

SITTING AT THE FEET OF JESUS

Sitting at the feet of Jesus. What kind of thoughts do these words bring to your mind? When I think about this, I imagine myself sitting on the floor on a soft carpet in a comfy living room with a fireplace behind me and drinking in every word that falls from the lips of the most loving and powerful human being who left the glory of heaven so I can be saved for all eternity. A God who chose to become like me in order to save me. And really, shouldn't we have thoughts like this when it comes to reading and studying the Bible, which is the very word of God? Aren't we sitting at the feet of Jesus every time we open the sacred pages of the most holy book that was ever written? At least I like to think of it that way.

This morning I'd like to bring some practical instruction from the word of God, something we can put into action, or something simple enough to put into practice, because it won't benefit any of us to sit here for an hour and listen to a bunch of information that has no practical value. There are lots of things we could talk about that might be interesting and it might even keep our attention for an hour, but when everything is said and done and we go back home to daily life, what good will it have been unless we can apply it in some way to your life? What good will it have been unless it will help us form a righteous character? What good will it have been unless it will help us to understand, what must I do to be saved? After all, isn't that the most important question? What must I do to be saved? And then the next most important question is, how can I help others to know what they must do to be saved. We can know all kinds of things and even do all kinds of good things, but if we don't know Jesus and His love, what will it profit in the end? In fact, isn't that what the apostle Paul alluded to in **1 Corinthians 13**? Let's take a look, but before we do, we dare not open God's holy book; we dare not sit at the feet of Jesus as it were, without first asking for the Holy Spirit to be our teacher; without asking the third person of the Godhead to send Jesus' words home to our hearts.

I know we've all read this many times in the past and some of you could probably quote it from memory, but do we just have it in our heads, or do we have it in our hearts? **1 Corinthians 13:1-3**, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity (**or love**), I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing." Nothing at all.

When I was putting my thoughts together when reading this last part, I couldn't help but think that there may have been martyrs in the past who were actually burned at the stake by the Catholics because they wouldn't recant of their convictions, and yet may come up in the second resurrection, could that be possible? Is it possible that a person could just be stubborn enough to allow themselves to be burned than give in to religious persecution? Evidently it must be possible, or Paul wouldn't have mentioned it. This just tells me how important it is that we actually have the love spoken of here in this chapter and not just a nominal ascent to the truth.

The apostle Paul had an enlightening experience in Athens when he tried to match logic with logic, philosophy with philosophy, and oratory with oratory as he reasoned about the gospel with the Greek intellectuals of his day, but after that experience he figured out what people really needed to hear. Do you remember what he wrote? Notice what he says in **1 Corinthians 2:1-5**, "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Now what can we learn from Paul's humbling experience? Well, probably more than we can talk about in the short time we have today, but there are a few things I'd like to bring to your attention. First of all Paul nearly became a monomaniac for Jesus when ministering to the Corinthians, because that's what they needed most. The second thing I want you to notice is that we should never underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit to change a life; and thirdly, we should never forget our own lack of power to do only what God can do.

I don't know about you, but I have loved ones who don't know Jesus and the peace that comes from a full surrender to Him, and I wish I could accept Him for them, but I can't. Only the Holy Spirit can bring the change that's necessary in order for them to be saved, and try as we might, we are powerless to bring that change about. It has to be their own choice to yield to the convicting power of the Spirit, or a real and lasting change can never take place. We can encourage and we can live a life that will be a worthy example, but that's about as far as it goes. Even though the Prince of life walked this earth, even He couldn't save anyone against their own will, could He? No, they had to make a choice to follow Him or not, and there were plenty who chose not to, unfortunately.

