

Colleyville Presbyterian Church

1 John 3:4-3:18

May 14, 2023

*4 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. 5 You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. 6 No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. 8 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. 9 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. 10 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.*

Calvin: “The sum of the passage is that the perverse life of those who indulge themselves in the license of sinning is hateful to God and is unendurable to him because it is against his law. It does not follow from this, nor can it be inferred, that believers are unrighteous. For they want to submit to God and they abhor their own vices even in individual offenses, and they also compose their life so far as they can to the obedience of the law.”

Yarborough: “The effect of 1 John 3:6 is to join with 3:4 to depict an antithesis to the person who has eschatological hope and therefore lives an ethically rigorous life (cf. 3:3). 1 John 3:4 and 3:6 identify those who do not abide in Christ but rather languish in ἀνομία, an advanced or confirmed posture of noncompliance with John’s message... Their defiance of Christ (as opposed to hope-generated ethical transformation because of him [3:3]) violates the very purpose of his coming, as 3:5 is at pains to emphasize.”

Calvin on verse 5: “In this place John means that Christ really and actually (as they say) takes away sins, because through him our old man is crucified and his Spirit through repentance mortifies our flesh with all its depraved desires... This is the sanctification of the Spirit.”

Calvin on verse 6: “[Believers] are said not to sin because, although they labor under the infirmity of the flesh, they do not consent to sin, but in fact struggle and groan, so that they can truly testify with Paul that they do the evil they would not. He says that believers *abide* in Christ because we are by faith engrafted in him and united to him.”

Calvin on verse 8: “The life of God and Christ is not present where men act perversely and wickedly. On the contrary, such are the slaves of the devil.”

Calvin on verse 9: “God’s children must needs labor under faults and sin daily; that is, inasmuch as they still have some remnants of their old nature. Nevertheless, the apostle’s contention stands firm that the end of regeneration is to destroy sin and that all who are begotten of God live righteously and godly because God’s Spirit corrects the lusting of sin... God’s Spirit so forms the hearts of the godly to upright affections that the flesh and its lusts do not prevail, but are tamed and as it were yoked, so that they are checked. In short, the apostle ascribes the superiority in the elect to the Spirit, who suppresses sin by his power and does not let it flourish.”

Calvin on verse 10: “[John] does not mean that they are so manifested that they can be openly recognized by the whole world, but simply that the fruit and effect of divine adoption always appear in this life.”

*11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12 We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. 13 Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. 15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*

*16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.*

Calvin: “The apostle declares that the only righteousness that God approves is when we love one another; and what is more, that where hatred, dissimulation, envy and enmity prevail, the devil reigns.”

Calvin: “He commends love to us by a remarkable saying, that it is testimony of our transition from death to life. From this it follows that we are blessed if we love the brethren but wretched if we hate them...as love is the special fruit of the Spirit, it is also a sure symbol of regeneration. Since none sincerely loves his brethren unless he is born again by God's Spirit, he rightly concludes that this same Spirit of God, who is life, dwells in all who love the brethren.”