

Session 10

An Exposition of I John

I John 5:13–21

Scriptures

I John 5:13

Hebrews 6:12

John 6:66

Hebrews 6:4–6

Matthew 24:13

Luke 9:62

I John 5:14

Romans 4:19

Jeremiah 32:27

I John 5:15

Ephesians 3:20

I John 5:16

Matthew 12:31

I John 5:17

I John 1:9

I John 5:18

II Corinthians 5:17

I John 5:19–20

I John 5:21

I John 1:5–6

I John 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

To preach Christ and make Him known is to preach the precious gift of spiritual regeneration. It is to reveal that God's eternal life can be found in the One sent to declare Him to the world.

There is but one entrance into heaven, and it is through the Son of God, Who now sits in heaven.

There should be no guesswork in determining one's salvation, as both God's Word and God's Spirit will confirm its possession.

Sincerely believing in Jesus Christ, obeying His words, and loving the brethren produces confidence that one is born of God, and shares spiritual relationship with Him. While religion provides no real certainty of these truths, genuine belief in the Savior does.

And that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

The second part of this verse, which appears at first as a duplication of thought, is actually just an exhortation to continue in the faith.

It is not enough to merely believe upon Jesus Christ for a brief period of time, which offers no sure hope of gaining the spiritual life offered through Him.

True faith is enduring; it is not short-term, for a time, or temporary. This mere profession of piety will save no one.

Thus, continued belief in the Son of God and subjection to Him must extend until this earthly life is over, or we are received into heaven by Him.

Practically, faith produces faithfulness, which is essential to receiving from God all that He has promised.

Hebrews 6:12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

When any lack following God's will for their lives, this demonstrates their lack of true spiritual regeneration.

John 6:66 From that time many of his [Jesus'] disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 6:66

Many of his disciples—Many who had followed him professedly as his disciples and as desirous of learning of him. See the notes at John 6:60.

Went back—Turned away from him and left him. From this we may learn,

1. Not to wonder at the apostasy of many who profess to be followers of Christ. Many are induced to become his professed followers by the prospect of some temporal benefit, or under some public excitement, as these were; and when that temporal benefit is not obtained, or that excitement is over, they fall away.
2. Many may be expected to be offended by the doctrines of the gospel. Having no spirituality of mind, and really understanding nothing of the gospel, they may be expected to take offence and turn back.

To truly believe in the Son of God, faithfulness to Him must continue throughout our entire life. All departure and falling away from the Savior, prior to this, has perilous and eternal consequences.

***Hebrews 6:4–6 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,
5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,
6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.***

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Heb. 6:6

Such a statement might be one of the most effectual means of preserving from apostasy. To state that a fall from a precipice would cause certain death, would be one of the most certain means of preserving one from falling; to affirm that arsenic would be certainly fatal, is one of the most effectual means of preventing its being taken; to know that fire certainly destroys, is one of the most sure checks from the danger. Thousands have been preserved from going over the Falls of Niagara by knowing that there would be no possibility of escape; and so effectual has been this knowledge that it has preserved all from such a catastrophe, except the very few who have gone over by accident. So in religion. The knowledge that apostasy would be fatal, and there could be no hope of being of the danger than all the other means that could be used. If a man believed that it would be an easy matter to be restored again should he apostatize, he would feel little solicitude in regard to it; and it has occurred in fact, that they who suppose that this may occur, have manifested little of the care to walk in the paths of strict religion, which should have been evinced.

The Christian's call requires faithfulness until the end.

Matthew 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Once the Christian journey begins, it cannot be departed from. To do so endangers the promise of eternal life itself.

To even begin looking back is dangerous; actually turning back is spiritually fatal.

Luke 9:62 *And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Luke 9:62

No man, &c.—As ploughing requires an eye intent on the furrow to be made, and is marred the instant one turns about, so will they come short of salvation who prosecute the work of God with a distracted attention, a divided heart. Though the reference seems chiefly to ministers, the application is general. The expression “looking back” has a manifest reference to “Lot’s wife” (Ge 19:26; and see on [1621] Lu 17:32). It is not actual return to the world, but a reluctance to break with it. (Also see on [1622] Mt 8:21.)

I John 5:14 *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*

One way to encourage faith in God is to focus not on the petition, but rather on the Lord Who has the power to grant it.

Understandably, no faith can really be developed by looking at the obstacle, and consequently, not God’s ability to help us to overcome it.

This was the spies’ sin, when they returned from searching the promised land and gave an evil report of what they had seen (Num. 13:25–29).

Thus, when praying for deliverance, we should trust in God’s ability to deliver and not be consumed with our own natural inabilities.

Spiritual confidence in God is what characterized Abraham’s faith, and it should characterize ours as well.

Romans 4:19 *And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb.*

Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Rom. 4:19

He considered not—He did not regard the fact that his body was now dead, as any obstacle to the fulfillment of the promise. He did not suffer that fact to influence him, or to produce any doubt about the fulfillment. Faith looks to the strength of God, not to second causes, or to difficulties that may appear formidable to man.

