

1 John 2:12-14

¹² I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. ¹³ I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. ¹⁴ I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one. *NKJV*

Your sins are forgiven. The Apostle John writes in Jewish flavor to the Christians who are dear to his heart because he has spent a great amount of time with them expounding from the Scriptures Who Jesus Christ is. He uses the Greek word “*tek-nee'on*” which literally means “born ones.” The recipients of this letter are not literally “little children” but are Christians who have come to the faith through the means of hearing the Gospel from John and believing upon it. He is like a father in the faith to them, not because they are born from them in any manner spiritually, but because they are “born again” through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His address to them begins with an endearing term.

No less than 7 times does John remind them in his letter that their “sins are forgiven.” (1:9, 3:23, 5:1, 5, 13, 1:7) Of course, he was not the one to absolve or pardon them from their sins, as he explains. But he is bolstering their confidence to walk as people forgiven by God. He is the one “from the beginning” Who has demonstrated His faithfulness to His own justice and mercy. God’s faithfulness in imparting forgiveness is first of all a faithfulness to His own character before it is an imputed blessing upon those who will believe.

Their sins have been forgiven “for His name’s sake.” For the sake of Himself God has pardoned the sins of all who will come to Him by faith in Jesus Christ. Not for their sake primarily, but for the sake of His own faithfulness to Himself does God forgive the sins of the repentant person.

John addresses three primary audiences.

Fathers. According to Jewish custom this refers to those who had responsibility for authority. Sometimes used to refer to the leaders of the past, ie. Fathers of Israel, patriarchs, etc... It is a solemn title especially to infer responsibility in the community of believers. **There is no substitute for a life-time of committed closeness of walk with Jesus Christ. This is how “fathers’ are forged in the faith.**

Little Children. In our English Bibles this second group appears to be the same words John used to address the whole group, “little children.” But in the Greek he uses another word, “*paidia*.” His first use of the words “little children” was of a relational aspect. He loved them and taught them in the faith like a father does his own family. But now John uses a different word which implies an immaturity or need for growth. He addresses a group of Christians who are new to the faith and in need of much learning and growth. He reminds them that God is their father just as much as any other Christian can call upon God as Father. They will need to continue to subordinate themselves to the authority of God in their life if they expect to grow in their walk of faith with Jesus Christ.

Young Men. John turns his attention to a third and growing group of Christians in the Church, young men. Likely, knowing the Jewish culture, these would be adult men under the age of 40. These are the men in the “throws of life” marrying, raising children, diligent in their workplace, involved in society, etc... They withstand an onslaught of temptation from the Devil in every way in which

their life is extended both in their roles and in their relationship. They may be tempted to feel overwhelmed and defeated at times in the spiritual battle for the priority of Christ in their life. John reminds them that their strength will not come from their physical or mental fortitude but only from abiding in the Word of God. **Only by depending upon the Lord as revealed in God's Word will they have victory.** John does not say because they are strong that they will not face significant battles, but because Christ has already given them the ultimate victory which they "have" already there is no match to the strength that they can draw from living a life dependent upon Him.

John desires that each of these groups of Christians in the church find the relational aspect of pardon by their heavenly Father to be the grounds by which they grow!

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What is the emphasis of the first "little children"?
2. What is the basis for forgiven sin? Has the Apostle John pardoned them from sin himself?
3. What is the nature of his address to the "fathers"?
4. Who are the second group of "little children" and what is the difference between them and the first address?
5. Can you understand the separate distinction of "young men" and the particular and relevant encouragement that John gives to them?

6. How can one benefit from depending on the Lord in the midst of the onslaught from the wicked one?
7. Are you trusting in the pardon of any man or religion for your sins other than God Himself through Jesus Christ alone?

CAPITOL SQUARE COMMUNITY MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

Staff, Lobbyists & Capitol Community Welcome

Statehouse Room #44 ~ Wednesdays, 12:00