



I have been in various types of conversations where someone has either said to me, or I've said to someone else, "Can you please repeat what I just said?" Maybe someone said it to me because they felt like I wasn't listening. I know I'm not the only one, but I've had multiple occasions where Tracy has said this to me. "Uhhh" has been a not-so-uncommon response. But we might have someone repeat a phrase simply to ensure that the person listening really understood what I stated. Whatever the reason, if you have someone repeat after you, you're indicating that what was said was important for them to know. You don't simply want that person to sit in the room and hear noises coming out of your mouth. You want them to be able to repeat what you've said because the information matters not only to you, but it matters for their good, too.

As we come to the end of the letter of 1 John, this is essentially what John does. He brings all of his writing to a conclusion, and he seems to have the expectation that they have understood what he's said. From the beginning, John states that he writes so that we would have assurance. Now, in these final verses, he begins three of them with the statement, "We know." There are three essential realities that we should be absolutely convinced of by the end of this letter. All of these things have been spoken of throughout the letter; so, today is going to be a review. But hopefully it's not merely a review. I hope that by the end of this sermon, you can agree with John and say, "I know! I know these realities. I'm convinced of these realities in my soul." If you can say that, your faith and assurance will only lead to greater joy and obedience in the Lord. This is my prayer for all of us.

So, I want to begin by stating the main idea of the sermon: **We know that our God and life, Jesus, grants people reconciliation with God, radical transformation, and obedience.** It seems as though in these three verses, John is leading up to his greatest point, and it's about Jesus himself. Please note this. If you've read and studied 1 John simply to know details about things, but you haven't read it to know Jesus, you've missed John's entire point. In chapter 1, John states that Jesus is the word of life. Jesus himself is life. If you don't know Jesus in a reconciled relationship with him, you only know this temporal life. But to know Jesus is eternal life!

Now, since John writes to move to the summit of Jesus, we're going to work that way, too, in our time together this morning. So, we're going to start with obedience, then move to transformation, then move to reconciliation with God and then end on Jesus. But look at that progression. You can see it's backwards, right? How can I obey if I'm not transformed? How can I be transformed if I'm not reconciled with God? And, how can I be reconciled with God? Answer: Jesus, who is our God and eternal life. I'm so excited to preach this, and I'm asking that you would take a moment right now to pray silently that the Lord would excite your heart to receive his truth today and you'd be willing to have your mind, heart, emotions and will stirred up to love God more.

Let's re-read these verses together, and note every time John says "we know": ¹⁸ We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. ¹⁹ We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. ²⁰ And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. ¹

By the end of this letter, the original struggling audience should be able to say "We know." This letter should serve as a means to help them grow in their assurance as opposed to living in the doubts they may have been feeling because of their friends and false teachers who brought confusion through different teachings. We should also have greater assurance as well. Can you say, "We know?" I hope you can. So, let's dive into these verses to discover more of what John is affirming. Beginning in verse 18, John says that

We know:

1) Jesus grants obedience (v. 18).

Read verse 18 with me again: We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.²

How does Jesus grant obedience? Remember that the Scriptures teach us that human beings, because we're born into a broken world, are born sinful. That doesn't mean that we act as wickedly as we possibly can, but instead that instead, we live for creation's and humanity's glory above God's glory. Which means that from the "smallest" to the "greatest" infractions, we are contributors to the brokenness of relationships and the hurt in this creation. But, Jesus came in order to free people so that they wouldn't be bound to their sin. How does Jesus free us so that we can obey? John gives at least two answers here in this verse:

We have been born of God. This is one of the important emphases of John in this letter. And here in verse 18, John says that we know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning. This verbiage closely aligns with what John wrote in chapter 3. To be born of God means that God has given you new life and you now trust Jesus as your life and Savior. Interestingly, the tense of this phrase here is in what's referred to as the "perfect" tense. That means that this refers to something that has happened in the past and it has continuing results to today. To be born of God is not some event that simply took place in your life years ago, with no results. No! To be born of God has powerful results up to this very moment of your life! The power of God was at work giving you new life, amen?

Let me now explain "keep on sinning." It's written in a present tense, which indicates continual pursuit of something. This doesn't mean that Christians can't sin. We do. But the point is that a Christian cannot have a settled habit of continuation in sin.

Christian, if you have been born again by the Holy Spirit's work in your life, if you have turned from your sins and trusted in Jesus to forgive you and reconcile you to God, you cannot keep on sinning. But you might say, "Why? How do I know this?" Well, going to John 3:9, John states explicitly why being born of

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Jn 5:18–20.

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Jn 5:18.

God means you cannot keep on sinning: **⁹ No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him.**³

Through this illustration of birth, John states that this new life means that you have God's character as a part of you now. If you are a genuine Christian, you've felt God's work inside of you that won't let you run in sin indefinitely. You've known God's work in you that has given you tastes for godliness and desire to obey him. God's nature is a part of you. This is why you cannot keep on sinning.

