

Real Disciples (11)- That You May Know

(1 John 5:13-17)

I. Introduction

- A. Someone told me they like it when I use illustrations about Lynn and myself
 - 1. That's probably because I usually end up looking goofy in those stories
 - 2. I decided Lynn and I were deeply in love a lot sooner than Lynn did (*years*)
 - a. So our dating was me trying to show her I was right (*nerve-wracking*).
 - b. I was on my best behavior, trying hard to say and do only the right thing.
 - 1) I wrote poetry, gave gifts, opened doors, waited outside her dorm.
 - 2) I always felt a bit depressed if we argued—afraid I'd blown it.
 - c. I was trying to win her love, but for the longest time never felt secure.
 - 3. Well, I finally wore her down; we've been going strong for 31 years.
 - a. Everything isn't perfect because I'm not perfect, but I'm not insecure
 - b. But I don't write poetry or wait outside her dorm— I do wash the dishes.
 - 1) I'm not trying to win or deserve her love; I'm secure in relationship.
 - 2) So the danger now is not insecurity... but rather presumptuousness.
 - c. If I presume her love, then I might act like I don't value relationship.
- B. Enough about me! Actually I'm talking about our relationship with God.
 - 1. Some Christians seem to feel they must continue to deserve God's love.
 - a. No matter how long they've believed, they doubt God accepts them.
 - 1) Every act of service/obedience is done so that God will save them.
 - 2) Every mistake carries with it the fear that God will reject them.
 - b. Every sin means they are lost; they never feel secure in God's love.
 - c. They can't deserve God love, but they keep trying to do precisely that.
 - 2. Other Christians are so secure that they do seem to presume on God's love.
 - a. They are every Sunday— so they continually tell God they love Him.
 - b. But little else of their actions lets God know they value the relationship.
 - 1) How they spend time-talent-money doesn't show they value God.
 - 2) They don't share their faith or mediate God's grace to others.
 - c. They assume God's love, but they do not actively seek to return it.

- C. Christians have for centuries argue over the issue of our security in salvation
 - 1. The discussion is framed by “*perseverance*” or “*once-saved-always-saved*”
 - a. Can we know that we are saved? Do we have security in salvation?
 - b. Can a believer repudiate their relationship with God and be lost?
 - 2. **1 John** ends with John giving us a word about confidence in salvation.
 - a. He says that he writes so that we may know that we have eternal life
 - 1) But he also ends his book writing about sin that leads to death
 - 2) This is a sin so bad disciples aren’t even to pray for those guilty.
 - 3. Let’s end our study of **1 John** by looking at what he says on security

II. That You May Know (Reading: **1 John 5:13-17**)

- A. John’s purpose in writing, “*That you may know that you have eternal life*” (**13**)
 - 1. KJV adds at the end, “*that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God*”
 - a. That reflects a late, unreliable manuscript; it was not in the original
 - b. This scribal addition likely reflects **John 20:31**, the purpose of gospel
These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God...
 - c. **Point:** John’s gospel was to unbelievers; epistles was written to believers
 - 2. Remember the context of the false teachers causing problems in church
 - a. Their philosophic ramblings caused disciples to wonder about the gospel
 - 1) Did they really KNOW that Jesus came in the flesh and died on cross
 - 2) Did they really need to obey commandments and love each other.
 - b. John is writing to believers to assure them that they have eternal life
- B. How can they know they have eternal life? Relationship with God (**5:14-15**)
 - 1. John has stressed 3 tests of true discipleship— faith, love and obedience
 - a. We mentioned last week that we tend to see salvation as **transaction**
 - 1) We are saved when we do the right steps or repeat right formula.
 - 2) We may disagree on the steps or formula, but agree there is one!
 - b. But for John, salvation is relational—living in faith, love and obedience
 - 1) The false teachers were false because they did not live in these.
 - 2) Conversely, true disciples are true disciples because of these three.
 - c. We know we have eternal life because it’s relationship—faith, love, obey

