

## Assurance with God – I John 2:3-6

Last week we looked at John's words of challenge to allow our relationship with God to take precedence over the temptation of giving ourselves over to sin. He challenged us to live in the light as God is in the light. God wants the world to see his thoughts, and is plans. Yet, he wants us to allow those thoughts and plans to guide us into the complete will of God, so that not only will we experience his blessings, but that we would also have salvation, grace and mercy, and by purified or cleansed of the junk we tend to carry around with us.

We saw that situational Christianity is not Christianity at all. It is just man's way of getting what he wants while at the same time claiming that he has the favor of God. Man thinks he has the answer to his own life, while the reality remains that we can only get help when we are willing to admit it. We need to evaluate our lives making sure that we understand our fallen condition, our inability at times to make proper decisions or to take proper action, thus allowing our human nature to take over causing us to fall in sins over and over again.

But Sin is a serious offense against God. It cuts to his heart. I caused him to respond with the life of his own Son, his most prized possession, just so that we can stand in his presence again. Yet, when we allow sin to rule us, we take that precious blood that was shed, and we cheapen it, we take the value away from it. In a sense we look God in the eye, say "thank you" and then turn our backs on him.

John does not want the church to fall into this trap. We have heard over and over again, that John wants us to experience the same type of unconditional love and relationship that he was able to experience while he was with Jesus. Sin can steal that away. It can even bring more judgement to us that we can imagine.

This morning we will be continuing in **I John 2:3-6**. John now wants to tell us how we can have a relationship with Jesus and have the assurance that we do. In fact, he brings up the idea of assurance or "to know" in **I John 3:24**:

*Those who obey God's commandments live in fellowship with him, and he in them. And we know he lives in us because the Holy Spirit lives in us.*

*And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us.*  
**I John 4:13**

*We know we love God's children if we love God and obey his commandments.* **I John 5:2**

Assurance can put our minds at rest, it can bring peace to the soul. John wants the church to have peace and security in their relationship with God.

A psychiatrist by the name of Dr. Carl Jung was quoted in Time magazine as saying, "I have treated many hundreds of patients. Among those who are thirty five years of age, there has not been one whose problem has not been finding a religious outlook on life."

Mankind struggles with who is God, how can I find release from my problems, or who is the answer for my life. Man is searching. But we can have assurance or security in our relationship with God. And John begins to tell us how in **I John 2:3**

*And how can we be sure that we belong to him? By obeying his commandments.*

### **1. Assurance by Obedience**

We need to understand that our love for God is linked to our obedience. When God was giving Moses the Ten Commandments, the commandments to worship the only God and nothing else, states this fact. **Deuteronomy 5:8-10**

*Do not make idols of any kind, whether in the shape of birds or animals or fish. You must never worship or bow down to them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not share your affection with any other god! I do not leave unpunished the sins of those who hate me, but I punish the children for the sins of their parents to the third and fourth generations. But I lavish my love on those who love me and obey my commands, even for a thousand generations.*

God promised to "lavish his love upon us" meaning that he will bring forth and fulfill His love for us.

When King Saul disobeyed God's command to destroy all of the Amalekites – the people, the cattle, the sheep, camels and donkeys – Saul decides to only destroy the people, spare the king's life, and kept select sheep, cattle, and lambs for himself. When confronted by Samuel, Saul tells him that he obeyed God, and in fact kept the cattle, sheep and lambs to be sacrificed to God. Samuel tells Saul in **I Samuel 15:22**

*"What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Obedience is far better than sacrifice. Listening to him is much better than offering the fat of rams.*

No matter how good our intentions may be, obedience to God's words is what is priority. Our obedience is far better than any religious activity or well meaning gesture. Obedience is a matter of the heart. The status of our heart is more important than the act of religious duty. **Proverbs 21:3** says:

*The Lord is more pleased when we do what is just and right than when we give him sacrifices.*

Jesus, when giving his Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 stated the importance of obedience in **Matthew 5:20**:

*“But I warn you – unless you obey God better than the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees do, you can’t enter the Kingdom of Heaven at all!”*

Jesus clarifies this statement even more in **Matthew 7:21** by saying:

*“Not all people who sound religious are really godly. They may refer to me as ‘Lord,’ but they still won’t enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The decisive issue is whether they obey my Father in heaven.”*

It doesn’t matter how good we look on the outside. It matters where our hearts are at and how we respond to God. Are we God-focused or self-focused? **Romans 2:8** says:

*But he will pour out his anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and practice evil deeds.*

Obedience to God is an extension of our heart. It shows our convictions, our priorities, and our motivation. If we obey God then we are submitted, dependent, and rely on him for our strength. If we disobey then we are submitted to ourselves, dependent upon what we want, and rely on ourselves for our strength.

