

Sunday Morning Message

June 6, 2021

1 John – Real Faith

“And We Know” - Wrapping It All Up

Text – 1 John 5:14

Congregational Reading – 1 John 5:14 - 21

Introduction

We have been examining the first letter of John in a series of messages on Sunday mornings, and have discovered that this epistle is all about living a genuine faith – real faith. Contained within this letter are many proofs, which reveal to the reader whether or not his faith is real. So far in this little letter we have seen that a genuine believer:

- 1 Will not walk in darkness (1:6)
- 2 Will walk in the light (1:7)
- 3 Will confess his sin (1:8 – 10)
- 4 Will keep God’s commandments (2:3 – 4; 5:2 – 3)
- 5 Will keep His Word (2:4)
- 6 Will not hate his brother (2:9)
- 7 Will love his brother (2:10 – 11; 3:10 – 12, 14 – 15; 4:7 – 8, 11 – 12, 20 – 21; 5:1)
- 8 Will have “an unction” (2:20, 27 – χρῖσμα [*chrisma*] an anointing – and will know the truth)
- 9 Will not deny the Son (2:22 – 24)
- 10 Will “purify himself” (3:3)
- 11 Will do righteousness (3:7)
- 12 “Doth not commit sin” (3:4 – 6, 8 – 10; 5:18)
- 13 Will not murder (3:15)
- 14 Will have the Holy Spirit dwelling within him (3:19 – 24; 4:13)
- 15 Will get his prayers answered (3:22; 5:14 – 15)
- 16 Will recognize truth from error (4:6)
- 17 Will confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (4:15; 5:1, 5)
- 18 Will dwell in love (4:16)

We must also understand that all these are all general statements about believers. It is also possible that a real Christian will violate these principles because even though the Holy Spirit indwells him and he has been given a new nature, the old man is still present. Paul said:

"(18) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." (Romans 7:18)

In last week's message, we examined verses 1 – 13 of this chapter and we saw that through our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ we have already been granted victory over the world (see v. 4).

We also talked about the two sets of three witnesses: the Three that bear record in Heaven (v. 7), and the three that bear witness on the earth - the Holy Spirit, the water, and the blood (v. 8). These are all witnesses that declare that Jesus is who He claimed to be, and that we who have placed our faith in Christ have received from Him the salvation that He offers.

Finally, we saw last time that we have the assurance of our salvation because of the written Word of God. (v. 13)

Transition

In these final verses of the letter, John will sum up his main argument (v. 13) and will also drive home some practical instructions for his readers.

I. The Proof of Answered Prayer (vs. 14 – 17)

In these verses, John reiterates something that he already introduced back in chapter three – the proof of answered prayer as evidence of the fact that we have a genuine relationship with the Lord:

"(21) Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. (22) And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." (1 John 3:21-22)

Notice the word "confidence" in both 3:21 and 5:14. John's first letter is all about having confidence or assurance in our relationship with the Lord.

John also recorded Jesus' principle on prayer as it related to bearing fruit back in the Gospel of John:

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." - (John 15:15-16)

Notice that there is a colon after the word "remain". The statement *"that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you"* is not to be taken separately from the rest of the sentence.

This particular prayer promise has to do with fruit bearing. This verse is not teaching that God is some kind of genie that is at our "beck and call" to give us what ever we want.

"God give me a million dollars – a new house – a new car – an expensive vacation – a new job that will pay me more money – etc."

God is saying here that He will give us what we need in order to accomplish what He has called us to do, which is “bear fruit”.

Simply put our prayers need to be others centered, and kingdom centered, rather than self-centered.

You may be thinking right now – “How am I going to get some of the things that I want?”

"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." - (Psalm 37:4)

Five Prayer Principles:

1 You Must Pray

"...ye have not, because ye ask not." - (James 4:2)

2 You Must Believe That God Can Answer Prayer

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." - (Matthew 21:22)

Believing does not mean that God necessarily will do what you're asking, but that He can do what you are asking.

3 You Must Pray According To God's Will

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:" - (1 John 5:14)

4 Your prayers should be Kingdom-centered or others-centered

"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." - (James 4:3)

5 Sin must be confessed and forsaken

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:" - (Psalm 66:18)

There are other prayer principles, but these are five important ones, particularly when we are talking about prayer and how it relates to fruit bearing.

