



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 John 3: 4-10

"The Old Morality"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Mike, and good morning. We are continuing our studies in 1 John, and we're in chapter 3, and we're going to look at verses 4 through 10.

⁴ Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and 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 sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. ⁷ Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; ⁸ the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. ¹⁰ By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

1 John 3: 4-10

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word.

(Message) In Isaiah 5, verse 20, the prophet warns, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!" That was written in the eighth century

B.C., over 2500 years ago. But it has a contemporary ring to it, doesn't it? Calling evil good and good evil, that is so typical of our age of relative ethics. But then that's human nature. Men have always justified sin, tried to find some way to do what they wanted to do. And there've always been ministers who have helped them along that path.

When I was in college, many years ago now, I was asked to visit a student who had recently come to the school. He had been active in a Christian organization at his high school and had shown some interest in the Gospel. So I met with him, and had a conversation with him. And it wasn't long before I found out that he wasn't really interested in spiritual things. All that interest that he had showed had disappeared. In fact, he was completely indifferent.

And the reason became clear from our conversation. He was involved in a relationship with a girl. It had become physical. But he and his father had met with their minister, who had assured them that it was okay—which he was glad to hear. It's not okay. The Bible says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil."

So, Isaiah speaks today as he did in John's day, who wrote to some people who had heard something very similar to all of that. Some ministers were teaching them that, 'Sin was not really sin, it's okay.' John wrote of them, of those teachers, in the 26th verse of chapter 2 of, "...those who are trying to deceive you." These were men who had not only condoned sin, but they were trying to make sin seem virtuous. John corrects that with a sweeping and uncompromising response in verses 4 through 10 in our chapter, in chapter 3. 'Sin,' he says, 'is the work of the devil.'

You can't read the Gospel of John, or you can't read the epistles of John and not believe, at least, that John believed very clearly in a personal devil. Of course, the Bible teaches that. And sin is the work of that evil being. Christ came to destroy his works. No child of God practices them. In other words, morality matters. John expresses that with a definition of sin, and a complete prohibition of it for anyone at all. There are no exceptions, he says. Everyone, regardless of who he is, or who she is, regardless of their

place in society, regardless of their level of education, doesn't matter, everyone; 'Whosoever practices sin, also practices lawlessness.' (vs4).

That is a universal truth. There are no exceptions. Sin is sin for everyone. And sin, John says, "is lawlessness." That's been called a simplistic definition. It's short, but it's not simplistic. More can be said about sin, that's true. In fact, John does say more about sin. Later, in chapter 5 in verse 17 he says that sin is "unrighteousness". Paul writes in Romans chapter 14, in verse 23 that sin is unbelief. At its root, that's what it is. All sin is unbelief. He writes, "Whatever is not from faith is sin."

But John's definition is to the point. Sin is any violation of God's standard of righteousness. The Old Testament expression of that standard was the Ten Commandments which, you'll remember, was engraved in stone. And that illustrates that God's righteousness is not flexible. His ethics are not relative. Any violation of them is wrong. And John's definition of sin as lawlessness shows that it is broad. Sin, quite simply, is rebellion against God.

That's what motivates a person in his or her sin, in breaking God's rule—it's lawlessness. The sinner's in open rebellion. He's a person who wants to have his own way, and it is witnessed in a human being from the very beginning. It's seen by all of us in a child's behavior. Children want their own way; they defy their parents; they challenge the rules of the house. You see that in your young children, you see it in your grandchildren. As cute as they are, these little cherubs, they have this streak of stubbornness within them, and they challenge what's there.

You wonder, where does that come from? Well, it's from the human heart from the very beginning. That's where we're born that way. David tells us that in Psalm 51, in verse 5. "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me." That tells us the human heart, from the very beginning, is sinful.

Sin is doing what the sinner wants to do and get away with. So he does it in secret, or under the cover of night, or it is really even more brazen than that. We see a lot of that today—simply justify sin as an expression of his freedom or of self—'This is what I am.' That justifies it. Men always find ways to excuse sin. We're easily deceived.

We're easily self-deceived. That's our nature. Jeremiah brought that out very clearly in chapter 17 of his prophecy in verse 9 where he defines the heart, explains the heart. He says that, "The heart *is* more deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked..." I think the ESV has, *sick*. Who can know it? That's a rhetorical question. Nobody can know it. It's a deceptive thing. We deceive ourselves. Men believe what they want to believe, so they can do what they want to do. And if they can find a minister to help them, then so much the better.

