

# So That You May Know

## An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John 5:6-8** Chapter 26- Understanding and Valuing the Doctrine of the Trinity 235 Our Triune God Part 7

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WAOY Friday-Monday 08/15-18/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today we're going to continue to look at what John taught about "The Doctrine of the Trinity". So, let's open our Bibles and read **1John 5:6-8**- again together:

**6 This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.**

**7 For there are three that testify:**

**8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.**

Now on the last broadcast- we were going over just how important it is for the Church to know and to rightly preach Who Jesus is. For almost five chapters- the Apostle John has been teaching us that there are four things that are essential to being a Christian:

1. Love of God and for God
2. Keeping God's Commandments
3. Loving the Brethren
4. A Correct Understanding of Who Jesus is

And all throughout this Epistle- these are the four areas that John constantly points out as being the hallmarks of genuine Christianity. And in this Passage- John is once again reminding us that even if we love God; even if we keep God's Commandments; and even if we love the brethren- even if we do all three of these things and if our understanding of Jesus is not true- then there is great doubt about whether or not we are truly saved.

And on the last broadcast- we were discussing a very important battle in Church History whereby the Deity of Jesus Christ came under assault from evil men from inside the Church and a time when the Christian Church nearly lost its confession about Who Jesus is.

In the fourth Century- a very handsome and charismatic man named Arius who was a presbyter of the Church began to teach contrary to what Scripture clearly reveals about Jesus. Arius taught that what he said that the Holy Spirit revealed to him outweighed what the Scriptures said, and that God had showed him that Jesus was a glorified and exalted Man who had been created at some point during Creation.

Now I realize that many today would simply shrug their shoulders and say, "*So what? So what if somebody wants to believe that- it really doesn't matter- as long as they love Jesus.*" Ah, but it really *does* matter, dear friends, because the net effect of Arius' teaching was that Jesus was not God because God cannot be created. But if Jesus is not God- then it is wrong to worship Him and wrong to pray to Him and therefore Salvation was not brought about by faith in His Name alone. And if Jesus was not Deity- then what will we do with all those verses in the Bible that clearly and repeatedly teach that Jesus is God.

So if Jesus is not God and He knew that He was not God- but was trying on purpose to deceive people into thinking He *was* God- then Jesus was not only a liar- but He was a deceiver. And that would make Jesus to be evil. But if Jesus was not God and only thought that He was- then Jesus was a lunatic. But if Jesus was either a liar or a lunatic- we could never trust Him with our eternal soul. Only if Jesus was telling the Truth and was God wrapped in human flesh could we then trust Jesus for Salvation. So that is what was at stake back in the fourth Century over the Arian controversy.

Now I really believe that this would make a great movie because it is filled with intrigue and drama and earnest passion- along with dealing with serious issues of eternal consequences.

Now part of the problem early in the fourth century Church was the fact that the horrendous persecution of the Church that had begun at the Crucifixion was now letting up. For three centuries after the first prayer meeting in the Upper Room, when the Church was born- Christianity was a persecuted and illegal religion. The Christian

Church had endured over three hundred years of living under the constant threat of immediate annihilation.

If you remember from your high school history- in the year A.D. 312, the emperor of Rome, Constantine, suddenly made a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Now we have no idea whether Constantine actually got saved or not- but history shows that he did make a public profession and that his sudden conversion was big news. In the following year, A.D. 313, Constantine issued *The Edict of Milan*, which for the first time ever, granted toleration for Christianity within the Roman Empire. And this Edict even gave the Christian Church some special tax breaks. And the net effect was that the people of the Roman Empire now had a financial incentive to follow their emperor and convert to Christianity. And that is how Christianity became almost overnight, the de-facto religion of the Roman Empire.

Constantine was supposedly converted because of a vision that he said that he saw. During the battle of the Molivian Bridge, Constantine said that he looked up in the sky and saw the Christian monogram. The Christian monogram is used in many Eastern Churches today- you may have seen it- it is a cross that looks like an “X”, superimposed on the letter “P”.

Constantine said that he saw this symbol in the sky and under the symbol was the words, “*By this sign, conquer*”. So he converted to Christianity and from that time on, the Church was no longer persecuted like it had been.

Now look, it is good when people are not persecuted. I am certainly not in favor of persecution against the Church. But because we are carnal creatures- when given an abundance of Peace and Safety and Prosperity- most people- even most Christians- even most good Christians- will get fat, dumb, and happy. It is simply human nature to get relaxed when all is well.