Notice what it says in ***Acts of the Apostles, Pages 151, 152***, "Paul was an eloquent speaker. Before his conversion he had often sought to impress his hearers by flights of oratory. But now he set all this aside. Instead of indulging in poetic descriptions and

fanciful representations, which might please the senses and feed the imagination, but which would not touch the daily experience, Paul sought by the use of simple language to bring home to the heart the truths that are of vital importance. **(What does the word vital mean? It means life or death, doesn't it? It means things that are indispensable, or essential. You know, many times we argue about things that we think are so important, but don't amount to a hill of beans, and I could name many such things that I've had to deal with through the years, but I'm not going to do that this morning, because it would be a total waste of time, and we really don't have time to waste when it comes to our eternal salvation and that of others.)** Fanciful representations of truth may cause an ecstasy of feeling, but all too often truths presented in this way do not supply the food necessary to strengthen and fortify the believer for the battles of life. The immediate needs, the present trials, of struggling souls—these must be met with sound, practical instruction in the fundamental principles of Christianity.”

Mary Magdalene was one of those who sought sound practical instruction of vital importance, wasn't she? and where did she find it? sitting at the feet of Jesus! **Luke chapter 10**, turn there with me please and I'll show you something very interesting, and very important. **Luke 10:38-42** “Now it came to pass, as they went **(that is, Jesus, His disciples and the multitude that followed)**, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet and **(did what?)** heard his word. **(Now I want you to think about your prayer life for a minute. When you are in God's presence during your devotional time; when you are sitting at the feet of Jesus, do you talk to Him more than you listen? Are you more interested in telling Him all your troubles than you are in listening for the solution? The Holy Spirit generally has a still small voice that says, “this is the way, walk ye in it.” Mary knew how to listen, and as a result she overcame her many bad habits and became one of Jesus' most devoted and ardent followers. And so, taking time to listen is just as important, if not more so, than it is to tell God that which He already knows. Verse 40)** But Martha was cumbered **(or distracted with unimportant duties)** Cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. **(Now here's an adult woman who was still tattling on what was probably her younger sister)** And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful **(just one)**: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

In other words, sitting at my feet is more important than being a good hostess and worrying about what people might think if things are not done just right, or many

other mundane things we might mention. Sitting at the feet of Jesus is the most important thing we can do. Yes, other things need to be done, but everything in its order. Jesus first, and then once we have heard His word we can go about the duties of the day as is necessary.

Now what is that “good part?” What is that “one thing that is needful?” It is to listen to divine instruction! It is the attitude that says, “teach me Lord, I’m like a little child, I don’t know how to come in or go out. Tell me what I need to know, tell me what to do, show me how to handle the situation that’s bothering me.” Prayer is our spiritual life blood, and listening with an open heart and mind is a major part of it, and I would say “that good part”, or that better part.

Ministry of Healing, page 458 says, “There are few who choose the better part, who sit at the feet of Jesus, as did Mary, to learn of the divine Teacher. Few treasure His words in the heart and practice them in the life.” And so, once again, it’s listening to practical instruction with a heart to obey, and then putting it into practice.

The other day I was thinking, what does it mean to be a Christian? How does one describe what a Christian is? and as I thought about this question I thought of many different ways we could use to describe what a Christian is, but the one that makes the most sense to me is, one who is Christlike. And so, if that’s the definition we go with, then that begs another question, what was Christ like? If we know what Christ is like, then it wouldn’t be a hard thing to determine whether or not we fit the mold. Didn’t Jesus Himself say, “you shall know them by their fruits?”

In His humanity Jesus was like us, was He not? It’s very important for us to understand, if we really want to know what Christ is like, that Jesus had a fallen sinful human nature, and to believe otherwise is to strike a fatal blow at the very heart of the “everlasting gospel.” If Jesus was not like us in His humanity, then there would be no hope of ever having victory over sin in this life, and that’s what the devil wants us to think. Because if Jesus couldn’t have victory over sin with a nature like ours, then how could we? I think I alluded to this in last month’s sermon, but I’d like to look just a little deeper this morning.

