

I JOHN 5

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I John chapter 5 as we continue our study through the Word of God, and we will finish up our study of I John tonight.

As we began our study of I John we saw this letter open up with the picture of - ***THE LIGHT OF GOD!*** In other words, in God there is no darkness at all. That is important for us to understand as we look at this world and see the darkness that is growing. God did not bring this; man has brought this and God has allowed this for His plan and purposes.

Thus, in this dark world God wants us to shine the light of God to a dark and lost world and we saw that in I John chapters 1 and 2.

Then, as we moved on, we looked at - ***THE LOVE OF GOD!*** And the point that John is making here is that God's love for us is unconditional and that He wants that love to not only flow into our lives but through our lives. He wants us to extend that love of God to others and we saw that in I John chapters 3 and 4.

As we finish up this letter tonight, here in I John chapter 5, we will be looking at - ***THE LIFE OF GOD!*** And as we do, we will not only see who He is and what He has done for us but that abundant life that He wants us to have in Him.

In fact, in John 10:10 Jesus tells us, "**The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**"

Notice, apart from Him the Devil is there to steal your life away, to kill your spirit, to destroy your witness, to send you to Hell if you don't know Jesus!

But Jesus has come to give us life and not just existence. He has come to give us abundant life, everlasting life that is only found in Him.

I don't think I have to tell you this, but I guess I will anyway. Satan has no problem in speaking about Jesus and he has used many religions to do that, but, of course, it is a false Jesus that he and his ministers are speaking of. Many feel that Jesus was just a great teacher who was an example that we are to follow after.

But is that what Jesus taught? Is that really all He is, a great teacher? Is that what the Bible is teaching us?

Again, some want us to listen to these lies of the Devil, but, as we will see, John is going to make it very clear. Jesus is Almighty God who became flesh and dwelt among us. Yes, He was a great teacher? But He is much more than just a great teacher, like I have said. He is God Almighty, maker of heaven and earth who loved us and died for us so that we can live with Him.

One author put it like this. He wrote,

Throughout the centuries, scholars and skeptics have given many different answers to the query, "Who is Jesus Christ?" His life is the most influential ever lived, and its impact continues to escalate. Still, Jesus' true identity is still hotly debated by modern historians and theologians.

Countless opinions have appeared as unbelievers have attempted to explain away the truth about Him.

The theological skeptics and liberals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were intent on denying Jesus' deity. They viewed Him as the quintessential strictly human moral teacher, in whom the spark of divinity inherent in all people burned most brightly. In their minds, Jesus' sacrificial life provided mankind with a model that all should follow, but not with a means by which men might be saved. Thus, He was "an example for faith, not the object of faith."

Other conceptions of Jesus range from the crusading socio-political revolutionary of liberation theology, to the cynical Jewish sage of the Jesus Seminar, to the countercultural hero of the rock musicals Godspell and Jesus Christ Superstar.

But all such fanciful and blasphemous viewpoints are far removed from the God-man revealed in holy Scripture. They say more about the obstinate unbelief and perverted imaginations of the people who created them than about Jesus' true identity.

Ironically, in all the debate over Him, Jesus' own self-testimony is seldom considered reasonably. Did He, as historic Christianity has always maintained, claim to be God incarnate in human flesh? Or, as skeptics argue, did His followers later invent those claims and attribute them to Him?

All this unbelieving pseudo scholarship ignores the biblical account of His life and ministry, which leaves no legitimate doubt about who Jesus declared Himself to be, and who He was.

- Source Unknown

This is so important for us to understand and thus, the question for you this evening is what Jesus said to His men – “**... ‘But who do you say that I am?’**” Matthew 16:15.

To put it another way, again what Jesus said to the Religious leaders - “**... ‘What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?’**”

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in I John chapter 5, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word, and we will be finishing up our study of I John this evening.

I JOHN 5**VERSE 1**

Why is this so important? Why is this such a big deal in regard to believe that Jesus is Almighty God?

The reason it is such a big deal is that if you deny this fact, then you are not saved!

Now some are taken back by that statement but listen to what Jesus said in John 8:24, **“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am [He], you will die in your sins.”**

And please understand that the “**He**” was added for clarity, but it does mess up what Jesus is saying. He is saying that unless you believe that “**I AM**” or that voice from the burning bush from Exodus, Almighty God, you will die in your sins.

You see, I did not say that, and I did not make that up, it is what Jesus said and it is what He taught in His earthly ministry. Over and over again He said that He was Almighty God and that is what upset the Jewish religious leaders so much.

