

8. Confidence in God

2/18/2007

How would you like to walk into an airplane that will fly to Los Angeles and just find out that the pilot is a 13 years old teenager who doesn't even have a driver license let alone a pilot license?

When he comes on the PA system with his high pitched squeaking voice, "Good morning, folks. This is your captain Jimmy speaking. I have never flown a jet before. I haven't even driven my dad's car yet. But it will be a short flight to LAX. Put your seat belts on and relax. Enjoy the flight. Everything will be fine. I know everything, after all I am a teenager."

Then all the passengers are thinking, "I am outta here." Everybody will run out the plane including the plane crew.

Of course, this is a far fetched story. Nevertheless we don't want to put our confidence in anything or anyone whom we can trust. We want to see the credentials, past history and experience of that person or product.

If there is anyone whom we can trust in this universe, it would be God. He is absolutely faithful, all capable, all powerful and never let anyone down. According to the Bible, He doesn't even slumber.

Apostle John is going to go over why our God is worthy of our trust and how we can pray to Him with that confidence in Him.

A. BEING BORN OF GOD

1 John 5:1-3 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

Many of you already know the meaning of 'Christ'. But for those who don't know, it means 'The Anointed One' in Greek and 'Messiah' in Hebrew. The word itself has a meaning of deity.

In v1, apostle John is not talking about just knowing that Jesus is Christ makes a person to be a child of God and born-again Christian. If that is the case, the devil and all of his demons would be Christians, too. It is more than a simple acknowledgement. Rather it is about putting one's trust into Jesus as his or her God and receives Him as the Savior into his or her heart.

Many of New-Age people believe that Jesus had the "Christ-spirit" – as they claim also Confucius, Mohammed, Buddha and any other weird gurus did. But we would never say Jesus "has" the Christ spirit. Jesus is the Christ.

Unfortunately, in my 20 years of walk with Christ I find that some Christians think that they are selected groups of people by God because of their intelligence, financial status or even ranks in the churches. I am sure that God would love to hear that kinds of stuck-up snotty mindsets. That is just wrong. If any of you think that you are a better Christian because you are richer than others or smarter than others or you are

a leader of a ministry, I assure you that God thinks otherwise. What God thinks matters, not any one of us think.

All the things people have to do in any religions are burdensome. But if you are born-again Christian and you are led by the Holy Spirit, the ministry and work we get to do for the Lord are not burdensome. When you are in love with someone, the things you had to do for that person, was it burdensome? Of course, not. You loved it every moment of it. Why? Because you knew that the things you were doing would please that person. Just like that, when we are in love with our God, there is no work that becomes burdensome. We might get tired, worn out from work, but not burdensome.

If you feel burdensome doing God's work, there is only one explanation: You are doing it with your own power and drive, not the Holy Spirit. Stop and ask the Lord to give you the guidance and follow Him.

B. THE OVERCOMERS

1 John 5:4-5 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith. 5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Christians live in a real world and are facing formidable obstacles. It is not easy to obey God. It is much easier to drift with the world, disobey Him and "do our own thing." But the Christian is "born of God." This means he has the divine nature within him, and it is impossible for this divine nature to disobey God. However, the world appeals to the old nature and tries to make God's commandments seem burdensome.

Our victory is a result of faith, and we grow in faith as we grow in love. The more you love someone, the easier it is to trust him. Because faith and love mature together.

The word 'overcome' is one of apostle John's favorite. He uses it often in 1 John and Revelation with reference to overcoming the devil. But he is not describing a special class of believers. Rather, he is using the word 'overcomer' as a name for the true Christian.

Our friendship with Christ and our becoming like Him will lead to a deeper love for Christ. Christian love is not a passing emotion. It is a permanent devotion, a deep desire to please Christ and to do His will.

The more we know Him the better we love Him, and the better we love Him the more we become like Him – "conformed to the image of His Son".

C. JESUS IS GOD

1 John 5:6-10 This is He who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7 For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. 9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. 10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does

not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.

How do we know that Jesus Christ is God? Some of His contemporaries called Him a liar and a deceiver. Others have suggested He was a religious fanatic, a madman or perhaps a Jewish patriot who was sincere but sadly mistaken. Many Christians don't have the foggiest idea how to explain that Jesus is God by using the Bible. Because they don't study enough.

The deity of Christ was mentioned in the Old Testaments more than 600 years before he was born. Isaiah, the prophet, foretold that the Messiah would be call "Mighty God" in Isaiah 9:6. In the New Testament, there are tons of references for the deity of Jesus – John 20:28; Titus 1:3; John 1:1; John 5:18 and John 10:33 are a few examples of that.

As if that is not enough, apostle John gives us more ammunition to our arsenal. He give us three witnesses.

1) The Water

The water refers to Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River. After He was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended like a dove and rested on Him. This was the Father's affirmation of His Son at the beginning of the ministry.

Matthew 3:16-17 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

2) The Blood

The Father gave further witness as the time drew near for Jesus to die. He spoke audibly to Jesus from heaven.

John 12:28b Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."

Furthermore, the Father witnessed in miracle power when Jesus was on the cross: the supernatural darkness, the earthquake, and the rending of the temple veil.

3) The Holy Spirit

The Spirit was given to bear witness to Christ. We can trust the Spirit's witness because the Spirit is truth. We were not present at the baptism of Christ or at His death, but the Holy Spirit was. His witness is our inner confidence that we belong to Christ – not a confidence that we "work up" for ourselves, but a confidence that God gives us.