There are many verses of Scripture that would show conclusively that Jesus had a fallen human nature, or a sinful human nature, but we’ll take a look at just a few this morning. And by the way, to say that Jesus had a fallen sinful human nature is not to say that He was a sinner, because that’s what some people think. That’s why they say He had an unfallen human nature. They argue that if Jesus had a sinful nature then He would have had to sin. NO! As Christians, can’t we have a sinful human nature without yielding to it? Of course we can! If we have partaken of the divine nature, then

we have a choice, and it's the divine nature that gives us that choice, and the power to resist. The person who only has the fallen human nature they were first born with doesn't have the same choice as the Christian who has been born again. It's in the yielding to temptation that determines if one is a sinner, and not simply because their human nature is fallen, and of course, yielding to temptation is something Jesus never did. He was tempted in all point such as we are, yet without sin, and that same possibility is granted to every person who has been born of the Spirit. The devil can tempt, but he cannot force us to yield, that's beyond his ability. We yield because we choose to yield, or we resist because we choose to resist, it's just that simple.

So let's look at a few texts. The first one is in **Genesis 5:1**, "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him." So, in the beginning Adam was created in God's likeness, both physically and in moral character, which was unfallen. When Adam was created he did not have a sinful human nature, because Jesus, the Creator did not have a sinful nature, because this was before He was born of a human mother. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem He did have an unfallen nature, but it was only on the divine side. On the human side He partook of the human nature of His mother, which was fallen. To get around this truth the Catholic religion has a teaching called the immaculate conception, which makes Mary unfallen so she could have a Son who was unfallen. That way the only thing the Catholics have to do is keep their sins confessed without ever having victory over them. By the way, victory means you are winning over sin by not doing it. Why do you think Catholics go to confession all the time? It's because they never quit sinning, because they don't think they have to in order to be saved. This is the teaching of antichrist as we'll see a little later.

Now how do we know that Jesus was born into this world with a fallen human nature? It's because **Romans 8:3** tells us so. Notice what it says, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

To condemn sin in sinful flesh means to live life without sin in sinful flesh. That's what Jesus did, and that's what He gives us power to do. The word flesh in the Greek is "Sarx", which means "human nature with it's frailties and passions, or to be carnal", and to be carnal is to be "opposed to the spiritual." This is where the fallen nature occupies a position directly opposite to the spiritual or the unfallen nature, but that was not how Adam was created. He was in God's likeness, but it was different with Jesus as He was born in the likeness of sinful flesh. In other words, Jesus was born into this world with the same human nature all of us were born with.

Now I say this very reverently and carefully, because I don't want anyone to think that

I'm saying that we are exactly like Jesus in every respect when we accept Him into our lives. We are not Mormons who say, "As man is, God once was, and as God is, man may become." We are not little Gods, and never will be. The main difference between the way Jesus was born into this world and the way we were born, is that Jesus had both the carnal human nature and the divine nature at birth and we have only the carnal nature, that's why we need to be born again. We must partake of the divine nature by accepting Christ as our Saviour, and we will always be dependent on Him for that, because it's not ours naturally, and never will be. Whereas Jesus always had divinity as God and always will. And so, we will always need Him and the divine nature He offers to each one who accepts Him. This is one of those subjects that when we study, has to be with our shoes off, because it's holy ground. The incarnation of Christ will be a subject for us to study for all eternity and never exhaust, but what we can know is that in His humanity Jesus became like us in order to save us and He did it with a fallen human nature. That we can believe and understand. It's one of those vital things we need to understand if we would become Christlike, and you'll see why in a minute.

Let's look at our next text in **Hebrews 2:14-17**, "Forasmuch then as the children **(that's us)** are partakers of flesh **(same Greek word "Sarx", meaning carnal)** partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; **(and "same" doesn't mean different. How clear can it be? And yet people try to twist the Scriptures in an effort to make Jesus' humanity different than ours so they can have an excuse to keep on sinning, or to believe that they are saved while living in it)** that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him **(what?)** the seed of Abraham. **(Did Abraham have a fallen sinful human nature? Of course he did, and Jesus, as his descendant, took on that same nature. It can't be any other way, because Abraham couldn't give to his descendants something he didn't have)** Wherefore in all things **(all things)** it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren **(again that's us)**, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

Jesus could not make an acceptable atoning sacrifice for our sins if His humanity was different than ours; it wouldn't suffice; it wouldn't satisfy God's requirement. In order to take our place so we won't have to suffer the second death, Jesus had to become like us; He had to offer something that was the same as what we have, and an unfallen human nature just wouldn't do. If His humanity was different than ours, that would not be taking our place, would it? No, because our place is fallen.

