Again and Again

*1 John 3:5-6 - You know that He appeared in order to take away sins, and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen Him or known Him.*

There are right ways to do things and there are wrong ways to do things.

That's a truth underlined by the story of Marcus Sanford Patmon of Miami. Here's part of that story. In 2001 Patmon was convicted of assault. That court decision negatively impacted his life in a number of ways, including his income. Having seen the value of art on an episode of Antiques Roadshow, he tried to sell two Picasso etchings and a Marc Chagall lithograph he had stolen.

To make a long story short, Patmon was caught, went to trial and, having been found guilty, spent two years in prison.

This past January he decided to drive to Washington and ask the Obama administration to clean his record of past wrongdoings.

It was a good idea. What was *not* a good idea is Patmon drove to Washington in a stolen car.

The car was spotted when Patmon stopped at a Starbucks; he was arrested and all hopes of receiving a pardon for past crimes went out the window.

As I said at the beginning: there are right ways to do things and there are wrong ways to do things.

Patmon did things the wrong way. So do a lot of people. To help us out, to help us do things the right way, the Holy Spirit inspired John to share the passage above. Very simply, those words tell us that Jesus offered His life to win our forgiveness and rescue us from condemnation and damnation.

Now we who have been rescued by the Savior need to live our lives the right way.

According to John, that means we need to stop our deliberate, intentional sinning. Now you and I know that until Judgment Day comes we will always be sinners. But that does not mean we should embrace deliberate, intentional sins.

Law enforcement had a tough time believing Patmon had changed his ways when he drove a stolen car to ask for a pardon.

Similarly, the Lord has a difficult time thinking we are serious about our salvation when we ask Him for forgiveness and then deliberately sin again.

Truly, having seen the Bethlehem manger, the Jerusalem cross, and the empty tomb, we ought to be filled with gratitude and thankfulness. Our appreciation ought to reflect itself in the way our lives are lived to honor the Savior.

**THE PRAYER:** Dear Lord, once you said, "This people draw near with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, while their hearts are far from Me" (Isaiah 29:13b). Grant that my lips, my heart, and my life show my great love for -- and appreciation of -- the Savior whose life has won my salvation. Help me live my life the right way. This I ask in Jesus' Name. Amen.