

## CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER

1 John 5:13-15

**Intro:** We come today in our exposition of 1 John to the verse I have probably more than any other in our study of this wonderful epistle: 1 John 5:13. Although the Apostle John has mentioned several times in the epistle, why he was writing, yet it is generally agreed that his statement in 5:13 expressed his primary reason for writing. He was writing for believers, although he did not mention where they were, whether it was a single church, or a group of churches. But whoever they were, they were lacking the assurance of their salvation. So 1 John was written especially for those who were saved, those who were true believers in Christ.

Thus our text give us, first of all,

### **I. THE PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE (1 John 5:13).**

(Read 1 John 5:13.)

As we come to this point in our study, this is a good time for us to notice why it was that John wrote the Gospel which bears his name. He also stated his purpose toward the end of the Gospel of John, and he did it in these words found in John 20:30-31:

30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Here John had written to those who had not yet believed, or trusted, in the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation, that his Gospel might be used, as it has been again and again, to bring others to Christ. The “signs” to which John referred were the miracles he had selected to establish the Deity of the Lord Jesus. But he also included a number of the messages which the Lord gave while He was here on earth as indisputable evidence of the Deity of the Lord. The Gospel is completed by the account of the trial, death, and resurrection of Christ. Salvation comes through believing that Jesus Christ was the Son of God in human flesh Who had come to offer Himself as a Sacrifice for sinners.

This does not mean that Christians can not profit from the Gospel of John

because they have countless numbers of times. Their faith has been strengthened by the way the Apostle John has established the Deity of Christ and explained what the Lord did for the salvation of sinners. In the same way non-Christians can profit from 1 John because there they can see what it means to be a Christian, a true child of God, and this often has led to their salvation.

Going back to our text in 1 John 5:13, I want to point out some of the details which are important for us to notice in understanding this important verse. The title Christian has been so misused in our day, that I may speak of *a true Christian* to clarify in all of our minds what it means to be a child of God.

John was writing to those that “believe on the name of the Son of God.” By this he meant that he was writing to those who were trusting in all that is involved in “the name of the Son of God.” Primarily it speaks of His Deity, but it also has to do with the work that He came to do on earth. Salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ, Who He is, what He accomplished by His death on the Cross, that which the Apostle John had declared, for example, in verses like 1 John 4:9, 10, 14. It is not just faith that there was a Person named Jesus in past history, but that He came to save sinners from the penalty they were under before God. And their believing as John described it in the present tense, was a continuous believing. Many profess faith in Christ at some time or another, but they do not continue to believe. They do not continue in the faith.

The same thing has to do with the word “have.” “Ye have eternal life” as a present and lasting possession. As we have read in 1 John 5:11 and 12, the witness of God is that He has given to those who believe in Christ, eternal life, and this life is in His Son. The only way sinners (and that word includes all of us) can come into the possession of eternal life, is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And throughout the epistle John has sought to make this clear by giving the evidences of salvation which he has given as a series of tests in which we note a change in a believer’s relationship to sin, to the Word of God, to the people of God, and on down the line.

So eternal life is through faith in Christ, a faith that perseveres, and it is a present possession. The idea that we have to wait until we die to get eternal life is contrary to all Scripture regarding the Gospel of the grace of God. We are as saved the moment we believe as we ever will be. Trust-

ing Christ, we have eternal life.

In verses 14 and 15 we have what I am calling,

## **II. CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER (1 John 5:14-15).**

I want you to notice that verse 14 begins with the word “and,” and the same is true of verse 15. Think of these like links in a chain. The “and” at the beginning of verse 14 links it together with verse 13. And the “and” at the beginning of verse 15 links it together with verse 14. So they are linked together as a unit. And this ought to be very interesting because it brings before us that Christians, true Christians, those who believe in Christ and are trusting Him and Him alone for their salvation, are people who pray. This is the way that the Lord identified Saul of Tarsus as a changed man when he told Ananias to go to Saul because “he prayeth.” See Acts 9:11.

Prayer really belongs to those who are trusting in Christ. There are many people who say prayers, or read prayers, but only true Christians can pray. I don’t say that the Lord never hears the prayers of the unsaved (He can do whatever He chooses to do). A sinner can pray to be saved, like the publican who was in the temple with the Pharisee. His prayer was, “God, be merciful to me, the sinner (Luke 18:13). People who don’t know the Lord often cry out to God in times of great need. But prayer is really the privilege and right of the people of God.

John has mentioned prayer before in this epistle. The first mention is in chapter 1, verse 9. (Read.) The confession of our sins as believers is a very important kind of prayer. We come to the Lord saying the same thing about our sins that He says. That is what it means to confess our sins. And we probably are not as careful about the confession of our sins as we ought to be.

