

## Loved and Loving Johns Epistles Lesson 10 3Q 2009

Confidence

SABBATH

Read memory text 1John 5:14:

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

Thoughts? What does it mean “he hears us”? That He is aware? That our prayers register in His consciousness? That His is willing to allow our prayers to reach His ears? That He cares?

Or, does it mean that when we ask in accordance with His will, we are demonstrating that our hearts are in harmony with His and thus our prayers, in that frame, hit a corresponding cord of unity in the heart of God?

Read the entire day starting with “Ben Franklin...” thoughts? How do you deal with uncertainty?

What, as Christian’s, are we to have certainty about? What is the source of our uncertainty?

What if we choose to go to the wrong school, major in the wrong career, choose to date the wrong person, choose to join the wrong church, accept the wrong job, move to the wrong city? What happens if we make choices that turn out not to be the best?

I have patients who fear making mistakes – do you fear making mistakes? Why? Are mistakes sin? Can you make mistakes that are not sinful? If you make mistakes do you feel guilty?

Will we make mistakes in heaven? We know we won't sin in heaven, but will we make mistakes? Are mistakes and sin the same?

Will we learn in heaven? Will there be mental challenges for us to explore in whatever field of study interests us? Can you imagine Einstein in heaven discussing an astrophysics problem with Jesus regarding the fabric of space time and how God constructed the universe? There is a complicated equation Einstein has worked out – will it always be right? Will he make mistakes? Will Jesus always just tell the answer or will Jesus want us to think through the problem, work out the answers and experience the joy of discovery? If we make such mistakes will that be sin?

When we make such mistakes on earth today do we feel guilty? Why? Do we expect that we should know everything? Do we expect we are perfect and without defect? Do we accept that we will make mistakes? If we acknowledge we are finite, and not only finite, but imperfect, isn't it a given that we will make mistakes? Then what is the healthy attitude to have?

That we are lovers of truth and are eager to know more and more truth, better and more efficient ways to live, understand, problem solve. We want to be people who are open to learn from our experience and grow from our mistakes, not people who are so afraid to make a mistake that we can't acknowledge a shortcoming.

People who can't make mistakes end up being like those who killed Christ, insecure of ideas that differ from their own, intolerant of divergent views, and seek to destroy those who disagree with them.

Do we need to fear making a wrong decision? What is our responsibility in decision making? To make the most healthy, reasonable choice, in harmony with God's will, methods, principles that we can with the information we have at hand. Having done that, are we responsible for how things turn out?

If we make the best decision we know how and things don't turn out well, did we do something wrong? Should we feel guilty?

What about the three worthies and the fiery furnace – did they have confidence? In what? Were they certain how things would turn out? Were they certain about God, His character, His love for them and the ultimate end of all things? Did they trust Him with their lives? Do you?

Questions about this?

## SUNDAY

Read second paragraph “According to...” thoughts? Why does this give us confidence? What would have prevented us from having confidence before Jesus did this or if Jesus had not done this?

In what is our confidence based?

Read third paragraph, “The same term...” Thoughts? Why will Christians have confidence in the day of judgment? What does it mean they rely on what Jesus has done for them?

Consider the example from the Bible, people with leprosy – did they ever have to appear before the priest to be examined and judged? Now, when Jesus healed the leper, did Jesus tell him to present himself to the priest – for what purpose? For examination and judgment? Did the leper rely on what Jesus did for Him in that examination and judgment? Absolutely, did the leper do any work for himself to commend or influence the outcome of that judgment? No! Who was being examined in that judgment, Jesus or the leper? What did Jesus do for the leper? He healed Him!

Who gets examined in the Judgment? Who does the Father see? What is it that we rely on Jesus to do for us so that we are confident in the judgment?

Do you think the leper, when looking at his skin, pink, healthy, all the lesions gone, was confident going to that judgment?

Should we be confident in the judgment? Why?

The lesson asks us to examine in 1John 5:13-15, 18-20 the other areas for which we can have confidence:

- Eternal life
- Approaching God he will hear what we ask
- Receiving what we ask
- Victory over sinful living
- Child of God
- Understanding

Thoughts about these?

## MONDAY

1John 5:13 assures us of eternal life – what does this mean? How would you describe eternal life? How did Jesus describe eternal life?

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3

How do you hear this definition? Did Jesus define eternal life in terms of length of time? Why not? What is the point Jesus is making?

What would non-ending existence outside of a true knowledge of God be like? A life of constant fear, insecurity, anxiety, pain, hurt, - literally hell!

Why should children of God “know” they have eternal life? What is the basis of life? What is life constructed to operate upon? If we are God’s children what has been restored in us?

Read third paragraph, “Some folk...” thoughts? What is the idea of once saved always saved predicated upon? What is the logic behind such an idea? What does it mean to be “saved” in this model? What is the problem with this model?