But, even without a minister, people are quite capable of deceiving themselves. If you were here Wednesday night, then you heard an example of that from one of our young teachers. He had a very fine lesson on the Christian and college. Joe had a story at the end of his lecture to illustrate a point. It's from the experience of Donald Grey Barnhouse, who had been preaching on a college campus when he was invited to speak to some girls at their dormitory, which he did.

And after he finished, a girl remained behind who was offended at what he had said. And he could tell by the look on her face that she was not at all happy and said, "I used to believe all that, but I don't believe it anymore." So he visited with her, sat down, talked to her, asked her some questions. Found out that she was a freshman, and that she had come out of a Christian family. He asked her if she had a Bible. "Yes." "Do you read it?" "I used to, but don't anymore. I told you, I don't believe that stuff."

He asked her when she stopped reading it. "Around Thanksgiving." "Tell me," Barnhouse said, "What happened in your life around November 10th?" And after some conversation, the girl began to cry, and it came out that she had been living in sin with a young man, and could no longer tolerate the gaze of God that confronted her when she read the Bible. So she had a choice. She put away the Bible. And she was comfortable with her life.

Wesley said it well. "The Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible." The only way to guard our life, to guard our soul, to guard against the deception of men or the deception of the human heart is to read the Word of God—to stay in the Word of God. It is our standard of right and wrong, of truth and error;

whatever act or disposition is against God's revelation, it is rebellion because, as John tells us, "Sin is lawlessness."

That alone is reason for Christians to abhor sin like leprosy. It is against God and His rules. His rules are good. They're meant for our good, not to inhibit us. But John adds in the next verse that sin, and practicing it, is also contrary to Christ and His work. He came, John says, for the purpose 'of taking away sins'. And He could do that because He's perfect. "In Him," John said, "there is no sin." (vs5).

Now that recalls the statement that John the Baptist made. John the apostle, was there when his mentor at the time, John the Baptist, saw Jesus coming and said, "Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (Jn 1:29). Now there, *sin* is singular. It may refer to the root of sin, the very basis of it; that is, it gives the fruit of personal sins. So when John the Baptist said that, he spoke of *sin* in the singular.

But here, John the apostle, speaks of *sins*, plural, and refers to the individual sins of His people. Just as he does earlier in chapter 2, in verse 2, where Christ is described as "the propitiation for our sins"—the One who satisfies the wrath of God and the justice of God, in His crucifixion. He has removed them. He has removed each and every one of those sins from God's people.

Not one sin was left behind. Not one debt left unpaid. He has carried them all away, paid our debts in full. Christ has removed our sins. He did that at the cross. He did that when He died—the innocent for the guilty—the just for the unjust. The perfect blood, His blood, was poured out as the price of our salvation. And He poured it out willingly, gladly, because there was no other way to remove our sins—to remove our guilt.

Now that's the love of God. That's the unconditional love of God. That's the sacrificial love of God. There can be no greater love than that. How then, in light of that, can a child of God be indifferent towards sin, excuse it or practice it? He can't! John says, in verse 6, "No one who abides in Him sins."

Now, Christians do sin. We know that. Their consciences convict them, and they confess their sins. But they don't live in this constant rebellion, indifferent towards sin, justifying their sin—not characteristically. Not in the sense of that being the 'habit' or 'bent' of their life. That's impossible. Anyone who makes it the pattern of his or her life, whose life is marked by sin, John says 'hasn't seen God, and doesn't know Him'. (vs6b). Not spiritually.

Now none of us, of course, have seen Christ, literally. And we won't until He appears in glory. And that's our hope to do so. John has mentioned that in the previous passage about the LORD's return and what that means to us. So we haven't seen Him yet. We look forward to that. But we have seen Him, all of us have seen Him. Every believer in Jesus Christ, every child of God has seen Him with the eye of faith. We have spiritual sight and knowledge.

And the knowledge of His sacrifice affects us. It has a purifying effect. Remember, just as that future coming of the LORD does, (as John spoke of in our text last week in the beginning of chapter 3, verse 3b), that "...everyone who has this hope..." within himself "...purifies himself just as He is pure." The hope of the LORD's coming has a purifying effect, does that to us. But so does His first coming. His sacrifice. When we consider what it cost Him to pay for our sins, to remove them as far as east is from the west, that encourages moral purity. That encourages obedience.

