

INTRODUCTION

1. This morning we are looking once again at 1 John chapter 5, so please take God's Word and turn with me to 1 John chapter 5.
2. We are looking at the second "Christian Certainty" which is found in verses 14-17.
3. We learned last week that First John chapter 5 and verses 13 through 21 is essentially the summary, the conclusion, the postscript, if you will, to the whole epistle.
4. And in this section, John focuses on Christian certainties, things of which we are absolutely sure.
5. And, of course, as true Christians, committed to biblical truth and biblical authority, we base our lives on what Scripture says.
6. We base our lives, time and eternity, on what God has written.¹

¹ <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/62-41/christian-certainties-part-2>

7. Now this morning, we are looking at verses 14-17 which gives us the second certainty.
8. John says, “This is the confidence which we have before 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 which we have asked from Him. 16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.”
9. So verses 14-17 are about prayer, answered prayer.
10. Throughout Scripture we have examples of the kinds of prayers that God wants us to pray.
11. For example in Matthew 6:5 Jesus told His disciples “not to pray like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward.
12. That’s how we’re not to pray.

13. He continues in verse 6 by saying how He wants them to pray.
14. “But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.
15. So verse 5 says don’t be like to hypocrites who want to be seen by men.
16. Rather, verse 6, go in “secret, and your Father who see what is done in secret will reward you.”
17. And in verse 7, “And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.”
18. Praying to be seen by men and to be heard for your many words is not the kind of prayers God is after.
19. He is looking for those whose heart is humble.
20. That leads me to another example of prayer which is found in Luke 18:9-14.

21. Luke says in verse 9 that Jesus “also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt.”
22. He says beginning in verse 10, “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 “The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 ‘I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’ 13 “But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’ 14 “I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”
23. John says in 1 John 5:13 we can know we have eternal life.
24. Now in he says in verses 14-17...

LESSON

- I. We Know We Have Eternal Life (v.13)
- II. We Know God Hears Us (vv.14-17)

A. The Confidence (v.14a)

Again we see the words “confidence” and “know” in verses 14 and 17.

In verses 13-21 the word “know” occurs 7 times and the word “confidence” 1 time

1. The word “confidence” (parresia) literally means “freedom of speech.” It’s often translated “boldness”
2. We’re told in Hebrews 4:16 (NASB) Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
3. That’s the “confidence” that John is talking about--a freedom to go before the Lord on any issue and freely, boldly ask.
4. Our confidence then is not only in the life to come, our confidence is in the here and now that we have access to God.

5. We're not yet in His presence, we're not yet in the heaven of heavens.
6. We haven't yet entered into our eternal inheritance which is laid up for us.
7. But we now have access to all of God's resources through the means of prayer.
8. And that's why John says, "And this is the assurance, this is the confidence."
9. Literally, this is the boldness by which we enter His presence and freely request whatever we need.
10. So when we talk about certainties, that's what we're saying.
11. We know for certain that we have eternal life (v.13) and we know for certain that God hears our prayers.

Notice...

B. The Condition of our Asking (v.14b)

“If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

There have always been conditions to our asking:

1. The first condition comes from verse 13 that you “believe in the name of the Son of God.”
2. In 1 John 3:22 the condition is “keeping His commandments and doing the things that are pleasing in His sight.”

And what is His commandments? Verse 23 says, “This is His commandment that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.”

3. In 1 John 2:5 His commandments is “His word”
4. In John 15:7 (NASB) the condition is abiding in Christ. Jesus said to His disciples, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”
5. In John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:24, 26 Jesus says the condition is asking in His Name

6. In Psalm 66:18 the condition is confessing sin. David said, “If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear.”

7. God does not answer prayer to those who:
 - a) Ask amiss - James 4:3 (NASB) You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

 - b) Live in sin - Ps.66:18

 - c) Disregard the law - Proverbs 28:9 (NASB) He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination.

 - d) Are deaf to the cry of the poor - Proverbs 21:13 (NASB) He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be answered.

 - e) Are idolaters - Jeremiah 11:11-14 (NASB) Therefore thus says the Lord, “Behold I am bringing disaster on them which they will not be able to escape; though they will cry to Me, yet I will not listen to them. 12 Then the

cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry to the gods to whom they burn incense, but they surely will not save them in the time of their disaster. 13 For your gods are as many as your cities, O Judah; and as many as the streets of Jerusalem are the altars you have set up to the shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal. 14 “Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not listen when they call to Me because of their disaster.

f) Are wavering - James 1:6-8 (NASB) But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

8. So when we asking “according to His will,” His will being obedience to His commandment to believe in the name of Jesus, to love one another, to abide in Him and His Word, to confess sin, then “He hears us.