One more text in **1 John 4:1-3**, and here's where things get really serious. "Beloved, believe not every spirit (**or we could say the spirit people are possessed by**), but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God (**same Greek word "sarx", again, meaning fallen flesh**): And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (**or in fallen flesh**) is not of God: and this is that spirit of (**what?**) antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

It is the teaching of antichrist to say that Jesus had an unfallen human nature, and most of the Christian world is wondering after the beast when it comes to this subject, and sadly it has even infiltrated Adventism. Two thousand years ago this lie was being promoted, and today it still goes on. People want to excuse sin anyway they can so they can be comforted in the falsity of salvation in sin. It just boggles my mind to see what lengths people will go to, to try to hang on to the sin that so easily besets them rather than take God at His word. In **John 8:36** Jesus said, "if the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." What could this mean other than free from sin! Not just in a figurative sense, but in reality, because they've stopped doing it. In **verse 34** Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin", and you can't serve the devil and Jesus at the same time. Friends, the power is available to be set free from evil habits and indulgences, but too many professed Christians remain in bondage to the devil because they think they're free from the consequences of sin while they're engaged in it, or they think that Jesus did it all for them and therefore they don't need to do anything but believe. But you know, the Bible says that the devils believe and do what? Tremble. So just believing isn't enough, is it? No, we have to obey, because that's what true belief entails. Too many people are going to find out too late that it's impossible to serve two masters. That's what Jesus said, and He can't lie.

Let me read you two short quotes and then we'll move on. ***Review and Herald December 15, 1896***, "Clad in the vestments of humanity, the Son of God came down to the level of those He wished to save. In Him was no guile or sinfulness; He was ever pure and undefiled; yet He took upon Him our sinful nature."

Early Writings, page 150, "What love! What amazing condescension! The King of glory proposed to humble Himself to fallen humanity! He would place His feet in Adam's steps. He would take man's fallen nature, and engage to cope with the strong foe who triumphed over Adam."

Earlier I said that this false idea that Christ had the unfallen human nature destroys the

everlasting gospel, or the way people are saved from sin, because the devil wants to change the good news into bad news for every person he can. This is a trick of the devil to make you think that you can't really live without committing sin, and if you believe that, you never will, because you will never be an overcomer, and thus you will not be taken to live in the society of holy beings who have never fallen. It will never happen. Sitting at the feet of Jesus means to take the time to study these things out for ourselves, listen to what the word says, believe it, and then order our lives after it.

In *The Desire of Ages, page 24* it says, "If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. Therefore Jesus was 'in all points tempted like as we are.' He endured every trial to which we are subject. And He exercised in His own behalf (**now listen**) He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man (**with a fallen human nature I might add**), He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God."

It is absolutely essential for us to realize that Jesus never sinned, even though He had a sinful human nature. And it is just as essential for us to realize that even though we have a sinful nature we need not sin either. Jesus overcame in the strength given Him from the Father, and we can do the same, otherwise the gospel means nothing, and all God's promises mean absolutely nothing.

