

Study Guide



“Have You Passed The Test” 1 John 5:13-21 – Dec. 18, 2016

Welcome (40 Minutes)

Be intentional to have authentic relationships...

Worship (5 Minutes)

As the group transitions from of a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

Word (45 Minutes)

John, like many of the New Testament writers, finishes his letter with several admonitions that restate and sum up what has been the theme of his letter, primarily the believer's assurance of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. John has communicated that God is Light, Truth and Love. He has also reminded believers that Christian virtue and obedience are evidences of our secure relationship with Christ.

For more in depth study check out the following pages...

Walk Prayer & Missions

December 18-28—South Sudan

For further information visit

norriferrychurch.org or contact Jared Clary (clary@norriferrychurch.org)

Calendar

December 18th— Happy Birthday Jesus Party (K4-3rd), Lord's Supper Service

December 25th— Christmas Service

January 1st— Pajama Party (K4-3rd)

December Schedule

There will be no 9am Sunday activities or services offered from December 11th - January 1st. Please join us for our 10:30am service during this Christmas season.

Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Jesus?

Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to "[O Come All Ye Faithful](#)":

O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye,
O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him
Born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens
Of heaven above;
Glory to God,
Glory in the highest;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be
All glory given;
Son of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord.

Word (45 Minutes)

Knowledge of Eternal Life (13, 20)

Not only do believers have a witness of eternal life by the Holy Spirit within their hearts, but they also have the witness of the Word of God: *“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may **know** that you have eternal life.”* (V.13) *“And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.”* (V.20)

It is interesting to note that John’s Gospel was written to assure us that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God (John 20:31), he wrote 1 John so we can be sure we are children of God and possess eternal life. Through this letter John pointed to being *“born of God”* and the practical evidence of our new natures as God’s children. (e.g., confesses sin (1:9); discerns truth (2:20); practices righteousness (2:29); does not practice sin (3:9); loves one another (3:14), (4:7); confesses Christ has come (4:15); prays faithfully (5:14); overcomes the world (5:4); keeps themselves from idols (5:21))

Confidence in Prayer (14, 15)

“And this is the confidence that we have toward 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 that we have asked of him.”

What we can understand from these verses is that God answers prayers that are according to His will. As a new believer I thought that this and other similar verses meant something like “God was going to fix everything for my benefit.” I soon discovered that there was a qualifier, “His will.”

We pray because God has commanded us to pray, and because prayer is the means by which we receive what God gives. Prayer keeps us in the will of God. Living out God’s will is a life filled with service and blessing. Our Heavenly Father is pleased to give us the Kingdom. (Luke 12:32)

While we cannot know every detail of the outworking of God’s will, we do know it is God’s will for us to be authentic, to know His promises, His principles and to obey the commands for godly living.

*“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able **to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.**”* (Rom. 12:1-3)

I think John has in mind that believers can pray to walk in the light, to love other Christians, to not love the world, to abide in Christ, to practice right living (righteousness), to not practice sin, to discern truth from error, to love one another in practical ways, to confess Christ as Lord, and to keep His commands. We can be sure as we pray these virtues for ourselves and other Christians that they are the will of God and He will hear us and we will have the requests we ask.

Brotherly Love & Repentance from Sin (16-18)

These verses follow John's assurance of God hearing prayers that are in accordance with His will. As outlined, that includes a life that is growing in holiness and the virtues of the Christian life, namely truth and love. Brotherly love pursues prayer for others, especially where sin has ensnared a fellow believer. Our prayer should begin with asking for God's mercy to reveal sin. *"If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life - to those who commit sins that do not lead to death."* (V.16a)

The end of verse 16 has been the subject of much discussion. *"There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that."* The meaning of this passage of Scripture is debated by Christians. There is no absolute consensus on what these passages mean. Some have suggested that the sin that leads to death is blaspheming the Holy Spirit, the difficulty with this conclusion is John identifies the "sinner" as a brother and in turn that would suggest the loss of our salvation which John has just assured the reader of in (v.13) Other views offer the position that John is not talking about a true believer, but surely we should pray, asking God to save the lost, so John's instruction, **"not to pray"**, does not seem to apply. Another view points toward grieving the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30), all sin grieves the Spirit in some degree, but I can see this has some validity when addressing unrepentant sin and heretical doctrine. There may be some link to those believers who have been led astray by the false teachers and have not confessed and repented of their heresy.