John now gives a second, or continuing reason, as to why we cannot keep on sinning: **Jesus protects you.** Look at the end of verse 18 with me: but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.⁴ The end is interesting because it says, "but he who." John is adding assurance. What do I mean by that? Well, you can read the first part and say, "Ok, that's wonderful that God's nature is at work in me, but I'm still tempted, and I've given into various types of sins even this past week. Not only that, there are some types of sins I struggle with more." Can you all resonate with this? You know that you have been changed. You know that God is at work in you, but the draw to sin can be so strong at times. It can feel like sin is more powerful than you, can't it? Sin is powerful, isn't it? And hearing that we have God's nature in us can be encouraging, but we can almost think, "Is there more that we have that'll guarantee we won't keep on sinning?" The answer to that question is a resounding yes. The wording is kind of confusing, so let's read it a little more slowly here: he who was born of God protects him. . . .⁵ Who is the "he who was born of God" and the "him" in this verse. The him actually connects with "everyone who has been born of God." So, now we have "he who was born of God protects everyone who has been born of God. There is One who protects others. Interestingly, John's tenses are different. There's one who was born of God, and there are those who have been born of God. Clearly different types of people. I think we can safely conclude John is talking about Jesus, who is the firstborn Son of God, the only begotten Son of God.

So, yes, sin is strong. We're still tempted. We still fail. But how can you and I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that we will not completely shipwreck our faith? Jesus. Jesus protects us. Think of Jesus' prayer recorded in John 17, where he prays about his disciples and says, "**¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.**" And then adds, "**¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.**"⁶ Jesus takes responsibility for every single person he saves. Now, let me ask you a question. Was Peter sinless while on this earth? Did other disciples fail in various ways? Yes. So, what does Jesus mean by "keep?" And what does it mean that the evil one will not touch them. It means that they didn't utterly fall away, like Judas. After all, in 1 John 3, John taught us that Jesus came to destroy the devil's work. One goal of the devil is to destroy us! But Jesus won't allow it. Yes, the tempter can speak to us. The tempter can inflict his strongest assaults. But Christian, no matter how hard the temptations. No matter how strong the pull. No matter how great the fear is inside of you, wondering if you will remain in the faith, Jesus is stronger! He conquered death, surely he will keep you from eternal death as well.

It's because of these realities that we can sing songs like, "He Will Hold Me Fast." When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast! When the tempter would prevail, Christ will hold me fast!" Praise Jesus.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Jn 3:9.

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Jn 5:18.

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Jn 5:18.

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 17:12, 15.

Do you know these realities? Do you believe that Jesus grants obedience because you have been born of God and Jesus himself protects you? Do you know that? If so, say “We know!” Now, let’s move to the second point.

2) Jesus grants radical transformation (v. 19).

Read verse 19 with me: ¹⁹ We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.⁷

The “and” in this verse means that we must see the connection and contrast John is making here between those who trust and follow Jesus and those who do not. The “whole world” isn’t simply referring to nature or this orb that we live on. This word refers to all those who are born into this world and haven’t submitted themselves to Jesus his life.

So, John says “We know that we are from God.” By the way, what a refreshing statement for these hurt and soul-wounded Christians. By this point, Lord willing, they could say, “We know we are from God.” It’s not the people who are making up different versions of Jesus. It’s not the people who seem to have feelings for God, but aren’t following his teaching. It’s these people who heard the gospel and knew their need for someone to forgive them and give them a relationship with God. These people who knew that salvation also included the ability to grow in obedience to the Lord. These people who looked to Jesus to transform and change them – not make God conform to their image.

This is what the world does, doesn’t it? It seeks to conform God to our image. I hear people make statements like, “I can’t imagine God being loving if he doesn’t allow me to do this or that thing.” Do you hear something wrong in that logic? I do. That “thing” is actually that person’s god, and they’re viewing God as the one who has to give them that thing in order for God to be a good God. But the Bible tells us that God is the point. And because God is the point, whether we endure through suffering, hardships, joys, or pleasures, if God is our greatest delight, we can rejoice in all things. This is a radical transformation. Those who trust Jesus are completely different than those who don’t because God himself is our source of everything as opposed to the world who lies in the power of the evil one.

Please understand that John’s word choice here is stunningly graphic. When he says “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one,” the imagery is like someone unconscious, not fighting, in the grasp of Satan. Remember in the previous verse that Jesus won’t even allow the evil one to touch those who trust him. But the world is completely under Satan’s sway, and they’re not fighting it. This reminds me of the movie, *The Matrix*, where people live unconsciously in pods. They think they’re living, but they’re only vivid dreams, all the while intelligent machines use humans as an energy source. This seems to picture the idea of John. No matter what people in this world think, whether they are conservatives or liberals or irreligious or religious or male or female or rich or poor, if they do not trust in Christ, they are living in lifelessness. They’re living in Satan’s grip, under his control – simply being used by him for his deceptive designs. Is that you? If so, he’s deceiving you to think that Jesus and his life is not reality. He wants you to think his way is reality. But who’s really binding you? Who’s way is reality and living?

