

October 20, 2013

"Is Your God a Liar?"

1 John 5:1-12

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has become a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too. **2** We know we love God's children if we love God and obey his commandments. **3** Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. **4** For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. **5** And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

**6** And Jesus Christ was revealed as God's Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross—not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms it with his testimony. **7** So we have these three witnesses— **8** the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and all three agree. **9** Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God. And God has testified about his Son. **10** All who believe in the Son of God know in their hearts that this testimony is true. Those who don't believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don't believe what God has testified about his Son. **11** And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. **12** Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.

A man named Jack was walking along a steep cliff one day, when he accidentally got too close to the edge and fell. On the way down he grabbed a branch, which temporarily stopped his fall. He looked down and to his horror saw that the canyon fell straight down for more than a thousand feet.

He couldn't hang onto the branch forever, and there was no way for him to climb up the steep wall of the cliff. So Jack began yelling for help, hoping that someone passing by would hear him and lower a rope or something.

HELP! HELP! Is anyone up there? "HELP!"

He yelled for a long time, but no one heard him. He was about to give up when he heard a voice. Jack, Jack. Can you hear me?"

"Yes, yes! I can hear you. I'm down here!"

"I can see you, Jack. Are you all right?"

"Yes, but who are you, and where are you?"

"I am the Lord, Jack. I'm everywhere."

"The Lord? You mean, GOD?"

"That's Me."

"God, please help me! I promise if, you'll get me down from here, I'll stop sinning. I'll be a really good person. I'll serve You for the rest of my life."

"Easy on the promises, Jack. Let's get you off from there; then we can talk."

"Now, here's what I want you to do. Listen carefully."

"I'll do anything, Lord. Just tell me what to do."

"Okay. Let go of the branch." "What?" "I said, let go of the branch. Just trust Me. Let go."

There was a long silence.

Finally Jack yelled, "HELP! HELP! IS ANYONE ELSE UP THERE?"

**Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has become a child of God. (v1b)**

What does it mean that Jesus is the Christ? It means He is the Messiah, the Savior, God the Son who came to save all who believe in Him; save them from hell and save them to God for eternity. He did this by giving His own life. And so...

**Philippians 2:9-11**

**(He is) Elevated .. to the place of highest honor...the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

Everyone who relies on the fact that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, the Savior, the one sent by God to purchase our salvation and forgive our sins by sacrificing His life for that purpose, everyone who believes that has become a child of God.

"But" you might say, "aren't we all children of God in the sense that He is the Creator of our physical existence?" Yes, but this is referring to a second birth, a spiritual birth, thus the term "born-again." We are born-again, born of God in a spiritual sense by the Spirit of God the moment we place our faith in Jesus.

Isn't that amazing? Is there anything here that mentions something good about us or something good you or I have done to earn such a gift? No. Rather we trust in what Jesus has done and Who Jesus is; and based on that, we are told who we are, a child of God. How can we not worship and serve Him and Him alone?

(v1b-3) And everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too. We know we love God's children if we love God and obey his commandments. Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome.

“Everyone who loves the Father loves His children too,” that is true in human relationships as well. I have experienced meeting people who were meeting me for the first time. They didn't know me, they never met me before, they didn't know what I'm like, but when they are told who my dad was, they say, “oh, your Jimmy's son? Come here.” And they hugged me and loved me as if they had known me for years. Why? Because they loved by father, so they love me too.

When we love God we love all Christians, all His children. But loving God and obeying His commandments does not make us children of God, rather the desire to love God and obey is commandments are indications that we **are** children of God.

v3 says “Loving God means keeping his commandments.” What does keeping His commandments mean, what does obeying God mean, it means we love God. This should not be a burden, His commandments are not burdensome, do they seem burdensome...sometimes?

Loving God must be accompanied by obeying God, it's just what children of God ought to do. It should delight the child of God to love God through their obedience. Keeping His commandments indicates you love God you put Him first, He is most important, you have no other gods but Him. This should not be a burden, yet at times it seems that doing the right thing is burdensome, doesn't it?

Our world today, unfortunately, puts so much emphasis on experience and feeling as opposed to duty and action. God, however, wants Christians' conduct to demonstrate their inward devotion to him. Jesus said all the commandments of God can be summed up in the one commandment to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Our heart determines where our allegiance lies. “Heart” in the Bible has a broader meaning than our modern day definition of the word. In the Bible the “heart” is the inner self that thinks, feels, and decides. And the “heart” often means someone's true character.

