

Walking in the Light – Part 4

Characteristics of Those Who Have Eternal Life – 1 John 2:12-17

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Sept. 29, 2024

Intro:

- This morning, we are continuing our series in the Letters of John as we grow in our understanding of what it means to be “walking in the light.” From our passage for today, 1 John 2:12-17 (page 1054), we are going to look at the characteristics of those who have eternal life.
- If you remember, the Gospel of John was written so we can believe in Jesus and have eternal life. Then, the letters of John were written so that we know we have eternal life, an assurance of salvation.

1 John 5:13 NIV

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

- So far, in the letter of 1 John, we have been given five questions we are to ask ourselves to determine and know if we have eternal life. Here are the series of questions we are to ask ourselves:
 - *Do I walk in the light?*
 - *Do I own and confess my sins?*
 - *Do I keep His commands?*
 - *Do I live as Jesus did?*
 - *Do I love my brother and sister?*
- My hope is that you can answer all of these questions affirmatively. If not, put your faith in Christ and commit yourself to following Him. The Spirit of God will enter and transform you, giving you the desire and the power to follow and do the will of God.
- In our next section of this letter, the Apostle John, with a pastor’s heart and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, turns his focus from questions to ask ourselves to determine if we have eternal life to characteristics of those who have eternal life.
- Our passage has two sections, each with three verses. We are going to look at each section one at a time, looking for the ***Characteristics of those who have eternal life***, which connects and runs through both sections. The first section is written in a somewhat poetic form and contains 4 of the 6 characteristics, whereas the last section contains 2 with some further explanation. So let’s look at the first section together:

1 John 2:12-14 NIV

I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. 13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.

14 I write to you, dear children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

- We again see John’s pastoral heart as he addresses this congregation and the church as a whole. We are “dear children” not just to him but more intensely and importantly to God. He highlights the important characteristics of those who are in and remain in the faith. These characteristics are to be found in us and be true of us as we continue to follow and become more and more in love and like Jesus. The first characteristic of those who have eternal life is that their sins have been forgiven on account of His name. And His name is Jesus.

Your sins have been forgiven through Jesus

- This is the first and foundational characteristic of a Christian, one who has eternal life. All people have a fatal flaw, which is sin—the rebellion of our hearts toward God. And because of our sins, we are all condemned to die. This is what we have earned according to the law: the wages of sin is death (see Romas 5:12-21, 6:15-23).
- Those who have been granted eternal life have recognized and admitted they have sinned and are a sinner. They have owned and then confessed their sin to God, who is righteous and holy, to receive forgiveness of their sin by faith in the grace of the one who paid for their sin by taking our sin upon himself. He became sin who knew no sin so that we could become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- All people are invited to have eternal life, and eternal life is only found in Jesus. He is the only one who can grant us eternal life. ***“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).*** In order for you to have eternal life, your sins must be forgiven on account of His name.

You have a relationship with Christ

- John, in the first part of verse 13 and the last part of verse 14, says he is writing to the “fathers” (both men and women) because they know Him who is from the beginning. He writes the exact words twice to emphasize their importance that those who have eternal life know Him who was from the beginning. Well, who is this? John tells us from the very beginning of this letter and his gospel.

1 John 1:1-3 NIV

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

John 1:1-4 NIV

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

- The person who was “from the beginning” is clearly Jesus Christ. John emphasizes that Jesus is God. He was not made, but everything was made through Him. You know you have eternal life if you know Him because He is the Word of Life, and in Him was life, and through Him we receive eternal life. So, being a Christian means that you know the one who is life.

- Christians know Christ. They have an ongoing relationship with Him because He is not dead. He is eternally alive. And we know Him because His Spirit lives in us. We talk to Him through prayer. He talks to us through His Word and by His Spirit. We see Him all around, and we know when something is of Him or not of Him. Christians know Christ, and He and this relationship is more precious to them than any and all others.
- The third characteristic of those who have eternal life is that they have the strength to overcome the evil one.

