it isn't the practice of my life.

for he that is begotten of God (5:18)

And now I believe that the He should be capitalized here. I believe that this is a reference to Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. "He that is begotten of God,"

keepeth him (5:18),

This particular Greek word translated himself, if you go through the New Testament, you'll find that it rarely is translated himself but all the way through it is translated him. So I do believe that the translators sort of missed it here. I think that the he should be capitalized and it is a reference to Jesus. "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not but He that is begotten of God [that is, Jesus] keeps Him,"

and the wicked one touches him not (5:18).

What a great place to be, in Christ! Jesus said "the prince of the world cometh and he has nothing in me" (John 14:30). If I am in Christ, then he has nothing in me. "The wicked one touches him not."

There is a cyclical, and it's really sick, and it cycles all the time, it seems, through the church. It runs its round. It becomes prominent, dies out, becomes prominent, dies out, people forget how stupid it is and they grab on to it, and then they realize. But this business of the believer being possessed by demons and the necessity of their deliverance. They call it the deliverance ministry. It flies in the face of this scripture, "The wicked one toucheth him not."

We know that we are of God, and the whole world is lying in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and has given us understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (5:19,20).

To be in Christ, He is the true God, He is eternal life. And John closes with the little exhortation, *keep yourselves from idols, little children (5:21).*

It is so easy, so easy to get caught up in idolatry. And idols come in many sizes, shapes and forms today. There are no longer in shapes of people, some places they are, but not too much. They're usually in shapes of, they have four wheels, a souped up engine, a convertible top and you can make an idol of a lot of different things. There are a lot of idols in living rooms that people sit before and worship every night. It is inbred, it is designed in man, it's a part of your inner circuitry to worship.

Moses said to the people, When you go out and you look at the stars, and you are driven to worship them. There's a drive to worship. "Keep yourself from idols." The first commandment, Thou shalt have no other gods before me. The second, Thou shalt not make any graven image or likeness to bow down to it, to worship it. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous god. Keep yourself from idols.

Keep your love for Christ supreme, pre-eminent. There are many things to distract you, to take you away, to capture your heart, your imagination. Keep yourself from idols. So important!

Father, we thank You for the instruction that John has given to us in this epistle. And Lord, we thank You for the effect of this epistle upon our lives. The fullness of joy discovering and knowing who we are and what we are in Christ. We thank You, Father, for the freedom and the power over sin through the indwelling Spirit and the word of God. And we thank You, Father, for the assurance that we are Your children. The witness of the Spirit in our heart. Your witness, Father, to us that we pass from death to life. Now Lord, be with us as we continue our journey through the Bible as we come down to the close, the final chapters. We thank You, Lord, for the joy and the blessings of this journey. The things that we have learned that have drawn us closer to You. Given us greater understanding of You. Greater understanding of Your purpose and Your plan for our lives. Help us, Lord, to be faithful and to be obedient. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.