

# SUMMER of LOVE

Sermon-Based Study Guide  
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

1 John 3.4-10  
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## I. Connecting With One Another

What are some of your parents' qualities or characteristics that you find prevalent in yourself?

## II. Introduction to this Series and Study

In or study of 1 John we have continued to see John's pastoral concern for the community of faith. He is concerned about a right understanding of who Jesus is. He urges true community by encouraging and building up one another. John is also concerned about holiness and God-honoring behavior. He calls the faithful to obedience to the will of God, to turn from the idols of this world, and to recognize that the faithful are the children of God.

Our passage this week, 1st John 3.4-10, further develops what it means to be children of God. John gives us a deeper look at what it means to be part of God's family. He is direct about not continuing in sin, not being led astray, and not succumbing to the power of the devil. John paints a vivid picture of what it is to be a child of God.

## III. Study the Text

- a. Read through 1 John 3.10-14. What are some words you find here that you would like to understand more fully? What words or phrases do you see repeated in this passage?
- b. Let's focus on 1 John 3.4-6. It picks up where 3.3 leaves off in describing attributes of the children of God. In 3.3 we are called to moral purity by continuing to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus who exemplifies God's character and purity. In 3.4 the characteristic of a child of God has to do with not breaking the law. To understand this better let's see how John pictures Jesus in relation to the Law of Moses.

### The Law was Considered to be:

Revelation from God

God's Light shined into the world

"Water" that gives life to the soul

"Bread" to feed spiritual hunger

A mediator between people and God

### Jesus is Described as:

John 1.14 and 17

John 8.12, 9.5, and 12.35

John 14.10-14

John 6.32-40

John 14.6

How would you summarize John's view of Jesus over and against the Law?

If Jesus, in John's understanding, fulfills and replaces the Law in every aspect, then what is the meaning of the phrase in 3.4: "sin is lawlessness?"

- c. Looking at 1 John 3.5-6 and verse 9, what does John tell us about the one who "continues to sin?"  
How is a follower of Jesus enabled to not continue to sin?

- d. Look at 1 John 3.7-8. What contrast does John describe here? What things that lead you astray is John referring to here?
- e. Take a look at the following passages to understand the Bible's teaching about the devil:
- Genesis 3.1-7 \_\_\_\_\_
- Matthew 4.1-11 \_\_\_\_\_
- Luke 10.18 and Isaiah 14.12-15 \_\_\_\_\_
- Matthew 25.41 \_\_\_\_\_
- Colossians 2.9-15 \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Children of God do not continue to sin. Sin, in John's use of the term, is rejection of the Law or "lawlessness". The Law is fulfilled and replaced by Jesus, so sin is rejection of Jesus and the call to be conformed to his character, values, and behavior.

What are some practical ways a person can:

- 1) not be led astray by anyone or anything or any power?
- 2) not continue to sin?
- 3) do what is right?
- 4) be more and more conformed to the character of Jesus?

#### IV. Reflect and Respond

- g. Take some time to evaluate your life of faith. Are you aware of tendencies to turn from Jesus and reject his leadership - the things John equates with sin and lawlessness?
- h. How do you respond to the reminder John gives us, that Jesus "appeared so that he might take away our sins" (v. 4) and "the Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil" (v. 8)?
- i. What is significant to you to understand that by trusting in Jesus you are actually re-born, that is, God's "seed" is planted in you so that you are God's child?

#### V. Spend some time in prayer:

- j. Pray for yourself to be aware of ways you are "continuing to sin or to be deceived." Ask the Holy Spirit to convict you of these things and empower you to turn from them.
- k. Ask God's Holy Spirit to enable people in our communities - our friends and neighbors - to learn that they are loved and valued by God who desires to infuse all people with life abundant and everlasting.
- l. Pray for Good Shepherd's continued work of discernment, especially lifting up our Discernment Working Party, the pastors, elders and leaders of our church to be led by God.

*One of the things that surprised me when I first read the New Testament seriously was that it talked so much about a Dark Power in the universe - a mighty evil spirit who was held to be the Power behind death and disease, and sin. The difference is that Christianity thinks this Dark Power was created by God, and was good when he was created, and went wrong. Christianity agrees with Dualism that this universe is at war. But it does not think this is a war between independent powers. It thinks it is a civil war, a rebellion, and that we are living in a part of the universe occupied by the rebel.*

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*