2. Here this relationship is seen in prayer—*asking and receiving from God*
 - a. We are confident in salvation because God hears our prayer. *Relationship*
 - b. John assumes that our prayers “*ask anything according to his will*” (**5:14**)
 - 1) Does that mean that I know what God wants before I ask him?
 - 2) Jesus in Gethsemane asked something that was not God will!
 - 3) But he asked in a way that submitted to God, “*Not what I want...*”
 - c. John earlier had used similar language of prayer and confidence (**3:21-22**)

²¹ *Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God* ²² *and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.*
 3. The emphasis on prayer isn’t WHAT we ask for, but HOW we ask it!
 - a. We may not know what to pray or totally scramble the words (**Rom 8:26**)

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.
 - b. We pray “*according to his will*” as we live that way— by God’s will
 - c. Prayer becomes the result of that relationship lived with God.
- C. Just as we get comfortable with security, John throws a curve (**1 John 5:16**)
- If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that.*
1. John is talking about intercessory prayer—we are to pray for each other
 - a. He has in mind spiritual intercession, and not just “*health concerns.*”
 - b. God uses our prayer for the spiritual struggles of others to give life
 - c. But not for sin that leads to death—don’t pray for such “*mortal sin*”
 2. So he moves from security in salvation to unforgivable sin? *What is this?*
 - a. Some see this referring to blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (**Matt 12:31**)
 - 1) The Pharisees attribute Jesus’ miracle to Satanic power (*Beelzebub*)
 - 2) Would that not have been Paul’s explanation for Jesus? (**1 Tim 1:13**)

Though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy
 - b. Others see this as particularly bad sin— like murder (*again Paul’s example*)
 - c. Others suggest “*willful sin*” of **Psalm 19:13**. (“*I’ll get forgiveness later*”)
 - d. Olbricht suggests we understand this sin within the context of 1 John
 - 1) False teachers left church, deny Christ, did not love other disciples
 - 2) In doing so, they had in essence tally left any relationship to God
 - 3) Sin unto death is a willful and deliberate turning away from God.

III. Conclusion

- A. John settles the issue on eternal security—we can know that we are saved
 - 1. How do we know? We believe in Jesus, love others and seek to obey God
 - 2. But does that answer the question? *How can we know we've done enough?*
 - a. That's easy! You can know that you haven't done enough and never will
 - b. Two of Jesus' parables teach two very important extreme truths—
 - 1) Workers in the field for an hour receive same reward (**Matt 20:12**)
 - 2) Slaves who do everything perfectly are still just slaves (**Lk 17:10**)
 - 3. John assures his readers they won't accidentally lose their salvation
 - a. There is not some key issue or doctrine that will cause them to miss out
 - b. That was the false teachers—need more than faith, love and obedience.
- B. So does this mean that “once-saved-always-saved?” Yes! No! Maybe!
 - 1. YES! It is true that no one who has a relationship with God can be lost!
 - a. Jesus, “*No one can snatch them...*” Paul, “*Nothing can separate us...*”
 - b. If we continue to seek to believe, love and obey—our sin isn't to death
 - c. Christian, you don't have to worry you'll miss heaven on technicality!
 - 2. NO! One who has a relationship with God can repudiate that relationship
 - a. That's the sin unto death (**1 Jn 5:16**). Who commits it? “*Brother*”
 - b. We can decide that living in a faith-love-obey relationship is not for us.
 - c. How deadly to believe that once I'm saved, I can live any way I choose!
 - 3. MAYBE! John says those who went out were never part! (**1 John 2:19**)
They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.
 - a. Usual response to case studies of apostasy—“*they weren't really saved*”
 - b. We are really asking two questions when it comes to our salvation--
 - 1) “*Am I saved right now?*” and “*Will I be saved in heaven then?*”
 - 2) To a God who is not limited by time, those are really same question!
- C. John has some more things to say—they'll come up in small group lesson
 - 1. We end our study where we began—how do you tell a real disciple?
 - 2. John list is short—believe, love, obey. *But that takes a lifetime to live!*