In this writer's opinion, I believe John is addressing unrepentant sin and the sinner(s) who refuses to confess their sinful actions, which may have included heresy. The sinner who is willing to confess and be restored, experiences the result and power of the loving prayers of his brethren and his own petition well. (V.16a) He receives the full restoration in his earthly life of faith, (1 John 1:9) and this is in concert with corporate prayer and the prayer of faith which is prayer in the will of God. (v.14,15) But, unrepentant sin hinders an individual's prayer. ***If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:***" (Psalm 66:18)

With unrepentant sin in mind, the word death as used here, is not referring to eternal death but rather physical death. There does appear to be sins that people can commit which God takes seriously enough so as to end their natural lives. Ananias and Sapphira, (Acts 5:1-10), are an example of God's immediate judgment of sin committed in the Church.

Other sin that is associated with physical death is found in 1 Corinthians in 2 places. Chapter 11:28-30, ***"Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died."***, and in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, where it is reported that a man was having sexual relations with his father's wife. ***"...5 you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord."*** (V.11) ***"But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one."***

In my opinion, ***the sin unto death*** is not some one specific sin, rather a matter of the heart's response to sin. I believe John is addressing our response in prayer to those members who are unrepentant in their pursuit of spiritual life within the body of Christ.

V.18 ***"All unrighteousness is sin"*** - no excuses, however John is making the case that not all sins are equal, some carry greater consequence among the body.

Our Deliverance from the World, Satan, Idols (19-21)

In verse 19, John states again that the believer has a divine knowledge, a particular revelation from God by His Spirit. (1 John 2:20) Believers have this anointing because we have been born of God. In this knowledge we have an understanding of the world, which is the system that is influenced and led by Satan himself. (2 Cor. 4:3-4) John is referring particularly to the power of Satan in tempting humanity in sin. John also clearly is saying that the world of lost mankind is under the power of the evil one. Man, apart from God freeing them from the dominion of sin, is held captive to his nature. Man is content to serve sin because by nature he is sinful. (Romans 6)

The final verse is John's final admonition, "***Little children keep yourselves from idols.***" This warning carries with it the identifying root problem of man's rebellion and disobedience to God, idolatry. The Old Testament is filled with Israel's great sin of idolatry. Ephesus, probably the city of the church John is writing too, was a wealthy, influential and religious city. It was the center of the worship of Diana. Ephesus had a robust business around the production and sale of silver statues of Diana. (Acts 19:23-41)

Most people in the modern world do not bow to idols of wood, stone or metal and yet there are more ominous idols that compete for our affections, those idols of the heart that capture the attention and affection of many people. To covet possessions or position is a subtle form of idolatry. The world, its positions and its possessions are a subtle way for Satan to control areas of our hearts and lives. Christians have turned from idols to serve the living God. (1 Thess. 1:9)

Conclusion

In conclusion, the world is quick to offer enlightenment but as we have learned the Christian is walking in light, because God is light. There is a kind of love that the world offers, but believers have experienced the love of God because God is Love. The world offers its brand of wisdom and knowledge but we have the Spirit of truth that allows us to live in God's truth and to know God personally. Idols are dead but Christ is alive. So the question is asked, "Did you pass the test? How did you do?"

If we are living an authentic faith we have real assurance of salvation.

Sermon Questions

What does it say?

1. What does verse 13 say is John's purpose in writing this book of 1 John?
2. In verses 14-15 John is talking about our confidence in Jesus with regard to prayer. What points does John make about prayer in these 2 verses?
3. What two kinds of sin does John talk about in verses 16-17? What does John say about praying for a brother who is committing a sin not leading to death?
4. What general statement does John make about a person who has been born of God?
5. From whom does a Christian receive protection from "the evil one"?
6. How does John contrast the Christians who have been born of God and the rest of the unbelieving world in verse 19?
7. What benefits of the coming of the Son of God does John cite in verse 20?

Sermon Questions

What does it mean?

1. John's stated his purpose for writing the Gospel of John in John 20:31. He stated his purpose for writing this letter of 1 John in 1 John 5:13. How are the purposes different and for what reason?
2. Verses 14-15 speak of having confidence in God when we pray. Verse 14 and 15 say, "if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him". What about the qualifying clause—"if we ask anything according to his will"? What does it mean to ask according to his will? Does it mean that we should only pray for things that we know are within his will? Does it mean that we end every prayer with the words "if it is your will"? Does it mean to always pray with an awareness that we may not know what is best, but God does? Look at the following verses to gain perspective on this question: Matthew 6:9-10, Matthew 26:39, Luke 11:9-13, James 4:3, and 2 Corinthians 12:7-9.

