

## 1 John 5:13-18 “The Certainty of Knowing Jesus” Part 1

8.16.17

One of the reasons we study the Bible book by book and verse by verse is for context. We saw this Sunday with the passage in Matthew 18 about the WANDERING SHEEP, versus the LOST SHEEP. As we looked specifically at Matthew 18 and the context of that entire chapter, we saw the sheep in question professed to be a believer, versus the sheep in Luke 15 was without question NOT a believer. However, if you “cherry pick” Scripture and pull a verse out of context, you can end up making a mistake in interpreting it.

Tonight is no different. Tonight we’re going to study one of the most difficult verses in the Bible. It’s verse 16 of the passage we’re going to read in a moment. However, in my mind, it’s not that difficult if we let Scripture interpret Scripture, but when we let our ideas and what we’ve been told by someone (without Scriptural evidence to back up that claim or claims), we can get into trouble.

Now, let me also say this...we’ve been studying 1 John for many weeks and again...we’ll have just one more message after tonight to complete the book and then we’ll move to 2 John, 3 John, Jude and then by the time we get to the first of the year, we’ll be studying the Book of the Revelation. It’s been since 2009 since I taught it, but in 2018 we’ll begin again!

Now, back to our study of 1 John and our text for tonight...we’ve finally arrived to the them verse of this epistle...verse 13 of chapter 5. Look at it with me.

### **1 John 5:13**

<sup>13</sup>I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

John wants to be certain that the Christians in Asia understand the confidence they can have in their salvation. Why? Because false teachers have been spreading lies about how to be saved. They have tried to muddy the waters and draw people to themselves by saying Jesus wasn’t fully divine. These false teachers were called Gnostics. They taught a religious “mysticism” that said you could only know salvation based on the divine light in your own soul.

There is nothing new under the sun. This understanding is known as the “Believe in yourself” mantra. The Gnostics said you could know truth through yourself and through the light in the human soul, not through repentance of sin and faith in Jesus’ death and resurrection. These Gnostics published false writings called the “Gospel of Thomas,” the “Gospel of Judas” and even the “Gospel of Mary Magdalene.” You may remember the 2006 movie called:



The Da Vinci Code, which was based entirely on these false gospels. And so, the believers who have been scattered into Asia are not certain about their salvation. Remember **where** these Christians are? See the map...



So, these believers were running for their lives under the persecution of the Roman tyrant, Nero and know they are being confused by these false teachers about whether or not they can be certain of their salvation.

Now let's look at the rest of the text and flow into this interesting verse (16).

### **1 John 5:14-18**

<sup>14</sup> And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. <sup>15</sup> And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him. <sup>16</sup> If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. <sup>17</sup> All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death. <sup>18</sup> We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

Now, it's this flow of chapter 5 and the context of the entire epistle that will help us to understand this complicated verse #16. Think with me: What have we been talking about during this entire epistle? CONFIDENCE...assurance...security. And we saw last time we were together that the authority we have in our confidence comes from God and His testimony in Jesus' baptism, death on the cross and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we can and SHOULD have confidence in our salvation, because God says we can.

We can have so much confidence, that John tells us we can come to God in confidence. See verses 14 and 15 again.

### **1 John 5:14-15**

<sup>14</sup> And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. <sup>15</sup> And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

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Let me ask you something. Is it God's will that you be saved? Answer is: YES. Okay, so, if you ask God to save you, will He? Answer is: YES. Now, that confidence in our salvation extends beyond our salvation in that we can also have confidence in that whatever we ask, **if it's His will**, He hears us and it will be done. Now listen, if you sincerely and genuinely ask Jesus Christ to forgive you of your sins, you can be confident that you are saved and you can also have confidence when you pray and ask anything in His will that it will be done as well. But, this is not some: "name it and claim it" deal.

Some people believe you can just pray for something (name it and claim it) and you'll get it. However, we must pray according to God's will and if it's God's will...THEN we'll have what we ask. In other words, to pray "in His will" we pray wanting what's best for His kingdom. We don't pray selfishly or with an intent to be greedy. **We pray that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.** No! It's not, "I pray for \$10 million because that will further His kingdom." The question is have you honored His kingdom with the \$10 you have? Getting another \$9,990,000 is not likely to change your attitude toward God.

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You say, "Pastor Kevin, how do we know if what we're asking for is actually in God's will?" Well, we need to go to Scripture and see what we can know about that which we're praying about. Let me put it to you this way: **I can promise you it won't be God's will if it goes against the teaching of His Word.** It's amazing in that I have had people, for instance, who have told me that God told them it's okay to live with their boyfriend outside of marriage. They said they prayed about it and that's what they heard from God and that's His will for their life. Hey Church...is that true? No! He is not going to tell you to anything outside of what His divinely inspired word teaches.