And let’s think this through for a minute. If Jesus was just a man, that means He was born with a sin nature. If He was born with a sin nature, then He could not pay for our sins because He Himself was a sinner! Do you see how foolish it would be to deny that Jesus is God! Like He said, you will die in your sins if you do not believe that He is the ***Great I AM!***

Also, keep in mind that John was dealing with the Gnostics. And one of the big false teaching that they were telling people was that Jesus was not God, they were denying the deity of Jesus!

Remember that John warned us back in I John 2:22-23, **“Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.”**

You see, if you deny the deity of Jesus, if you do not believe, which is more than just head knowledge, that Jesus is your Lord and Savior, you will die in our sins! That is what we read in John 8:24!

And our faith is not dead, it is a living faith. What do I mean by that?

John is telling us that if we are born of God, if we are saved, then we will love the brethren. Yes, we are not saved by our good works but by our faith in Jesus. But that love that God has given to us, and the love we have for Him will be manifested in how we treat others!

I remember when my children were young, and you know how boys are, they would often fight with each other and that would just break my heart.

Why?

Because they are brothers, they are family and thus, they may not always agree with each other, but they should love each other. Now, thank God their fights never lasted long, we would tease that they were either the best of friends or the worst of enemies, depending on what time of day it was.

Now, let's look at this from a Godly perspective. How do you think our heavenly Father feels when His children, you and me, are fighting? Obviously, He is not pleased.

Listen to the commandment that Jesus gives to us, not a suggestion, in John 15:12-17,
“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another.”

May we love the brethren with the love that God has extended to us!

As we read on John is going to expound on that love being manifested in our lives, how it is seen.

VERSES 2-3

Why can’t we love the brethren like we should? Because our love for God is off! It is as simple as that and that is what John is saying here.

And it is interesting that we are not only to love God, but we are to keep His commandments as well!

Why is that so important?

Because our love for God is seen in our obedience to Him!

Jesus said in John 14:15, **“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”**

You see, you can’t say you love God and do your own thing, disobey what God has said. Your actions show you don’t love God!

Remember what John said back in I John 2:3-6, **“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”**

Now for some, this is too much. It is a heavy burden for them to do these things.

Look at the rules and the regulations that some religions make you do – even having to wear holy underwear!

Jesus said of the religious leaders of His day, **“For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.”** Matthew 23:4.

I truly believe that Jesus was speaking of the Law being a heavy burden to the Jewish people. You see, the Law of God given to Moses contained 613 commandments. And for most of the Jews, they could not even remember all of them let alone keep them!

And then the rabbis added more and more to it. Pages and pages of regulations and rules related to keeping those 613 main laws.

Now you may be thinking I am going overboard here. Not at all. Think about this. For the Sabbath day alone, that had 24 chapters in the Talmud that was devoted to what the Sabbath rest was all about. You would get tired just reading it!

And thus, it was a heavy burden upon them. A day set aside to worship God was no day of rest for them.

And here we see Jesus tell them in Matthew 11:28-30, **“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”**

I think the yoke that Jesus is speaking of is the yoke of grace. You see, it is no longer what I have to do to be saved, it is what Jesus has done for me and I have to receive that free gift by faith. No longer a burden to obey the Lord, we obey Him out of love. It is not about our salvation that we obey Him, not at all!

Paul put it like this in Romans 3:21-26, **“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”**

Thus, the commandments of God are not a burden to us, not at all. We don't keep them for salvation, as I have said, but we now have a new nature, we are a redeemed people, and we love the commandments of God!

VERSES 4-5

Make no mistake about it, we are at war with the world, the flesh and the devil and there is no way, no way at all that you will win this battle apart from Christ. You will never find victory over this world's influence on you.

Paul said in II Corinthians 4:3-4, **“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”**

You see, they are blinded to the things of God and thus, their lives are conformed to this world, its mold is forming them instead of God transforming them!

And look at our nation today and I think you will see how this is playing out. Good is evil and evil is good, and they will fight you to remain in this darkness.

But we need to understand that there was plenty of evil in John's day. And in John's mind, the idea that anything born of God could be defeated by this world was strange to him and it should be strange to us.

Maybe it is so difficult for us is because we are trying to do this on our own and we are failing, frustrated and defeated. We should not be!

You see, John gives to us this glorious truth! What is this glorious truth?

If we are born of God, if we are saved, then we don't have to be conformed to this world, but we can be transformed by God.