Notice verses 16 and 17 – regarding the sin unto death

I believe that these two verses tie directly into the discussion regarding prayer.

Exegetical Comments – This is a very difficult passage of Scripture. Is the “death” referred to here speaking of eternal death or physical death?

Eternal Death

The word for “sin” (ἁμαρτία) has no definite article, so an indefinite article “a” is appropriate.

I do not think that these particular verses are referring to what is referred to as “the unpardonable sin,” or “blasphemy of the Holy Ghost.”

"(10) And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven." (Luke 12:10)

"(31) Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. (32) And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." (Matthew 12:31-32)

In the context of these verse, the religious leader representing the nation of Israel had just attributed the miracles of Jesus to Beelzebub (or Satan). It was the ultimate rejection of their Messiah who came to deliver Israel. Jesus came in the power of the Holy Ghost to save them, and they rejected Him. To reject Christ is to reject the message of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit points people to Christ. If you come to the time of your death still rejecting Christ, having never received him, you will die not being forgiven for your sins.

Physical Death

John is likely in these verses speaking about a sin that causes God to take the sinning believer home to Heaven.

McGee states:

“Death” refers here to *physical* death. It has no reference at all to spiritual death because the child of God has eternal life. John is saying that believers can commit a sin for which their heavenly Father will call them home; that is, He will remove them from this life physically, perhaps because they are disgracing Him.¹

According to ancient Church tradition, the Apostle John was referring to a heretic named Cerinthus. John Phillips states:

The story comes from Polycarp and is related by Irenaeus, a legend that the apostle John left the public baths at Ephesus in great haste when he heard that Cerinthus had entered. “Let us flee,” he said, “lest the baths fall in while Cerinthus the enemy of truth is within.”²

According to McArthur:

Such a sin could be any premeditated and unconfessed sin that causes the Lord to determine to end a believer’s life. It is not one particular sin like homosexuality or lying, but whatever sin is the final one in the tolerance of God. Failure to repent of and forsake sin may eventually lead to physical death as a judgment of God (Acts 5:1–11 {Ananias and Saphira}; 1 Cor. 5:5 [the man who committed adultery with his father’s wife]; 11:30 [the Lord’s Supper]). No intercessory prayer will be effective for those who have committed

¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, electronic ed., vol. 5 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 819.

² John Phillips, *Exploring the Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), 1 Jn 5:16.

such deliberate high-handed sin, i.e., God's discipline with physical death is inevitable in such cases as He seeks to preserve the purity of His church.³

Old Testament examples – Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1 – 7); Korah (Numbers 16); Achan (Joshua 6 – 7); Uzzah (2 Samuel 6)

In most cases a sin unto death is not necessarily a particular kind of sin, but it is a unrepentant continuation of sin that God eventually judges by removing the believer from the earth.

This discussion of sin transitions us into the next two verses:

II. The Power of a Transformed Life (vs. 18 – 19)

John already discussed this in 3:4 – 10.

Again, John is not saying that a genuine believer never sins. In fact, he stated just the opposite:

"(8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John 1:8-10)

"(1) My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:" (1 John 2:1)

A true born-again believer can certainly commit sin, but he cannot continue in sin successfully. God simply will not allow him to. The true believer has the indwelling Holy Spirit of God within him, and the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, meaning He convinces us that what we are doing is wrong. Though there may be some degree of pleasure in sin for a short season, the guilt that follows makes continuing in sin completely unbearable.

When we got saved, we received a new nature. The new nature is sinless. Our spirit, which was dead in trespasses and sins was given life by the Holy Spirit of God. God is in us.

"(17) Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Notice it says: "that wicked one toucheth him not." Satan cannot get his hands on the child of God. He cannot touch him unless God allows it.

McArthur states: "Because the believer belongs to God, Satan must operate within God's sovereignty and cannot function beyond what God allows, as in the example of Job (Job 2:5; Rom. 16:20). While Satan may persecute, tempt, test, and accuse the believer, God protects His children and places definite limits on Satan's influence or power (2:13; John 10:28; 17:12–15)."⁴

Notice the phrase – "the whole world lieth in wickedness"

The world is a very wicked and dark place.