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Church, can I encourage you tonight? God is not playing hide and seek with His will. He wants you to know His will, **but He wants you to know Him more.** Let's not be guilty of going to God like He's some sort of cosmic blessing machine. We should go to Him to know Him and as a by-product of that relationship, we'll come to know and understand what our Heavenly Father wants. Let me put it to you this way: as a father, *I want my kids to talk to me and have a relationship with me...NOT just come to me asking for money or stuff.* We should seek to know God and when we do, we'll come to know His will.

Here's the plain and simple truth: Most of the time in our lives, we're not going to have something spelled out in Scripture that says, "buy that piece of land" or "go to that school" or "go out with that guy." But, we do have principles in Scripture to guide us and we have the Holy Spirit to teach us and show us the way to go. And we can be confident when we pray, because we ARE PRAYING TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

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## **Hebrew 4:16**

<sup>16</sup> Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

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**Now, let's look now at verses 16-18.** These are the really tough verses. And I'll say this...it's amazing how verses 16-18 are going to tie into what we're going to be seeing on Sunday in our study of Matthew chapter 18. Sunday we'll see where Jesus tells us that if we see our brother living in sin we're to go to him and show him his sin...help him. We're going to see how Jesus describes the responsibility of the Church to rescue that brother or sister and here in 1 John 5, we'll see the same thing. **Look at verse 16.**

## **1 John 5:16**

<sup>16</sup> If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. <sup>17</sup> All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

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Now, we need to ask ourselves, “What is this sin that leads to death?” What is John talking about? Now remember, we are talking about having confidence that we are born again. These believers have been rocked to the core of their foundation by these false teachers, who have led them astray in their understanding of salvation through Christ alone...not some INNER LIGHT in themselves.

It seems that the Apostle John is describing the difference between a true believer and a false believer. John says, “If you see your brother in a sin, go ahead and pray for him and ask the Lord to help him and to give him life...that's what we should do.” But, John continues, “But, there is a sin that leads to death and you're in essence...wasting your time if you pray for that person. It's too late. There's no need to even pray about that.”

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So, what is this, “Sin that leads to death?” The Greek word for death is THANATOS and it can mean “physical death or spiritual death,” depending on the context. The context here is clear. This is a death that is unrecoverable and is **spiritual death** that leads to an eternity in Hell. Here's the word as it's used in this verse...

**Death** (Greek: Thanatos):

1. the misery of the soul arising from sin, which begins on earth but lasts and increases after the death of the body in hell  
2. the miserable state of the wicked dead in hell

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So, this is spiritual death. This is death that leads to eternity in Hell. So, how does a person commit that sin and what is that sin?

Now, let me stop here for a moment so I can tell you this: I've read and read and read many different opinions, viewpoints and commentaries on this verse and I'm telling you that almost NO TWO AGREE. But, I'll tell you this. SCRIPTURE INTERPRETS SCRIPTURE and I believe we can gain understanding from looking at other passages of Scripture.

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Now, what have we studied in our study of Matthew's Gospel about the sin that leads to death? What is that sin? Do you remember?

As you turn back there, be reminded that Jesus has just healed a demon-possessed man and the Pharisees have the audacity to say that Jesus cast out the demon by way of Satan. Jesus, said, "THAT'S IT! You've gone and done it now. You have actually blasphemed the power of the Holy Spirit working through me! That's it! You have committed the sin that leads to death." Church what do we often hear that sin called? The UNPARDONABLE SIN. Watch it...

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### **Matthew 12:31-32**

<sup>31</sup> Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. <sup>32</sup> And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

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You see, the Pharisees were denying the power of the work of the Holy Spirit in the miracles being performed by Jesus and attributing them to Satan. And so Jesus in essence said, "You can never be forgiven. I can't do anything more to convince you. You have rejected the power of the Holy Spirit acting through my life to bear witness and evidence that I am the Son of God. You've rejected that and therefore, you can't be saved." The sin that leads to spiritual death is the unpardonable sin and that sin is ONE TOO MANY TIMES DENYING THE POWER OR THE PURSUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO DRAW **A LOST PERSON TO CHRIST**.

**Now let's return (with that understanding) to 1 John 5:16. Look at the verse again...and let's look at it in the light of "scripture interprets scripture" and the fact that the unpardonable sin or "sin unto death" is a lost person who is rejecting Jesus by pushing away the Holy Spirit.**

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### **1 John 5:16**

<sup>16</sup> If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that.

