

1 John 2:28-3:10 The difference Jesus makes!

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This morning I want to ask you the following questions.

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1. Are we any different from those people who don't know Jesus?
2. What difference does knowing Jesus make in our lives?

We are going to look at these questions as we pick up from where we left off two weeks ago, in the first letter of John.

So let's turn to 1 John 2:28

1 John 2:28-3:10

28 And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

29 If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

4 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

5 You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.

6 No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.

7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.

8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

10 By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

Now from these verses let's begin to find answers to the questions I raised at the beginning.

The first of these questions was:

Are we any different from those people who don't know Jesus?
From the following verses from this passage we find the answer.

1 John 3:1

See what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

The 1st difference is that they don't know us because the world does not know him.

We are a little bit weird to people who don't know him.
Have you ever experienced that?

Recently I had an instance at my workplace where this became noticeable.

I needed to apply for leave at the end of the month to go across to Adelaide for the leadership training time. As some of you are aware I have a new job and it gets very busy at the end of each month with a series of financial reports needing to be done. The LTT occurs at the end of this period and so I wanted to let my new boss know what I needed the leave for. So I told her a little bit about starting up & leading this church and I could tell by her very first reaction that she doesn't know him, because her initial look at me was a mixture of confusion and almost worry. She then went on to tell me a little about her church background.

People, who don't know him, just don't understand us. They don't "get it".

The 2nd difference is that they keep on sinning wilfully without any sign of wanting to stop.

1 John 3:6

No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.

The 3rd difference is that because of this repeated habitual sinning, they belong not to God but to the devil. Verse 8 makes this frightening statement.

1 John 3:8

Whoever makes a practice of sinning is **of the devil**, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

These are very strong words. John is equating those who keep on habitually sinning (and unbelief in God is also sin even though someone may have the appearance of being good) are of the devil or belong to the devil.

The 4th difference is that they don't love the brothers.

1 John 3:10

By this it is **evident** who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

Now John makes this distinction and says that it is evident, or in effect it can be shown to be true by certain evidence and that evidence is that the children of the devil do not practice righteousness and do not love the brothers.

This is interesting because he is suggesting that there will be times when people come in amongst us that are not really of us. They may look and say all the right things but sooner or later we should be able to detect that:

- 1) They don't make a practice (or a habit) of being righteous
- 2) They don't love the brothers

This will come out in various ways but we need to be mindful of such people and I am in no way suggesting that any of you are these people.

So from these passages we see that there are differences between those who know Jesus and those who don't.

Now from these passages let's look at what difference knowing Jesus make in our lives?

- 1) That we have received a special love from the Father. (3:1) See what kind of love the father has given to us.
- 2) That this love has resulted in us being born of him and being called his children. (3:1) No longer strangers or aliens but children in his house with brothers & sisters down through the ages and all over the world.
- 3) That we have the power to resist sin. (3:6) No one abiding in him keeps on sinning. If we abide or live in him we cannot keep on sinning. It is impossible unless of course we don't live in him.
- 4) That we have the power to live righteously. (3:5) He appeared to take away sins. He is the scapegoat for our sins and has removed them as far as the east is from the west. (3:9) No one born of God makes a practice of sinning and he cannot keep on sinning because God's seed (the Greek word for seed is sperma) abides in him. We have been impregnated with a holy seed that caused us to be born again and enables us to live righteously. (3:3) also because we have our hope in him we purify ourselves as he is pure. We have a reason to live righteously and that reason is him.
- 5) And finally that we have an everlasting hope a hope that goes way beyond the average life span that we can expect to live here on earth. (3:2) but we know

that when he appears we shall be like him and we will see him as he is. Our hope has a certainty about it in that we **know** that when he appears. It will happen and yet it is still a hope. Remove hope from a person and you remove their reason for living. Our hope is in Jesus himself and what we know in part now we will fully know then even as we are fully known by him.

So Jesus makes a huge difference in our lives from those who don't know him.

But let me ask some final questions about this difference before we finish.

Do we have a superior lifestyle than those who don't know Jesus?

Are we happier than those who don't know him?

Do our marriages last longer and are they more fulfilling than those who don't know him?

Do we earn more money than they do?

Are we more contented with the things we have than they are?

I'm sure each of us knows people that are more contented, do make more money, have better marriages and have a much better lifestyle. So what is the difference?

The difference that Jesus makes in our lives is not about lifestyle but it is about life itself.

1 John 5:12

Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

I want to finish off by reading a story of a young couple who in 1934 had just begun a family and had just begun to work in China as missionaries before their lives were cut tragically short. They never had a lifestyle that many of us would envy but in the end they had life itself.

Let's pray.