

Sermon - The Ministry Of Silly Walks

1 John 2:1-6

Page 1

A pastor and his wife were vacationing in Estes Park, Colorado, and were having breakfast in a local coffee shop. It was empty except for four men at another table. One was mocking Christianity; in particular, the resurrection of Christ. He went on and on about what a stupid teaching that was. The pastor could feel the Lord asking: 'Are you going to let this go unchallenged?' However, the pastor thought to himself, "I don't even know these guys. They are all bigger than me. They all have cowboy boots on and look mighty tough." The pastor was agitated, yet too frightened about doing anything, but, deep in his heart he knew that he had to take stand for Jesus.

Finally, he went over and challenged him and said, "I've been listening to your conversation, and you don't know what you're talking about " He then did his best to give him rundown of the proofs for the resurrection. The skeptic was speechless, and the pastor felt half dead.

Now, you have to admire this pastor's courage and his determination to be a witness, regardless of how difficult it was for him. Many Christians would have just sat there in fear or fumed about the ignorance of these men in the restaurant that day. (Story adapted from pastor Rodent Buchanan)

Yet, I wonder if there wasn't different approach that might have been more positive, and more affective than just rattling off a list of rational arguments for the resurrection. It seems to me that the pastor missed the most important and impressive proof of the resurrection — his own life. Would it not have been more effective to walk over to the men at the table and say something like this:

"You know, I couldn't help but overhear your conversation, and found it very interesting. If you don't mind, I would like to pay for all of your breakfasts. The reason I want to do this is that, because of the resurrection, Jesus Christ has changed my life and lives in me, and wants to communicate his tremendous love for you."

What we believe as Christians is of the utmost importance - But of greater importance is our walk with Christ; Our walk with Christ may show if we really believe what we claim to believe or our walk may reveal that our faith is...not really faith.

Sermon - The Ministry Of Silly Walks

1 John 2:1-6

Page 2

The Apostle John has been explaining our faith in Jesus Christ here in the book of 1 John. First we have seen John teaching us that our faith is personal, not a philosophical statement. He taught us that we place our faith in a person and that person is Jesus Christ. We don't place our faith in philosophical statements. It is not the power of our personal faith that makes things happen in our life, it is the power of the one who we place our faith in that makes things happen in our life.

Second, John explained how sin and faith and sin go together. We saw that God already knows we have sinned, we are the ones who have to own up to our sin. Simply put, John told us that personal confession is a powerful key that will help guide us in remaining in relationship with God. Very powerful insight.

John now takes things a step further this morning as he addresses the question - How can I know that I am saved, How can I know that I truly am in relationship with God?

Many Christians come to a point in their lives where they question whether they really are a Christian or not. Though not every Christian has felt this way, many Christians do. So, if this is a question you have wrestled with in your life, your not alone. Many people give their life over to Jesus Christ and they know that they know that they know - and there is never a question of the validity of their faith, but for others, there is always that lingering question in the back of their minds, "Is this Christianity for real?"

Sometimes people seem come to church for safety reasons if for nothing else: We know that automobiles cause 20% of all fatal accidents. We know that 17% of all accidents do occur in home. We know that 14% of all accidents happen to pedestrians. We also know that 6% of all accidents happen by air, rail, or ship. Yet only... .001% of all deaths occur in worship services in church, and these are related to previous physical disorders. Hence, the safest place in the world for you to be at any time is church.

This question of whether we are really Christians or not can be answered from a number of different angles - John, being practical, answers it from a practical perspective. John tells us that assurance of our Christianity lies with our defender

Sermon - The Ministry Of Silly Walks

1 John 2:1-6

Page 3

Jesus Christ, our Attitude and our Action. John gives us something we can observe in ourselves, and others.

First off, as we look at our Scripture, notice that John tells us that we can know, we can know about our salvation. He doesn't say that he hopes we might be able to know, or that he thinks we might be able to know or that what he is explaining is in the realm of possibility - John says we can know. So first off, we are assured that this is something we can know - we CAN know if we are Christians.

Sometimes people look at their lives and they see that they are not perfect, and deep down they realize that they are in the long run, a lost cause, so they get discouraged. They see others around them who appear to have life all together, who appear to be as spiritual as ever and they know they will never measure up. Well, what does John say? John tells us in verse 1 that he writes so that we do not sin.....but if anybody does sin...we have one who speaks in our defense. When John says if anybody does sin, what he means for us in English is, 'When the time comes that you do sin'.

To start off with John assures us that we are not perfect. John has been around about 90 years at this point and he has seen his share of Christians, John has even known all the other disciples inside and out and John is telling us even with the great people of faith - nobody is perfect. John tell us more than that, not only has he not seen perfect people, but he has seen even the most spiritual people - sin. Also realize that John is speaking of himself here.

A pastor was finishing his Sunday sermon and he wanted to see if the congregation understood his message, so he asked, "Can anyone tell me what you must do before you can obtain forgiveness?" There was dead silence for a time, and finally a small boy spoke up, "Pastor, first you have to sin". How correct that little boy was.

