

August 18, 2011

THE JOY AND CONSTRAINT OF THE BELIEVER

1 John 2: 1-2



WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday: 10:00 AM Bible Class  
11:00 AM Morning Service  
Thursday: 7:00 PM Mid-week Service

WEB ADDRESSES

Be sure to bookmark our website for daily articles and audio messages:  
[www.FreeGraceMedia.com](http://www.FreeGraceMedia.com) | [www.FreeGraceRadio.com](http://www.FreeGraceRadio.com)

WEEKLY MEETING LOCATION

Rocky Hill Firehouse, 2nd floor  
150 Washington St., Rocky Hill, NJ  
08553

MAILING ADDRESS

7 Birch Street  
Pennington, NJ 08534

Phone: 615-513-4464 | Email: [clay@freegracemedia.com](mailto:clay@freegracemedia.com)

If you would like to receive this bulletin sent weekly to your email then send a note to the email address above.

John addresses brethren as “little children” nine times in this epistle. This was how the Lord addressed his disciples—no matter their age, no matter their time in the faith (John 13: 33.) It reminds us of our frailty and dependence upon our heavenly Father. By the Spirit of God in the new birth, the elect of God are made “little children” (Matthew 18: 3.) And John gives the reason he is writing these things, “these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.” In the first chapter, he gives another reason for writing these things, “that your joy may be full.” (1 John 1: 4.) What is the message that will both constrain the believer and fill the believer with joy? It is the gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace: electing grace, predestinating grace, redeeming grace, regenerating grace, forgiving grace, preserving grace, glorifying grace. These are the things John has been writing (1 John 1: 1-4; Ephesians 3: 17-19.)

Fellowship in Light (1 John 1: 5-7)

God is Light. He does for his vessels of mercy only that which is right and faithful and just. Christ Jesus said, “he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8: 12.) Those who have been made to delight in the faithfulness and justice of God to forgive all who come to Christ, walk in the Light (John 3: 20-21.) By the Light of God’s fellowship, his continual faithfulness and forgiveness keeps us coming to Christ the Light (Psalm 56: 13; Psalm 89: 15.)

### **Vain Excuses (1 John 1: 8, 10)**

Any sinner who will not come to Christ because he thinks he has no sin is deceived in the darkness of the natural heart. The truth is not in us. The one thing keeping the sinner from Christ is that he will not take sides with God against himself. And any who claims to be a believer and imagines he has not sinned—today, this hour, or since reading this article—deceives himself and the truth is not in him.

By God's grace, through faith in Christ Jesus, by Christ's one offering as our Substitute every believer is freed from the guilt of sin, the condemnation of sin, the dominion of sins reign, and from the wrath of God toward our sin. But by his Light, we know that in our flesh still dwells "no good thing." Sin is mixed with all we do--"O wretched man that I AM!" But we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, our Mercy Seat.

### **The Good News (1 John 1: 9-2: 1.)**

Hear this good news! God is both *faithful* and *just* to forgive and cleanse all who come taking sides with God against themselves. Forgiveness for one of Christ's redeemed is not only an act of mercy from God it is an act of justice. *He is faithful and JUST to forgive* us. It is so because Jesus Christ the Righteous is the Advocate with the Father.

Christ confessed the sins of his people to be his own (Psalm 69: 5) justifying *the sentence of the law* against himself in the place of those for whom he died. By presenting himself to pay the wages of sin *Christ vindicated the sanction and perfection of the law*. When he laid down his life as the Substitute of his people Christ paid the wages of sin and *satisfied the law*. Thus, Christ has honored and magnified the law of God for those he represented on the cross. Christ is the believers Righteousness and our Mercy Seat (Propitiation.)

### **The Plea of the Advocate**

The presence of Christ our Advocate with the Father pleads two things: FOR HIS OWN SAKE and FOR THE SAKE OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. (Psalm 69: 6.) "*For my sake*" because Christ bore the shame and reproach of the sin of his people and paid for their crime. "*And for thy sake, O Father*" because God is just and justice has been satisfied on their behalf the righteousness of God demands that no sin be laid to their charge. Thus God is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse the redeemed who come confessing our sins.

### **The Joy and Constraint**

Oh, when the Spirit of God speaks forgiveness into our hearts there is much fruit (Zechariah 3:4; Isaiah 51: 22): the fruit of joy (Lamentations 3: 58) and the desire to sin no more (Ephesians 4: 32.)

What joy to come to God in honesty confessing what we are and to have God in faithfulness and justice forgive us and cleanse us of all unrighteousness. This faithful and just forgiveness causes the believer to delight, not merely in the letter of the law, but in the very God of the law. This is the joy and constraint that keeps the believer ever coming to Christ!

<p><b>Save the Date: Youth Bible Study, Friday, August 26, 7pm, at 7 Birch Street.</b></p>
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