



# 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter

14 April 2024

*Confident Christianity  
knows and experiences the grace of forgiveness.*

## **Main verses:**

- 12 I am writing to you who are God's children  
because your sins have been forgiven through Jesus.  
13 I am writing to you who are mature in the faith  
because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning.  
I am writing to you who are young in the faith  
because you have won your battle with the evil one.  
14 I have written to you who are God's children  
because you know the Father. (1 John 2:12-14a)

## **Main point:**

Confident Christianity means knowing some important truths.  
Those who have put their trust in Jesus Christ can know:

- Our past sins have been forgiven;
- We have eternal life; and
- We can live a life that pleases God.

Intro |

As I prepared today's message, it reminded me of a TV commercial that was around when I was a child. It was when bread was promoted on TV.

Health experts were encouraging everyone to buy wholemeal bread, rather than white bread. Wholemeal bread, they said, has all the goodness of the grain, while white bread is so highly processed barely any nutritional value remains.

But, we all complained, wholemeal bread is heavier, chewier, feels like you're trying to digest cardboard! On the other hand, white bread is light, fluffy and slips down so easily! Yes, marketers had quite a job, trying to convince us to choose the healthier option.

So ... what was their solution? Make wholemeal bread that looks and tastes like white bread!

Well ... that is, in effect, what I'm hoping to do in today's message.

As we continue our series in 1 John, John starts serving up some very heavy, hard-to-chew doctrinal truths.

However, he knew it is imperative new believers know these truths, otherwise they would have no hope standing against the deceptive teachings of those who were determined to lead them astray.

So, today I'm going to attempt to teach heavy, 'wholemeal' doctrinal truths – with the digestibility of fluffy white bread – and that means using two short videos which will answer two important questions.

We know that one of the dangerous teachings circulating amongst the new believers at Ephesus was whether or not believers can know with certainty they had eternal life and would live forever in the kingdom of God after they died.

John concludes his letter with, *"I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life."* (1 John 5:13)

The emphasis is "so that you may **know** ..."

Or ... 'So that you no longer have any doubts concerning your eternal life ..."

John is talking about a certain kind of 'knowing'.

Knowing that is two-fold:

Firstly, how can we know that we have been forgiven by God and will therefore share in the gift of eternal life God offers to those who belong to His Son Jesus?

**Point 1 | *Anyone who puts their trust in Jesus Christ and his substitutionary sacrifice, is called a child of God. The heart of every child of God has been washed by the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ.***

John writes,

<sup>8</sup>If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. <sup>9</sup> But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:8)

So if we posed the question, "when God the Father looks at your heart, what does He see?" this verse reveals that those who put their trust in Jesus Christ find themselves in a very special place when they stand before the pure and holy God the Father.

Let me try to explain this special place in 'white-bread' language:

Imagine our holy God and Father, in heaven with his angels circulating all around.

Now imagine that you or I desire to come before our holy God.

We come mindful of our sins, our failings, our mistakes – and we kneel before God with a repentant heart.

Have you got this image in your mind? Would it surprise you to learn there is something very wrong with that picture?

The truth is NO person can enter God's holy presence on their own.

That's why Job cried, *"If only there were a mediator between us [meaning between him and God], someone who could bring us together."* (Job 9:33)

We need a mediator, a go-between, one who is perfect, sinless and holy.

Of course, God sent His Son Jesus Christ to be that mediator.

So now, when one of God's children enters God's heavenly presence, they don't enter alone!

When Father God sets His gaze towards one of His children, He sees them through the filter of His Son Jesus's perfect, sinless and all-sufficient life.

He says to that child of God, "Come my child, you may enter because you are with, or in, my Son Jesus."

That's why John wrote,

*"My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. <sup>2</sup> He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world."* (1 John 1:1-2)

Let's watch a little video which very clearly explains what it means to be forgiven.



[Watch a three minute skit on the Christian foundation of salvation]

After video: So, the gift of eternal life is not based on what you've done, how often you've attended church, or even your good works – it is based entirely on whether or not you've placed your life in the person of Jesus Christ.

**Point 2 | We can live in the freedom from sin which Jesus obtained for us by**

**regularly confessing our known sins, and remaining committed to ensuring we don't hold onto the sins which have been forgiven.**

But there is another 'knowing' which John wants them to be confident of.

How can we live continually in the freedom from sin which Jesus obtained for us?

That's what John was attempting to answer, when he wrote,

*"No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God."* (1 John 3:9 and also see 5:19)

What the heck is John talking about?

John is emphasising that because the seed of the Spirit of God is planted in the heart of the believer, they will no longer live the same kind of life they had prior to becoming God's child.

Although while we live in this world we will always be vulnerable to sin, the Spirit's cleansing presence in our life will always lead us to want to please our heavenly Father, and so the desire to intentionally or deliberately sin will not remain.

The Holy Spirit is always a transformative power within us, and He will continually work to make us into the new person God created us to be in Christ.

But we must remain committed to walking in Christ's forgiveness, and not hold onto the sins that Jesus has cleansed us from.

Let's watch a little video that emphasises this truth.



*[Watch a three minute skit on our vulnerability to hold onto old sins, rather than releasing them to Jesus]*

### **Application |**

Let me leave you with some truths which John wants us to confidently know:

The confident Christianity knows, with certainty, they have eternal life.

They know with certainty that Christ has cleansed them

from their sins.

They are determined not to hold onto sins that Christ has already forgiven.

So, if there are sins that need to be released to Jesus, as we move towards confession, let us allow Jesus to forgive these sins so we may live lives which glorify him.

## *How we'll proceed through 1 John:*

### **Easter 3 | 14<sup>th</sup> April | 1 John 2:12-29 | Confessional Christianity**

*Fellowship with God the Father means walking in the light, whilst admitting our vulnerability to sin, we acknowledge Christ's atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

- God sent Jesus to atone for our sins, delivering us from slavery to sin;
- having been freed from sin, our faith and trust in Jesus Christ gives us right-standing before God

### **Easter 4 | 21<sup>st</sup> April | 1 John 3:1-24 | Compassionate Christianity**

*Fellowship with God in Christ means receiving God's love with which to share with others.*

- Those who have experienced God's forgiveness, shared God's love with others

### **Easter 5 | 28<sup>th</sup> April | 1 John 4:1-20 | Confronting Christianity**

*Fellowship with God in Christ means confronting and challenging lies with the truth.*

- God's word alone is the measuring stick to test truth from human lies
- The Spirit of God has been given to us to discern truth from error

### **Easter 6 | 5<sup>th</sup> May | 1 John 5:1-20 | Compliant Christianity**

*Fellowship with God in Christ means living obediently and confidently knowing we have eternal life.*

- Those who love Jesus, obey his commandments;
- Those who are 'in Christ' have received God's eternal life

### **Easter 7 | 12<sup>th</sup> May | Ascension Sunday**