Paul, in Romans 12:1-2 tells us, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”**

You see, our victory is in Christ, not might be, or even will be, but He has given to us the victory over these things!

Remember what John said back in I John 4:4, **“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”**

I like the way the Poole put it regarding the life that Jesus has given to us, that it *“fills the soul with so great things concerning Him . . . as to easily turn this world into a contemptible shadow, and deprive it of all its former power over us.”*

Keep things in perspective as John warned us, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”** I John 2:15-17.

Our victory is in Jesus. Now if that is true, and it is, then why does John say that **“... the victory that has overcome the world – our faith”**?

What does the word **“faith”** mean here?

Spurgeon said this of this word **“faith”** - *“Look at any Greek Lexicon you like, and you will find that the word [faith or believe] does not merely mean to believe, but to trust, to confide in, to commit to, entrust with, and so forth. The very marrow of the meaning of faith is confidence in, believing upon.”*

Like I have said, our victory is found in Christ, not ourselves. If you are lacking victory in your life, I would encourage you to abide in Him, draw close to Him and stand on the promises of God that He has given to us in His Word, and then walk by faith!

Remember what Paul wrote in Galatians 2:20, **“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”**

Thus, if you want that victory, walk in Christ!

As we read on, we are going to encounter some of the most controversial and hotly debated Scriptures that you will find in the New Testament. And there is a variety of interpretations in regard to these verses. Let’s see what we can glean from them.

VERSES 6-8

First of all, what is John’s point in these verses? I think that is important for us to understand.

John’s point is simple. He is telling us that we can know without a doubt that Jesus is the Son of God. That Jesus is the Savior of the world!

But how can we know this?

This is all based upon the testimony of three powerful witnesses. And we will look at who those witnesses are and what they are saying.

Make no mistake about it, John is speaking of the real, the historical Jesus, not some false Jesus, and John should know, he was there with Jesus. He was not speaking of the Gnostic Jesus or that He was just spirit, not at all. Let's look at the first two.

Now here is a tough question. What does John mean when he says that *Jesus has come by water and blood?*

It is a difficult passage as one scholar said, *“This is the most perplexing passage in the Epistle and one of the most perplexing in the New Testament.”*

There are a few thoughts out there regarding this and I will share a few of them with you.

Some feel this describes the water and the blood that flowed from the side of Jesus when He was crucified spoken of in John 19:34.

The problem with this is it doesn't explain what John meant, that Jesus came by water and blood, it just speaks of His death. It does not explain His deity, not at all. And that is the context in this chapter.

Some others believe that this is speaking of our baptism, which speaks of the water. And communion, speaks of the blood.

Thus, Jesus comes to us in these two sacraments. Again, this is a little unclear to me how John is writing about this because he wrote this as a past event, **“came by water and blood”** and not something that was ongoing like these, baptism and communion.

Others see this as His physical birth, the waters of the womb, and His death, the shedding of His blood.

Thus, Jesus was fully human, He was born a man and He died like a man, which would refute some of the Gnostic beliefs.

This is a possible explanation for what John was speaking of, but I believe it is more than that.

I believe that the water represents the baptism of Jesus.

In Matthew 3:16-17 we are told of this, **“When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”**

In this He identified Himself with humanity, which was important, that He was flesh and blood and yet, the Father says that He is God. And keep in mind that He was sinless.

Also, the blood speaks of His crucifixion, the shedding of His blood, again showing His humanity and that He, the God-Man, paid in full the penalty for our sins in His death.

And we have the Holy Spirit who testifies to us the truth, He speaks to us of the true Jesus. That is the third witness.

In John 15:26 Jesus tells us of the work of the Holy Spirit, **“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”**

And in John 16:13-15 we are told, **“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.”**

Also, in Romans 8:16 we are told, **“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”**

You see, these three things; the water, the blood and the Spirit all testify of who Jesus is, they are consistent with each other!

Now let me say a few things about verses 7 and 8 here in I John chapter 5.

In the New King James Version of the Bible there is a marginal note stating that the words **“in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in the earth”** are not included in the vast majority of the New Testament Greek manuscripts.

In fact, we don't see these words in any Greek manuscripts until the fourteenth century, besides one in the eleventh and twelfth century, but in those they have been added to the margin or as a footnote.

The problem with this is that some try to use this to prove the Trinity, but these words were probably not part of the original manuscripts.

They may have been added by a copyist or were part of notes that got added to the text.

