

Adult Bible Study Class 5/2/10

Session 172

The teachings of the Epistles (cont'd)

18. 1 John

e. Read 1 John, chapter 5.

v 1-5 John shows how "faith, love", and obedience are related to each other. Faith brings us into a loving relationship with God and love for Him leads to love for other Christians and to obedience of "His commandments". They are not burdensome, for the practical benefits of obedience to all God's laws are entirely contributive to human good and fulfilling to those who learn their application to life. "Our faith" brings victory over "the world", providing a spiritual weapon by which we can combat both the temptation and the persecutions of a godless society.

v 6-13 In the previous paragraph (vv 1,5), John spoke of faith in the divine-human Jesus. Now he presents the basis of such belief, especially in answer to the heretics who suggested that the Spirit came upon Jesus at His Baptism but left Him at His crucifixion. John insists that Christ possessed the indwelling Holy Spirit during His entire earthly life (since He was born by the power of the Spirit).

v 6 "water" probably refers to the Baptism of Jesus, when the Father declared His identity as the Son and anointed Him for His ministry. "blood" refers to the Crucifixion, by which Christ completed His work. "The Spirit" testifies concerning Christ at every point of His life.

v 7,8 The Law demanded the testimony of two or three witnesses (see Deut. 19:15; John 8. 17,18).

v 9 Behind the united testimony of the three witnesses is God Himself.

v 10 The assurance that comes to those who trust in Jesus is from the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:16). To refuse to believe is equivalent to calling God a "liar".

v 11-13 John states the content of the "testimony" given by the witnesses mentioned in the previous verses. "Eternal life" signifies not only endless life but a quality of life that comes only to those who have faith in Jesus. This life is a present possession of which we can have confident assurance.

v 14,15 Children of God may have "confidence" of free access and boldness of speech in presenting their requests to Him. There is

however, a limitation to the assurance that our prayers will be answered. The NT elsewhere bases the assurance on asking in Jesus' name (John 14:13,14; 15:16; 16:23,24), abiding in Christ and allowing His words to abide in us (John 15:7), having faith (Matt.21:22; James 1:6), and being righteous in life and fervent in prayer (1John. 3:21,22; James 5:16). Here John says that we must ask "according to His will", which inclusively states the fundamental condition for assurance in prayer. One who abides in Christ and whose words abide in Him, who prays in the name of Jesus, that is, in accord with His character and nature; and who is full of faith and righteousness is not inclined to pray anything contrary to His will. But more than how we pray, God wills and cares that we pray. Genuine prayer is not an attempt at precise means of getting God to meet our desires and demands; but rather, in subordinating our will to His, we open the doorway to His fullest blessings being released in our lives.

v 16,17 A specific example of prayer is intercession for a "brother sinning a sin which dose not lead to death". On the other hand, John does not encourage prayer for the restoration of those who are sinning a "sin leading to death". These are the ones who, like the false teachers, have manifested the spirit of the Antichrist (2:18) in denying the Father and the Son (2:22,23). They reveal themselves to be "children of the Devil" (3:10), and they forfeit life in rejecting Christ (v12).

v 18 "does not sin": John teaches that anyone whose life is unrepentantly characterised by sin does not belong to the family of God. The reason that a Christian does not persist unrepentantly in sin is that "he who has been born of God keeps himself", or, as this may also be translated, "He(Jesus) who was born of God keeps him (the believer) from the relentless temptation and snare of "the wicked one".

v 19 John has given tests by which believers may "know" that they "are of God" as distinguished from those who belong to "the wicked one". "world": Satan exercises dominion over the world as its ruler (see John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 6:12).

v 21 Any god, object, or pursuit other than that directed by God's revealed will and way declared in His Son (v20) is an idol.

Please read Psalm 51

Memory verse: Col. 3:4

God bless you

Ron