His unconditional love for us, love unto death itself, (really more than just physical death), experiencing hell itself for us, motivates our love for Him. In fact, it controls us. It gives us a desire for obedience. That's what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 14, "The love of God constrains us," or 'controls us'. His love for us motivates us to live obediently to Him, gives us a desire to please Him. It's not a kind of compulsion, like 'I have to be obedient.' You want to be obedient in light of all of that.

And what a great God we have, because, (and we'll say this again), we do sin. What does the hymn say that we just sang, by Bernard*?, "How kind is He to those who fall." He's kind to us. He's receptive to us. He's not a hard, harsh God at all. That's a stimulant for obedience. (*Bernard of Clairvaux; From *Jesus, The Very Thought of Thee*)

John says in verse 7, that it is a mark of a true child of God—righteousness; while, he says in verse 8, that a lack of righteousness, bad behavior, shows a very different allegiance. “The one”, he says, “who practices sin”, (not falls into sin), but the one “who practices sin”, (that is, sin characterizes his life), is not convicted by it. —He justifies it. That one, John says, "...is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning." (vs8b).

Christians are not saved by good behavior. I know that I don't need to say that to you, really. But you read a passage like this, and you probably need to bring it out, reinforce that point; we're not saved by the things we do. We're not saved by works. We're saved by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. He takes the initiative. "We love Him because He first loved us," as John will say. (1 Jn 4:19).

But behavior is important. It reveals the change that grace has produced. The fruit on the tree reveals that there's life in the tree. And when bad behavior happens, it reveals something about the person. It reveals that the person's character is unchanged, and is actually in agreement with the devil—that's what John is saying, the devil is the source of evil. Sin began with him.

There's a lot we don't know about evil. Well, we know enough. We know it is not of God, "...God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all." (1Jn 1:15). We cannot blame God for evil. We cannot blame God for our sin.

The source of sin is Satan. He was in the serpent, in the garden in the beginning. But his ruin, his fall, occurred earlier. We don't know how much earlier, but it occurred earlier when he was a glorious angel, described in Ezekiel 28 verse 15, and “iniquity was found” in him. It was then that sin came into the universe. And from there, he brought his rebellion of pride to the rest of creation through the temptation in Eden and the ongoing rebellion of the human race. Just as there is no darkness in God, there is no light in Satan. He's thoroughly evil. His work is to sin—just as Christ's work is to save. So Christ came, John said, "to destroy the works of the devil."(vs8c).

What are those works? Well, there are multitudes of 'works'. There's varieties of 'works'. They include temptation, deception, and immorality, which is really a big part of the problem that John was dealing with in this book. Enticement to sin, error, heresy, was another big issue that John is dealing with—propagating a false gospel. And then I think you could say it's even physical: It's disease, it's sickness. We see that from the book of Job, physical harm and personal ruin. This is what Satan is about.

These are "the works of the devil." He is the spirit inspiring the world. John talks about the world. He speaks of the world's system and the men of that world system; the antichrists of every age—they encourage lawlessness. They encourage, and he through them, the very thing that occurred in him—rebellion.

Now he does that through men of religion. That's really what John is dealing with here. But the other apostles speak of the same thing. Paul describes Satan's servants in 2 Corinthians 11, in verse 13, as "false apostles", "deceitful workers", "disguising themselves as apostles of Christ". They don't come as ministers of Satan, they come as apostles of Christ. They are the ministers and the priests and the preachers today who do the very thing that John is exposing here. They spread error. The excuse immoral relationships. They tickle ears.

That's how Paul describes the teaching of the false teachers: 'They tickle ears. (2Tim 4:3). They tell people what they want to hear, what's comfortable, what's enjoyable; to draw them into their web. That's satanic. Christ came to destroy that; not to rob us of pleasure, not to take our joy away, but to put things right and restore us to a relationship with the LORD God, to give eternal life—which is "eternal life".

Go back to Genesis, chapter 3, and you see the tactic of the evil one. And it's just variations of it throughout history. But what does he do? He approaches Eve as a friend, who only wants to help her, and lets her know that God doesn't. 'He wants to rob her of her fulfillment because He's jealous, and He doesn't want you to become like Him and experience all that you can be. You'll get it if you have that fruit. Take the fruit, and you'll

be like God, and you'll be full, have fulfillment, the very fulfillment God's trying to keep from you.'