Let's go back to the second chapter of **Hebrews** for a minute, because there's something important there I don't want to just skip over. **Hebrews 2:18**. Speaking of Jesus it says, "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour (**or help or relieve or come to the aid of**) them that are tempted." You see, the suffering of Christ was not on the cross alone, He suffered His whole life being tempted. What does that mean? It means that when Jesus said no to temptation, it caused His fallen flesh to suffer, because sin is its nature, and it's not satisfied until it's gratified. His fallen human nature suffered just like our fallen human nature suffers when we refuse to give in to it. When we gratify our fallen nature it no longer suffers, because it has gotten what it wanted. The problem is, it will want to be satisfied again and again, and each time we yield, the craving becomes stronger and stronger until it takes entire control of our being. Sin is like a drug that requires more and more in order to bring you to the same high. However, here's the good news, a person can be forgiven and empowered to overcome that sin if they surrender all to Jesus. Notice what it says in **Hebrews 7:25**, "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." That means you can be forgiven no matter what you've done, "to the uttermost", but, you better come before you go so far that you can no longer hear the

Holy Spirit speaking to your heart and you commit the unpardonable sin.

Let's go to **1 Peter 4** now and we'll see how this kind of suffering fits in with what we just read in **Hebrews 2:18. 1 Peter 4:1, 2**, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, **(what kind of flesh? Fallen flesh)** arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: **(or the same kind of thinking Christ had. Now listen)** for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath **(what?)** ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." So, if we are not causing our sinful nature to suffer, then we are giving in to sin, it's just that simple. Causing our sinful nature to suffer is the way we are transformed into the image of Christ, or how we become Christlike, and since our moral character is the only thing we're taking to heaven, we must not "live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

I'm sure you're all aware that there is "another gospel" being preached out there in the religious world today, and it's a gospel that leaves people saved in sin; a gospel that teaches that we are still God's children even though we are sinning, and remember, that's the spirit of antichrist. You may remember when you were in English class back in school studying about suffixes. So let's go back to school for a minute. A suffix is letters added to the end of a word, which changes its meaning, like "er", "ing", "ly", "ed" and so on. When you add "er" to the word sin it majorly changes the meaning. The suffix "er" when added to a word means, "one who does or performs, or one who is engaged in." For example, what does a reporter do? He reports. What do teachers do? They teach, what do farmers do, they farm, what do welders do, they weld, and so on. Then what does the sinner do? He sins, or is engaged in sin, and the Bible says, "the soul that sinneth, it shall **(what?)** die" (eternally), unless there is repentance and confession.

What did Jesus tell Mary Magdalene? "Go and sin no more." And what did He tell the man who had an infirmity 38 years? "Sin no more lest a worse thing come upon thee." Would Jesus tell someone to accomplish an impossible task? Of course not! Power to keep you from falling will come when you have faith to believe. That's why **Romans 14:23** says, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." If you have no faith to believe, you cannot have victory over the temptation to sin, and we have to stop sinning in order to be God's children, that's the testimony of scripture. If you can't stop sinning then you need more faith, and **Romans 10:17** says, "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." So here we are once again sitting at the feet of Jesus in order to grow our faith, and if we don't do that we are doomed to failure in the Christian life.

As we wind down, let's take a look at a few verses that are so clear that no one need be confused or duped by the devil and his agents regarding the salvation in sin hoax. **1**

John 3:1-10 with a little commentary along the way, “Behold, what manner of love (or what quality of love) the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: (that would be the children of God in today’s gender equality thinking) therefore (or for this reason) the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, (I have to stop right there for a minute and explain something to you about the word “now.” In an official document of the SDA church you will find the following quote in 7BC 649. This is not an Ellen White quote, but one from denominational leaders who wrote the commentaries. Here’s what they say, “It is now, while we are still falling into sin that we are said to be the children of God.” That’s quite an admission isn’t it? and they believe this because they are all confused about the human nature of Christ. But let’s see if this statement is in harmony with what the apostle John wrote. Verse 2) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, (when He comes back to this earth) we shall be like him; (that is, in character. That means that God is not going to change our character when He comes, as some believe.) for we shall see him as he is. (In all His glory, and if we are not already like Him when He comes, we won’t be able to see Him that way and live) And every man that hath this hope (the hope that we will perfectly reproduce the character of Jesus so we can see Him in all His glory and not cease to exist) And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, (in this life while probation lingers) even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. (This is the best definition of sin there is, and most Christians have no idea that a violation of number four is sin) And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; (not save us in them) and in Him is no sin. (And if we are in Him, we won’t have any sin either. That’s what it means to be Christlike) Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: (you can’t abide in Christ and continue to sin, plain and simple) whosoever sinneth (or continues to sin, that’s the context) hath not seen Him, neither known Him. (If a person thinks they can be in a saving relationship with Jesus while they continue to sin, they have never really understood the gospel, and thus they really don’t know Jesus, and they never have) Little children, let no man deceive you: (are people deceived about this issue today? Without a doubt. As Paul said earlier about this antichrist teaching, it’s been around for a long time, it was in the world in his day) let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. (In other words, the person who is right with God, does what is right, just as Christ did what was right. Now here comes the main point) He that committeth sin is of the devil; (oh, you mean they’re not now the children of God as the SDA commentary says? No, they’re of the devil!) for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, (or why He came to earth) that He might destroy the works of the devil. (Where does He want

