

## What Do You Know?

### I John 5:18-21

Last week we look at the fact that we can have boldness or confidence in our prayers. We saw that we can be confident in the fact that God will listen to us and we looked at the example of David and the book of Psalms. We saw that David was a man who needed God, who valued God, and who was honest with God. We saw that if we want to have confidence that God will listen to us that we need to come to God the same way.

We also saw that God listens to the requests that line up with his own will. He knows the danger of giving us something that can destroy us or cause us to take our eyes off of Himself. We can allow God's blessing to become our curse. But sometimes the best place for us is in a place of need. It makes us dependent upon God, it takes our eyes off of our own abilities and puts the reality of God's provision before us.

God knows what he wants for our lives. He has a plan that is specific and precise for each one of us. And when we come before him and ask for something that is part of his plan, he will cause it to take place.

Finally, last week John urged us to pray for each other. That we should pray for those in the church who may find themselves in occasional sin. We should pray for each other's forgiveness. That's why we read in James about the prayers of righteous people having great power and wonderful results. The prayers of the church has the ability to see God move.

But John also talked about those whose sins are leading them to spiritual death. We need to pray for those who are in rebellion against God. We can pray for them, but we shouldn't expect much from them, because they have turned their back on God. But just as God would leave the 99 sheep to look for the one, we should also hope for the return of those who have turned their back on God.

This morning I want to conclude our study of I John and look at the final four verses. **I John 5:18-21:**

*<sup>18</sup>We know that those who have become part of God's family do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot get his hands on them. <sup>19</sup>We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the power and control of the evil one. <sup>20</sup>And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we are in God because we are in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life. <sup>21</sup>Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts.*

John begins by making three statements of confidence by using the words, "we know" which points to a definite understanding. It is amazing how powerful we feel when we have true information about something or someone. I remember an individual who knew a secret about a fellow church member, and although it was wrong for him to hold that

secret until he needed it for retaliation, he told me the secret with a sense of power and authority over that individual. Although this is the negative aspect of having truth, the opposite can be said.

Try talking to some people with many college degrees. Some of them have a sense of arrogance because they feel that their knowledge gives them more understanding and superiority. But the reality is that truth does empower us. The truth's about God does give us a sense comfort or even a boldness in our approach to life.

John this morning is telling us that we can find comfort and boldness in three things this morning as he closes his letter of I John. He states first that those who are a part of God's family do not habitually sin, but allow God to hold them and protect them from Satan.

### **1. We know we have protection**

How do we know if we are child of God or not? We simply need to look at our own lives. The writer of Hebrews put it in a word picture for us and said in **Hebrews 6:7-8**:

*<sup>7</sup>When the ground soaks up the rain that falls on it and bears a good crop for the farmer, it has the blessing of God. <sup>8</sup>But if a field bears thistles and thorns, it is useless. The farmer will condemn that field and burn it.*

What kind of fruit do you see being produced in your life today? What kind of character changes can you identify that have taken place over the last number of weeks? If God is in you and you are allowing God full access to your lives you will see a change.

But obviously this morning we in no way can be sinless simply because we are trapped in these human bodies the crave things beyond what God has for us. Sin will always be an area that we will struggle with. Don't let anyone tell you this morning that just because you struggle with sin, you lack spiritual maturity or that you lack faith in God. But as children of God we make every effort to avoid falling into sin. Jude wrote in **Jude 21**:

*<sup>21</sup>Live in such a way that God's love can bless you as you wait for the eternal life that our Lord Jesus Christ in his mercy is going to give you.*

Notice that God grants us eternal life because of his mercy. That means there is no way that we can earn it simply on our own good behavior. This points to the fact that there is no way that we can be completely sinless. We are dependant upon God's mercy. In **Ephesians 2:4-5** we read:

*<sup>4</sup>But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so very much, <sup>5</sup>that even while we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's special favor that you have been saved!)*

The Apostle Paul understood that his coming to Jesus Christ was a result of mercy. He said in **Galatians 1:15**:

*<sup>15</sup>But then something happened! For it pleased God in his kindness to choose me and call me, even before I was born! What undeserved mercy!*

Think about your own life. Think of the condition you were in before Jesus was even a part of your life. Can you acknowledge this morning that God has shown you mercy. Even today, we lack the ability to earn our salvation, and God is still showing mercy.

God could have left us in the dark and left us for the Satan to devour us and destroy us, but that is why John then goes on to say in I John 5:18 that God Son hold us securely so that Satan can't harm us or touch us. The KJV uses the word touch which comes from a Greek word which means to touch, or to fasten to, or to even set on fire.