³ John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1974.

⁴ Ibid.

"(19) And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19)

Christians should be bright and shining lights that penetrate the darkness.

Illustrate – We should be poking some holes in the darkness – Doug Kiser didn't want to listen to my dirty joke.

"(15) That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;" (Philippians 2:15)

III. The Perception That Only Comes Through Knowing Him (vs. 20 – 21)

The word “understanding” (διάνοια – *dianoia*), means spiritual insight, divine knowledge. God has opened our eyes to the Truth of Himself.

Illustrate – It's like a lightbulb clicked on.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 2:9 – 16

"(9) But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (10) But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. (11) For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. (12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. (13) Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (14) But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (15) But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. (16) For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." (1 Corinthians 2:9-16)

Notice that the very last verse of this letter has to do with idolatry. God warns his children to be careful about idolatry. φυλάξατε (from φυλάσσω – *phyllassō*) – Aor. Imp. – translated 3 times elsewhere “beware.”

Church, you and I need to beware – to watch out for – anything that can come in-between us and the Lord. Idols for us are not little gold statues, but they could be anything that we care more about than we do the Lord: Sports, hobbies, job, even our children.

Conclusion

"(13) These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." (1 John 5:13)

Do you really know that you have eternal life. If you have sincerely received His gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus and what He did for you on the Cross that you know.

Translation Work

1 John 5:14 TR

καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ παρρησία ἣν ἔχομεν πρὸς αὐτόν,

and / this / is / the boldness, confidence, assurance (Nom.) / that, which (Acc) / we have / with (Acc) / him (Acc)

ἔχομεν – 1st Per. Plu. Pres. Act. Ind.

ὅτι ἐὰν τι αἰτώμεθα κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ἀκούει ἡμῶν:

that or because / if / something / we would ask / according to, against or down / to will / of him (Gen) / he hears / us

αἰτώμεθα – 1st Pers. Plu. Pres. Mid. Subj.; ἀκούει – 3rd Pers. Sing. Pres. Act. Ind.

Translation – And this is the assurance that we have with Him, that if we ask something according to his will, he hears us.

1 John 5:15 TR

καὶ ἐὰν οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἀκούει ἡμῶν,

and / if / we know / that or because / he hears / us

1st Pers. Plu. Pres. Act. Ind.; ἀκούει - 3rd Pers. Sing. Pres. Act. Ind.

ὃ ἂν αἰτώμεθα,

who, which, that (Neut. Nom. or Acc.) / we would ask / we know

αἰτώμεθα - 1st Pers. Plu. Pres. Mid. Subj; ἂν – indefinite particle

οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἔχομεν τὰ αἰτήματα ἃ ἠτήκαμεν παρ' αὐτοῦ.

That or because / we have / the requests (Acc. Plu.) / that who, whom (Neut. Plu. Nom. or Acc.) / we asked / of / him

ἔχομεν – 1st Pers. Plu. Pres. Act. Ind.; ἠτήκαμεν – Perf. Act. Ind. 1st Pers. Plu.

Translation – And if we know that he hears us, whatever we would ask, we know that we receive the requests that we ask of him.

1 John 5:16 TR

Ἐάν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτάνοντα ἁμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον,

If / someone, anyone, certain one / see / brother (Acc.) / his / sin (Part. Acc.) / sin (Noun Acc.) / not / with, toward / death (Acc.)

ἴδῃ - 2nd Aor. Act. Subj. 3rd Pers. Sing; ἁμαρτάνοντα – Pres. Act. Part. Acc. Sing. /

αἰτήσῃ,

he shall ask

αἰτήσῃ – 3rd Pers. Sing. Fut. Act. Ind.

καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ ζωὴν τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσιν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον.

And / shall give / him / life / sin / not / toward, with / death

δώσει – 3rd Pers. Sing. Fut. Act. Ind.; ἁμαρτάνουσιν – Pres. Act. Part.

ἔστιν ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον:

is / sin (Nom.) / toward, with / death

οὐ περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω ἵνα ἐρωτήσῃ

not / concerning, for (with Gen) / it / I say / that or because / he shall ask

ἐκείνης demonstrative pronoun (Gen) - λέγω – Pres. Act. Ind. 1st Pers. Sing.; ἐρωτήσῃ - Aor. Act. Subj. 3rd Pers. Sing.