to destroy the works of the devil? In your heart and in mine. The works of the devil are to get you to transgress God's law, and if he can make you believe that you are still God's child while you're doing it, he has accomplished his goal) Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. **(John is not teaching holy flesh here. He is simply saying that as long as the divine seed that was planted in your heart the day you accepted Christ as your Saviour remains in you, you will not sin, because Jesus and sin cannot abide in the heart at the same time. If we choose not to abide, sin is going to happen, because that's the only option if we go that route)** In this **(that is, whether or not we sin)** the children of God are manifest, **(or made known or exposed)** and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, **(or is not born of God)** neither he that loveth not his brother."

I was talking to someone several years ago who believed the devil's hoax of once saved always saved, and he thought he had me over a barrel when he said, "once you're born of God you can't be unborn", meaning you can't be lost, and I said, "you're right, you can't be unborn, but you can die, and if you die you must be born again, again", and he had to rethink his position. You see, when we sin willfully we die spiritually, because eternal life comes from God, and if He's not abiding in us, we're as good as dead, and if we want that life back we must repent and confess our sins in order to be brought back into a saving relationship with Jesus once again.

Another time I was sitting in a Sabbath School class and we were discussing this very subject and I mentioned the fact that sin is a choice and that we could choose not to sin, and someone who believed the new theology of salvation in sin piped up and said, "do you think you're holy?" and they quoted **1 John 1:8** where it says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us", and I have to admit that I was at a loss for words at that point and didn't know how to respond, but I went home and I studied and prayed about this and God gave me the answer, and I'll share that answer with you this morning just in case you run across this sometime.

As I was studying everything I could find on **1 John 1:8** I found this particular quote in ***Review and Herald, February 22, 1881 paragraph 17*** that gave me the answer I was looking for. Notice what it says, "The epistles of John breathe a spirit of love. But when he comes in contact with that class who break the law of God and yet claim that they are living without sin, he does not hesitate to warn them of their fearful deception." Then **1 John 1:6-10** is quoted. So when you read **1 John 1:8** in context, by reading a couple verses before, it should be understood as follows. "If we say that we have no sin, **(while we walk in darkness as verse 6 says)** we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

Earlier I asked what it means to be a Christian, and if I were to ask you right now if you are a Christian, I suppose every hand would go up. But what if I were to ask, how many of you are Christlike? What would your response be to that? Maybe not so many hands would go up for that one, but really, they are the same. One just sounds like bragging a little bit, but they are really the same.

Notice what it says in *Review and Herald, March 8, 1892*, “In the books of heaven are registered your profession of faith, your responsibility as Christians. But are you Christians? What is it to be a Christian? It is to be Christlike. To be a Christian is to act as Christ acts, to have His spirit at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances.”

If we act as Christ acted and we have His spirit at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances we cannot also be engaged in sin. It just doesn't work that way. Christ never sinned, and if we belong to Him we will not continue in it. Again, we can never do it on our own, but if Jesus lives within, He will work out His will within us, and His will is that we obey His Ten Commandment Law, the violation of which is sin. It's true, without Christ we are sinners, because without Him we will sin, but we will not sin as long as we abide, and we are always free to choose whether or not we abide.