It is not confidence in self that gives hope of answered prayer, but trust and confidence in the One we are praying to.

For this reason men should not look on their own fleshly inadequacies, shortcomings, and inabilities, but rather trust in the Lord, Who has none.

Jeremiah 32:27 *Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?*

I John 5:15 *And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

Expectant prayer is the most effective prayer. This is observed in the lame man at the gate Beautiful (Acts 3:2–8); the woman who came to touch the hem of Jesus’ garment expecting healing (Matt. 9:20–22); and the centurion who sought for Jesus to speak only a word in order that his servant might be healed (Matt. 8:5–13).

This is again why men's eyes should be solely on the Lord, similar to when Peter's eyes were focused on Jesus when he walked on the water (Matt. 14:22–32), lest their attention become distracted, also like Peter, by observing the storm, and dependent faith in God is lost.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 5:15

Not one of our past prayers offered in faith, according to His will, is lost. Like Hannah, we can rejoice over them as granted even before the event; and can recognize the event when it comes to pass, as not from chance, but obtained by our past prayers. Compare also Jehoshaphat's believing confidence in the issue of his prayers, so much so that he appointed singers to praise the Lord beforehand (II Chrn. 20:5–22).

When a man spiritually perceives that God has heard him, he should expect, when his request is according to divine will, to receive what has been asked.

The only way also that believers may experience the powerful effects and wonderful results of prayer is by praying.

For God cannot prove Himself until men believe that God is, and that the Lord will justly reward those who diligently seek Him.

When prayer is offered with expectant faith, God can reveal His supernatural spiritual ability to do exceedingly above all that is asked and/or thought.

Understandably, it is not God's power that falls short in times of need, but His people's faith, which cannot perceive that what is impossible with man, is entirely and absolutely possible with God.

Ultimately, whatever any can perceive, God is able to do exceeding abundantly more than this.

Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him [God] that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 3:20

That is able to do—see the notes, Romans 16:25.

Exceeding abundantly—The compound word used here occurs only in this place, and in 1 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:13. It means, to an extent which we cannot express.

Above all that we ask or think—More than all that we can desire in our prayers; more than all that we can conceive; see the notes on 1 Corinthians 2:9.

According to the power that worketh in us—The exertion of that same power can accomplish for us more than we can now conceive.

I John 5:16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

Praying for other Christians in need in the body of Christ is as essential as praying for our own needs. If we love our brothers as ourselves, we will seek God's help for them.

Though there is *a sin which is not unto death*, there is undoubtedly one that is.

There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

In all of life there are natural laws that govern points of no return. The same is true concerning spiritual laws, when men progress further in sin than where God's forgiveness will follow.

An example of this can be observed in the physical realm, such as if a man jumped off an exceedingly high and lofty cliff, but then, in the middle of the fall, abruptly changed his mind, yet nothing could alter the fatal result.

In some things, and especially so in regard to certain sin, there exists an event horizon. Once this has been passed, there is no chance of reversing the choice that has been made, nor to avoid the inevitable repercussions that must come because of it.

Sin against the Holy Spirit is such a fateful error as this: an error from which neither repentance nor prayer can change God's judgment.

Matthew 12:31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

If any passage of Scripture should alarm men to the danger of aligning themselves with the devil and carrying his words of blasphemy against the work of the Holy Spirit, it is this one.

If this sin is committed, no room for forgiveness remains, and not even prayers of faith can alter God's sentence.

No sin is so great as proclaiming evil the work of God. To proceed this far in sin goes beyond even the manifold grace of God.

To align oneself with the devil is to carry out his malicious and treacherous aims and speak evil of the Lord's work. The consequence of this devilish act is none other than eternal damnation.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Matt. 12:31

The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.— ... The Pharisees were warned against a sin to which they were drawing perilously near. To condemn the Christ as a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, as breaking the Sabbath, or blaspheming when He said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," was to speak a word against the Son of Man. These offences might be sins of ignorance, not implying more than narrowness and prejudice. But to see a man delivered from the power of Satan unto God, to watch the work of the Spirit of God, and then to ascribe that work to the power of evil, this was to be out of sympathy with goodness and mercy altogether. In such a character there was no opening for repentance, and therefore none for forgiveness. The capacity for goodness in any form was destroyed by this kind of antagonism. The human nature in that extremest debasement has identified itself with the devil nature, and must share its doom.

I John 5:17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

When men do not adhere to the commandments given by either God's Word or God's Spirit, it is sin; however, this does not imply that all sin is unpardonable and must end in death.

God's nature is to forgive, so that if a man repents of his sin, the Lord's grace will prove itself greater than his transgression.

Nowhere also is God's love manifested more than when He forgives those who have broken His laws and transgressed His commandments.

Ultimately, pity on the sinner is one of the greatest expressions of divine love that is extended towards him. Vast amounts of sin have been forgiven through repentance, and the penalty for sin avoided because of the generosity of God's nature.

