Series: 1 John…Living the Christian Life

Message: 13 That You May Know 1 John 5\_13-21

Text: 1 John 5:13-21

Theme:

Date: Nov. 25, 2018

Location: Christ Community EFC

**If you would please turn in your Bibles to 1 John chapter 5 and we will be picking up at verse 13, 1 John 5:13.** That’s page 1023 of the pew Bible.

We are coming to the close of our series in 1 John. Next week starts Advent which we will kick off with the Christmas program followed by a special meal.

A lot of work has gone into the program and I know the Fellowship Team has a great lunch planned. So, be sure to be here, and bring a friend.

In this, our final section of John’s first letter, we begin by reading the purpose statement of this letter.

1 John 5:13 “**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**.”

In this letter John has sought to build confidence in the believers of Jesus that they know they are in a relationship with God.

Jesus is God. When we believe that and submit to his authority by walking in the light and joyfully keeping his commands, we know we have eternal life.

In this letter, John has been combatting the false teachers and the false teachings they had been spreading. He has done this by weaving together three main themes.

First, our confidence is found in right theology, orthodoxy: right thinking regarding who Jesus Christ is—the Son of God, fully God and fully man who died on the cross to pay the penalty of our sins.

The second theme has dealt with morals, orthopraxy: right living. Our transformed lives reflect what we truly believe about Jesus and will respond to His love and gift of salvation by right living—obedience to His commands.

The final theme was right community, loving one another with the same, self-sacrificing love, that Christ loved us.

Now, as we come to a close, John gives us two more areas in our lives where we can be confident in the Lord.

1 John 5:14 “**And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.**

**16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that.**

**17 All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.**

**18 We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.**

**19 We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.**

**20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ.**

**He is the true God and eternal life.**

**21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols**.

The first area John says that we can have confidence is that we are able to have confidence in prayer.

Listen again to these reassuring words at the end of verse 14: “**…if we ask anything according to his will he hears us**.”

Your prayers are not empty, meaningless words. Your prayers are not a mere formality. Your prayers are not just heard by the walls.

Your prayers are heard by God. God listens when we talk to him.

How easy it is for us to forget that God is listening to our prayers!

I think sometimes we pray just because we feel some sort of obligation or duty to do so. We pray because it’s the right thing to do.

But listen to this. God hears when you speak to Him!

Verse 15 continues to give us confidence. “**15 And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him**.”

God not only hears our prayers but He answers the prayers that we ask of him.

But listen to this. It is not that God gives us no answers…God give us “no” as the answer.

There are times when we feel like God has not answered our prayers, in in fact, He has just not given us the answer we expected—or at the time we wanted.

We need to understand that God answers our prayers with a “no” answer many times. Other times God’s answer is wait.

Maybe you have prayed and asked God for a new job. You wait and you wait.

You wait to the point where you begin to think maybe God just didn’t hear you so you start to take matters into your own hands and you settle for a job that in your heart you know isn’t right for you.

But maybe it wasn’t that God hadn’t heard you. Maybe it was just that the job He wants for you is not ready yet.

Other times, I think, we do not believe in this truth that God hears us and answers our prayers because we do not get the thing we ask for.

John reminds us that we need to ask “**according to his will**” (1 John 5:14).

James teaches us that we ask and do not receive when we ask for things on the basis of our own selfish desires (James 4:3).

God has to answer “no” to our prayers because we do not know what is good for us.

There are plenty of things I have prayed for in my life? But now, in hindsight, I am so glad God answered “no” to those prayers.

When we first moved to Ashland we tried to buy a home on Samaritan Ave. On our side everything was in place, loan was approved. The owner even let us move in expecting everything to go through on his end.

We prayed and we prayed. We waited and we waited but we couldn’t figure out why the sale didn’t move forward.

In the six months we ended up living in that house we slowly began to discover many issues, like led based exterior paint, some major plumbing issues on the second floor, and there were a couple other issues.

Looking back it is easy to see how God protected us from a house we at first thought was perfect for us.

There are things that we ask God for in the moment, when we are short-sighted and cannot see what we need, but now we are glad that God said no.

We need to think of this in terms of how children ask things from their parents. Parents have to say no too many of their children’s requests because what they are asking for is not good or helpful to them.

It is not that our parents did not hear our requests, but the answer was no. Just because God answers “no” does not mean that he did not hear us.

We know this, but there are time we stick out our lower lip and cry, “Why didn’t God answer my prayer?”

When we do that we are revealing a heart of selfishness. We are acting like God is our personal genie who must always do what I ask.

When I take a stance that God did not do something for me, I am revealing the heart of a bratty child who does not appreciate the goodness of our Father in heaven.

We must trust God that he is acting in our best interests.

We know that God is acting even if we cannot see him acting. Therefore, we can have a confident faith, knowing God hears and is acting on our behalf.

**And it is with this understanding we confidently pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are in sin.**

Notice this point is made by John in verse 16. **If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that.**

If we see our brother or sister sinning we are to intercede for them in prayer. We see many examples of this in the scriptures.

We see Jesus while on the cross praying on behalf of those who mocked him and crucified him.

