

So That You May Know

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

Chapter 6- John's Moral Test of Salvation

46. Obedience- The Proof of Salvation- Part 3

WAOY Thursday 06/28/07; WOSM Monday 12/05/22

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 over the centuries- there have been many attempts by Man at knowing God. But Christianity teaches that all attempts by anyone in any way to know God- other than through Jesus Christ are wrong and futile.

During John's ministry of the first century- both the Gnostics and the Greeks were teaching people how to "know" God without Jesus; without Repentance; without Salvation; and without Grace. So, in these verses- John engages these evil people to show the only true way to know God.

You see, way before Jesus was born- Alexander the Great conquered the known world- and through him bringing Greek culture to the world- a new concept emerged. This was the false idea that God could be "known" through an emotional or mystical "experience". And

their logic was since the mind alone could not satisfy- perhaps the emotions could.

And this idea gained ground and during John's ministry- a whole group of what are now called, "mystery religions" began to appear on the scene which promised great and mighty things, but which all involved nothing more than emotional ecstasy- taking the place of Divine Truth.

Great gatherings began to occur as multitudes of people began to be attracted to the music, the incense, and the beat of these mystical "parties" which bombarded the senses with things designed to try to take the place of genuine Salvation. It wasn't long before anyone who did not attend these gatherings was considered to be out of touch with God- and so it became very popular. The knowledge of God that these people had was based upon a high powered emotional experience rather than true conversion.

But the logic that carried the day was that what the Greeks taught must be God- because it was so thrilling and so emotionally captivating and so earth shaking.

But there was a two-fold problem with this attempt at knowing God without true Salvation. First of all- it didn't last. One fantastic emotional experience was replaced with another which was louder and more stimulating than the one before it until the people reached a limit on how loud they could shout and how high they could jump and how many songs they could sing.

Not only did this attempt at knowing God not last very long- but it also didn't satisfy. To be sure the so called "worshipper" of this new religion had definitely had an "experience" -but just what exactly *was* this experience and what did any of this experience have to do with the fact that he was lost and going to hell and in need of Salvation? I mean everybody had had a powerful weekend- but by Monday morning- the thrill was gone.

The bottom line was that during this period of time the Greeks had a choice between cold rationalism and mindless emotionalism- which is a lousy choice- no matter which way you go.

So along comes the Apostle John who rejected both the cold rationalism and the mindless emotionalism of the Greeks and said that knowing God was both wise and personal. And John taught that

coming to Jesus Christ was also fully satisfying- because it is both knowledge and a change of behavior.

You see, unlike the false mystery religions- being truly born again is knowledge- not of a thing or a concept- but it is knowledge of a real live Person- Jesus Christ- and it is satisfying in that it is the root cause of a profound and permanent change of behavior.

But John was not alone in this teaching. Over 700 years earlier- the Prophet Jeremiah had spoken about this very thing in **Jeremiah 9:23&24** when he said:

23 Thus says the Lord, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; 24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the Lord.

You see, according to Jeremiah- the goal of true religion is the knowledge of God. But unlike what the Greeks were saying- true religion and the true knowledge of God centers around the Person of Jesus Christ. So, in reality- no one truly knows God outside of knowing Jesus Christ. Now the Greeks would agree with the first part of Jeremiah's prophecy- which says that the knowledge of God is Man's glory- but they would categorically reject the last part- which speaks about God practicing kindness, justice, and righteousness and the part that says that God delights in those who emulate God and who do these things also- the Greeks would reject that part because that links knowledge of God with godly behavior- and they categorically rejected that concept.

It is interesting to note that many today hold to that ancient Greek philosophy which say that "being" right and "doing" right are two different things. This is why murderers and child molesters can ask for leniency because they say that they are "good people". This is why the former President of the United States could commit adultery in the White House and then say that he was a good man. He is applying ancient Greek philosophy to his life rather than Scripture.