Translation - If anyone see his brother sin a sin not to death, he shall pray, and he shall give him life for a sin not to death. There is a sin to death: I do not say that he shall pray concerning it.

Exegetical Comments – This is a very difficult passage of Scripture. I think the basic meaning of it is that we should pray for people and forgive people who sin, but the sin unto eternal death, which is rejection of Christ cannot be forgiven, and we should not pray for God to forgive that. We also know that continuous unrepentant sin can lead to physical death.

ἁμαρτία has no definite article, so an indefinite article “a” can be appropriate. The question is: is it a particular sin that leads to death, or “sin” that leads to death.

1 John 5:17 TR

πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστίν:

every, all, whole / unrighteousness / sin / is

καὶ ἔστιν ἁμαρτία οὐ πρὸς θάνατον.

And / is / sin / not / toward, to / death

Translation - All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

1 John 5:18 TR

Οἴδαμεν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει;

We know / that or because / all, every / having been born / of / God / not / he sins

γεγεννημένος – Perf. Pas. Part. Nom.; ἁμαρτάνει – Pres. Act. Ind. 3rd Pers. Sing

οἴδαμεν – 1st Per. Plu. Pres. Act. Ind.

ἀλλ’ ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τηρεῖ ἑαυτὸν,

but / having been born / of / God / he keeps / reflexive pronoun

γεννηθεὶς – Aor. Pas. Part. Nom.; τηρεῖ - 3rd Per. Plu. Pres. Act. Ind

καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς οὐχ ἅπτεται αὐτοῦ.

And / wickedness (Adj. Nom.) / not / touches / him

ἅπτεται – Pres. Mid. Ind. 3rd Pers. Sing.

Translation – We know that anyone born of God sins not; but he that is born of God keeps himself, and wickedness does not touch him.

Exegetical Comments - ἅπτεται is a middle verb; the action is happening to the subject.

1 John 5:19 TR

οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐσμεν,

we know / that or because / of / God (Gen.) / we are

οἶδαμεν – 1st Per. Plu. Pres. Act. Ind.

καὶ ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται.

And / the world (Nom.) / whole / in / wickedness (Dative) / lies, be set

κεῖται – Pres. Mid. Or Pas. Dep. Ind. 3rd Pers. Sing.

Translation – We know that we are of God, and the whole world is set in wickedness.

1 John 5:20 TR

οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἦκει,

We know / on the other hand, and, moreover / that or because / the Son / of God / he is come

οἶδαμεν - 1st Per. Plu. Pres. Act. Ind.; ἦκει – Pres. Act. Ind. 3rd Pers. Sing.

καὶ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν διάνοιαν,

and / he has given / to us / understanding (Acc.)

δέδωκεν – 3rd Pers. Sing. Perf. Act. Ind.

ἵνα γινώσκωμεν τὸν ἀληθινόν,

in order that / we may know / true

γινώσκωμεν – 3rd Per. Sing. Pres. Subj. Ind.

καὶ ἐσμὲν ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ.

And / we are / in / true (Dat) / in the son / his / Jesus / Christ

οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεός,

this / is / true (adj. Nom.) God (Nom.)

καὶ ἡ ζωὴ αἰώνιος

and / the life /eternal

Translation – Moreover, we know that the son of God is come and has given to us understanding that we may know the true one, and we are in the true one, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Exegetical Comments – It is interesting that the adjective true (ἀληθινῷ) is translated here twice “true one” or “him that is true” in the KJV. He is the true one – he is also “the true.”

1 John 5:21 TR

Τεκνία,

Children

φυλάξατε ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων.

Keep / yourselves / away from; from / idols (Gen. Plu.)

φυλάξατε – 2nd Pers. Plu. Aor. Act. Imp.

ἀμήν

Amen

Translation – Children, Keep yourselves away from idols. Amen.

Exegetical Comments - φυλάξατε – Aor. Imp. – translated 3 times elsewhere beware. Interesting that the last verse of this letter contains a warning regarding idols\