3. Regarding verses 16-17, what do you think constitutes a sin leading to death? Look at Mark 3:29 and Matthew 12:22-32 for possible explanations and examples of sins leading to death. Can a believer—a person born of God—commit a sins or sins leading to death (Romans 8:30 and Romans 8:38-39)?
4. Looking at verses 18-19 what does John say about those “born of God”?
5. In verse 20 how does John summarize what we have received as a result of being born of God?

Sermon Questions

How Does it Apply?

1. Examine your personal prayer life. Do you pray according to God’s will? Do you pray freely and boldly for what you need? Do you pray with a conscious realization that what you are asking for may not fit with God’s will for your life, and do you invite the Lord to answer your prayer according to his will? Do you ever pray that God’s will in this world be accomplished quickly?

Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying fellowship, worship, and time in God’s word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important. It answers the question, how do we apply what we are learning in 1 John to our lives today?

Many groups have found that it is helpful to sometimes break up into a men’s group and a women’s group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God’s work outside the walls of our church – “neighbors and nations.” Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

May the Lord bless and encourage you as you lead your groups! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!

Model Answers

What does it say?

1. John's purpose in writing this book was that they would know that they have eternal life. In other words he wrote the book so that could have assurance of their salvation.
2. John says that if we pray according to his will, we know that he hears us and that we have the requests we asked of him.
3. John talks about a sin leading to death and sins not leading to death. John tells his readers that they should pray for a person committing sins not leading to death.
4. A person who has been born of God does not keep on sinning.
5. He receives protection from Jesus against Satan.
6. Those who have been born of God do not keep on sinning and are protected from Satan. Those of the world (not born of God) lie under the power of the evil one.
7. God has given us understanding. We have come to know him personally who is true. We are in Jesus and the Father. We have eternal life in Jesus.

Model Answers

What does it mean?

1. John's purpose for writing the Gospel of John was to help his readers to "believe that Jesus is the Christ" and that by believing they may have eternal life in his name. In 1 John his purpose is that "you may know that you have eternal life." The Gospel of John was written for unbelievers to help to come to faith in Jesus. The letter of 1 John was written to believers to help them to have confidence they have eternal life.
2. In Matthew 6:9-10 we see that Jesus instructs us to pray according to the will of God by the words in the Lord's prayer, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." We see that Jesus prayed in Gethsemane these words, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will (Mat 26:39)." We see that James says we do not receive what we ask for because we sometimes ask wrongly to spend it on our passions (James 4:3). In 2 Corinthians 12 we see that Paul asks for his thorn in the flesh to be removed, and God gave him a no answer by saying that "my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." God encourages us in his Word to ask freely (Luke 11:9-13). We should not ask for answers to spend it on ourselves—to indulge ourselves—but according to his will. We should always pray with a spirit that acknowledges that we are not wise enough to always know how we should pray—what to pray for. In these situations we should consciously ask for God to answer according to his will—which is best for us. Also we should pray for things that we know are in alignment with the general principles of his will found in his Word.

3. The “sin leading to death” may be the unpardonable sin spoken about in Mark 3:29 and Matthew 12:22-32. In these passages Jesus describes this sin as blasphemy against the Holy Spirit or speaking against the Holy Spirit. Jesus says it is an unforgiveable sin—an eternal sin. You can see an example of it in the Matthew passage when the Pharisees accused Jesus of healing the demon-possessed man by the power of Satan. This miracle was done through the power of the Holy Spirit in Jesus’s life, and the Pharisees said it was done by Satan. The false prophets that had already left the church that John was writing to may have also sinned unto death. No, a person who is born of God—a born-again Christian cannot commit an unpardonable sin according to Romans 8:30 and Romans 8:38-39. All those who are called are justified and glorified—that means none of those who have been called by God are lost. Romans 8:38-39 say that nothing can separate us (his children) from the love of God in Christ Jesus.
4. John says that those who are “born of God” cannot and will not continue in a lifestyle of sin, and he says that they are protected from harm coming from Satan.
5. John summarizes the benefits of being “born of God” as follows: we have gained understanding: we know God personally through Jesus; we are in the Father and in the Son (united with them in spirit); and we have eternal life.