God's not doing that. God is telling Eve and Adam not to eat that fruit because of the consequences that would come. And you read chapter 4 of Genesis, and there they are. Their oldest son kills their youngest son. Murder happens, and a whole world begins to unfold that is full of vice and selfishness and cruelty, evil, illness, all of that. God said, 'Don't do this, and don't go there.' God doesn't try to restrict us from what is pleasurable and right and good. He offers that in the right way.

But of course, there is pleasure in sin, and that's enticing. —That's what makes it so enticing. No one denies that. The Bible doesn't deny that. In fact, the Bible affirms that. It recognizes that there is pleasure in sin. There's pleasure in lawlessness, there's pleasure in rebellion—but it's only for a season. It's real, but it's brief. And then it's enslaving. It ends in ruin. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Eze 18:20).

Christ came to end that. Christ came to end the works of the devil, to *destroy* them, and to free us. John's words are literally, Christ came "to *loose* the works of the devil", which John Stott compared to "loosening or breaking the chains that bound us, to free us from the enslavement of sin."

That's what Christ came to do. And He did that at the cross. Not in the absolute sense of destroying the works so that they no longer exist. That will happen. That's the glory we look forward to. We've been saved from sin, we're being saved from sin, we shall be saved from sin. We're saved from the penalty of sin. We're being saved, presently, from the power of it—and some day from the very presence of it.

But in the meantime, there's the presence of sin. And it will happen—happen in a believer. We still struggle with temptation. We still struggle with deception. We still fail. And how kind is He to those who fail, to those who fall.

Satan is very active—but real deliverance has occurred for the believer. We've been 'released from Satan's domain'; that's Colossians, chapter 1:13. We've been made "new creatures" in Christ—that's 2 Corinthians, chapter 5:17. We have been

regenerated. To quote from the prophet Ezekiel, (36:26), God's 'taken the heart of stone out, and He's put a heart of flesh in'. We're different creatures. We have new abilities. We have eyes to see. We understand the truth. We've got the Spirit of God within us, to protect us and guide us and empower us. We have power to resist the devil. So, both Peter and James can instruct us 'to resist the devil, be firm in your faith, and he will flee from you.' And the Christian will do that. Not always successfully, but as a rule.

But now, since the purpose of Christ's first coming was to take away sins and to destroy the works of the devil, it follows logically that we will not want to practice those sins, and be involved in those works. We see them for what they are. They're completely incompatible with the life of a child of God. And the more we recognize that, and the more we know the LORD, and the more we understand His sacrifice, the more we want to avoid those chains—the more we want those chains to be loosed.

That's what John says in verse 9, though in a more absolute way. He says, 'Those who are born of God do not practice sin.' And not only that, he says, 'They cannot sin.' The reason is, 'God's seed abides in them'. Now that's a little surprising. We "cannot sin." That's a verse that people cite to prove that the Christian can live a sinless life—that he can live, or she can live in perfection.

But unless John contradicts himself, we know that's not his meaning. He says very plainly that, 'We do sin.' One of the proofs that a person is a genuine believer is that he or she recognizes that fact. That's in 1 John chapter 1, verse 8. And then, in the next verse, in verse 9, we're to confess those sins. That's what a believer does. He recognizes, she recognizes that he or she is a sinner. We commit sins. We recognize those. We confess them to the LORD. That's characteristic of a child of God.

But some say, 'Well, we can come to that point in life where we don't sin at all.' I've never met anyone that claimed to have reached perfection, but I know that that is a doctrine. It's called "Sinless Perfection". And some people have met those who believe it. A number of years ago, J. I. Packer was here. I'm sure some of you were here for those lectures that he gave. This was back in the early '80s, but in one of those lectures he told

a story, (and some of you, I'm sure, have heard this), about Charles Spurgeon, who was visited by a man who said, "Mr. Spurgeon, I want you to know how I've been sinlessly perfect for the last two months." And Mr. Spurgeon said, "I was most intrigued, and wanted to find out more about this wonderful perfection, so I lunged forward and stepped heavily on his toe. [Laughter] And his perfection vanished like the morning dew."

