

UNMISTAKABLE

Four Unmistakable

Truths of the Christian Life

Week One: Unmistakable Forgiveness

01. INTRODUCTION

Hello there, My name is _____ and I want to welcome you to Vintage Church. I am so excited to kick off our New Series **UNMISTAKEABLE**, where together we are going to be doing a study through the New Testament Book of 1 John. I want to welcome everyone who's joining us this week here locally at one of our physical locations or just streaming us online. We're glad you're here.

02. TRANSITION TO MESSAGE

Throughout this series, we will be studying the book of 1 John together...

BACKGROUND & Importance of Context

Scholars agree 1 John was written by the Apostle John. **But, to whom is the letter written?** Well, John pastored a church at Ephesus, and at one point led a whole region of churches. That's where modern-day Turkey is located. 1 John was written to those same churches – like Smyrna, Sardis, and Philadelphia.

So, **why was the book written?** Well, many of the churches were *struggling...* they were living well below the life Christ had for them. They were living in darkness, instead of the light. And, they had questions... *big questions about their own salvation.*

As a pastor, people come to our pastors and me regularly and say:
"Pastor, I don't even know if I'm really saved! How can I be sure of my

salvation? I've really messed up. I've blown it. I'm wondering – does God still love me?"

- I've also counseled tons of people that really **fear death** – because they're not certain they are saved even though they had confessed their sin and invited Christ to come into their life. *How about you?*
- Are you **100-percent convinced** that if you were to die right now, you would go to Heaven?
- *If you've ever doubted or questioned your own salvation – you're at the right place. John wrote this book for you.*

You see, these churches were going through a bit of a **crisis**. Some people brought in *false teachings* about who Jesus was and how to live the Christian life.

- One false teaching viewed Jesus as *something less than the Son of God*.
- Another lie being spread was – since Jesus died for sin, they could experience more of His grace by *sinning even more*.

Whenever we accept a false view of Jesus or misunderstand His will, we will live below God's best for our lives.

So John writes this letter—1 John—to show both the first-century Believers and us today how to live and enjoy the Christian life.

BIG IDEA TODAY

We have been delivered from the penalty of sin by justification, but we haven't been delivered from the presence and the relational consequences of sin. That is an on-going process called *sanctification*. Join us this week as we study UNMISTAKEABLE Forgiveness in the Book of 1 John.

03. MESSAGE

The letter starts out in **1 John 1:1** saying: *What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have observed and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—*

- John's giving the backdrop to this book and is affirming his authority to write it, saying, "**I actually walked with Jesus.**"
- "I was there with Jesus on the Mount of the Beatitudes and on the Mount of Transfiguration.
- I was with Jesus there by the Sea of Galilee. I was there in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- I was at the cross, at the tomb, and at the ascension." *John lived and walked with Jesus* and is saying, "We heard firsthand what Jesus taught.
- We saw the kind of life He lived and observed every detail of His life. And those of us who actually walked with Jesus all agree about who Jesus was and how we ought to live."

In **1 John 1:2-4**, He goes on to say: ² that life was revealed, and we have seen it and we testify and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us— ³ what we have seen and heard we also declare to you, so that you may also have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

Here John's saying, "*Jesus taught us how to experience a full life with Him every day by walking in fellowship with Him and with the Father,*" and John wanted to pass that on to the hearers.

He goes on to say, "When you live in harmony with God you will live in true friendship with others who walk in harmony with God."

1 John 1:5 continues: This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him.

- This verse tells us not only is God *in the light*; but He *is* the light! That means God is purity – His motives and intentions toward us are pure and only for our best. He *is* truth – we can trust His promises.

- God sees clearly – even if we can't see where He's leading us, He knows the destiny He's planned for us.

The challenge for us surrendering our will comes down to **sin and our flesh that fights against that.**

***What is sin?* Sin is any action or attitude that falls short of God's standard.**

ILLUSTRATION: *Practically, what is sin?* The word sin is an archery term that means to miss the mark or target. We are created by God to aim at a target, His target. When we don't do that and miss, it is sin.

While sin is difficult to categorize, we can think of **sin in a threefold sense:** **Three types of Sin:**

1. **Sin of commission** – the sins that we commit.
2. **Sin of omission** – the sins that we omit.
3. **Sins of disposition** – the sins of attitude. the spirit in which we do something.

Sins of commission are usually recognizable, but *sins of omission* can be more difficult to acknowledge.

The Ten Commandments are a clear example of sins of commission. Thou shall not... **James 4:17** speaks of *sins of omission*: **So, it is sin to know the good and yet not do it.**

Sins of disposition are the most difficult to discern since we can easily cover up our stubborn or rebellious attitudes as we outwardly act with obedience and a smile. ***We may be sitting down on the inside, but we are standing up on the outside.***

I do want to mention, the fact **Christians sometimes continue to sin** bothers some people – especially new Christians.

- They forget that receiving their new nature does not eliminate the fact that they still live in their "earth suit" or flesh that fights against their reborn spirit.