But there are other kinds of prayer. Worship is a very important kind of praying. Thanksgiving is a third kind. Intercession is when we pray for others. And then there is what many Christians refer to as petition, that is, the prayers that we pray for ourselves. Christians are people who pray. A person who never prays on a regular basis can hardly be considered a child of God. In prayer we recognize our dependence upon God, and our need of Him.

Much of the Bible is prayer. That is particularly true of the Psalms. The Bible teaches us how to pray. We are to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). That means we are to live prayerful lives. We need to be praying all through the day as well as having special times for private prayer. The Lord has given us many promises concerning prayer to encourage us to pray. But there are conditions to prayer that we cannot overlook. We see this in another verse in 1 John. I am speaking of verse 22 in chapter 3. Reading verse 21 with verse 22 we notice that in verse 21 the Apostle John used the word “confidence” again in connection with prayer. But in verse 22 we see that the Apostle John was led to tell us that “whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him.” Does that mean that the Lord puts no restrictions on what we ask? Can we ask the Lord to fulfill some foolish or frivolous desire? Absolutely not! Notice the whole verse. We ask and receive “because we keep His commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in His sight.” The verbs “keep” and “do” are in the present tense, which means that we live our lives finding out what He wants us to do, and then we do it, not just before we are about to ask the Lord to do something for us, but this is to be descriptive of how we live. Anyone who reads his Bible to find out how the Lord wants him to live, and then asks for the grace to live that way, is going to be praying about what he knows is pleasing to God in opposition to what we just want the Lord to do for us to satisfy some want that we have.

So both 1:9 and 3:22 teach us some very important lessons in prayer. But now what about our verses in chapter 5, verses 14 and 15? Here the Apostle John said, “If we ask anything according to His will.” Now that is certainly similar to what we have just read in 3:22 about keeping and doing the Lord’s commandments. The commandments of Scripture certainly are an expression of His will. But I believe that the Apostle John was saying something more than what he had said about prayer in chapter 3. Asking according to His will, that is, God’s will, must mean that we come to the Lord being very careful that we are seeking to do the Lord’s will in our daily lives. *In other words, we cannot really pray according to the will of God unless we are living in the will of God.*

Don’t we often come to the Lord in prayer conscious that there are things in our lives that are not pleasing to Him? After all, we can’t really say that we are doing the will of God even in prayer, if there are things in our lives that are displeasing to the Lord, things that we often do not relate to prayer, but they actually are vitally related to our ability to pray aright.

Troubles between a husband and wife, can render prayer ineffective. The Apostle Peter pointed this out in his first epistle, chapter 3, and especially in verse 7 where we read these words:

7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Trouble between a husband and wife can render our prayers ineffective. The first six verses of 1 Peter 3 show that the wives have a responsibility in this as well.

Or perhaps there is trouble between two believers. We are commanded to love one another. We act like we do love the people of God, but in our hearts we really dislike a certain person. But we don't do anything about it because we feel that nobody knows how we really feel. Have you had any problems like that? Or perhaps I ought to say, "Do you now have any problem like that?"

King David has given us many prayers that ought to convict us when things are not right in our hearts. One of these is in the last verse of Psalm 19 where David, after giving us that wonderful truth about creation and then about the Scriptures, had this to say. Actually I want to read from verse 10 on to the end of the chapter:

10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer (Psa. 19:10-14).

By "presumptuous sins" David meant immorality. He knew by experience how quickly he could fall. Add to this David's prayer at the end of that great 139<sup>th</sup> Psalm:

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the

way everlasting (Psa. 139:23-24).

Is this the way that we pray for ourselves? Are we aware of the dangers that confront us all of the time. What effect has your TV had on your relationship with the Lord? Would you like for us to know what you have been watching on TV this past week? The Lord knows. He even knows the thoughts of our hearts. Another Psalmist said in word that are recorded in Psalm 66:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." To regard iniquity is to look at it in my heart. Such thinking can lead to disaster, and to check it the Lord takes away the desire and blessing we have experienced in prayer.

On the other hand, the Psalmist in Psalm 119, probably David, said, "The Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (v. 11).

**Concl:** We live in a very wicked world. Sin is taking its toll in our nation, and even in our churches. Unless the Lord gives us a spiritual awakening, our country could be finished. May God lead us as His people back to verses like 1 John 2:15-17 and Romans 12:1-2. These are days when we need to take a strong stand against sin, and to pray that the Lord will keep us from the sins which so easily can take us captive.