

Review

John has given us some really tough stuff to consider as we've gone through his five-chapter letter. This morning, we come to the end of our study, as John is coming to the end of his letter.

In closing, he rapid-fires a number of things at us, the first being...

5:13 So That You Who Believe May Know

Many people believe in the name of the Son of God. But not everybody can be certain they have eternal life.

John says he has written these things so that we who believe may know. What things? The things that he's been repeating in his letter:

- Some say they have fellowship with God, but walk in darkness. They don't have fellowship with God. (1John 1:5-7)
- Some say they are saved, but also claim that they have no sin. They lie and present God as a liar. (1John 1:8-10)
- Some say they know God, but don't keep His commandments. The truth isn't in them. (1John 2:3-6)
- Some say they love God, but hate their brother. They don't love God. (1John 2:9-11; 3:10; 3:14; 3:24; 4:8; 4:20-21; etc.)
- Some say they teach Christianity, but deny the biblical Jesus. They are false teachers. (1John 2:18-23; 4:1-3)
- Some say they abide in Christ, but continue in sin. They don't know Him. (1John 3:6-10)

So, a lot of people say they believe. But many do not truly know that they have eternal life. That's why John has written us this letter: so that we can make sure we're really in the faith, knowing that we have eternal life.

5:14-15 He Hears Us

There are some things in the Bible that even faithful people have trouble believing. And when we read that we'll get whatever we ask, it just seems a little too far-fetched. But what we need to understand is that there is a qualifier here: "if we ask anything ACCORDING TO HIS WILL."

Jesus said something very similar in John 14...

John 14:13-14 "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it."

The clarifier there is "in My name," which is actually the same qualifier as "according to His will." You see, when you do something in the name of someone else, you are representing them.

- An ambassador comes in the name of the leader who sent him.
- A lawyer comes in the name of the client he represents.
- A delegate comes in the name of the people who appointed him.

Contrary to popular practice, "In Jesus' name, Amen" doesn't mean, "That's the end of my prayer now God. Thanks for listening. Talk to You later." What it means is, "Everything that I've presented in this prayer is representative of the heart of Jesus. I've prayed in accordance with His will, asking for the same things He would."

And so, if you want to see your percentage of answered prayers jump up, then make sure your prayers are in accordance with the will of God, that you are praying just what Jesus would be praying in your situation.

5:16-17 The Sin Leading To Death

John says that we should make intercession for Christians that have fallen into sin. We should pray that God will spare them and give them life. My understanding of this is that we pray they will have time to repent.

However, there is an exception to that rule: don't pray for life extension when the person is committing a sin "unto death."

A lot of people wonder what John means when he refers to a sin that leads to death. Of course, sin itself is the cause of death (Rom. 5:12; 6:23; etc.), and all unrighteousness is sin. But John is saying that some sins a brother in Christ can commit will lead to death.

What kind of sins lead to death? It's difficult to say. We do see one possible example when Paul instructed the Corinthians to disfellowship a certain man in the church. You see, he had entered into a relationship

with his own step-mother and refused to repent. Paul said,

1Cor. 5:5 I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

It is very possible that John is making the point that it is better for God to end someone's life as a Christian than to let them live in grievous sin continually and fall into apostasy.

5:18-19 In The Evil One Or In God?

The person who is born again will be convicted by sin.

As a believer, you shouldn't be able to go very long in a sinful practice before stopping. We have the promise that Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, will keep us, and that the devil will not touch us.

Did you catch that? The world is in the power of the devil, but Jesus keeps him from touching us.

That completely takes away the excuse of "the devil made me do it."

Today, it is popular in many Christian circles to blame the "demon of lust" or the "spirit of alcoholism" for a Christian's sinful behavior. But the Bible tells me that the evil one does not touch the one who is born of God. That means if a Christian woman is lusting or a believing man is getting drunk, the only one to blame is them.

Each of us is responsible for repentance and for holiness. Never blame the demon of this or the spirit of that. God's been hearing the same excuses ever since Eve said her sin was the serpent's fault:

Gen. 3:13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

5:20-21 Guard Yourselves From Idols

There is only one true God, and you have the opportunity to know Him personally.

There is only one true God, but there are many substitutions in the world. And those substitutions have the capability of leading us away from the true God.

Sometimes they're people, sometimes they're things, and sometimes they're just abstract ideas, but they are very real distractions.

To stay on track, we've got to check our hearts daily. We need to ask ourselves,

- "Is this relationship taking priority over my relationship with God?"

- "Is my desire for that possession greater than my desire for God?"

- "Am I seeking this more fervently than I'm seeking God?"

Because it's so easy to get distracted, because we're so susceptible to getting off track, John tells us to guard ourselves.

So, be on guard, stay alert, and keep the Main Thing the main thing.