- Our old nature fights against our new nature, which we receive when we are born again. Light fights the darkness. **Sinning saints** are not mentioned in the Bible to discourage us, but to admonish us.

One day an angry church member said to the pastor, “*Why do you keep preaching to us Christians about sin? After all, sin in the life of a Christian is different from sin in the life of an unsaved person!*” “Yes,” replied the pastor, “It’s different. It’s much worse!” Those that have not come to Christ yet can’t help but sin, but in Christ we have the power to overcome a lifestyle of habitual sin.

As Believers, though, we have to deal with our sins if we are to truly enjoy the life God intends for us. In 1 John 1 and the beginning of chapter 2, John gives us

Three Responses to Sin:

1. We try to hide our sin.

1 John 1:5 tells us, ...God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him.

- **1 Peter** tells us when we were saved, God called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:5** says we are children of light.

Light produces life, growth and beauty, but sin is darkness; and darkness and light cannot exist in the same place.

DID YOU KNOW? It’s possible for a Believer to live in sin and convince themselves that everything is fine in their relationship with the Lord.

This is where we have to discuss an extremely important key to walking in the light – that factor is **honesty**.

Our passage in 1 John describes a Believer who’s living a dishonest life: They’re playing a role and acting a part, but not living a genuine life.

They’re insincere.

What losses does this person experience?

They lose the power of God’s Word in their life and stop walking in the truth. **1 John 1:6** says: *If we say, “We have fellowship with him,” and yet*

we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. **Verse 8** continues: If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. And **verse 10** says: If we say, "We have not sinned," we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

The truth is no longer in them and then they turn the truth into lies.

Unfortunately, a dishonest person loses something else: ***They also lose intimacy with God and other Believers.*** **1 John 1:7** says: If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. The converse is true when we walk in darkness – our fellowship with other Believers is impacted as well.

- Here's the dangerous part, when you become critical of others and start staying away from church and any form of connection with other Believers.

Personal: As a pastor, I've seen it over and over. People run from God, then they disconnect.

- I love what **Abraham Lincoln** said, "If a man is going to be a liar, he had better have a good memory!"

Is it any wonder that God warns us in **Proverbs 28:13**: The one who conceals his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them will find mercy.

If we want to enjoy True Living...

2. We can acknowledge our sin.

The Apostle John was dealing with Believers who claimed to be in the light and have fellowship with God. Yet, in actuality, they walked in darkness because they refused to confess their sins.

True Christians aren't afraid to confess their sin. It's a healthy pattern to be constant confessors, never denying our sin but always acknowledging our sin.

The truth is, I've become a **professional repenter** to my wife, daughter, and close friends, **1 John 1:7,9** says: *If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.... If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Now, here's the dilemma, *here's the big question.* Why would we say, "**God, forgive my sins,**" when we know He's already forgiven our sins?

We must understand this truth: **they're Two kinds of forgiveness.**

It's true, that all our sins are forgiven insofar as the judgment of God is concerned when we received Jesus Christ as Savior.

It is also true that we need to continue to ask the Lord to forgive our sins when the Holy Spirit convicts us of them. Both are true, both are taught in Scripture. **There's Judicial forgiveness which is justification and there's relational forgiveness which is sanctification.**

You see, we need two things as human beings when it comes to our relationship with God – **we need justification... and we also need sanctification.**

- **Justification** is where our sin of rejecting Christ is blotted out by the blood and sacrifice of Jesus. Justification means "just as if I have never sinned." God sees us clean through the blood of Jesus Christ.

So, we have been delivered from the penalty of sin by justification, but we haven't been delivered from the presence and the relational consequences of sin. That is an on-going process called *sanctification*.

- **Sanctification** takes places over time as we repent from our sin and grow to be more like Jesus. That's why we are always confessing and always being forgiven and always being cleansed.

Illustration: My wife and I get in a fight, I violate her relationally – we are still married, but I’ve violated the relationship. Still have the marriage certificate, but if I don’t ask for forgiveness I’ll be snuggling on the couch with that piece of paper.

Your justification is a fixed and settled reality. Your sanctification ebbs and flows dependent on how you deal with the sin in your life.

Spiritual maturity is measured by the distance between when sin occurs and how quickly you repent.

What does confession look like? Well, we confess to God. And at times, we need to confess to others – to a trusted friend, a pastor, a counselor, a small group leader – or maybe an older person in the Lord.

04. CLOSING & PRAYER

This leads to a third way to deal with sin...

3. We can conquer our sins.

John makes it clear that Christians do not have to live in habitual sin in **1 John 2:1** when he says: **My little children, I am writing you these things so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the righteous one.**

You don’t have to live subject to the curse and tyranny of sin. You don’t have to live buried in the condemnation of your sin...

How do you consistently live victorious? 1 John tells us... in chapter 2. But you will have to come back next week!!! Next week, we will look at how to live a clean, victorious life.

Let’s pray.