

So That You May Know

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

Chapter 6- John's Moral Test of Salvation

47. Obedience- The Proof of Salvation- Part 4

WAOY Friday/Monday 06/29-07/02/07; WOSM Tuesday 12/06/22

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 on the last broadcast, I was going over with you why John gave us his test of true Salvation here in verse 3, by showing you that the prevailing sentiment of his day about "knowing God" was false and was in opposition to Divine Truth. John cries out to us here without reservation that there is no genuine knowledge of God apart from a righteous life in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now that may sound harsh to some of you. This may even sound unloving and even unchristian to some of you- but I assure you that this is exactly what verse 3 means. And since it is what Almighty God has said- it is neither unloving nor is it unchristian- but rather it is part of the test that was inspired by none other than the God the Holy Spirit Himself to determine without doubt who is truly saved and who is only deceived.

Now John was not insensitive to the concerns of those around him. He understood that many people were sincere. But John- like Paul and Peter and all the rest of the men whom God used to write down inspired Words- knew what we need to know today- that sincerity isn't enough. They knew as well as we should know today that Divinely inspired Truth trumps sincerity every day.

So, John drove the discussion deeper than any of the great Greek thinkers had ever gone and he went beyond simply talking about "knowing" God. John went to the depths that discussed just how we may know that we know Him. How a person can *verify* that our knowledge of God is accurate and how can we be sure that we are in right relationship with God?

Now I recently asked this very question to a group of local people. I asked, "*How do you know that you know Him? How do you know that you are saved? How can you verify your place in Jesus Christ?*"

Now you would think that this was an easy question to answer. And you would think that since we are dealing with qualities like "how do you *know*" and how do you *verify*" - and not speculation- you would think that all answers to this question would be firm and without guessing or bewilderment.

But I am sad to tell you that their answers were all over the scale. To begin with- you simply cannot answer a question that begins with "How do you *know*..." with an answer that begins with, "Well, I feel..." because if anything has been proven to be true over the years- it is that how we *feel* as human beings is probably the most unreliable part about us. People *feel* things all the time that are completely inaccurate- because basically our feelings are not Sovereign in and of themselves- but they are based upon information that we have received. And so our feelings are only as reliable as the information that produced them. Therefore- bad information produce bad feelings. Unreliable information produces unreliable feelings. Incorrect information produces incorrect feelings. And partial information produces partial feelings.

So, something as important and eternal as Salvation must not ever be based upon subjective and unreliable human feelings and emotions. This is what the Greek philosophers and Gnostic mystics were teaching. But the Apostle John taught that true Salvation is

definable; it is real; it is tangible, and it is objective and not subject to the changing whims of social or emotional variations.

So, John shot a missile over the bow of the Greek and Gnostic ship of state by linking the true knowledge of God with righteousness; with obedience when he said in verse 3-

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

You see unlike the Greeks and the Gnostics of his day- John knew that true Salvation was *impossible* without the supernatural transformation of the human nature. In other words- no one can fake true Salvation for very long because true knowledge of God; genuine Salvation cannot be accurately expressed apart from genuine obedience.

So, while it is true that lost people can sometimes and on some level acknowledge that the Bible is true- it is also true that lost people have absolutely no desire whatsoever to deny their flesh or pick up their cross and follow Jesus Christ on an ongoing basis. Lost people don't have the will to do this, and they certainly do not have the internal power of the Spirit to do it. And that is part of what makes them to be classified as being lost.

So, John shatters the foundational Doctrines of both Greek philosophers and the Gnostic mystics by this one verse. And I might add he also shatters the foundational doctrine of the modern equivalent of the Greek philosophers and the Gnostic mystics of our day- who can talk all day long about a generic "god" and who can talk all day long about being "spiritual" and who can wear golden crosses around their necks- but who are absolutely unwilling and incapable of obeying Jesus Christ.

Listen, pointing your index finger toward Heaven when you score a touchdown is real nice- but it is no substitute for actually obeying the Words of Jesus Christ. Giving God credit when you win an award for singing a song about sex and killing police officers or because you starred in a movie in which you used blasphemy and took your clothes off is just peachy keen- but it is not proving your Salvation.

