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A Letter to Dear Children, Part 19

Untouched by The Wicked One

Text: 1 John 5:18-21

Yesterday I took an online cooking class on knife skills. The lesson began with a quiz about knives.

Q: Which is more dangerous: a sharp knife or a dull knife? A: A dull knife is more dangerous because a dull knife can slip, as you're trying to cut with it, and possibly cut your non-cutting hand which might be resting on the cutting board. Likewise, a dull Christian is more dangerous than a sharp one. A dull believer is susceptible to the teachers of heresy (4:1). A dull believer is more likely to believe the devil’s lies. John writes this epistle in an effort to make sharp knives of these first century believers. We have been studying what John said, for several weeks.

John sums up his previous teaching, using the phrase, “we know...”

* We know that the person born of God does not live in sin (18). This has reference not to the occasional act of disobedience or a night of behaving badly. This refers to the person who lives in persistent rebellion to the voice and the known revealed will of God. This is the person who, instead of surrender, gives to God a constant, “no”. When we are walking in the light or walking in obedience or walking in holiness, it is not because we are wonderful. It is because God’s seed in in us (3:9) and God is producing, in us, His fruitful life. John says, essentially, “Satan can *have at* you, but Satan can’t *have* you.” (cf. Luke 22:31-32). In regard to Satan, we are overcomers (2:14b).

New English Bible:

*It is the Son of God who keeps him safe.*

* We know that we are of God (19). That is, we are God’s children (John 1:11-12; 1 John 3:1-2). This is not a phase. Rather, it is a change of status (5:1,4).

**Illus.**

My personalized license plate from the state of Georgia reads TIMSDAD. I’ve told my son that when I go home to be with my Savior, one of my great claims will be, “I was TIM’S DAD”. Timothy is in a non-reversible relationship with me. I am his father and he is my son. That can never be changed. When you received Jesus Christ as savior, by repentance and confession of sin, you became God’s child. That is an irreversible action and a non-negotiable change of status. Hallelujah!!

* We know that the Son of God has come (20)

Next week, Lord willing, I will begin a short, two-part sermon series called, “Why Jesus Came”. For now, however, note verse 20 and the benefit of Christ’s coming.

1. The Son of God has come and has given us an understanding.

1 Corinthians 2:12-16:

***12****Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.*

***13****These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the [a]Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* ***14****But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* ***15****But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.* ***16****For “who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.*

B. The Son of God has come and is knowable (John 17:3;)

Martin Luther writes of God as the *Deus Absconditus (*hidden God) as opposed to the *Deus Revelatus* (revealed God). In reality, God is both hidden *and* revealed. He is both known and shrouded in mystery. Hear Paul in Philippians 3:10-

*...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering...*

**Closing**

I’m a little disappointed by John’s final word. I was expecting the epistle to close on a high note. Instead, John closes with an admonition. No, an assignment. He closes with yet another item for the believer to handle.

*Keep yourselves from idols.*

In my opinion, he should have closed with a promise about what God will do for the believers. Perhaps a Pauline benediction: Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling....

No, John closes with “keep yourselves from idols”.

Now that I've pondered John’s closing more, I think he’s right. Let us remind ourselves that much of our growth in this walk of faith and this life is Christ has to do with our voluntary compliance with what God has said. God has commanded that we worship nobody but God. Now, see to it that you keep yourselves from (worshipping) idols! In verse 18, we are *kept.*  In verse 21, we are to *keep ourselves.*

Amen