

The Forgiveness of God

2006042

Topic # 1045 (assurance)

Introduction:

- A. I John written to Christians near the end of the first century.
 - 1. Writes from firsthand experience – 1:1-4.
 - 2. John physically associated with Jesus – because of this he had a right to address these Christians and encourage them in their service.
- B. John addresses:
 - 1. Questions about the nature of Jesus.
 - 2. False teaching that denied the humanity of Jesus.
 - 3. The assurance Christians have through Jesus
 - a) Salvation is assured to those who assume the responsibility of Christianity.
- C. October: we've addressed the assurance of our salvation.
 - 1. We can live with hope: *confident expectation*.
 - 2. When people become Christians, God does not abandon them to their own strength.
 - a) Forgiveness is not a 1 time occurrence.
 - b) It is an ongoing process in the Christian life.
 - c) It is the atoning blood of Jesus that makes all of this possible.
- D. We cannot be sinlessly perfect.
 - 1. We *can* be honest with self and with God.
 - 2. We *can* be faithful.
 - 3. We *can* accept responsibility for our sins as we become aware of them.
 - 4. We *can* always have a penitent heart – that is always ready to repent – which assures God's continuing forgiveness.

I. Facts in I John 1:1-5.

- A. 1:5 – God is totally separated from **evil**.
 - 1. Absolutely no evil exists in Him.
 - 2. He is absolutely good. Not a mix of good & bad.
- B. 1:6 – Christians cannot claim a relationship with God when they pursue a **lifestyle** of sin.
 - 1. We must understand there is a difference:
 - a) In living a life in constant **rebellion** against God through calculating evil.
 - b) And...falling to temptation through ignorance and **weakness**.
 - 2. The first is associated with a rebellious lifestyle.
 - a) That is contrasted with a lifestyle that is seeking to be transformed despite weakness.
 - 3. The first describes a person who has no intention of directing his lifestyle away from evil.
 - a) This is contrasted with the person seeks to become an imitator of God.

4. Which side of the screen do you think faithful Christians fall upon?
- C. 1:7 – Christians seek to live as close to God as possible. *It is a condition of heart.*
 1. Walking in light will cause us to want to associate with other Christians.
 2. We will do what is necessary to conform to God's standards of living. This is walking in the light.
 3. Walking in the light includes:
 - a) living a life of **purity** & holiness
 - b) walking in the **doctrine** of Jesus
 - c) involves a commitment to avoid a **lifestyle** of sin
- D. 1:8 – Christians who claim they have no sin are **deceived**.
 1. God is patient with those who realize they are prone to sin and are taking measures to deal with it.
 2. God is NOT patient or compassionate with Christians who refuse to recognize sin as a problem.
 3. Those who minimize sin or ignore it have a big problem.
- E. 1:9 – Christians who confess with a sense of regret for committing the sin are promised **forgiveness**.
 1. This is behavior indicative of a heart turned toward God.
 2. God forgives us of the sins we confess.
 - a) Is confession merely a simple acknowledgement that sin has occurred?
 - b) Confession implies **regret** and a desire to **redirect** life.
 - c) In confession, we don't place God under obligation – we place ourselves under obligation to redirect our lives.
 3. 1:9 – *cleanse us from all sin*. Through His grace and mercy,
 - a) God forgives us of the sin we may not realize we have.
 - b) Also: there is no sin that God will not forgive.
 4. We must continually seek Him, being honest with self & w/God.
- F. 1:10 – Christians who claim to have no sin & do not need His forgiveness **insult** God.

II. The importance of this text.

- A. John emphasizes that Christians must admit they struggle with sin.
 1. As long as we live on earth, we will struggle with sin.
 2. We are cleansed of sin because of God's **mercy** & forgiveness – not because we are **perfect**!
- B. We can move with assurance as long as we continue to **resist** sin in our lives.
 1. When we do fall short, we must accept responsibility for spiritual failures.
 2. Penitently and faithfully, we must approach God and confess the sin, pray for forgiveness, and pray for help in strengthening our weaknesses.
 3. God has no hesitation to cleanse Christians who admit their spiritual failures.
- C. When people become Christians, God does not abandon us to our own strength. He works to see us succeed! He wants us in heaven!

III. Transforming our Spiritual Perspective:

- A. Too often, the perspective we have is that personal **performance**/worthiness is the means to justify a relationship with God.
1. Many Christian lives are lived in **fear** – not **faith**!
 2. obedience is absolutely necessary,...but
 3. It must not be an attempt to deserve what God has accomplished.
 4. Obedience is the grateful acceptance of God's gift.
 - a) We do not obey to be saved – we obey because we have been saved!
 5. Christians are those who gratefully live in the benefits of salvation.
 - a) Our actions, motives, could never provide, deserve, or earn those benefits.
- B. With too many, salvation boils down to performance ... not **relationship**!
1. Causes people to be insecure in their relationship with God.
 - a) Salvation is at best, *iffy*. A matter of chance. Uncertain.
 - b) *Die at the right moment* – saved.
 - c) *Die at the wrong moment* – lost.
 2. This attitude views salvation as a human accomplishment and not God's gift.
 - a) Romans 6:23 – what do we deserve?
 - b) What do we possess? The *gift* of God – **salvation**!
- C. Romans 8:1-8 – consider these verses in light of what we have discussed in 1 John.
1. Through Jesus – Christians have been delivered from sin.
 2. We **respond** by conforming to the teaching of the Holy Spirit.
 3. We **respond** by no longer consciously rebelling against God.
- D. 8:16-17a – as long as we are living godly lives in accordance with teaching of the HS – we can **know** we are children of God.
1. 8:24-25 – hope = confident expectation. We now live with this assurance.
 2. 8:31-35 – the Christian who **chooses** to live in God's love cannot be ripped from God's love.
 - a) the key is not sinlessness
 - b) The key is love for God, which will be seen in our response to Him!
 - c) If we maintain our love for God – God keeps us in His love.
- E. 8:37-39
1. What God did in Jesus is more than adequate to save us as long as we choose to abide in Jesus.
 2. The foundation of our faith must be firmly established in God's adequacy.
 - a) At issue is not God's power.
 - b) At issue is our **faith** in God's power.
 - c) *Lord...increase our faith!*

Conclusion:

- A. We can live with confident expectation.
- B. Are you? If not, why not? Obey the gospel today!
- C. INVITATION