No one in this life reaches perfection. And if we think that we attain to perfection, providence will arrange for us to stub our toe, or have someone step on it, and make it very clear that we're not perfect. There's sin within every one of us. Paul, in Romans 7 speaks about that 'law of sin within', (vs22), and in Galatians 5 about 'that battle that's constantly going on between the Holy Spirit and the sin that's in us.' (vs17). That's the Christian life.

No one reaches perfection. What John means is, the person who has been born of God, who is born again, does not sin constantly, characteristically, habitually. It's not the bent of his or her life. It's not something that he justifies. We sin. We may feel we sin every day. We do sin every day. We're convicted of it. We don't justify it. We don't in our hearts say 'It's okay. I'm free to do that. That's not sin.' So John isn't denying that we do that, that we commit acts of sin or that we go off into sin for a season. We do, of course, but sin isn't "the settled habit", as John Stott put it, of a person's life. It isn't characteristic of our lives.

That, too, is the meaning of the statement, "...he cannot sin..." (vs9), 'he is not able to sin.' Again, as you see, throughout John's epistle here, the word, the description of sin is used, is put, in the present tense. And the grammar's very significant. It gives the sense, the force, of a characteristic of a person's life. He doesn't sin habitually; he doesn't go on sinning.

The reason for this impossibility is "...His seed abides in him...", (vs9), which is a statement that can be taken in at least two different ways. The *seed* has been interpreted as God's offspring. You see this quite frequently in the Bible. The seed is the descendant. It's the child, 'the seed of the woman', the child of the woman. And perhaps

that's his meaning here. Those who are God's children, those who are born again, they are in Him, they are in Christ. And so because of that, they cannot sin habitually. They are in Christ, and the life of Christ is in them.

I think, however, it's probably more likely that John's meaning of *seed* is that of God's nature that it abides in him; meaning "in him" —being the child of God, him or her, who has been born of God. In other words, everyone who is born of God has God's nature. We have a new heart. We have, with that heart, a new inclination; one toward righteousness, not toward sin.

The new birth is not a superficial experience. It brings about a radical change, a fundamental change in the person who's born again. We have what Peter calls "*the divine nature.*" We have the life of God within us. And as a result of that he says, We escape "the corruption of this world by lust." (2Pe 1:4). It enables us to escape that, enables us to prevail over that. The new nature, imparted to us at the new birth, exerts powerful pressure toward holiness, so that we cannot go on living in sin. Those who do, show that they've never been born again.

That's just what John said earlier about the antichrists. And what he's saying here about this is really directed toward these false teachers who are trying to entice these believers into this life and this heresy that they've been propagating. But he said this about them already when he described them as the "antichrists", the false teachers, those who call evil good and good evil. "...they were not really of us", he said, back in chapter 2, verse 18. What does he mean by that? They're not of us spiritually. They're not of the same family as we are. They're of a different family. They've never been born again. That's why they went out from us, they weren't of us.

And John did not want his friends, those who are reading this letter, to be taken in by those people. He warned them in verse 7, to "make sure no one deceives you." So the warnings here are against these false teachers. And he's encouraging his believing friends to stay with the truth, with the Word of God, and not be drawn off by these

individuals. They're subject to that, they're influenced because they're influence is strong. These are clever men. False teachers are.

So to insure that didn't happen, he sums up all of this in verse 10, in a clear-cut way that shows, again, how they can distinguish between truth and error, between the godly and the godless; "By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother."

Now those are two of the three tests of life, obedience and love. The moral test and the social test. The two are inseparable. As someone said, love is righteousness in relation to others. We practice love. And when we practice love, we behave righteously, obediently.

But these false teachers were able to confuse things and make unrighteousness seem like righteousness, and immorality seem like love. Now how true that is of our own day. That's the argument that's used today; that 'Immorality is really okay because it's love. And love makes everything alright.'

It used to be called *The New Morality*. I think I mentioned that a few weeks ago, and the book by the Episcopal minister, Joseph Fletcher titled *Situation Ethics*. It was published in 1966, so it might seem dated now. But it was hugely influential 45 years ago, and I suspect still illustrates the way that people think, and the way they justify things. It probably illustrates the sophistry of the false teachers that John opposed, and shows how men have always been able to substitute error for truth—darkness for light—light for darkness. The argument of the book is that the one and only inflexible principle that guides us in our decisions and actions is love. Everything else is relative. One of his chapters is *Love Justifies the Means*.

