**Wednesday 24th June**

**1 JOHN: (Study 4.1) Free to follow**

*You cannot continue to sin? But hang on, we want to say, hasn’t John already established that each us of does sin? And isn’t that our daily experience?*

**He breaks the power**

**Read 1 John 3:7-10**

**Questions**

*What simple equation does John want us to understand from verses 7-8 and 10?*

*What does it mean that someone is “of the devil”, do you think?*

*Why did Jesus come (v 8)?*

In one sense it is inevitable that we will sin. But in another sense it’s not. Jesus has destroyed the work of the devil. The power and penalty of sin are broken, even if we still live with its presence. So we don’t have any excuse. We can’t give up the struggle against sin because we think that it’s inevitable that we succumb to it. The tempter still tempts, but he can be resisted. John is saying that in general terms believers will think and do right, and unbelievers will not.

**Apply**

**Personal**

*Is there something wrong that you keep on doing?*

Don’t despair! Every Christian sins, but a true Christian can’t go on sinning without being concerned—without struggling to be right. So to struggle with sin is not a sign of unbelief but a sign of true life. Most unbelievers couldn’t care less whether they sin or not. Only a true child of God struggles against sin, confesses their sin, and enjoys knowing they are forgiven of their sin.
Talk to the Lord about that now.

**Murder in church**

**Read 1 John 3:11-15**

**Questions**

*Why does John quote the example of Cain and Abel? What does it illustrate?*

*What are we told we should expect if we are living for God?*

*Why is it so vital to love one another?*

*Cain’s hatred came to a climax in murder. Of course, few of us go that far. But before we let ourselves off the hook, John says that anyone who hates his brother is just as bad as a murderer! The difference is in degree, not in nature. This teaching comes straight from the lips of the Lord Jesus (see Matthew 5:21-24). Those who love Christ are our family and our future. Loving our brothers and sisters is a mark that we truly belong to the family and have the same shared future. And don’t be surprised if people hate you because you’re a Christian. Cain hated Abel because Abel was righteous. Now that you’ve been made right with God, people will hate us in the same way. After all, the world hated Jesus (John 15:18-21).*

**Pray**

Pray that God would give you a deep, passionate and sincere love for your brothers and sisters in Christ. Ask him to make you

willing to suffer rejection for your faith, and to give you the joy that comes from knowing you’re following in the steps of your Master.

**1 JOHN: (Study 4.2) Free from Guilt**

*According to my dictionary, love is “warm affection, attachment, liking, or fondness, paternal benevolence, affectionate devotion”. Not bad, but not good enough for John.*

**Real love**

**Read 1 John 3:16-18**

**Questions**

*Where does John point our attention so that we can see what real love is?*

*So what kind of love should Christians be showing to others?*

Real love is seen in costly, practical action— and so real love is seen supremely at the cross. Intentions and warm feelings towards others are good, but only if they result in practical action—in doing something. Talk is cheap unless it is accompanied by deeds.

**Apply**

A third of the world does not have access to basic sanitation. Hundreds of millions of Christians are not able to get an education.

Many are persecuted because of their faith. What are you doing for your brothers and sisters in need? John isn’t interested in words—he’s after practical action (v 18).

*So what are you going to do about it?*

**Real peace**

**Read 1 John 3:19-24**

**Questions**

*What should we do if our hearts condemn us before God (v 20)?*

*What happens if our hearts do not condemn us before God (v 21)?*

*What do you make of verse 22?*

Conscience is that God-given sense that tells us that what we’re doing is right or wrong. But sin has messed it up. Some people’s

consciences are almost dead, while others have hearts that condemn them unnecessarily. In the latter case, we look at our lives and wonder how we have the nerve to call ourselves Christians when we are so sinful. John reminds us that Jesus has delivered us from condemnation through his death in our place.

Our love for others is one reassuring sign of his work in us. But at the end of the day, it is God who reassures us. He is greater than

our hearts (v 20). Christ bore our judgment on the cross. The answer to a condemning heart is the gospel—the message of freedom and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. And when we truly understand that we are accepted by God through Christ, we can

stand confidently in his presence and ask boldly. God gives us what we want when we want what God wants (v 22). So ask away for what pleases God—especially that your friends, family and neighbours would believe in the name of his Son (v 23).

**Pray**

Use verse 23 as a basis for prayer. Pray for all those you normally pray for (including yourself), and some whom you don’t pray

for. Ask God to grow their faith in his Son and their love for others.24