And this is the biggest problem with the American Church today. We have too much money and too much spare time and we feel far too entitled and far too safe and far too peaceful and we have a sense of security and warmth and well- being that has nothing to do with what God has provided us. And all of these wonderful blessings have the tendency to make us self-centered and self- reliant rather than putting our trust in God. And that tends to make us apathetic and relaxed, and worldly and more in tune with keeping our prosperity and keeping our

materialism intact than to risk everything to earnestly seek after the things of God.

Now I know that I am not going to get on a lot of people's Christmas party list for saying this, but it is the truth- so I am bound to say it. Here we go.

The unprecedented Peace and Prosperity that we have enjoyed in this country over since the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War is a snare of the devil to divert our minds and our hearts away from the things that matter most to things that are temporary and that moth will corrupt, and that rust will take away.

The overwhelming majority of the teachings today in the modern Church about prosperity are not Biblical, and are not true and they are false teachings that promote greed and idolatry and covetousness and materialism and bring about great discontent in the hearts and minds of God's people.

And this turn from Biblical Christianity to materialistic idolatry is destroying the American Church and the people in the Church. And to prove that what I am saying is true- at the very same time that we have enjoyed this unprecedented Peace and Prosperity in this Country- we have also seen an almost total collapse of Biblical morality and the two things are connected.

The same thing that is happening to us today happened to the Church in the fourth century. The great persecution of the Church had stopped. Women were no longer being made widows because of the Gospel. Little children had their fathers at home every night because their fathers were no longer being thrown into jail for serving Christ.

And at first, the Church rejoiced at this new found Peace. But soon, human nature took over. Soon prayer meetings went unattended- because the people no longer saw the need to pray. Before they were earnestly praying that they could live just long enough to declare the Gospel to just one more soul for one more day. But now because they were living in peace- they saw no need to pray at all.

And because of the tax breaks, Christians actually began to prosper more than the non- Christians. So with this prosperity came more of this world's goods. And with all the stuff came the need to tend to all the stuff and that meant less time to study the Bible; less time to pray; less time to witness; less time to serve God. In the fourth century Church, some even preached that fasting had been done away with

because the need to draw close to God had passed away. Some even went so far as to declare that since Constantine was so good to the Church- that Constantine must be Jesus and his ascension to the throne must be the second coming of Christ.

The result was you couldn't pay people to do what they had done before the Peace and the Prosperity had come. They simply were too busy; too occupied and too involved in making this world their home and making these temporary and worldly things their heavenly rewards.

And so the heretics took advantage of a Church that was weak and worldly and rushed in to destroy it. And they nearly succeeded. The people of God were so busy becoming important and acclimated to this world that they forgot about defending the Faith. But please don't look down on them. Who among us today would trade a week long cruise to a resort location with a week of fasting on water and weeping between the porch and the altar? Very few. Very few then and very few today. Which Churches today have seen a growth in attendance to prayer meetings and Bible Studies? Very few. We simply don't see the need and we simply don't have the time.

So the entire mood of the fourth century Church about false teaching was *"Let's just go along to get along. Let's just love everyone and God will sort it all out. It's not my job to defend the Faith- let the pastor do that. It's not my responsibility to preserve the Church- let the Elder Board do that- I've got places to go; things to do and people to see"*

Well Brother Blair, are you saying that it is better to be poor than to be rich. No, I am not saying that at all. But I am saying, and I am saying it very clearly that it *is* better to be poor and to be saved and to be on fire for God and to be faithful to Christ and to go to Heaven than it is to be drunk with pleasure and to be rich in this world and lose your convictions lose your fire and lose your desire to serve God and go to hell. I am saying that.

Well can't we do both? Can't we be blessed and still be on fire for God? Yes, if you will. But You need to know that very few people in the history of the world have ever done it. And I don't know how you feel about Jesus- but I believe that Jesus was a fairly spiritual Guy and Jesus said that it is impossible for a human being to love Money and love God at the same time.

All throughout the Bible, there were no more than a handful of

souls who didn't allow their prosperity to destroy their faith. Very, very few. So if you can do both- knock yourself out. But if you have to lose your Faith in order to be blessed- then it is better to be poor.

History teaches us that the Church in the fourth century went through this very dilemma between a love for God and a love for money and for the most part- they miserably failed the test. Heresy and false teaching rushed into the Church and the people were too blessed to even be concerned. They were too busy taking care of all the blessings they had to take care of their relationship with God. Beloved let us not fall into that same trap. Let us remain faithful. Let us remain true to God. And let us earnestly contend for the Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.