

1 John 3:10-13 | Sunday February 8, 2026

Often we can be tempted to diminish how dangerous false teaching is. For John this was not an option. He wants to encourage believers to remain anchored to the truth they have heard from the beginning. He desires for all believers to have an abiding walk with Jesus. **The message of the false teachers was dangerous and would lead to sin.** This is a huge deal because **sin takes a believer out of fellowship, and out of an abiding walk with Jesus.** Having this kind of non-abiding walk as a believer would cause us to shrink in shame at Jesus' coming. His appearing is one of the themes that runs throughout this entire section. Understanding what Jesus accomplished at His first appearing, what He will accomplish at His second appearing, and ultimately how His appearing's should be reflected in our life right now will combat the lies of the false teachers.

1 John 2:28-29; 3:2; 5-14 ESV

(28) And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when **He appears** we may have confidence and not shrink from Him in shame at His coming.

(29) If you know that He is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of Him.

(2) Beloved, we are **God's children now**, and what we will be **has not yet appeared**; but we know that **when He appears** we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.

(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.

(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.

Jesus is fully righteous, and in Him there is no sin at all. At His first appearing He came to take away sin and destroy the works of Satan. At His second appearing all believers will perfectly reflect His righteousness in every aspect of who we are. **We will finally be revealed because He is revealed.**

1 Thessalonians 5:23 ESV

(23) Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may **your whole spirit and soul and body** be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our whole spirit, soul and body will be made perfect and blameless because we will see Jesus as He is. Last week we looked at the fact that **we live between His two appearances**. Sin has been defeated and all believers are a child of God right now. Yet, we still live in a **body of death**, and even **our soul has been corrupted by sin**. Our personality has good parts but also have parts that are sinful. We are called to abide with Jesus and in His sinlessness, as we await His return. **To stay in sin is to deny the purpose behind both of His appearances**. Seeing Him at His second appearing changes us and it should change us right now.

1 John 3:6 NAS95

(6) No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins **has seen Him or knows Him**.

Seeing Jesus changes us so when we sin we are not seeing Him and truly knowing Him. We saw and came to know Jesus when we were saved and that is supposed to have an ongoing affect in our walk. Sinning shows that our seeing and knowing Him are not having the affect it should. **Our sins blinds us to Him**.

2 Peter 1:9 ESV

(9) For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted **that he is blind**, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

Sin does not come from an abiding walk with Jesus. When we walk in sin we are forgetting what His appearing accomplished for us. Jesus defeated sin by paying its penalty of death. **When we were saved by trusting in Him, we became spiritually alive**. The part of us that died in the garden is brought back to life, just like Jesus was. When we sin we are not walking in this new spiritual life.

1 John 3:9-10 NKJV

(9) Whoever has been born of God does not sin, **for His seed remains in him**; and he cannot sin, because **he has been born of God**.

(10) **In this** the children of God and the children of the devil **are manifest**: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

That part of us that came alive when we were saved is born of God. It is what enables us to have fellowship with Jesus and abide with Him. It is this new part of us that came alive that reveals, we are a child of God. This new nature in Christ **is manifested, or revealed as we practice righteousness**. This is the adjective of the word **appearing** that is throughout the passage. The new nature can honor God and reveal His righteousness in us. It is only through this new nature that true righteous acts can be done. Likewise, sin comes out of the old nature. **When a nonbeliever sins they are revealing their nature. When a believer practices righteousness they are revealing their true nature**. The problem is, believers don't always act out of our nature. We have the capacity to sin and the capacity to abide. **Those who shrink back, who have not been abiding, are not acting out of their new nature in Christ**.

John 12:42-43 ESV

(42) Nevertheless, many even of the authorities **believed in Him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it**, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue;

(43) for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

These believers, are saved, yet are not walking in their new life. **Their actions are not manifesting who they truly are.** Instead, they were walking out of a fear of man and walking in their old sin nature. Unfortunately, a child of God can get very dirty and try to pretend that they don't have a new nature.

Luke 15:15-16 ESV

(15) So **he** went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields **to feed pigs.**

(16) And he was **longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate,** and no one gave him anything.

Jesus is describing the prodigal son. **At no point in the parable is the son not a son.** Even when He is dirty like a pig, living with the pigs and longing to eat like a pig. His true nature as a son does not change. **When a son lives this way they are not manifesting who they are.** They great news is no prodigal is left in the pig pen. We are promised that God will discipline His sons and daughters.

Hebrews 12:6-7; 10 ESV

(6) For **the Lord disciplines the one He loves,** and chastises **every son** whom He receives.”

(7) It is for discipline that you have to endure. **God is treating you as sons.** For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

(10) For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but **He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.**

God disciplines His sons and daughters; He lovingly corrects His own. This discipline is not pleasant, but **it is for our good, so that we can share in His holiness.** He so desires for our true nature as His child to be reflected in our lives. **It can be hard to see what this discipline process looks like in a prodigal.** If we did not have the book of Ecclesiastes, it would be difficult to tell the inner turmoil Solomon was under as He walked outside of God's will. On the outside everything looked great, but on the inside, he was being disciplined and saw how empty it all was. We can rest in the truth that God is going to finish His work in every believer.