⁷ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Jn 5:19.

The truth is that if you know Jesus, you are of God. Meaning, you belong to God. In chapter 4, John uses the phrase “of God” many times, and I want to read a couple verses from chapter 4: **Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.**⁸ **And then, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.”**⁹ To be from God or of God means you belong to him. He’s your source and he is your protector. You’re not simply being used by him. No. He’s Life in and of himself and he gives his life to you! Therefore, you overcome the sinfulness of this world. You are completely transformed from being in the darkness to being in the light. You once were dead in the grip of Satan. Now you are alive in the arms of God!

Do you know that Jesus grants radical transformation? Do you? Have you been transformed? If you know these things say “We know.” Finally, we get to the third “We know” statement, which teaches us that

3) Jesus grants reconciliation with God (v. 20).

Look at verse 20: ²⁰And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. . .¹⁰ I want to stop here to get what I think is the main idea of this verse.

John uses the two different words for “know” in this verse. We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding. Let’s stop here first. John uses the phrase Son of God, which we’ve talked about before as a phrase that actually emphasizes Jesus’ deity, drawn from the Old and New Testament teaching. For example, in Psalm 2, the Son is the one to whom all the world is to worship and bow down to because in him we are blessed. John says Jesus is the Son who has come and has given us understanding.

Jesus came into the world, right? Unlike these false teachers who tried to argue that Jesus came in spirit and not in flesh, John states that the Son of God came to this earth. We saw him. And Jesus gave us the correct understanding of certain things. Jesus taught. Why did he come and teach? So that we may *know* him who is true. This word know is different than the previous one. The previous one is to emphasize awareness of mind. This word for “know” emphasizes relational experience. So, this reminds me of a statement that Thad Barnum made when he was speaking to the men a few months ago: Do you know that you know? Or, I could modify the wording ever so slightly: Do you know so that you will know? Meaning, how do you approach the Bible? How do you approach Jesus? How do you approach life? Is God and the Word just a task of accomplishments or is he the Holy Majesty and Splendor with whom you can relate and pray and commune? Do you commune with God or just talk about him? Do you seek to know him more or just try to acquire knowledge about him so that you can be smarter than others or feel more superior to them because you know more of the Bible? Really think about this. John says that by the end of this letter we know that Jesus came and gave us understanding so that we may relationally know God! That’s the “him who is true.” Or, actually, the word for true here can be translated as “real” or “genuine.” Jesus came to give us real relationship with the real/genuine God.

How phenomenal is this, Ventura? Do you know this privilege? What does this look like in your daily life? This is why Jesus came. Jesus came so that you would, in your daily living (whether eating or drinking or

⁸ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Jn 4:4.

⁹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Jn 4:7.

¹⁰ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Jn 5:20.

changing diapers or programming something or studying for a class or parenting your children or hanging out with friends) you can grow in your praise and worship of God and display him to those around you! This is *why* Jesus came. Do you know that? Do you know that? If so, say “We know!”

But there’s more that John adds here. He adds an “and.” We are in him who is real, in his Son Jesus Christ. Being “in him,” means we are in close relationship with him. We are so close to him that it is as if we are *in* him. He totally envelopes us! And because the Father is one with the Son, we are in the Son. Oh what fellowship! Oh what joy divine! We are one with God.

Then John gets to the clincher statement. Keep in mind how the false teachers created a different version of Jesus. John has been confronting the false teaching here in these conclusions. All these statements affirm us as believers in Christ and compel us in our obedience and joy. But none of these blessings come if we don’t know the genuine Jesus. And who is this Jesus? “He is the true God and eternal life.” There’s debate over whether this statement refers to God the Father or to Jesus. However, there’d be no debate over God the Father being the true God. There would be if John is talking about Jesus. There’s two other reasons I believe this is speaking about Jesus. First, in chapter 1, John refers to Jesus as eternal life. And here, at the end, Jesus is referred to as eternal life. This follows how John wrote his gospel, beginning saying Jesus is God and then ending with Thomas crying out that Jesus is God. Second, I believe this is speaking of Jesus because usually in the Greek, the pronoun is meant to be connected to the closest person in proximity before that pronoun. In this case, it’s Jesus.

Do you see what John is getting everyone to acknowledge? All of life, and eternal life, flows from Jesus. Because of Jesus, we reconciled with God, radically transformed, and granted obedience to the Lord. We have all assurance and hope because Jesus is God and he himself is eternal life. With him, we have everything. Apart from him, we’re in the grip of Satan.

Do you know this? If you do, say “We know!” But maybe you don’t. Maybe you’re here today, pretending to be a Christian or maybe you’re just thinking today about what it means to follow Jesus. If you want to talk to me or someone else after this time, please do. We’re up here, ready to answer questions and to pray for you. Whatever the case may be, though, I do pray that all of us have greater assurance and joy that **We know that our God and life, Jesus, grants people reconciliation with God, radical transformation, and obedience.**