Does that mean that the New Testament is not accurate, that it is unreliable? Not at all!

First of all, we have over 25,000 manuscripts of the New Testament. So we can check this out and let people know that this portion of the Scripture was probably not part of the original writings because we have the documentation to show this!

We are not trying to hide anything.

Secondly, in the entire New Testament, from Matthew through Revelation; 27 books, 260 chapters, 7959 verses, 181,253 words, there are only 50 passages which have any sort of questions regarding the reliability of the text.

And please understand that not one of them are the sole foundation for any Christian doctrine or belief.

Let me put this in perspective for you, because 50 passages sound like a lot, but not more than one-one thousand of the text is in question!

I think we can trust it!

So what about the Trinity, is it real or just made up in the minds of men as some like to say?

In fact, the word Trinity doesn't even appear in the Scriptures!

Just a few verses to show you the Trinity is real, one God manifested in three distinct persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

In Mark 1:9-11 we are told, **“It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, ‘You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”**

In Luke 1:35 we are told, **“And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.’”**

In II Corinthians 13:14 we are told, **“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.”**

And look at what Paul says in Galatians 4:6, **“And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’”**

And in I Peter 1:2 Peter also makes this point as he tells us, **“elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ . . .”**

Thus, the word *“Trinity”* may not be in the Bible but the concept flows throughout the pages, from Genesis chapter 1 onward through Revelation!

We don’t have to be ashamed of this doctrine, but we can boldly proclaim it, just don’t use I John 5:7-8 to try to prove it, the Jehovah Witnesses will jump all over that!

There are many other Scriptures, like I have shown you, to prove the Trinity!

Thus, I John 5:7-8 should read, **“For there are three that bear witness: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.”**

I hope that clears that up for you.

VERSES 9-10

Think about what John is saying here, we tend to believe the words of men, but we reject the Words of God.

You know, *“Buy this laundry detergent and all your stains will be removed!”*

Or the car salesman who says, *“This is the best deal I can give you. I’m actually losing money on this one!”*

And there is the famous, *“This is the best movie ever”* until the next one comes out!

Not only that but think about this for a minute.

We can look at the witness of men in a court room. And as we listen to what they are saying, their testimony is accepted as we seek the truth and then render a verdict.

Now, the words of men, the testimony of men, which may be true, pales in comparison to the testimony of God. You see, the testimony of God is greater than any testimony of man!

And yet we trust what man says and we negate what God tells us. Think about this. God tells us, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”**

John 3:16-17, and yet, we don't believe Him!

Like I have said, God's witness is far greater than anything man can say.

Thus, read His Word, believe His Word and act upon His Word, what He is saying.

And remember what Paul said in Romans 8:16-17, **“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”**

And let's think this through. If you reject the Words of God, then you are calling God a liar!

Of this Spurgeon says, *“The great sin of not believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is often spoken of very lightly and in a very trifling spirit, as though it were scarcely any sin at all; yet, according to my text, and, indeed, according to the whole tenor of the Scriptures, unbelief is the giving of God the lie, and what can be worse?”*

You see, it's not that you can't believe, you just refuse to believe the truths of God, His testimony of His Son Jesus Christ that covers all of the Scriptures, not just the New Testament.

And if you continue to reject Jesus, you can reach a place where your heart is so hardened you can no longer believe, Jesus calls it the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

We see this in Mark 3:28-29 where Jesus said, **“Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation.”**

You see, the work of the Holy Spirit among the unsaved is to draw people to Jesus. If you reject that work, you are committing blaspheme against the Holy Spirit.

I don't know where that point is, God does, but don't push it, if you don't know Jesus, you need to before it is too late!

VERSES 11-13

This really is not complicated. If you are in Christ, if you are saved, you will have that abundant life, that everlasting life, that eternal life.

But, apart from Him, if Jesus is not your Lord and Savior, you will not have that abundant life, but your eternity will be in the Lake of Fire enduring the punishment of God for your sins because you refused the pardon for your sins that is only found in Christ!

Now what does John mean when he speaks of **“life”** in I John 5:12?

The Greek word that John does not use here is ***BIOS***, from which we get our English word ***“biology”*** from. It is speaking of physical life.

I am thankful that this does not speak of physical life being eternal because how would you like to live in these physical bodies, with all the problems that arise from them, for eternity!

That would not be appealing to me and I bet it is not going to be appealing to you either.

John uses the Greek word ***ZOE*** here and this speaks of not just a quantity of life but a quality of life!