Okay, but here comes the issue. I've heard preachers teach that **Christians** can actually commit enough sins that God gets fed up and just snatches them off the earth before they can do any more damage. I've heard that preached and taught have you? Some say that Christians can fall away from God and commit enough sins that God says that they're a stumbling block so He just takes them off the earth. I don't see that at all here! And here's why. **Look at verse 18.**

### **1 John 5:18**

<sup>18</sup> We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

**Yet, there are preachers and commentators and scholars who use two examples** in Scripture to say that God killed Christians who committed a "sin unto death." **Turn to Acts chapter 5 and I'll show you two people:** Ananias and Sapphira.

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Now as you are turning let me set the scene...the first church has just been established (we're right after Pentecost) and the members are selling property and bringing the proceeds to the Apostles to help those in the church who are in need. And what did A&S do? They sold a piece of land and brought the money to the Apostles, but they said they brought 100% of the proceeds from the sale, but they actually didn't. They lied. They only brought a portion of it. What happened?

Ananias comes in first and lies and he falls over dead in front of the Apostle Peter and the young men of the church come and carry him out...



Then Sapphira comes in and she doesn't know that her husband is dead... Watch...

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### **Acts 5:1-11**

<sup>1</sup> But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, <sup>2</sup> and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. <sup>3</sup> But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? <sup>4</sup> While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." <sup>5</sup> When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. <sup>6</sup> The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

<sup>7</sup> After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. <sup>8</sup> And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." <sup>9</sup> But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." <sup>10</sup> Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. <sup>11</sup> And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

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She tested the SPIRIT. Who is that? That's the Holy Spirit, of course. The question is: Did God remove them because they were living in sin as BELIEVERS or did they commit the unpardonable sin, by not listening to the Holy Spirit who was telling them, "Don't do this...it's sin?" Well, the text seems to lean toward these two being lost... Peter said to Ananias "Satan has filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit..." While we can't say for sure A&S were "false" believers, I'm more inclined to believe they were. What I do know is this struck great fear in the young, fledgling church in Jerusalem because of the dishonesty of this couple.

I have a hard time buying that they were believers and God took them off the earth because they lied...because folks, if that gets a Christian taken off this earth, then none of use would be here tonight.

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There's another place in Scripture that some point to and say that God took the people off the earth because they had sinned too much. This happened in Corinth when the church was partaking in the Lord's Supper. Do you remember that in:

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### **1 Corinthians 11:28-30**

<sup>28</sup> Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup> For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup> That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.

Folks, I'll tell you something...I don't believe those folks were actually believers. I believe they were fakes who had come into the church to get a free meal and to get drunk (because some were getting drunk). These people were desecrating the church and God got rid of them. I believe the Holy Spirit was trying to convict these people and they refused to listen and God took them off the earth. I don't believe these people were born again (that's my opinion). They were fakes.

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### **Church, let me tell you what God wants in His church? Holiness. Peter said it this way:**

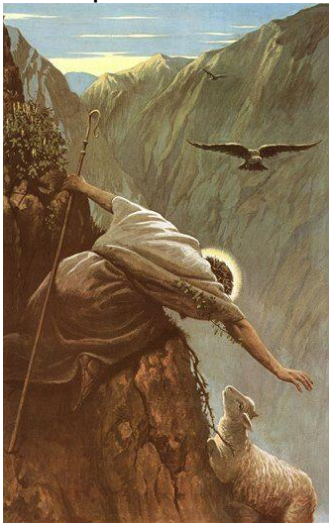
(We'll talk more about this on Sunday.)

### **1 Peter 1:14-15**

<sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, <sup>15</sup> but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, <sup>16</sup> since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

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Let me tell you this... Paul said that God will complete the work of salvation that He started in us. Now, I'm the first to admit that I'm not perfect, but I believe God's Spirit is not going to let me stray to the point that I can't be brought back. I believe just like the picture from Sunday...



Jesus is going to come and get me and I believe I'll return. This is the Doctrine of Perseverance. I will endure to the end.

Did Peter endure to the end? Did he make mistakes? Yes, but Jesus restored him.

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Go back quickly to the beginning of this chapter and be reminded of this:

## **1 John 5:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. <sup>2</sup> By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. <sup>3</sup> For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. <sup>4</sup> For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

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The word overcome is that word:

### **Nikaō**

1. to conquer
  2. to be victorious
  3. of Christians, that hold fast their faith even unto death against the power of their foes
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This is the Doctrine of Perseverance and runs through 1 John and the entire NT and Jesus completes this teaching in the Book of the Revelation when He is speaking to the seven churches of Asia. He says almost the exact same thing to all 7 churches. I'll just show you one of them... the first one...Ephesus...

### **Revelation 2:7**

<sup>7</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

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Do you know the Greek word for “conquers?” NIKAO. Jesus said it to all seven churches: “to the one who conquers...” That means: we win! We overcome! We cross the finish line! We endure to the end! We finish the race, like Paul. We return like David did, like Solomon did, like Peter did!