It's hard to argue with the importance of love. Paul said, at the end of 1 Corinthians 13, that great chapter on love, "Now abide faith, hope, love, these three. But the greatest of these is love." Augustine famously said, "Love, and do what you like." Love is a law that rules the believer in both thought and deed. If we act in love we will act righteously.

There's no question that love is a guiding principle of our lives. The question is, what is love? Fletcher, in *The New Morality*, believed that it could violate God's Law, that it could violate His principles of conduct. This is the one inflexible rule, the others are flexible. And he argued that, philosophically, and somewhat theologically. He quotes a lot of theologians, both modern and ancient, and sprinkles his book with Bible quotes and verses.

And he gave illustrations of his argument—kind of 'case studies'. One of them is what he calls "sacrificial adultery". It involved a German woman, Mrs. Bergmeier, who was captured by the Russians at the end of the Second World War and taken to a prison camp. When her husband returned from the war, he was able to find their two children but not their mother. And the family became very desperate without her; in fact was in danger of breaking apart. The commander of the camp learned of the situation, was sympathetic, but the rules allowed them to release her for only one of two reasons—and that was either sickness or pregnancy.

She thought about this for a while and then she talked to a friendly guard who agreed to impregnate her. She was allowed to leave, and the family welcomed her home with open arms. A child was born, little Dietrich, who was loved by all the family because he had done more for them than anyone. It was adultery done for love of family—so 'it was okay; a virtuous thing.'

Was it really? What about that friendly guard? Was it love of him and love for him that that happened or was he drawn into a sin? Was it love for little Dietrich? Was any thought given to him? What about love for the LORD?

It certainly wasn't an act of faith. Listen, the LORD is well able to open prison doors for those who trust in Him, who wait upon Him. But neither was Mrs. Bergmeier's act one of love. The LORD said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." (Jn 15:10). There are no exceptions to that. None.

Love is first, obedient to God's Word and always puts the welfare of others before personal interest. That's love. It is obedient. Then, in that way, with that love, Augustine is right. "Love, and do what you like." That's the old morality.

The *New Morality* really isn't new. It's as old as the heretics Isaiah and John opposed; who used the highest virtue of love as a pretext for vice; who called evil good and good evil. John's very clear about such men. He says, "...anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother." (vs10b). 'They are "children of the devil". They are false teachers. Don't be deceived by them.'

"The children of God" live by God's standard of righteousness, which loves God and loves man. That's what the apostles teach. That's what Paul taught. Paul wrote in Ephesians chapter 5, in verse 1, "Be imitators of God..." That's what a child of God does. He imitates God, "...and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma." And then he adds, "But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints." (Eph 5: 1-3).

Morality matters. Doesn't save us, but it's the result of being saved. We're saved by Christ through faith alone, by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. The saved person does work. The power and the Spirit of God is in him or her that enables us to fight sin, and strive for righteousness. Look, we do stumble, we do fail, we do drift for a time. That happens. And all of us can fall prey to that. Why does Paul, in Ephesians 5, make that statement? Why does he say, 'imitate God'? Because there's this danger of not doing that. We have the power of God within us to enable us to fight that sin and to live a life of victory by His power, not by our own.

Well, if you're here without Christ, but it's your desire to be freed of those chains of sin, to be freed of the power of sin and the penalty of sin, there's one way to do that, only one way, and that's through faith in Christ. Come to Him. Trust in Him, He receives

all who do. Regardless of how great your sin may be, He receives all who come to Him through faith and faith alone—and He transforms life. Doesn't mean we'll live a perfect life. We won't, but we'll live a victorious life, and we will be victorious at the end. Come to Him and by His grace you'll be changed and made into a fruitful individual that brings glory to Him and help to those around you.

May God help all of us to look to Him, to stay in His Word, and be faithful to Him in all of our thoughts and deeds. Let's pray.

Father, we do thank You for the warnings that are here, warnings of individuals who are out there who would seek to lead Your people into error. And yes, we know who we are. We know the sin that's in us and the danger of it; and even the deception that we can bring upon ourselves. We are easily self-deceived. LORD, keep us from that. Keep us in Your Word. Keep us looking to You, and living for You. We can do that only by Your grace. So we look to You to bless us in that way. And then, may we live a life that's honoring to You, pleasing to You. Thank You for all that we have in Christ. It's in His name we pray. Amen.

(End of Audio)