We can have a quality of life now with the Lord and then, when these bodies go back to the dust of the earth, we will spend eternity with the Lord! Think about that. Never ending life that is complete, it is full of richness, joy, blessing, peace, comfort, and on and on I can go!

Those who die outside of Christ will also spend eternity in the Lake of Fire, but it won't be a blessing to them, not even close!

Listen once again to what I John 5:13 says, it is so important. He wrote, **“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”**

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“I write this to you who believe in (adhere to, trust in, and rely on) the name of the Son of God [in the peculiar services and blessings conferred by Him on men], so that you may know [with settled and absolute knowledge] that you [already] have life, yes, eternal life.”**

The Living Bible says, **“I have written this to you who believe in the Son of God so that you may know you have eternal life.”**

In other words, the last reason John wrote this letter was to let believers know that they can be assured of their salvation, that you can know if you are saved, that you have eternal life, but how?

Are you in the Son, Jesus Christ?

You see, like I have said. If you are not, then you don't have eternal life and if you are, you do have eternal life.

What a great comfort that should be to each of us!

And please understand that I don't believe the devil can cause a Christian to lose their salvation.

Then why do so many Christians struggle with this?

Because he can cause them to lose the *assurance* of their salvation through temptation and sin!

VERSES 14-15

John just spoke of the confidence we have in our salvation, that it is secure in Christ.

Now he speaks of the confidence we can have in our prayers and notice the prayers are not for my will to be done, but His.

In John 14:13-14 Jesus said, **“And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”**

Now some read that and believe by putting the tag *“In the name of Jesus”* at the end of your prayers, God has to answer them.

That is not what Jesus is saying. He is telling us that if we would pray as He prayed, if we pray asking the Father what Jesus would ask for, as His representative, then God will answer that, why?

Because we are praying according to God’s will and many times as we pray God is conforming our will to His!

Now here is a question that many have regarding prayer and why is it even necessary?

If God knows what is best for us, why doesn’t He just do it, why do we even need to pray?

First of all, we are told by Paul in II Corinthians 6:1, **“We then, as workers together with Him . . .”**

You see, God wants us to work with Him and to have a passion for the things that He has a passion for.

Also, when God answers our prayers, we see God working. But, if we didn't pray, we would not necessarily see the hand of God.

We are partnering together with God to see His will accomplished down here as it is in heaven!

VERSES 16-17

I don't know if this is a controversial verse, but many do seem to be confused as to what John is speaking of. And it is difficult because I don't think we can understand the totality of what John is saying here.

But let me see if I can help clear up what John is saying.

Keep in mind that John just spoke of praying in the will of God and now he tells us that if you see a brother or sister in the Lord involved in sin, what should you do?

Call the gossip chain to tell everyone, right?

Wrong!

We should get on our knees and be praying for them so they may be restored and blessed by God. It is not that they can lose their salvation, but the fellowship with God and the brethren will be hindered. Thus, we need to pray for them. That is the will of God, the heart of God for this person.

Now that is pretty straight forward. Here comes the difficulty.

There is a sin that doesn't lead to death and we should pray for those that are involved in that.

But there is a sin that does lead to death and John says praying for them is not going to help, they will die!

I think what John is saying here is that a Christian can be involved in sin and at one point God feels it is better to take him home rather than leaving him here to cause any more harm.

Do we see examples of this in the Bible?

Yes, we do.

In I Corinthians 11:27-30 we are told, **“Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.”**

At these Agape feasts in Corinth, or what we would call potlucks, they were drunk, they gluttoned themselves with food while others got nothing, they took communion in an unworthy manner and thus, Paul tells us that some of them were sick and some had even died because of their behavior.

Thus, Paul says, **“For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.”** I Corinthians 11:31-32.

You see, deal with these things, God will chasten you and that is good when you have gone astray, but to ignore them, there are consequences.

Also, in Acts chapter 5, the story of Ananias and Sapphira and how they lied about their giving to the Lord, and they were struck dead!

God is serious about our behavior but also understand that every Christian's death is not because of some sin in their life.

Then how do we know?

I don't believe that we are to know which sin is to death and which sin is to life, but we are to pray and leave the rest in the hands of God.

Let's face it, we are all sinners that can or have been saved by the grace of God. No sin will keep you out of heaven except, as I have said, the blaspheme of the Holy Spirit.

Did you know that Jeffery Dahmer got saved in prison, this serial killer who mutilated bodies and ate them!