Why is the traditional objection to this model limited in its impact? Because the traditional objection comes from the same faulty legal understanding of the sin problem and actually inflames fear and insecurity.

Read bottom green section – thoughts? Is anyone disturbed by this section? What is the likely impact this section will have on readers – to increase guilt? Is it true that one could be struggling with insecurity because of some unrelinquished sinful habit in their life?

But is there another reason that a person may struggle with insecurity regarding assurance of salvation that is not about some behavior in which they are engaged?

What about the God concept with which they have been indoctrinated? One author wrote the following:

It is beyond the power of the human mind to estimate the evil which has been wrought by the heresy of eternal torment. The religion of the Bible, full of love and goodness, and abounding in compassion, is darkened by superstition and clothed with terror. When we consider in what false colors Satan has painted the character of God, can we wonder that our merciful Creator is feared, dreaded, and even hated? The appalling views of God which have spread over the world from the teachings of the pulpit have made thousands, yes, millions, of skeptics and infidels. {GC88 536.2}

Might people who hold such a concept of God struggle with assurance? Might they be afraid of God and need a doctrine to protect them from Him? And what better than the idea that Jesus paid the legal debt, and if we say the sinner's pray, accept His blood payment, get baptized in the water, then we have had all our sin debt past, present and future wiped out and we are eternally saved- once saved always saved – a doctrine created to protect us from a God who can't be trusted.

But for those who reject the once saved always saved idea, yet still believe in a God who will use his power to inflict suffering, pain and torment upon His creatures – might this cause anxiety, fear and uncertainty? Yet the lesson authors want to place this back on the struggling sinner and blame them for this as if the insecurity is due to some choice they are making, rather than the false god concept that religious institutions have taught.

## TUESDAY

Read 1 John 5:16,17 and then third paragraph, “First John 5:16,17...” – thoughts?

What do you think this means?

This is my paraphrase:

1 John 5:16 If anyone sees a fellow Christian, who desires to be Christlike, commit and act of sin, he should talk with God about him knowing that God will completely heal him and give him life, if he opens his heart in trust to God. Such sin does not result in eternal death because it is merely a residual symptom of a heart in the process of being healed. However, there is no use in asking God to heal and give eternal life to the sinner who closes his heart to God and stubbornly refuses to allow God to heal him. Love cannot be forced and God cannot force people to love and trust him, so there is no

use in praying for God to force people to accept him. 17  
 All violations of love are sin, but violations of love which  
 occur in someone whose heart is open to God does not  
 lead to eternal death. (Jennings paraphrase)

Thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

Are there actions we can take that can obstruct God’s healing  
 plan in our lives? Examples?

- Pray for healthy teeth and don’t brush
- Pray for healthy lungs and smoke
- Pray for good character and lie, cheat, steal
- Pray for peace of heart and gossip, spread rumors
- Pray for Godlikeness of mind and hold to lies about God  
 and teach others falsehoods about God
- Pray for salvation and criticize teenage girl for wearing  
 makeup
- Pray to be a faithful witness for God and ridicule college  
 student wearing jewelry, demean those who don’t observe  
 Sabbath the way you do etc.

Colonel Gonin, a British officer who help liberate the Bergen-  
 Belsen concentration camp after WWII wrote:

It was shortly after the British Red Cross arrived, though  
 it may have no connection, that a very large quantity of  
 lipstick arrived. This was not at all what we wanted, we  
 were screaming for hundreds and thousands of other  
 things and I don’t know who asked for lipstick. I wish so  
 much that I could discover who did it, it was the action of  
 genius, sheer unadulterated brilliance. I believe nothing  
 did more for these internees that the lipstick. Women lay  
 in bed with no sheets and no nightie but with scarlet red  
 lips, you saw them wandering about with nothing but a

blanket over their shoulders, but with scarlet red lips. I saw a woman dead on the postmortem table and clutched in her hand was a piece of lipstick. At last someone had done something to make them individuals again, they were someone, no longer merely the number tattooed on their arm. At last they could take an interest in their appearance. That lipstick started to give them back their humanity.

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Are you comfortable with the idea that Jesus perfectly reveals the Father? Is there any character attribute about the Father that is not revealed in Jesus?

If Jesus has perfectly revealed the Father can we use this revelation to differentiate various doctrines as either true or false depending how the doctrine represents God?

Can you think of any that need to be discarded because they contradict the character of God as revealed in Jesus?

Woman caught in adultery, what did Jesus say, “neither do I condemn you.” Does this perfectly reveal the Father?

When Jesus washed Judas’ feet was He revealing the Father?

When Jesus forgave those who crucified Him was He revealing the Father?

What will the Father do to those who betray Him and remain His enemies?

Read last paragraph “So far in...” thoughts?

FRIDAY - Questions 2-4 read and discuss