Philippians 1:6 ESV

(6) And I am sure of this, that **He who began a good work** in you **will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.**

God began a good work in every believer when they became His child. **This work will not be completed until we see Jesus face to face.** We do not want to be the believers who shrink back from this moment. Our true nature will finally be revealed in every aspect of our life. Just as believers do not always reveal their true nature, non-believers can also hide their nature for a season.

2 Peter 2:20-22 ESV

(20) For if, after **they** have escaped the **defilements** of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, **they are again entangled in them and overcome,** the last state has become worse for them than the first.

(21) For it would have been better for them never to **have known the way of righteousness** than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to

them.

(22) What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and **the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.**”

Some nonbelievers come into enough contact with the truth that they are able to escape some of the defilements that sin causes. **They never believe in Jesus, but start trying to practice moral things.** This would be a nonbeliever being sober, or living a pure life until marriage. Both of these actions have earthly benefits. They would escape earthly consequences, but these external changes, are not true acts of righteousness, because they do not have a new nature yet. Someone is a child of God by believing in Jesus. **The pig can wash up and be clean for a season. Yet, this washing does not change its true nature as a pig.** A nonbeliever can live a moral life, but this will never save them. They need Jesus’ sacrifice. If a nonbeliever lives this way and yet never trusts in Jesus, it ends up worse for them in the end because they will have a harder heart towards the things of God. So both nonbelievers and believers can conceal out true natures. Yet **true righteous acts are only accomplished through Jesus, in our new nature as believers.** This raises the question though, of what do true acts of righteousness look like?

1 John 3:10-11 ESV

(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.**

(11) For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, **that we should love one another.**

True righteousness is reflected in our lives by showing love to our brothers and sisters in Christ. **As a believer we are not of God, we are not abiding in Him, if we are not loving others.** Walking in the Spirit will be shown through a God given love for others.

Galatians 5:22-23 ESV

(22) **But the fruit of the Spirit is love,** joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

(23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

There is a reason that love is listed out first. The Spirit produces true righteous acts in us. **Love is righteousness in relation to others.** When we abide we are reflecting Jesus’ heart. **The fruit of the Spirit reflect Him.** Love will become the major theme for the next **36 verses.** Up to this point in the letter love has been mentioned **7** times (twice in reference to the world). From here through chapter 4 love will be mentioned **35** times. We are called to reflect Jesus and show His love. We are not to be like Cain.

1 John 3:12 ESV

(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.**

As we are commanded to love, Cain is held up as the negative example. We are not to act like Him, **which means it is possible for us to do so.** Again we can cover up our true nature and not be loving. Cain hated Abel, and murdered him. We are given Cain’s motivation. Cain was jealous that Abel was righteous and He was not.

Genesis 4:2-5 ESV

(2) And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground.

(3) In the course of time **Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground,**

(4) and **Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions.** And the LORD had regard **for Abel and his offering,**

(5) but for Cain and his offering He had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.

Cain was the older brother and was given the more important job of working the ground. Cain was in charge of growing food. Abel was given the less important job as younger brother of keeping the sheep. At this point sheep were only used for clothing (Gen 3:21) and worship. It is not until after the flood that humanity started eating animals (Gen 9:3). On a human scale Cain brought the more valuable offering. **Cain brought His best to God and was rejected.** Abel trusted in what God had instructed them to do, He brought blood. Abel's actions were righteous because He was trusting in the blood of the future redeemer. He was looking forward to Jesus.

Hebrews 11:4 ESV

(4) **By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain,** through which he was commended **as righteous,** God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.

Abel had faith that He would be accepted by the blood. Too often this story is presented that Cain brought His leftovers and was out sinning all the time but Abel brought the best to God and was moral. **Abel was righteous because of the blood.**

Cain could not make sense of the fact that God required blood and He hated Abel for trusting in it.

1 John 3:12-13 ESV

(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.**

The word used for murder is not the typical word for killing someone. This word means to kill by cutting the throat, and is used in context of offering a sacrifice. Cain was so upset that God accepted the blood of the sacrificial lamb that he sacrificed Abel. Our sin nature, and the world hates the truth of the gospel. **It hates the truth that we cannot save ourselves or create a new nature for ourselves.** We are not accepted because of righteous acts that we do. We are righteous because we trust in the blood. Jesus gives us new life and enables us to abide in Him, to reflect His righteousness. Each command given to believers, like showing love, is only possible as we abide in Jesus. It is only possible as we walk in the new life He has given to us.

Galatians 2:20 ESV

(20) I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, **but Christ who lives in me.** And the life I now live in the flesh **I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**