If we obey and submit to God we can have peace or assurance in Christianity. **Philippians 4:6-7** says:

*Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. If you do this, you will experience God’s peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts, and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.*

John continues in **I John 2:4** and says:

*If someone says, “I belong to God,” but doesn’t obey God’s commandments, that person is a liar and does not live in the truth.*

## **2. Assurance by living in the Truth.**

John tells us that a person who does not obey God does not live in truth. Truth here in the Greek is defined as the “revealed truth of God.” A person who does not live in truth is one who has not allowed the message of Jesus to impact or change the way they live. Jesus said in **John 14:6**:

*"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."*

In **John 16:13** it says:

*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not be presenting his own ideas; he will be telling you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.*

By living in the truth we find that it is the application of Jesus' commands to us. It is the application of what has been revealed to us. Even as we read and study Scripture we will find truth's that we must then apply in our own lives. We should constantly be searching out the truth's in Scripture thus challenging us to apply truth, and allowing truth to rule our lives. God said it very clearly at the Mount of Transfiguration in **Luke 9:35**:

*Then a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, my Chosen One. Listen to him."*

Certain religions only choose to acknowledge the Old Testament, some only certain parts of the Old Testament. It is very clear, however, that we must embrace the entire Bible, especially the revelation of God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

To live in the truth means that we apply the words of Christ, and we apply the Scriptures to our lives.

John continues on in **I John 2:5** and says:

*But those who obey God's word really do love him. This is the way to know whether or not we live in him.*

### **3. Assurance by Evaluation**

We should be constantly evaluating our lives to see if we are truly in obedience to God. I think sometimes we get caught in a rut, and we find ourselves living in consistent cycles of familiarity. We live the same way over and over again finding comfort in its manageability. Evaluation takes work and means more changes. But we need it. It helps us to avoid Christian mediocrity. It puts an edge to our walk. It allows us to experience the freshness of God's Spirit.

David understood lifestyle evaluation. In **Psalm 139:23** he tells God:

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*

**Proverbs 20:27** says:

*The Lord's searchlight penetrates the human spirit, exposing every hidden motive.*

The Holy Spirit highlights or confirms our having a relationship with God. **Romans 8:16** says:

*For his Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God's children.*

The presence of the Holy Spirit within us is not confirmation of our relationship with God, but God's relationship with us. And it is this same Spirit that calls out within us, asking us to reconsider, to believe, to obey, or to press even closer to God.

So many people live their lives without any consideration as to what the Spirit is trying to say to us. We must take the time to isolate ourselves, get into our prayer closet and LISTEN.

Finally, John continues in **I John 2:6** and says:

*Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Christ did.*

#### **4. The Assurance by Following Our Model for Life – Jesus Christ**

Jesus made it very clear that the greatest commandment of all is to love the Lord God with all our heart mind soul and strength. He then added that we are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Jesus modeled to us the love of God and the love of man. Jesus in **John 13:14-16** after washing the feet of the disciples said:

*And since I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. How true it is that a servant is not greater than the master. Nor are messengers more important than the one who sends them.*

Jesus served mankind while at the same time served God and held him in priority. Jesus served mankind through his death and resurrection. He served mankind by praying for people. He served mankind by modeling unconditional love. And He served mankind by giving out the Truth of God.

He held God in priority by being obedient to what he was commanded to do, and he had a relationship with God through means of communicating in prayer. In **I Peter 2:21-23** Peter tells the church to follow the steps of Christ.

*Follow in his footsteps. He never sinned, and he never deceived anyone. He did not retaliate when he was insulted. When he suffered, he did not*