We see Stephen also praying on behalf of those who were stoning him to death.

We need to pray for each other when we see one of us going astray. We need to pray for God to give them the light they need to see what they are doing and the heart to seek the Lord, to bring His spirit of conviction that leads to repentance.

This is a text that has caused confusion and a variety of false interpretations.

Some read about sins that lead to death and sins that do not lead to death and have taught that there are certain sins that cannot be forgiven.

You may have heard of “the seven deadly sins” or “mortal sins.”

Some teach that if these certain sins are committed that one cannot have eternal life.

However, the scriptures deny such an arbitrary list. Consider the criminal on the cross. He was on the cross for insurrection (trying to overthrow the Roman government) and murder.

Yet Jesus forgave him and said that the criminal would be with Him in paradise.

Murder is not a “deadly sin” and there is not some set of actions that cannot be forgiven.

So what does it mean that there are sins that do not lead to death and there are sins that do lead to death?

Well, let me ask you this. What sins can you commit that do not lead to your spiritual death?

Paul is clear in Romans 6:23 “**For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord**.

Sin, no matter how “big” or how “small” is an offence and at its heart rebellion against the holiness and authority of our just God.

All sin, any sin must be judged by a holy God and will result in death—separation for God.

The only sins that you commit that do not lead to your spiritual death are sins that have been forgiven.

Remember John’s teaching at the beginning of this letter 1 John 1:9 “**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**”

Please notice that **all unrighteousness** can be forgiven. John does not say there is a certain act that cannot be forgiven.

Therefore, the only sins that lead to spiritual death are sins that have not been forgiven by the blood of Jesus. When we confess our sins, receive Christ’s death as the payment due for our sins and seek to live for Him through the power of the Holy Spirit we will have spiritual Life eternal.

Right theology, right praxeology, and right community!

But, there are consequences for our sin, even sins that are forgiven.

Some scholars say that the expression “**that does not lead to death**” should be understood in the sense, “not punished by death.”

Sometimes God will even go so far as to allow someone to suffer physical death as appose to continuing in their sins.

You may remember the story of Ananias and Sapphira found in Acts 5:1-11. This husband and wife team devised a plan to sell some property and give the proceeds from the sale to the church to help care for the needed.

That was well and good, but they decided to tell the church that they had gotten a lesser amount for the sale that way they could keep some of the money from the sale of the property and still appear the be very spiritual, giving so much to the church.

The husband, Ananias, arrives at the church first and gives the money to the church.

Acts 5:3-5: **But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal?**

**Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.” 5 When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it**.

Later, his wife Sapphira, not knowing that Ananias was already dead, came in and she repeated the lie. And she too dropped dead.

Look, the problem is not that the Christian commits an act of sin. John taught in the first chapter that if any Christian says he has no sin, he is a liar.

The problem is with the Christian who is willfully choosing to persist in their sin. The Christian who knowingly lives life in constant opposition to God.

Notice that John does not command us not to pray for them. What he means here is that we should not pray that God would spare them the consequences of their sin, because it is through that they may actually come to repentance.

Then verse 17 concludes this thought. **All wrongdoing is sin**. There are not big sins and little sins. All wrongdoing is sin.

Is the sin accidental, the Christian remorseful, seeking the prayers of the Christian community, and turning the heart back to God?

Or is the sin intentional, without remorse, not listening to the reproving of the Christian community, and turns his heart against God?

**Finally, the apostle John teaches that we have confidence in our protection.**

There are three “we know” statements in these next three verses.

1 John 5:18 “**We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him**.

Let me read that verse again. Verse 18: “**We know that everyone who has been born of God** [those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ] **does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God** [Jesus the Son of God] **protects him** [who is born again]**, and the evil one does not touch him**.”

We are under the spiritual protection of Christ. We have confidence in our salvation. Satan cannot touch us.

Listen to the confident words of 2 Timothy 4:18 where we read: “**The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Paul writes in Romans 5:10-11: “**For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.**

The next “we know” statement is found in verse 19: “**We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one**.”

Those who are born of God have a changed perspective of the world.

We do not look at this world as good or just. The world is in the hand of Satan. The world runs under the power of the evil one.

But we are confident that though we live in this wicked world, we know we are from God and are secure with him.

In verse 20 gives us the third thing we know: “**And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true.**”

The Son of God has come and revealed to us everything we need to know so that we can have a relationship with him.

The writer of Hebrews tells us that God spoke at many times and many ways through various people, but now God has spoken to us by his Son.

The Son of God is the revelation of God to the world.

When we are in a relationship with the Son, then we are in a relationship with the true God and know that we have eternal life.

Then we come to John’s fascinating ending to the letter. With his passionate words to his little children, the apostle John appeals to his readers to keep themselves from idols.

John is calling for us to reject the false and embrace the real.

Idolatry is anything that occupies the place due to God. Do not be misled to put your hope and security in anything else in this world.

Our hope is only in Jesus. Our security is only in Jesus.

When we are with Jesus then we know we have eternal life and are with our heavenly Father.

**Benediction “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” (Num. 6:24-26)**