Romans 8:15-16 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

Non-believers, especially, those intelligent people have a lot of problems believing the deity of Jesus Christ, the absolute truth and the exclusive way of salvation. So, they might say something like this, "Do you mean that you are believing these stuff because they are written in the Bible and you are taking them in without any of your own research and proofs?"

Then I would encounter them in this way, "I know that you think, "This guy has a blind faith." Let me put it this way: You are the one who is denying the truth of the

Bible without any research and proofs of your own. The Bible proved itself to be true from the viewpoint of archeology, history, science, geography and prophecy. It is also you are the one who is denying the fact that you are influenced by other agnostic or atheistic people who also denying God without a proof. Now who has the real blind faith?"

On the side note, if you have any other version than NKJV, you have noticed that yours read a little different in v7-8. It is because NKJV makes a marginal note on them that is not mentioned in the vast majority of New Testament Greek manuscripts.

Then how did these words ever get included, if they are not in any ancient Greek manuscripts? The words were included in ancient Latin versions of the Bible which is known as 'Vulgate' in 1522. Does it destroy the authenticity of the Bible? Absolutely not.

Using thousands of ancient Greek manuscripts, the Bible scholars reconstructed 99.86% of the New Testament. No other ancient document has this kind of accuracy. There are only eleven verses are not coincide with other manuscripts. Guess which one is two of those eleven verse?

D. TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT

1 John5:11-13 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

This is God's essential message to man – eternal life is a gift from God, received in Jesus Christ. He who has the Son has life. But he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. It is all about Jesus, and living in Jesus is the evidence of eternal life.

I saw the sign from a very liberal church in Tucson. It says, "We are all children of God, or none of us are." That is so far out of the truth. Yes, the entire human race has the image of God according to Genesis 1:26. But not everybody is children of God. That title is reserved for those who receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. The rest of the people are not the children of God.

E. PRAYING WITH CONFIDENCE IN GOD

1 John5:14-15 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

I am sure that all of us wonder one time of another how we can bend God's ears so that He can do what we want. However, if the truth to be known, prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance. Rather, it is laying hold of God's willingness.

Any other way than God's will is extremely dangerous for us. If we insist our way, sometimes God allows us to have it our way and we would suffer for our own stupidity. That is one painful way for us to learn not to demand God for our will and ways. After all, the Father knows best.

Then someone will ask, ““If it is God’s will for me to have a thing, then why should I pray about it?” Prayer is not spiritual self-hypnosis. Nor do we pray because it makes us feel better. We pray because God has commanded us to pray and because prayer is the God-appointed means for a believer to receive what God wants to give him.

Prayer keeps a Christian in the will of God and living in the will of God keeps a Christian in the place of blessing and service. We are not spiritual beggars. We are the children of God coming to our Father in heaven who is the Master of the universe who loves to give His children what they need.

F. THE SIN MUST BE DEALT WITH

1 John 5:16-19 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. 17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death. 18 We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. 19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

Again apostle John is not talking about occasional sins that we all commit, but habitual intentional continuing sins. A believer with the nature of God doesn’t want to continue in sin. He will bring it to the Lord in repentance each time he sins.

All sin is hateful to God, and should be hateful to a believer. But some sin is punished with death.

If a believer does not judge, confess and forsake sin, God must chasten him. In other words, first God “spanks” His rebellious children, and if they do not yield to His will, He may remove them from the world lest their disobedience lead others astray and bring further disgrace to His name.

By the way, “*the sin leading to death*” is not some one specific sin. Rather, it is a kind of sin – it is the sort of sin that leads to death. So don’t ask me what they are. I have no idea.

G. LIVING IN REALITY

1 John 5:20-21 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. 21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

Christians live in reality. All the non-believers live in pretense and sham. You may say, “That is harsh.” The Lord gives spiritual discernment to the believers of Jesus Christ to know the true from the false, but the non-believers do not have this understanding. Until they choose to listen to God’s salvation message through Jesus Christ, they simply stick their spiritual bananas in their ears and pretend that they are fine while they are heading to the place they cannot come back.

Christians do not simply choose between good and bad. They choose between true and false. An idol represents that which is false and empty and a person who lives for idols will himself become false and empty. In our modern days, people may not have wooden or metal idols they worship, but they sure have other things that take them away from God. That is idol.

The world boasts of its enlightenment, but a Christian walks in the real light, because "God is light." The world talks about love, but it is nothing more than a nicely packaged selfish demand to the other person. But a Christian experiences true love, because "God is love." The world displays its intelligence and knowledge, but a Christian lives in truth because "the Spirit is truth." That is real.

Someone would say, "But it makes no difference what a man believes so long as he is sincere!" This popular excuse hardly needs argument. Does it make any difference what a person believes about one particular clear liquid? He sincerely believed that it was H₂O, water and drank it. Actually, it was H₂SO₄ pure Sulfuric Acid. Yes, it makes all the difference in the world!

H. APPLICATIONS

- 1) Our friendship with Christ and our becoming like Him will lead to a deeper love for Christ. Christian love is not a passing emotion. It is a permanent devotion, a deep desire to please Christ and to do His will.
- 2) Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance. Rather, it is laying hold of God's willingness.
- 3) Christians do not simply choose between good and bad. They choose between true and false.