

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 6- John's Moral Test of Salvation

45. Obedience- The Proof of Salvation- Part 2

WAOY Wednesday 06/27/07; WOSM Friday 12/02/22

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1 John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about "The Moral Test of Salvation." So, let's open our Bibles and read **1 John 2:3-6** again together:

3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

Now as I said on the last broadcast- I suppose that the single most common question that has ever been asked of me is, "*Pastor Blair- how can I know for sure that I am saved?*"

And the Apostle John deals with this very issue here in verse 3- so let's read that verse again together:

By this we know that we have come to know Him if we keep His commandments.

The Epistle of **1 John** gives us tests that we can take which will show us clearly whether we are saved or not. And the net result of these tests is that we will know- not wonder; not guess; not hope- but that we will know that we are saved.

You see, beloved, unlike any other religion or philosophy on earth- Biblical Christianity alone gives both the assurance and the certainty of eternal Salvation. Those who are truly saved know that they are truly saved. And every single person who is going to go to Heaven knows that he is. No one on earth but Christian can say that. In fact- it is this assurance and certainty that both draws and offends many Muslims today who view this as nothing more than American arrogance.

But John was not an American and John knew nothing about the American way of life. John knew nothing of Western Civilization of even the Western Hemisphere and he was never one time presented in his entire life with concepts like Democracy: or freedom of the press or freedom of religion or free enterprise or capitalism or the law of supply and demand.

But John knew and John taught that Salvation was certain, and that Salvation was something that could be objectively defined and measured and determined and ruled either in or out.

In fact, to John there was nothing more clear and certain than who was a true born again believer and who was deceived and only said that he was.

So, to avoid the very confusion that exists today about what it means to be a Christian - John wrote down several tests that anyone can utilize which will determine in his own mind whether he is in the Faith or not.

And these tests are written down for us in Holy Scripture so that there should never be any confusion in our minds about this issue. Now on the last broadcast- I went over with you how that Scripture- all of Scripture is reliable and trustworthy today. And I went over in great detail about how that Scripture is the only source on earth of words that are inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative; and relevant to the 21st Century.

So since it is true that all of the tests which determine who is really saved and who is not are recorded for us in Scripture- and if it is true that Scripture alone is inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative, and relevant today- then there can only be two reasons why so many people today are so confused about what it means to be a Christian- they are either not reading and not studying the Bible and are ignorant about what it teaches- or they don't believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of the living God- which should answer their question

about whether they are saved or not.

Now almost 100 years ago- the great theologian, H. Richard Neibhur said

“The American Church is preaching a God without wrath bringing people without sin into a Kingdom without judgment through a Christ without a Cross”

... and I will tell you that this spiritual liberalism is much more popular now than it was then. And it has brought forth nothing but utter confusion on the part of millions as to what Salvation is and what it is not and what it means to really be saved.

We have taken the amazing supernatural miracle of the new birth and boiled it down to us helping ourselves become a little more moral- and that is not Biblical Christianity. Listen to me. Muslims may be moral; Buddhists may be moral. Hare Krishnas may be moral. Mormons may be moral- but Christians are saved. Biblical Christianity is not about doing some clever things that will help yourself become a better person and Christ’s Church is not one big group therapy session.

No, Christianity is Christ doing for us and in us and through us what we *cannot* do for ourselves. And the Church of Jesus Christ is the pillar and the ground of the Truth that exists only to glorify God.

Being saved beloved is not like changing your socks- it isn’t simply a choice that you can make and then unmake then make again later on. Salvation is a sovereign miracle and it should take your breath away and it should cause you to drop your jaw and stand in awe of this mighty God who was willing to drape Himself in human flesh and take upon Himself the sins of us all and be brutally beaten and to die so that He could place within us the new divine nature that loves and that serves God.

We must remember that when we are talking about what it means to be a true Christian- that Biblical Christianity is all about the humiliation of arrogant flesh and the exaltation of Jesus Christ through the miracle of Salvation. But the very foundation of godless humanism is the exaltation of the “self” of human beings so that we can “be” and “do” and “achieve” all that is in our hearts- without God and without Repentance and without Salvation and without any Moral Absolutes. And secular humanism is taught today through all the vehicles of self-

help and self-therapy and self-esteem and self-actualization and self-fulfillment- that are in competition with Christianity. We have to understand, dear friends, that some of the most popular so-called Preachers and Teachers on what is called, "Christian Television" today are really not preachers at all- because they don't preach the Gospel- but are simply motivational speakers- telling people how to become a better person and reach their own goals by thinking and doing certain things.

