

w/b 9<sup>th</sup> April 2017 1 & 2 John – Letters from the last man standing

THEME: WINNING NOT SINNING

INTRODUCTION: One of the key elements of Paul's preach on Sunday was the vital distinction between the phrases 'when we sin' and 'when we choose to sin'. The distinction is vital because if we believe the former statement then our battle against sin is already lost. This study helps us learn what we need to know in order to gain the winning edge.

PASSAGES:

### **1 John 2:1-2 (NIVUK)**

*My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. <sup>2</sup> He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

### **Romans 6: 1**

*<sup>6</sup> What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup> By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? <sup>3</sup> Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

*<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with,<sup>[a]</sup> that we should no longer be slaves to sin – <sup>7</sup> because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.*

*<sup>8</sup> Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. <sup>10</sup> The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.*

*<sup>11</sup> In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. <sup>12</sup> Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. <sup>13</sup> Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. <sup>14</sup> For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.*

### **1 Peter 1:13-16 (NIVUK)**

*<sup>13</sup> Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. <sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. <sup>15</sup> But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; <sup>16</sup> for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'*

LAUNCH

When you think back to the time you became a Christian what elements of your life changed fairly quickly for the better and what aspects were rather more resistant to change?

From a Christian point of view how might you respond to the following phrases about new life or lack of it

- He's turned over a new leaf
- A leopard can't change its spots
- They're a chip off the old block

Why are these statements profoundly anti-Christian?

## DISCOVERY

- Read 1 John 1 vs 8-9 and then read 1 John 2 vs 1-2. These two passages seem to directly contradict one another by saying we cannot be without sin but at the same time telling us not to sin. How do you go about explaining this apparent contradiction?
- In the Romans passage Paul strongly challenges the Gnostics who suggest that frequent sinning is an opportunity for God to show his grace in forgiving us. Whilst probably not holding this view, our attitude towards sin can become fatalistic, pragmatic and even casual. Why is this the case?
- What arguments in Romans does Paul use to strongly challenge a sloppy attitude towards sin?
- Why is the death and resurrection of Christ and our participation in it of any relevance in an argument about how to resist sin?
- Imagine you were a beggar in Calcutta for many years. A wealthy benefactor comes along and moves you into a mansion in Monte Carlo. S/he also pays a large annual income to you for the rest of your life. Two weeks later you are found begging on the beaches of Monte Carlo!
  - a) What has gone wrong?
  - b) How can it be fixed?
  - c) What insight does this story give to the Christian life and how we handle sin?
- What are some of the key features of being a slave to sin and a slave to Christ? Why does Paul use this metaphor?

## APPLICATION

Read the excellent Spurgeon quote below:

*"If God has given to you and to me an entirely new life in Christ, how can that new life spend itself after the fashion of the old life? Shall the spiritual live as the carnal? How can you that were the servants of sin, but have been made free by precious blood, go back to your old slavery?" (Spurgeon)*

Pray for one another to be preserved from temptation and sin in every area of life. For strong marriages. For wholesome conversation. For honest and truthful dealings at work and for any other area that the Holy Spirit guides you towards