

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 26TH, 2019 // BOOK OF 1 JOHN

We can be assured of our salvation in Christ, and we can be assured that Jesus is the Son of God that provides us eternal life.

OVERCOMING THE WORLD (5:1-5)

John has emphasized knowing who Jesus is, what the marks of a true Christian are, discerning what is true and false teaching, and examining the marks of a false prophet.

- But he's spent most of his teaching emphasizing the importance of love.
- He reminds his readers that who loves the Father must love the Father's children.

There is a mindset amongst our culture that says, "I love Jesus, I just hate His followers".

- A test of the regenerate character of someone that's truly been born again is that if they love God, they'll love others who have also been born of God.
- This can be hard, but one who truly loves Jesus must learn to love His bride.

An interesting idea is then presented by John- he says, "we know that we love the children of God by loving God and carrying out His commands" (vs. 2).

- We would expect to hear him say that we demonstrate our love for God by loving our brothers, but that's not what he says.
- Real, Godly love towards others is demonstrated by obedience towards God.

If the command were to simply, "love God's children", all of us would have differing versions of what that actually looks like.

- But when that direction is to first love God and OBEY His commandments, not only will love towards others be shown, it will be the right kind of Godly, pure, and holy love.
- The commands of God are not burdensome (vs. 3).

This doesn't mean that God's commands are always the path of least resistance- obeying God is often more difficult than disobeying Him.

- However, the consequences of disobeying God are FAR more burdensome than the consequences of obeying God.
- In the long run, a life of obedience is a far more simple, less complex, and rewarding life- not a burdensome one.

John tells these believers that they've "overcome the world" because of their faith in Jesus as the Son of God (vs. 4,5).

- In spite of our daily struggles against sin, false teaching, and the seductive systems of the world- Jesus has overcome the world.
- We won (past tense) the victory with our union with Christ, and we win it (present tense) by our refusal to deny Him and give up our faith.

THE WATER & THE BLOOD (5:6-12)

"The water and the blood" has led to a number of interpretations from Bible scholars.

- Those familiar with the crucifixion narrative might think of the incident when Jesus' side was pierced and water and blood came out (Jn. 19:34).
- This is probably not a reference to that event, but more a reference to Jesus' baptism and crucifixion.

There was a false teacher from the Gnostic camp named Cerinthus who taught that Jesus became the "Christ" at His baptism, but that "Christ" left Him before He was crucified.

- He was saying, "Christ came through water (baptism), not blood (crucifixion)."
- So John corrects this lie by saying that the Son of God (vs. 5) came not by water only, but by water AND the blood (vs. 6).

John's witness as an apostle of what he'd seen and heard was important (1:2, 4:14), but there is a greater witness to the divinity of Christ- the Holy Spirit (vs. 6-8).

- There was a physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit at Jesus' baptism (Mt. 3:16), and there were many miraculous workings of the Holy Spirit through the apostles to confirm their claims that Jesus was risen and was fully God.

This is "the testimony of God", and it's greater than the "testimony of men".

- What John is saying is that there is proof from God that Jesus was 100% God & man, and the gnostics only presented their own unproven opinions without divine testimony.
- If someone accepts the testimony of God, he has an internal ("in himself") assurance that this belief is true (vs. 10).

But someone who doesn't believe God and doesn't believe Jesus has come from God has made God out to be a liar (vs. 10).

- What are all of these divine proofs pointing to and what do they mean for us?
- Eternal life comes from God through His son Jesus and through no other way- whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life (vs. 12).

WHY DOES THIS MATTER FOR US?

1. Jesus was fully God & fully man throughout the duration of His life and ministry- He never stopped being God.
2. There are real, tangible proofs given for the divinity and exclusivity of Jesus.
3. Jesus is the only way to God and to eternal life- there are not multiple ways, and to declare that there is would call God a liar.

THAT YOU MAY KNOW (5:13-21)

What's John's purpose in writing this epistle? "That you may believe in the Son of God, that you may know you have eternal life" (vs. 13).

- John wanted to give true believers in Jesus assurance that they were saved and didn't need any "secret knowledge" to be Christian.
- God wants that assurance for us too- He wants our relationship to be as sons, not as slaves (Gal. 4:7).

John also desires for us to have confidence in approaching God in prayer (vs. 14-15).

- Ask anything according to God's will, and He will hear it and answer our request.
- How do we know what the will of God is?
- We know God's will through knowing His Word.
- We're to abide in Jesus and let God's Word abide in us, and we may ask what we will and it will be given (Jn. 15:7-8, 16).

John's next instructions get a little confusing.

- We are to pray for a brother who commits a sin that does not lead to death, but not to pray for a brother who commits a sin that does lead to death (vs. 16).
- The Catholic understanding of this verse is that of "venial sins" (a lesser sin that doesn't result in complete separation from God and eternal damnation in hell), and "mortal sins" (which do).

SIN UNTO DEATH?

- A particularly bad sin that God will not pardon. Apostasy- deliberate denial of the Christian faith after supposedly embracing it (Jude 4), Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:31-32) Physical Death as a divine consequence of sin (Acts 5:1-11, 1 Cor. 5)

We can't be certain what John is referring to when he writes the "sin leading to death". Evidently, John and his readers knew what the sin leading to death was, so no detailed explanation is given.

- So we need to focus on what we do know- (1) willful, intentional sin has deadly effects, (2) we're to pray for our brothers/sisters who are caught up in sin.
- All "wrongdoing is sin"- even the little things that might not "lead to death" (vs. 17).

John brings his first epistle to a close by giving a summary of three final affirmations, each introduced by the phrase, "we know":

- "We know" that a person born of God does not keep on sinning (vs. 18) and is kept away from Satan's harm.
- One major evidence for someone's true conversion is a pattern of growth in holiness.
- A true Christian is protected from Satan.

"We know" that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one (vs. 19).

- As Christians, we're under the power and control of God, NOT the satanically influenced world system.
- "We know" that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding- Jesus is enough to provide us the path to eternal life and to the true God.

"Keep yourselves from idols" is the last instruction given to this church in this letter.

- What false teaching offered was the opportunity to feel superior to others, the opportunity to get rich, and the opportunity to indulge in immorality.
- All of these things are simply idols and cheap substitutes for the real thing- "that which we have seen"- Jesus!

WHAT I BELIEVE WILL DETERMINE HOW I BEHAVE... "

- Do I believe that Jesus is everything that He says that He is?
- Do I believe that Jesus is more valuable, precious, and worthy than anything on this earth? Even the fleeting pleasures of sin?
- Do I believe that Jesus loves me? Do I love Him back?

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."-Jesus of Nazareth, John 14:15