But those things don't require a dead and risen Savior; they don't require a virgin birth and they don't require inerrant Scripture. People tell me all the time- "Oh, Brother Blair- these motivational speakers really help people." As though that was the standard. Listen Dale Carnegie classes help people too but that isn't Christianity either. Christianity is all about Jesus Christ and what He did and Who He is and what He said- and about me being rescued from God's Wrath by what He did and then living in such a way that minimizes me and that exalts Him after I am saved- not how I can fulfill all my dreams.

For someone for anyone to go to Church or to read the Bible or to endeavor to serve the Lord so that they can "be all that they can be" or so that they can "fulfill all their dreams" is not following Jesus Christ. Men do not come to Christ so that they can release "the giant that lives within them" and become somebody "important." That is not Christianity beloved- that is pagan humanism.

Men come to Christ so that they may die to themselves and so that their life can come to an end and so that they may decrease and so that they may completely surrender their heart and their mind and their will and their ambitions and their desires and their life to Him so that His Will and His Plan and His Desires may be manifested on the Earth- all for His Glory alone.

Christ did not come to die so that "good" men can become "better" men. Christ gave His Life on Calvary so that wicked and wretched and undeserving sinners who are completely lost and who deserve to go to hell and who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and who are strangers to the covenants of promise and who are without God and without hope in the world can be gloriously redeemed by a merciful and loving God and then live for Him and then follow Him and then obey Him with joy- regardless of the personal cost- that is true Salvation.

The Apostle John was faced with a very similar crisis that faces us today. Gnostic heretics were overrunning the Church. Strange unbiblical Doctrines were being taught. People were growing more and more in love with this present world and less in love with God. Peter and Paul were dead and John as the only remaining Apostle. John saw these things as a real and serious threat to the Church that was birthed in that prayer meeting at Pentecost.

So, in verse 3, John begins to open down spiritual tests that anybody and everybody can use to determine whether they know Jesus Christ or not.

Notice that in this verse, John does not say, *“by this may we know that we are born again”* and he does not say, *“by this may we know that we are Christians.”* But John says-

By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

Now John chose his words very carefully here because in his day the big threat against Biblical Christianity came from the Gnostics who hung their hat on secret knowledge and codes and mysticism. So, John is responding to these ungodly apostates by saying, *“Okay, you want to talk about knowledge- I’ll give you knowledge. You want to know what the epitome of true knowledge is- it is righteousness- keeping the commandments of God.”*

Now at the time that John wrote this- true Righteousness was the last thing on the Gnostics and various pagan philosophies minds which were attacking the Church.

During this time period, great confidence was being made on human reasoning and the development of the carnal, natural mind. A very popular teaching was circulating all throughout Greece during this time which said that God could be known simply by the process of reasoning. The teachings of Plato led the way in this thinking. In his system of thought- general knowledge by definition became a knowledge of the eternal and unalterable essence of things- not of changing phenomena. In other words, the popular thought of that day was that people could know God without being holy. That righteous living was irrelevant to knowing God. This is why so many of the Greek philosophers lived such depraved and ungodly lives.

So, John attacks this false concept head on by teaching that keeping God's commandments or in other words- Biblical righteousness was essential to knowing Jesus Christ. In fact- the way that John puts this here in verse 3 shows us that what he is actually saying is that it is impossible to truly know Jesus Christ and live continually in violation of that which Jesus Christ taught.

We see this same ancient heresy alive and well today in those who make statements like, "*I love Jesus- but I just don't serve Him,*" or "*I'm saved- but I'm just living to myself.*" John says here in verse three that these people are liars, and the truth is not in them. John is teaching here that one of the tests of genuine Salvation is not how much information about God that you have in your head- but whether or not you obey Jesus Christ.

Many people today try to separate the person of Jesus from the words of Jesus – and that simply cannot be done. To know Jesus is to love Jesus and to love Jesus is to obey Jesus. And John is saying here- No obedience- no true knowledge.

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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