But John would not tolerate such distortion of Truth. So, John boldly linked our knowledge of God with our behavior. Those who know Jesus- John says- obey Jesus. Therefore- those who do *not* obey Jesus- don't

truly know Him. So, they may know *about* Jesus- but John says that nobody truly knows Jesus as Savior unless they obey Him.

In other words, John is saying to us here in verse 3 that there is an unmistakable test that a person can take to prove without doubt that he knows Jesus Christ- and that test is that he obeys the Words of Jesus Christ. So, John is saying that it is our obedience to what Christ says that *proves* our Salvation.

Now again, I must reiterate here that John is not talking about sinless perfection in this verse. True, genuine believers can and do sin even after we are saved. But as I went over with you in great detail on earlier broadcasts- the normal default setting for believers is obedience with periodic moments of falling short- while the normal default setting for lost people is that they do what is right in their own eyes with periodic moments of obedience to God's Word.

So, John is teaching here that for anyone to think that they are saved simply because they prayed a prayer or because they got baptized or because they joined the Church or because they spoke in tongues and yet they live continually in unrighteousness is classic deception.

Salvation is real- only because there has been a radical and supernatural and miraculous transformation of the nature of that individual. Their old nature- which was fashioned after the Original Sin of Adam has been sovereignly replaced by a new divine nature which is created in righteousness and true holiness, and which gives that individual both the desire and the power to obey Jesus Christ.

So, because that is true- lost people simply follow their unconverted nature and live lives which are in opposition to the Word of God while saved people simply follow their new nature and live lives which are in submission to the Word of God.

Again, the Old Testament prophet tells us that all saved people will know God- even Gentile believers- because of this glorious miracle that is accomplished in the inner man. Let's read **Jeremiah 31:31-34:**

31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord.

33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Once again God links true knowledge with changed behavior. We will know God and God will forgive our sins. The reason that God will forgive our sins is because our sins are wrong; they are bad; and when we sin- we are bad. So, if we are sinning –we can't then turn around and assay that we are "good" people because only "bad" people sin. This is why the Bible tells us in **Romans 3:10-18**:

10 as it is written, "*THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;*

11 *THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;*

12 *ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."*

13 *"THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS";*

14 *"WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS";*

15 *"THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,*

16 *DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,*

17 *AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN."*

18 *"THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."*

God doesn't save "good" people. Jesus only called sinners to repentance. So, if you say that you are "good"- then Jesus didn't die for you. Only lost wretched vile wicked sinners need a Savior. "Good" people must try to earn their own "salvation"- through their own good deeds- but lost sinners can come to God and confess their inherent lostness and beg God for forgiveness and holy Red Blood will wash their evil black hearts and make them whiter than snow.

This is why I preach and teach so hard against so much of modern Theology which teaches that people are fundamentally “good”, and they just need to improve themselves by developing certain techniques and by applying certain secrets to their lives in order to make themselves “better” people. That is not Christianity, beloved- that is pagan Gnosticism. Christianity seeks to glorify God at Man’s expense while pagan philosophies seek to glorify Man at God’s expense.

Therefore, any teaching- no matter how sincere- which is designed to build up the “self” of man- which is what you hear so much about today like self- esteem; self- help; self- fulfillment; self- actualization- any teaching which seeks to make much of fallen Man- is the enemy of the Cross of Jesus Christ- and has no place in the life of a true believer or in the Church.

We must remember, beloved, that genuine Biblical Christianity breaks the staff of Man’s pride and arrogance and humbles him before a holy God. And it is a shame that we have so easily abandoned the Glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ which commands lost men to repent and we have so eagerly embraced pop psychology which allows lost people to feel better about themselves.

Any doctrine which teaches that people can know God; that people can be saved and still live sinful lives is not of God and has no place with genuine born again saints.

So, John shouts boldly to anyone who has an ear to hear that there is no genuine knowledge of God without an accompanying righteousness- because God is righteous.

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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