

Lesson 23 – 1 John

3:19-22

July 10, 2022

John further expounds on the Farewell Discourse, now illuminating John 15:16

The subject at hand: How do we have confidence before God in prayer?

“This is how we will know that we belong to the truth”

What is the “this” in this sentence? Our successful fulfillment of the preceding mandate to love the brethren sacrificially?

Paul’s ‘Therefore’ vs. John’s ‘By this’

Paul tends to use his transitions to refer back to what he has just said to make his next point; John uses his transitions to look forward to what he is about to say

“And will reassure our hearts before him”

The words “before him” define the situation in which John is working, and it is further clarified by the following verses

vv. 21-22 – Dear friends, if our hearts don’t condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive whatever we ask from him because we keep his commands and do what is pleasing in his sight.

We can use contextual clues to understand that John is talking about confidence in prayer in these verses (as opposed to 2:28, which concerns confidence at Christ’s second coming).

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“Whenever our hearts condemn us”

The difference between conviction and condemnation

For the believer, conviction is a normal part of the process of progressive sanctification; condemnation is the inflation of feelings of conviction to the point of that they obscure or nullify Christ’s redemptive work of justification.

Romans 8:1 – There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

v. 19 – This is how we will know that we belong to the truth

If we are in (belong to) Christ Jesus (the truth), our hearts may be reassured before him, based not on what we have done, but on what Christ has done

“For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows all things”

How does it make you feel to think about the fact that God knows everything?

In one sense this is terrifying: Think you’re messed up? God knows everything!

In another sense, God has constantly in mind something of which we can all too often lose awareness: THE GOSPEL!

When our hearts condemn us, they actually condemn God!

“I know something you don’t know.”
– Inigo Montoya

God says, “Yes, you are a sinner. Worse than you can imagine. But I know something you don’t know. My son died to save sinners!”

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God does not “forget” our sins; he actively chooses not to count them against us because he is a just God and those sins have already been paid for by Christ on the cross.

“Dear friends, we have confidence before God and receive whatever we ask from him”

Is this John preaching the prosperity gospel?

” The clause “whatever we ask”... is all-inclusive and leaves open both the content and the occasion for our requests. At the same time, this statement requires that both the immediate and remote context must be taken into consideration with this statement. The immediate context suggests that the one asking is the one who is striving to “obey his commands and do what pleases him”. Likewise, 5:14–15 states that the prayer is to be offered “according to his will.” The guarantee of answered prayer is based on the proper standing of the petitioner, which in return gives him confidence to approach God freely and openly.” – *Daniel Akin, 1, 2, 3 John*

This is not a passage teaching that faith in or obedience to God is the key to unlocking untold riches.

The closest we can come to understanding the inclusion of material goods in this context is by keeping in mind the preceding verses regarding giving sacrificially to care for others (see Philippians 4:14-19)

“Because we keep his commands and do what is pleasing in his sight.”

The connection between faithful living and fruitful prayer

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What's with the condition between
obedience and answered prayer?

“Although this may sound like a quid pro quo deal – we do something for God and he repays us by granting something we ask for – it is nothing of the kind. It is another way of saying that people who keep God's command and do what pleases him know God's will. As a result, they will ask only what is consistent with what they know of God, for they are his children. Jesus taught that following him requires us to trust and depend on the Father and to ask as an acknowledgment of that dependence. On his last night with his disciples he told them, “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask for anything in my name and I will do it.” God is pleased to grant such requests to his children because it reveals his glory through Jesus and shows that God's power is at work in the world when his children invoke it by their prayers.” – *Karen Jobes, 1, 2, and 3 John*

When we pray in the name of his Son and according to His will, we bring glory to the Son and we come into deeper fellowship with God.

The prayers of the obedient heart are not answered because obedience earns God's love or special favors; they are answered because the obedient heart and its prayers are in tune with God's desires and mission for the earth.

So, pray! And come in confidence that God hears you and is delighted to bring you into fellowship with him in the accomplishment of his mission!