I would probably get a better response if I had asked, how many of you are sinners? Usually every hand goes up for that one, but now that you know that a sinner is “one who does or performs, or one who is engaged in sin”, you may not be too anxious to raise your hand on that one either.

Do you remember what **Revelation 14:12** says? We should all be able to quote it from heart. It says, “Here is the patience of the saints. Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” There are three important parts to this verse. “Here is the patience of the saints” is part one. What is a saint? It's a holy person, isn't it? The word “saint” and “holy” are the same word in the Greek. Do saints sin? No! Sinners sin. Saints are holy because Jesus is holy. We may have a sinful nature, we can't help that, and we will until the Lord comes and changes our human nature, but saints can't sin and still remain saints. If a saint sins they are no longer a saint, and if a sinner sins and repents and confesses that sin, they can be a saint again, that's the beauty of the gospel, but be careful about going back and forth, because there is a limit at which the Holy Spirit no longer speaks, and we don't know where that limit is. When we cross a certain line we're done. Anyway, why would we want to play Russian roulette with eternal life? why would we want to cause Jesus pain by crucifying Him afresh every time we mess up?

Now, some of you may not be so sure that what I'm saying here is true, that maybe I'm stretching things a little too far about the difference between saints and sinners, but

let me read you three short quotes to prove the point. Maybe in the future we can explore this further, but for right now these three quotes will do.

Sermons and Talks volume 1, page 343 “In Living Temple (**that is, the book that Kellogg wrote that had pantheistic theories**) “In Living Temple the assertion is made that God is in the flower, in the leaf, in the sinner. But God does not live in the sinner. The Word declares that He abides only in the hearts of those who love Him and do righteousness. God does not abide in the heart of the sinner; it is the enemy who abides there.”

Testimonies to Ministers, page 87, “The eternal God has drawn the line of distinction between the saints and the sinners, the converted and the unconverted. The two classes do not blend into each other imperceptibly, like the colors of the rainbow. They are as distinct as midday and midnight.”

Manuscript Releases, volume 21, page 350, “No one can occupy middle ground. Men and women are either saints or sinners, either entitled to a glorious life of eternity, or doomed to eternal death.”

The second important point about **Revelation 14:12** is that Saints are not only holy and patient, but they obey the Ten Commandments, and this is what distinguishes between the saint and the sinner.

The third important part is that saints keep the faith of Jesus, and again, how do we get that faith and keep it? By sitting at the feet of Jesus every day and living out every moment of the day what God works in.

Friends, it's not my purpose today to make salvation hard or difficult, but we need to realize that the devil doesn't want us to be saved, and it's his goal to so confuse the gospel that we will fail to grasp the truth. In **2 Peter 1:10**, we're told to make your calling and election sure by doing the things listed in the previous verses, and I'll let you study out what “these things” are, and if we do these thing we “shall never fall”, and in **Jude verse 24** we're told that Jesus is able to keep us from falling, and to present us “faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.” What could these verses mean except that we have the promise and possibility to never fall from grace and back into sin as long as we abide in Christ?

God wants us to be saints, not sinners, because sinners do not keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus! Only those who are holy can do that, and **Romans 1:7** says “We are called to be saints”, that's what God wants us to be, but how can we who are fallen be holy, that's the question, and the answer I think is in **Galatians 2:20**. Let's read that as our closing text. “I am crucified with Christ:

nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh (**fallen flesh**) I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

The only way to be holy is for self to die, for the unholy part of us to die, then the One who is holy can live out His life within us. Does that make sense? I hope so, because this is fundamental to true Christianity, and I hope that you have heard something today that is practical and something you can put into practice. As you find yourself sitting at the feet of Jesus this coming week, listen carefully to what He has to say and then ask for power to be Christlike. As your faith is, be it unto you.