Before he was killed in prison, he shared his faith with others.

I realize that some have a hard time with this but here is what will really blow you away.

Do you know that if Mother Teresa did not ask Jesus to be her Lord and Savior she is not in heaven?

And there are many statements that she has made that indicate that she didn't.

How can that be?

Because one asked Jesus to be Lord and Savior of his life and the other didn't.

One knew he had no good works to save him, the other thought her good works and life of poverty would get her in.

We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus and not by works!

That is the reality, none are too far gone to be saved and none are too good to be saved!

VERSES 18-19

What we see here is that John is repeating his words from I John 3:6, “**Whoever abides in Him does not sin.**”

And there are those who believe that once you get saved you sin no more! That is not too encouraging if it were true.

Remember what we said when we looked at I John 3:6. That the grammar in the original language makes it plain John is speaking of a settled, continued lifestyle of sin.

John is not teaching here the possibility of sinless perfection.

Stott put it like this, and it does clarify it for us. He wrote, “*The present tense in the Greek verb implied habit, continuity, unbroken sequence.*”

Listen to how The Amplified Bible puts I John 5:18, “**We know [absolutely] that anyone born of God does not [deliberately and knowingly] practice committing sin, but the One Who was begotten of God carefully watches over and protects him [Christ’s divine presence within him preserves him against the evil], and the wicked one does not lay hold (get a grip) on him or touch [him].**”

You see, if you are born of God then the nature of God should flow from your life. It is not that you will no longer sin, but you will not be in habitual sin, that lifestyle is no longer pleasing to you.

But if you are born of the flesh then this lifestyle of opposing God will be pleasing to you and you are being pulled away from God by the world.

Now verse 18 the word “**himself**” is more accurately “**Him**” and the point that John is making is that He who has been born of God or Jesus Christ, keeps him, the believer from Satan.

In other words, He is watching over us, He is protecting us!

And here is an interesting point for those that believe Christians can be demon possessed.

That word “**touch**” in verse 18 speaks of grasping not just a superficial touch. Thus, Satan or his demons cannot attach themselves to the one who is born of Him because Jesus is watching over us!

What a great comfort – that greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world and Jesus won’t let these demonic forces attach themselves to our lives!

But we also need to remember that Satan can tempt, manipulate and influence the Christian.

But he doesn’t *own* us anymore now that we belong to Jesus, so he can’t grab us, hold us take us captive and control us as he can the unbeliever!

VERSES 20-21

Remember what we opened up with this evening regarding Jesus. That He is God and John tells us that He is “**the true God.**”

As opposed to the idols, the false gods that are out there, Jesus is the true God!

Also, God has come in the flesh and by His atoning work He has given to us life, we know this and as you read this you see the theme is fellowship with Jesus, with our God and to know Him by experience, as we live out our faith, as we walk with Him!

And John closes this section and this letter by warning them to keep themselves from idols. Seems kind of a strange way to end a letter but let me explain.

First of all, in Psalm 115:4-8 we are told, **“Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell; They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter through their throat. Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them.”**

We may laugh at that today, because most of us don’t worship little statues, but an idol is not just a statue. It is anything that you are worshiping over God. Some people worship their cars, their jobs, money, and-so-on.

The thing I want you to notice is that those who worship these things become like the idols they are worshiping.

Listen to the warning of John and don’t be taken captive by these idols that will steal your time away from the Lord.

John wants us to have this deep and real relationship with God, and the enemy to this fellowship with God is – ***IDOLATRY!***

We can only have a real relationship with the God who is really there!

Idolatry, whether obvious (praying to a statue) or subtle (living for your career or someone other than God) will always choke out a real relationship with God and damage our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Jesus.

Again, we need to understand why John ends this letter by saying, **“keep yourselves from idols.”** This is how we protect our relationship with God.

I pray that the study of this letter has blessed you.

Folks, may we know the truths of God found in the Word of God and not be deceived by the false teachers.

You see, we have the anointing, the Holy Spirit that will teach us all truth.

As I close this evening, let me leave you with these thoughts, why John wrote this letter.

He wrote this letter so that your joy may be full - I John 1:4!

He wrote this letter so that you may not sin - I John 2:1!

He wrote this letter so that you may not be deceived - I John 2:26!

And he wrote this letter so that you may know that you have eternal life, I John 5:13!

The love of God that He has bestowed upon us! May that same love that God has given to us, may we give it to others, share it with them.

May the Lord bless you as you walk with Him!