John tells us here that we have an advocate, one who speaks in our defense, verse 1. The word used here in the Greek 'parakleton' means someone who comes alongside another to help out. It has two applicable parallel meanings: First Christ intercedes for us for our sins. There is nothing we can do, so Jesus Christ goes before God the Father on our behalf. Jesus is the atoning sacrifice himself, as he

Sermon - The Ministry Of Silly Walks

1 John 2:1-6

Page 4

took on our sin, when he had none. Because he is God himself, Jesus overcomes the sin and so he can appeal to the father saying that the sin has already been taken care of.

Remember Jesus is God and time does not have a hold on His actions. So when Jesus dies and is resurrected over 2000 years ago, his action, for all intents and purposes, is outside of time, so it applies for all time past present and future. This is why Jesus (who is God himself) can go before God the Father and say the sin is atoned for.

The second parallel action that happens when Jesus is before the Father is not only atonement for our sins, but a removal of the optical sin has caused to our fellowship with God. We saw this last week. Our sin fogs our fellowship with God - that is why, as we saw last week, confession is so important. It really is a paradox of sorts, the offended God pardons our offense by Himself.

Jesus both atones for our sins and removes the fog sin creates in our relationship with God. We all know what sins are, they are a hindrance in our relationship with God. Sin hinders us from living a life totally surrendered to God. Imagine you are at a track meet, and they're lining up for the 100 meter dash. Everything is fine except for one contestant. Instead of the regular shorts and track shoes, he's wearing a snowmobile suit and mukluks. Now that's probably not against the rules, but he's not going to win, if he even survives the race. The clothes are a hindrance to his success in the same way sin is a hinderance to our relationship with God. John tells us that we will sin, but God has taken measures to help us work through sin in our lives.

So we see that sin in a person's life is not what determines if they are truly a Christian or not. How do we know? John tells us that as a Christian we know Jesus will defend us in our sins, but we know in a practical way by our Attitude and our Actions.

Verse 3, "We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands." When John says, 'know' here he uses the perfect tense and in this way shows a past experience with continuing results. In other words, you knew Jesus in the past, you

Sermon - The Ministry Of Silly Walks

1 John 2:1-6

Page 5

will continue to know Jesus in the future. With this in mind, the continuance of knowing God - we see an attitude and action response - he obeys his commands.

See, this is what John is trying to get across to us: If you know God, you obey his commands.

Now hold on a minute! John is not talking about perfection here. He has just clearly stated that we will sin, and when we do sin, Jesus will cover our sin for us. Let me be clear: obedience to God's commands is not a condition of being a saved - I obey the commands of God and then I am a Christian, NO - obedience to God's commands is a result of being a Christian. If I am a Christian, then I will obey the commands of God, Not, I am a Christian because I obey the commands of God.

Remember, John has told us faith is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It is my relationship With Jesus Christ that makes me a Christian not obedience to the commands of God. However, obedience to the commands of God, after I am a Christian, shows in a practical way, that I am a Christian.

John has told us that he has people in the church who are claiming to be without sin, or they are claiming that they never have sinned. John tells us that these people are simply not living in reality. They say they have no sin because they do not recognize that their sin is, sin. John says, that's crazy, we all sin, these people do not have the truth within them if they live this way, saying they have no sin.

What is happening here in this church of John's is that there is a blatant disregard for sin. These folks were saying that they were going to redefine things and what the church called sin, they no longer called sin, what the Bible called sin, they no longer called sin.

Compare that kind of attitude, basically, I'll decide on my own what is sin and what is not. Compare that kind of attitude with this attitude that John suggests: I will obey the commands of God. I may not always be successful, but I am not going to disregard the commands of God.

Sermon - The Ministry Of Silly Walks

1 John 2:1-6

Page 6

What are the commands of God? Jesus summed them up for us, Matt 28:37-40“ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

The people John is dealing with are indifferent to the commands of God, Christians are not. In verse 4, John is stating the negative of verse 3 for greater impact and clarity to his message.

John goes further in verse 5. John does not only restrict obedience to the commands of God, but He now expands it to keeping the word of God and this includes receiving and believing in the promises of God. John tells us that if a person does this he goes beyond having the truth, John tells us the by doing this the love of God will complete the person.

Verse 6 can be summed up in English this way - If you want to be able to claim that you are a Christian, you must do what I have said in verses 1-5.

A way to sum up what John is saying here for us this morning is this: Those who are not Christians have no real concern with the commands of God in their life - to them, the commands of God are neither here nor there. You can tell, by how they live, they sin and they refuse to call it sin. They sin and they are not really concerned.

On the other hand, a Christian will obey the commands of God as a result of his or her being a Christian. Because they are a Christian, they will be concerned with obeying the commands of God and the word of God. You can tell this by how they live, they sin and they recognize their sin, they are concerned with their sin and therefore they go before God to deal with their sin.

Am I really a Christian? John gives us one practical way to help us evaluate the reality of our commitment to Jesus Christ.