Wearing your "WWJD" bracelets and your "God Chaser's" baseball caps and the cute and clever slogans on your Tee- shirts or your bumper

stickers are all fine and good- but until and unless we actually “do” what Jesus said to do- John says that we do not know Him.

Now it is no wonder that in his day- that John was a despised man. It is no wonder that hit squads from both the hardhearted Jews and the pagan Gentiles went all around trying to kill him. But thanks be to God that God supernaturally protected John and preserved him until these holy and inspired words could be written down for us to learn and love.

So, the bottom line to understanding what John meant when he wrote down verse 3 is that any teaching which allows for anyone to believe that they are saved and yet live continually in disobedience to the Words of Jesus Christ is not of God and should be rejected by God’s people- no matter how popular that teaching is and no matter how we may personally gain from it.

Now it was at this point that John gives us an example of two kinds of people to illustrate the point that he has made- so I want to read again verses 4 & 5 of **1John 2**:

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:

Now the first person in John’s example says that he “knows” Jesus Christ and yet he does not “obey” Jesus Christ. Again, John is using the verb, “to know” here in the Biblical sense in that this person says that he has a real and personal and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and yet he does not keep the Teachings of Jesus Christ. In other words- this person says that he is saved and yet lives in direct rebellion to that which Jesus requires.

Now when John uses the word, “commandments” here in verse 4- he is talking about several things. First of all- John is talking about those Commandments which came directly from God and are recorded for us in the Old Testament. But it goes further than that.

This word also means those Commands which came directly from the Mouth of Jesus Christ Himself during His earthly ministry as well. But it doesn’t stop there either.

Because we cannot fully or rightly interpret the Old Testament or the Gospels without going through the Epistles- we also must include in this statement by John those Commandments which were penned down in the teaching Books of the Bible too- the Epistles- which were given to us by the Spirit of Jesus.

So, for example- because some of the ceremonial laws and dietary laws and sacrificial laws and sabbatical laws of the Old Testament were fulfilled in Jesus Christ- they are no longer applicable for us today. But we don't know that by reading only the Old Testament nor do we know that by simply reading the four Gospel Records. But by including the NT Epistles- we get the final and full Revelation of God, and we have all the applicable Commandments of God.

We need to know that 22 of the 27 Books of the New Testament were already written down and were in use by the Church by the time that John wrote this Epistle. All major Christian Doctrines had already been formulated and written down and were being boldly proclaimed in all the Churches by the time that John wrote this verse.

For example- the Christian Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone – that we find in Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians- which teaches that human beings are justified by Grace alone through Faith alone in Christ alone- absent any human works- had been written down and had been taught in the Christian Church for over 40 years by the time that John wrote this Epistle.

The teaching of the exclusiveness of Jesus Christ as taught in the Epistle to the Hebrews- which says that ever since the Resurrection- all Jews must totally and completely abandon their adherence to the inferior sacrifices and washings and ceremonies of the Old Covenant and fully embrace the superior New Covenant if they hope to be saved had been taught for over a quarter of a century by the time that John wrote this Epistle.

New Covenant Theology had already been developed, written down, and was being taught in all the Churches by the time that the Apostle John wrote his five Books. Men were being schooled in Christian Theology in various locations such as Syria, Egypt, and Ephesus by the time that John writes these words.

So, when John is speaking here about keeping His commandments- don't ever let anyone tell you that he was talking strictly about the Old Covenant commandments alone- because that is

factually untrue. John was referring to all the Commandments of God in both the Old and New Testaments as interpreted through the lens of the Epistles.

Now the Epistles are those writings which Jesus was referring to when He said in **John 16:12&13:**

12 "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now.

13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

This verse does not mean that people today are able to get new Revelation and new Truth from God because they are filled with the Holy Spirit. That is a real bad interpretation of this Passage. And that is why the Christian Church doesn't teach that. Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons and Muslims teach that- but not Christians.

This Passage was fulfilled when the Spirit of Jesus inspired Paul and Peter and James and John and Jude and the writer of Hebrews to complete God's Revelation to Man by writing those final Books- the Epistles that make up the finished canon of Scripture.

So, on the very Eve of the second Century- the aged Apostle John looks over the horizon of the Christian Church and sees great threats being posed by forces inside and outside the Church and so he writes his five Books- which finished God's Revelation to Man- and he tell us here that obedience to God's Commandments is essential to being saved.

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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