**Proverbs 4:23**

Guard your heart above all else,  
for it determines the course of your life.

Your heart determines who you are, what you think, and what you do. Therefore, there is a battle raging for your heart. There has been a war for the devotion of our heart since the beginning of time.

**Proverbs 27:19**

As a face is reflected in water, so the heart reflects the real person.

The heart is the truth of who we really are, that is why the enemy is in a battle for every inch of our heart. This is why gods are battling for the possession of our heart.

I want to take a look at the first two commandments of the 10 Commandments found in Exodus 20:3-4

"You must not have any other god but me.

"You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind

Don't have any other god

Don't make an idol

Are these two commandments even relevant to us today? After all unlike the people of the Old Testament and New Testament also, we are not a society that worships images of gods. We don't have temples of other gods, we don't have idols made of stone or other materials that we bring into our home and worship. The thing about making an idol is that you can make them out of anything. Do we do that? We do not have other gods and we don't make idols for ourselves that we worship... right? Wrong!

As a matter of fact idolatry is not just one of many sins, but it is THE sin from which all other sins come. Not only do we have idols/other gods, but these idols are the source of every sin and every struggle that we have.

A few weeks ago I mentioned scratching below the surface to find what is going on in our hearts that Jesus Christ our Lord is wanting to change. If you start scratching at whatever struggle you are dealing with you will eventually discover that underneath that struggle is a false god. And until that false god is dethroned, and God takes His rightful place, you will not have victory.

(v4-5) For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

Is Jesus the Son of God? Is life in Him only? Or is God a liar?

(v11-12) And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.

If life is in Jesus, because He is life, He is the way the truth and the life, John wrote that in Jesus was life (John 1:4); If we believe that why do we look for life elsewhere? We defeat evil, we have life only by being a child of God, one who obeys and worships Jesus only. Do we obey and worship Him only, or do we have gods beside Him, do we make idols that promise us life.

One of the problems of identifying idols is that they do not look like idols. Is God against pleasure? Sex? Money? Families? Careers? A god is something that is most important, something we adore, something we sacrifice to and sacrifice for. The problem is that the moment we put something or someone before Jesus, the moment it replaces God on the throne it becomes an idol.

Ask yourself some questions: Where or to what do you go when you are hurting? Where is our sanctuary? Is it the refrigerator for food? Is it the computer, the TV, video games, pornography, your work, what is your emotional rescue?

What do you complain about the most or what disappoints you? Your marriage? Your sex life? Your career? Your financial situation? Perhaps this can help you discover your god. What worries you? What do you sacrifice for? These questions can help us identify other gods, idols in our life so we can dethrone them and give Jesus His rightful place.

**Matthew 6:21**

**Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.**

When I was in the army I got real sick. I went to an army doctor on the base. He said what's wrong? I told him I had terrible cramps, so he gave me a pill for pain. I told him I had the runs, so he gave me a pill for the runs. I had a fever, so he told me what to take for the fever. But I still was sick, he was only treating the symptoms, he didn't get to the root of the problem. I was taking all this medication, I was doing everything he told me to do, but I wasn't any better.

Then a new army doctor came on base (he was Italian). I went to see him, he diagnosed me, he said you have salmonella – food poisoning. He gave me an antibiotic told me to take it for 14 days, I did and I was healed because it killed the cause of my problem.

We do the same with sin. Someone tells us they are smoking pot. We tell them, get rid of the pot you currently have in your home; stop hanging out with friends who smoke; don't go to places where you can easily get marijuana. Someone is struggling with pornography. We tell them, get rid of certain channels on your cable TV; put a filter on your computer; good suggestions. But these are all examples of dealing with the symptoms, but not getting to the root of the problem which is idolatry, there is another god besides Jesus. We mentioned some of them before, pleasure: food, sex, entertainment, or things like success, money, achievement. Can romance be a god, can family be a god, or how about the god of me? .

**(v6b) And Jesus Christ was revealed as God's Son...**

Have no other gods besides Him, He is the Christ , God's Son.

**(v6-8) revealed as God's Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross—not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms**

it with his testimony. So we have these three witnesses— the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and all three agree.

We don't have time to get into this verse today. I will pick up this theme in my next sermon. But I want you to notice the witness of the Spirit, the water and the blood. We too need the witness of the Spirit, the water and the blood. There must be a baptism, that symbol of receiving Christ, and there must also be a death, that we might live by the Spirit.