**BCM Bible Study – February 4-6, 2015**

**1 John 3**

**1 John 2:28 – 3:3** True believers will remain in fellowship with Christ and experience the blessings that come through communion with Him. You will be confident at His coming, certain you are his child, conformed to Christ, consistent in your consecration.

Reflect on your reaction to Jesus’ coming. (v. 28)

John links our being children of God with the lavish love of the Father. How do you see the two connected?

* “I once was a slave to sin, but now I am a child of God, there is no place for either an inferiority or superiority complex.”

What if we recognized that we are lavishly loved by Him? (How could this affect different relationships? Knowing now that the person you are dating, friends with, or not being loving towards is God’s child as well?)

How can you allow this present reality to meet you in the circumstances you are currently facing?

How can the hope of seeing Christ at his return and the glory that follows affect your purity/chasing holiness? (v.3 – pure = free from contamination.)

* When I find myself without hope, it can be because I’m not dwelling on what’s to come – seeing Jesus as He is and being make like Him - this directly affects my present and daily choices I make. John writes about the love of the Father because our future reality has present implications – our beliefs affect the way we live now.

**1 John 3:4-10 –** Jesus Christ came to redeem and renew sinners by paying the penalty of sin and defeating the devil.

What is the core message of 4-10, these negative warnings of sin v. the positive declarations of righteousness?

* Verse 4-10 is not to condemn or judge the salvation of everyone we see but for discernment for John’s specific context. This is not license to say “I see you have sinned, you must be of the devil.” Context: people who claimed to be followers of Jesus were not living according to his ways. John was bringing clarity saying don’t be deceived by people who claim to know but whose lives contradict His will and way.
* Purity (v. 4-10) is not a moral high ground for a Christian for self-righteousness but the choice has its roots in being the very children of God (v. 1-3); it’s about living like who we are.
* God’s seed (various views): Holy Spirit, Word of God, Christ, God Himself, the new nature.

The question naturally arises, “what happens if I’m struggling in sin, does this mean I’m not truly a child of God? Why do Christians still sin?

* 1:8-2:2 established that no one is without sin and we have an advocate in Jesus.
* Sin: habitual, continual, and deliberate sin as a way of life; “continues to” or “keeps on” sinning (v. 6); if a Christian commits a sin, there is forgiveness through Christ. But John said “I write this so that you will not sin” (2:1). Christians should never be characterized by sinful lifestyles. An occasional sin is not impossible, but neither should it be inevitable. It is impossible for a Christian to choose to live a habitual lifestyle of sin.
* A life of righteousness, free of power of sin is connected to our relationship with God. We come to this text to figure out how much sin is too much sin, and then we try to fix things in our flesh. But our not sinning is not about how much harder we try, it’s about our relationship with our Father and His son. We realize that we are not someone the Lord tolerates or let slip in, but that Jesus chose us, and “maybe what John is saying is that it really is possible to be free from sin.”
* Christ has taken away our sins; we have a new liberty and freedom. Sin no longer dominates us or enslaves us. I may fall into sin, but I will not walk in sin. Any righteousness we do flows from the righteousness of Christ poured into our lives by means of the new birth.
* 1 John is to examine our genuineness and give evidence to ourselves of assurance. Two tests to distinguish a child of God from child of the devil: “Do you do what is right?” “Do you love others?”

What does this text teach me about God (His character and His ways)? What does this text teach me about fallen, sinful humanity (that requires the grace of God)?

**1 John 3:11-18 –** those who truly belong to God in Christ will live and love after the pattern of Jesus rather than the pattern of the world. Love one another and follow the example of Jesus.

(Cain and Abel is in Genesis 4:1-8)

Is there anyone you hate, are holding onto bitterness or jealousy toward, or haven’t forgiven?

* Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:21-24

What may John be saying to us by stating “do not be surprised if the world hates you”? How do you feel about this, is this reflected at all in your own life?

Verse 16-18 gives a definition of what love is. What does laying your life down for others actually look like?

* “For 33 years Jesus laid down his life to do the will of the Father.”

Is there any area where you’re currently holding your life back, trying to preserve your way, your wants, and desires? Has the Holy Spirit brought a person to mind to whom you’re not showing love? How is God asking you to take an action step of love in obedience to his commands to lay your life down for another?

* “Self-preservation in the first law of physical life, but self-sacrifice is the first law of spiritual life.”

**1 John 3:19-24 –** God uses Biblical truths and the gift of His Spirit to provide assurance and comfort to His beloved Children.

Does your heart ever condemn you (even rightly so)? Do you avoid God’s presence because you’re riddled with guilt, shame, or a sense you don’t measure up? How does this affect your relationship with the Lord? How can doubt and guilt actually serve to assure of God’s presence in our lives?

* John is assuring the church in two ways: 1.They love in action and in truth, their tangible care for the body is a fruit of who they are in Jesus. 2. God knows everything about us, and “still the love and mercy of the Father are present to heal our troubled consciences.” (Psalm 103:13-14) Rest in His presence (v. 19): reassure, set at ease (Pray 139:23)
* “Am I believing, obeying and loving rightly? Sometimes I doubt, disobey, and hate, and these things bother me. This is bad right? No, it’s good. Those who do not know Christ ask none of these questions. Such issues do not bother those with hard hearts.”

What does it mean to come with confidence before God? Can we really ask and receive anything?

* “The man of obedience is the man whom God will hear, because his heart leads him to pray humbly with submission, for he feels it to be his highest desire that the Lord’s will should be done. Is he not one with God? Does he not desire and ask for exactly what God intends?”
* Verse 23: believe in the name of Christ (everything he claimed about himself, teachings, trust in Him, submit ourselves to him, go where He goes, agree with His ways, enjoy His fellowship) and love one another. We can’t separate loving others from our belief in Jesus.

Verse 24 ends the chapter by telling us how we know if we are in right relationship with Christ. Does reading this give you confidence in your relationship?