

BLESSED ASSURANCE

1 John 5:13-21

Read 1 John 5:13-21

Pray

Final Words

The closing words of John's letter seem to me to be very pastoral –

-Here is a wise, seasoned and mature apostle giving his full attention to encouraging and building up a small flock of believers.

It sounds like the kinds of things a father might say to his son before he leaves for college.

-Or how a woman might counsel a younger woman she's mentoring in the faith.

I believe it makes for us a good discipleship curriculum –

-This is good for pastors who are equipping the church fellowship

-Or counselors who are doing biblical counseling

-Or a teacher mentoring a disciple

-Or a parent rearing their son or daughter...

A Plan for Discipleship

1 – Lead them to full assurance – v. 13

-v. 13 – “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.”

-Knowing that you have eternal life is the assurance that God wants you to have.

-That's why He had John write this letter!

-How do you get this assurance?

-Doctrinal test – What do you confess to be true about Jesus Christ?

-Jesus is the Christ and the Christ is Jesus –

-You must believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

-Moral test – Do you want to obey the commandments of God?

-Love test – Do you love God and others?

-The essence of this assurance is this –

-You have confessed Jesus Christ as Savior and there is evidence of His life in you!

-Not – “Don't worry Johnny, you said the prayer in Sunday School.”!!!

-When someone joins our church and gives a testimony we ask them three questions:

-What do you believe about Jesus?

-How did you come to believe this?

-What is the evidence in your life that you believe this?

-There is a danger of false converts –

- Jesus spoke of this...
- But we don't want to lose a balance perspective that God does want you to have assurance!

2 – Remind them of what we know

- Notice the number of times John says “we know” –
 - v. 15 – “We know...and we know”
 - v. 18 – “We know”
 - v. 19 – “We know”
 - v. 20 – “And we know...so that we may know”
- First, notice the collective and corporate aspect of “**we** know” –
 - There is a collective body of truth that makes up the Christian faith.
 - The Christian faith is inward – what we know and trust to be true
 - And it is outward – what we confess to be true.
 - This truth is from God and to us – and it becomes our confession because we confess to be true what we know to be true.
- The truth of the Christian faith is ours – for “we know”!
 - All the truth of the Christian faith belongs to us – it's ours to claim, study, delight in and apply.
 - Peter says it so well in his second letter – “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature.” (2 Peter 1:3-4)
 - And what is true of the church corporately is true for you individually – The Christian faith is yours to claim, study, delight in and apply!
- Discipleship in the church is when we teach and remind and exhort and encourage one another to know what we know!
 - You might say – “I'm a new Christian and I don't know nothing!”
 - Here's the blessing – Everything you need to know is yours to know – and the church family is here to help you know it!
- Two more thoughts about “we know” –
 - “We know” show how there is no daylight between the church and the Christian faith.
 - They are not the same but “we” (the church) “know” (the faith).
 - We know what we know because of the Bible...
 - We don't find what we know written in the sky...

3 – Teach them to pray

-One morning after Jesus had finished praying, one of his disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray as John taught his disciples." (Luke 11:1)

-A spiritual leader teaching his disciples to pray has always been an essential part of discipleship.

-John the Baptizer taught his disciples –

-Jesus taught his disciples –

-Now, John the Apostle is writing to Christians and instructing them about prayer...

-So in your discipling, mentoring and parenting relationships, teach your disciples to pray – it is fundamental to their relationship with God!

-The flow of the text supports this, too –

-John has just established you and your relationship to God –

-You know that you have eternal life – that you belong to God.

-Now, of first priority, pray.

-Look at the end of verse 13 – "...that you may know that you have eternal life" then verse 14 – "And this is the confidence that we have toward hi, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us."

-So, our confidence that we belong to Him is immediately followed with confidence to come before Him in prayer.

-And this tells us a great deal about God's motive for establishing a relationship with us through Christ – that we might talk to Him – that we might communion with Him – that we might have a real relationship with Him.

(A Gospel Primer – p. 35)

-So, according to John, we know this –

-Because we belong to God –

-We confidently come before Him in prayer –

-To make our requests according to His will –

-That is such an important part of this – We submit our will to God's will because by faith, we trust that He knows best.

-This then produces a third confidence – He will answer – v. 15 – "...we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him."

-Our three confidences –

-1) We belong to Him 2) We can come before Him in prayer 3) He will answer according to His will.

-A word about verses 16 and 17 and the "sin unto death" –

-There are a lot of ideas as to the interpretation of these two verses and the discussion usually centers around two questions –

-What is the "sin unto death"?

- Who can commit it?
- Read verses 16 and 17

-We are talking here about intercessory prayer for believers – The subject here is Christians praying for Christians –

- As verse 16 says – “If anyone sees a brother committing a sin...he shall ask...”
- As Christians we have the opportunity and responsibility to pray for one another – specifically for one another’s sanctification.
- The issue here is not that the brother is sick and needs healing...
- The issue here is not that the brother wants a promotion at work so we pray...
- This issue here is not that the brother is taking a trip so we pray for safety...
- We have become aware of a brother who is trapped in sin – and he needs delivered from it so we are praying about that!
- The verb tense “committing” gives the clear indication that this brother is in a pattern of sin.

-It is a matter of life and death but what kind of life and death? Physical or Eternal?

-I believe, from the context, we are talking about eternal/spiritual life or death and not physical –

- The only way “life” has been used is eternal life or the life of the Son. (vs. 11-13)
- The sins a believers commits are not “leading to death” because the death they deserve for those sins has already been paid – by Christ.
- So you see your brother sinning (not leading to death because the death required has been paid) and God will answer and give life.
- God gives life in the sense that the life that the brother has (the life of the Son) will be experienced in a greater, deeper, more life changing way.

-v. 16 – “...There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that.”

- All sin that is not paid for leads to death – but in the context, it seems that the sin that leads to death is the sin of unbelief.
- The previous text told us that to reject God’s witnesses about Jesus being the Son of God is to call God a liar – v. 10
- To remain in unbelief is to assault the very character of God.
- Unbelief is the sin that leads to eternal death.
- Is this like the “unforgivable sin”?

4 – Ground them in Christ

5 – Help them fight sin