Satan would like nothing more than to get a hold of us, or to fasten himself to us like we see so often on TV as a demon sits on a persons shoulder. But ultimately Satan would love to have us join him in the lake of fire. But **Colossians 1:13-14** tells us:

*<sup>13</sup>For he has rescued us from the one who rules in the kingdom of darkness, and he has brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son. <sup>14</sup>God has purchased our freedom with his blood and has forgiven all our sins.*

Today we have been freed from Satan's control in our lives. So many people today are controlled by Satan. They give into extreme circumstances. They go through addictions, irresponsible ways of living, giving into many lies, living for themselves no matter what the cost. But this morning for those of us who produce fruit in our lives, and whose ultimate desire is to please God, we can find protection and eternal life through God's mercy. God will not ignore a pleading heart, a searching heart, and a committed heart.

John continues on in verse 19 and states the reality that a person is either a child of God or they are being-controlled by Satan.

## **2. We know who has control**

It is so unfortunate this morning that people don't even realize that they are being manipulated. Have you ever wondered why it seems like the world in general makes our lives difficult as Christians. We are bombarded by images of violence, sex, or selfish behavior. Mankind in their arrogance try to figure out through science the meaning and origin of life. They become more reliant on their knowledge than on the One who gives them the ability to think.

Think about how people look at and treat the Christians today. They call them narrow minded, intolerant, unable to speak for themselves, weak minded. As we live each day there is the opposition that constantly comes against us. Why? Because people either belong to, and obey God, or they live under Satan's control. **Ephesians 6:12** tells us:

*<sup>12</sup>For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil*

*rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms.*

*<sup>4</sup>Satan, the god of this evil world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe, so they are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News that is shining upon them. They don't understand the message we preach about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. II Corinthians 4:4*

We live in the midst of people who are being influenced by Satan himself. That is why we will always clash with the world.

But thank God this morning, we don't have to be manipulated by evil forces anymore. They use to have their way with us, but today God has freed us from this because of his mercy and because we are willing to obey God.

That's why John continues on in our text this morning and states that we know the true God. We are not deceived.

### **3. We know the true God**

Today we know the truth. We know the reality of who God is, we know who is influencing this world, and we know that we have hope and freedom because of what Jesus has done for us. Jesus said in **John 14:6-7**:

*<sup>6</sup>Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup>If you had known who I am, then you would have known who my Father is. From now on you know him and have seen him!"*

*<sup>6</sup> "This is what the LORD, Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty, says: I am the First and the Last; there is no other God. Isaiah 44:6*

*<sup>9</sup> For in Christ the fullness of God lives in a human body. Colossians 2:9*

Do we realize today that we follow the only true God. God revealed himself to us for our own sake. Today, John is telling us to have confidence in this fact. Have you ever wondered "what if Jesus was never real, and another religion was the true way to God?" I have found myself wondering at times. I know many of us here have thought the same, but may be afraid to admit it. John tells us not to let these thoughts distract us from the truth.

Finally, this morning John ends his letter with the warning, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts.

*<sup>21</sup> Dear children, keep yourselves from idols. I John 5:21 NIV*

#### **4. Beware of things that take God's place**

Today there are many things that can stand between us and God. The pursuance of material things, fame, popularity can cause us to rely more on ourselves or to seek our wills before God's. But I think one of the greatest things that can turn our hearts this morning is doubt. We can let doubt control our lives, which will eventually cause us to compromise our relationship with God and begin to seek other answers.

John is telling us this morning to remain confident that we have found the true answer to life. He tells us to keep ourselves from idols. The word keep here can be defined as "to separate or depart from.", while the term idols can be defined as "a form, appearance, shape, or fashion of worship." We can replace God with so many different things, in fact John has been warning us all through this letter about the dangers of false teachers, of loving this world, of allowing fear to cause us to live in denial, or of finding ourselves tricked and led astray.

#### **Conclusion**

Today, John sums everything up by telling us to remain confident in our relationship with God. Because we love God and strive to obey what he has given us in his word, he will protect us. Satan cannot touch us, he cannot attach himself to us, and he will not have the chance to set us on fire. Instead because of his Mercy Jesus grants us eternal life. Second, John told us that we can be confident in the fact that those who obey God are his children, while those who choose to ignore and rebel against God are definitely influenced by an unseen power. They are influenced by Satan himself. They embrace lies and deception and yet some people don't realize it. They are being played like puppets on a string. And in the end their reward will be hell itself.

Third, John has told us this morning to be confident in the fact that the God we serve is the only true and living God. We are not simply serving a myth as some would have us believe. But we are serving the true God who has sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to die and offer forgiveness to us. All we need to do is stand firm in our choice and not allow anything to get in the way. That we would not allow anything to stand in the way between us and God. No material object, no selfish need for recognition, no need for fame or fortune, or success and comfort.

My prayer is that we be a church that lets nothing stand in our way of loving God, reaching people, and experiencing hope.