9. “Hears” is more than just hearing, the verb akouo is used in the present tense to indicate that God “always hears the prayers of His children.”²
10. Proverbs 15:29 (NASB) says, “The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.”
11. We can come to God with full assurance that He hears everything we ask regardless of whether He answers everything we ask for which He doesn’t. The point is “to ask” (Phil.4:6; Jas.1:5) with the confidence that He always hears.

Verse 15 gives us...

C. The Confirmation of Answered Prayer (v.15)

John says “And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”

“Requests” (aitema) means “What was being asked for”³

² MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#). electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997. Print.

³ Louw-Nida

This is answered prayer!

1. God answers prayer when asked according to His will
2. He answered Hannah's prayer for a son in 1 Samuel 1:2-20
3. He answered Moses, Aaron and Samuel in Psalms 99:6 (NASB) says, "Moses and Aaron were among His priests, and Samuel was among those who called on His name; they called upon the Lord and He answered them.
4. He answered the psalmist in Psalms 118:1-5 (NASB) Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting. 2 Oh let Israel say, "His lovingkindness is everlasting." 3 Oh let the house of Aaron say, "His lovingkindness is everlasting." 4 Oh let those who fear the Lord say, "His lovingkindness is everlasting." 5 From my distress I called upon the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me in a large place.
5. He answered David in Psalms 138:3 (NASB) On the day I called, You answered me; You made

me bold with strength in my soul.

D. The Concession (vv.16-17)

It seems like out of nowhere John drops in these two interesting verses:

1 John 5:16-17 (NASB) If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. 17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.

What do they mean?

How does it fit with what he has already said in verses 14-15?

1. We are to pray for a “brother” who commits a sin not leading to death
2. We are not to pray for a “brother” who commits a sin leading to death

3. Evidently John and his readers knew what the **sin leading to death** was, since no explanation is given, but its exact meaning is difficult for us to determine.
4. Two possibilities present themselves.
5. First, the sin in question may be that of a non-Christian leading to eternal death.
6. In that case it would be a final rejection of Jesus Christ, such as that committed by those who attributed His miracles to the power of Satan (Matt. 12:31–32).
7. Such ultimate apostasy is unforgivable, as Jesus declared: Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. (Matt. 12:31–32)
8. Praying for the restoration of such people to the fellowship from which they have departed (1 John

2:19) is futile, because “it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame” (Heb. 6:6).

9. John did not forbid prayer for such people, since it is impossible to know who they are.
10. The apostle merely stated that prayer for them will not be answered; God has already made the final decision about their future.
11. Supporting the view that John is referring to unbelievers is the present tense of the participle *hamartanonta* (“sinning”; the Greek text literally reads “If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin ...”); John elsewhere in this epistle uses the present tense to describe the habitual sins that characterize unbelievers (e.g., 3:4, 6, 8; 5:18).
12. Another possibility is that John is not referring to an unbeliever, but to a believer.
13. According to this view, the **sin leading to death** refers to a Christian’s sin that is so serious that God takes the life of the one committing it.

14. He put to death Ananias and Sapphira when they lied to the Holy Spirit in front of the church (Acts 5:1–11).
15. Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning those who were abusing the Lord's Table, "For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep [have died]" (1 Cor. 11:30).
16. The sin is not one particular sin, but any sin that the Lord determines is serious enough to warrant such severe chastisement.
17. Both of the above views reflect biblical truth, and it is hard to be dogmatic as to which one John had in mind.
18. In either case, John's point is that prayer for those committing a sin leading to death will not result in the outcome that might otherwise be expected.
19. Although God mercifully does not immediately punish every sin with death, every sin is nonetheless a serious matter to Him.

20. **All unrighteousness is sin**, John reminded his readers, even **sin not leading to death**.

21. Every sin is a violation of His law and an affront to God, and is to be confessed (1:9; Ps. 32:5), forsaken (Prov. 28:13), and mortified (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5).⁴

CONCLUSION

1. So we know that we have eternal life and we know that God hears us and answers our prayers when they are according to His will.
2. We are to ask God about everything.
3. Philippians 4:6 (NASB) Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
4. If you're here today and you want to know Jesus more, ask Him as we pray.
5. Ask Him to change your life, to forgive your sin and tell Him you want to follow Him.

⁴ MacArthur, John. [1, 2, 3 John](#). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2007. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

6. Let's pray.