You have strength to overcome the evil one

- This characteristic can be found in the second part of verse 13 and the second part of verse 14, where John is addressing the “young men” that they have “overcome the evil one.” This is being “strong in the Lord” and in His mighty power (Eph. 6:10). The strength they have is the Word of God that lives in them.
- The Word of God is both the source of strength and the weapon of our warfare (Eph. 6:17). Those who have eternal life know the Word, and the Word gives them the strength to overcome the evil one. The evil one’s main weapons are accusations and temptations. He accuses us of the sin that we have already done. And he tempts us to do the sin we haven’t yet done. Christians resist him and overcome him by the strength of the truth in the Word of God. The Word gives you strength, and the warfare shows your strength.
- Blessed is the person who meditates on the Word of God. They are like trees that are planted by streams of water; they produce fruit in season, and their leaves do not wither (Psalm 1:1-3). Those who have eternal life know the Word, and through it, they overcome the accusations and the temptations of the evil one. They continue to fight and overcome by the Word of God.

You know the Father

- Not only do those who have eternal life know the one who was from the beginning, but they know the Father as well. John will write just a couple verses down from here that whoever confesses the Son has the Father also (1 John 2:23). You can’t know the Father if you do not know the Son.
- This is a huge statement that has serious theological implications for all the religions of the world that reject Jesus as the Son of God (i.e., Islam, Judaism and the cults that diminish the full nature of Jesus). This means that they don’t know the Father because they have rejected the Son; even though they claim to know God and worship Him, they do not know Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).
- From our first section, those who have eternal life have their sin forgiven through Christ, they have a relationship with Him, they have strength to overcome the evil one, and they know the Father through Jesus. Now, we come to section two of our passage, where we find two more characteristics of those who have eternal life.

1 John 2:14-17 NIV

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. 16 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

You do not love the world

- First, we need to understand what “love the world” means. Jesus said that “God so loved the world,” meaning God loves all the people of the world so much so that He gave His one and only Son to save those who are in the world. But this does not mean that He loves what the world values and the desires that are against and outside of Him.
- This means that a person who loves the world can’t get enough of the pleasures of this world (the lust of the flesh), they can’t get enough of the things of this world (the lust of the eyes), and they can’t get enough of the status they receive from the standards and values of this world (the pride of life).
- Loving the world means that you have a desire for and a commitment to something. Love requires a commitment of time and resources. If you love the world, that is where your time and resources go. If you are living for the desires of your flesh, you are living just for this world and the things in this world. If you have pleasure over principle, a fixation of the material over the spiritual, a promotion of self over others, then the love of the Father is not in you.
- This world and its desires are passing away. But the person who does the will of God lives forever, which brings us to our next point. Those who have eternal life are characterized by doing the will of God.

You do the will of God

- What are you going to connect yourself to? Are you going to love this world that will pass away, or are you going to love God and do His will and live forever? Those who have eternal life are determined to do the will of God. They seek it out because they love Him and want to please Him. They know doing His will is the best thing, the place that will hold the most joy and will last forever.
- Where your heart is, your treasure will also be (Luke 12:34). We know what His will is by putting His Word in our hearts and choosing to follow it in our actions—loving others, seeking and building the kingdom of God, praising him, and turning from evil. We must be faithful in our commitments, honorable in our actions, and work as unto the Lord.

Conclusion

- Examine yourself and see if these characteristics are true of you. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to see yourself as you truly are. Be encouraged if you see them in action, continue to persevere in them, and grow stronger in the Word. Demonstrate your faith by your actions, be at peace, and rejoice in your salvation, for great will be your reward. Continue to ask that you see more of the glory of God and fall deeper in love with Christ.
- If you see that you are missing the mark with your soul, repent of these things and ask God to do His cleansing and transforming work in your soul.
- Prayer people and closing prayer.

Benediction

May the God of grace and mercy, who has forgiven your sins on account of His Son, strengthen you with His Word and fill you with His Spirit. May you know Christ, the One who was from the beginning, and walk closely with Him all your days.

As you leave this place, may the peace of Christ guard your hearts, and may the love of the Father overflow in your life. Amen.

Questions for Growth Groups

- Why is acknowledging our sinfulness essential for receiving eternal life?
- How does your relationship with Christ influence your life choices, habits, and mindset?
- How would you describe the role of prayer and God's Word in maintaining that relationship?
- What role does God's Word play in helping you overcome the attacks of the evil one?
- In what ways do you think loving the world competes with loving God in your life?
- How can we discern between enjoying God's gifts in the world and falling into "the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"?
- How does knowing that the world and its desires will pass away impact your perspective on what truly matters?
- Which of the characteristics listed in 1 John 2:12-17 do you feel strongest in, and which do you feel you need to grow in?
- What steps can you take this week to resist worldly temptations and grow in your love for God?
- How can you encourage others in your group to walk more closely with Christ and live out these characteristics of eternal life?