Just as man's fallen nature compels him to sin against God's laws, God's loving nature allows for forgiveness for this disobedience.

The gospel of Christ is undoubtedly a gospel of divine grace, where men, though unworthy of pardon, are still, because of heavenly mercy, granted it.

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

I John 5:18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

The truth is not debatable that any true Christian cannot remain living in sin, nor will he return back to it once born of God. God's very own nature imparted to him prohibits this.

Thus, if a man claims he can remain in sin and live as he always has and still be saved, then you can be sure he has never received true spiritual regeneration.

Continuing in sin, or refusing to leave it, only proves that men have never been saved by Christ, since it is the children of wrath, and not the children of promise, who foolishly believe the holiness of heaven and the uncleanness of sin can be joined.

Yet no man can truly enter heaven without being born of God, and all those truly born of Him will depart from serving their carnal nature, which consists of nothing but sin.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:18

We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not—Is not habitually and characteristically a sinner; does not ultimately and finally sin and perish; cannot, therefore, commit the unpardonable sin. Though he may fall into sin, and grieve his brethren, yet we are never to cease to pray for a true Christian: we are never to feel that he has committed the sin which has never forgiveness, and that he has thrown himself beyond the reach of our prayers. This passage, in its connection, is a full proof that a true Christian "will" never commit the unpardonable sin, and, therefore, is a proof that he will never fall from grace. Compare the notes at Hebrews 6:4–8; Hebrews 10:26.

But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

Adding to the wonderful truth that the new birth transforms the human heart is that God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, preserves, protects, and keeps safe those whom God has given Him and made to become part of His mystical body.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, I John 5:18

But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself.—Rather, he that is begotten of God keepeth him: that is, the Son of God preserves him. (Comp. John 6:39; John 10:28; John 17:12; John 17:15.)

It is Christ's blood that saves the Christian, and it is Christ's power that preserves and keeps unholy and deceptive spirits from exerting the needed spiritual influence to lure him back to a life of sin and death.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:18

And that wicked one toucheth him not—The great enemy of all good is repelled in his assaults, and he is kept from falling into his snares.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 5:18

that wicked one toucheth him not—so as to hurt him. In so far as he realizes his regeneration-life, the prince of this world hath nothing in him to fasten his deadly temptations on, as in Christ's own case. His divine regeneration has severed once for all his connection with the prince of this world.

Where habitual sin is, God is not.

Where sin is preferred more than faith, the Holy Spirit's presence cannot be. This undoubtedly includes every willful sinner's heart.

True believers in Jesus Christ have been made anew. They have, through the ministry of the Son of God, been given a holy Spirit, which convicts them of sin, and will not allow their heart to continue in it.

Where the Spirit of Christ truly is, the desire to continue in sin cannot exist.

Hence, he who is truly born of God *sinneth not*; he cannot, simply because Christ's new nature that has been imparted to him is far greater than the previous sinful nature received from Adam.

Ultimately, the holy, spiritual genetics of heaven are far greater than the sinful, natural genetics passed on from Adam.

Because of their relationship with the Son of God, those saved are made completely new creatures.

II Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

This spiritual transformation is similar to when God took from the Spirit upon Moses and gave it to the seventy elders of Israel (Num. 11:25).

But now God has taken the Spirit of His Son, and anointed those saved by Christ, so that they might share in the same spiritual nature as their Savior.

I John 5:19–20 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

²⁰ And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

These verses reveal the three spiritual realities that every child of God will be made to know through the revelation given to him by the Son of God:

- (1) That God is Jesus Christ's Father, and Jesus Christ is God's Son.
- (2) That the whole world *lieth in wickedness*.
- (3) That he who is saved is *in Him that is true*, even in His Son, Jesus Christ.

I John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

These last words of the apostle seem to be a digression, yet the danger of unintended idolatry remains, even for those born of God.

Idolatry can occur when personal pursuits, worldly pleasures, carnal desires, and the cares of this world wrongly assume the place in the believer's heart reserved solely for God and His Christ.

For this reason Christians should take great care and regularly inspect their own hearts to ensure that nothing assumes the rightful place reserved solely for the Savior.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:21

(1) Those to whom he [the apostle] wrote were surrounded by idolaters, and there was danger that they might fall into the prevailing sin, or in some way so act as to be understood to lend their sanction to idolatry.

(2) in a world full of alluring objects, there was danger then, as there is at all times, that the affections should be fixed on other objects than the supreme God, and that what is due to him should be withheld.

There is no middle ground for true Christians to balance love for God and love for the world.

To love what the flesh desires, and not what the Holy Spirit wills, only reveals the absence of true salvation.

Consequently, if any desire to be saved, then sincere, deep, and genuine love for God must arise above every other carnal and worldly affection in the heart.

Idolatry is the foundation of all unrighteousness, and no man who lives in it will inherit everlasting life.

Many also have deceived themselves into believing that they may continue in sin, pursue its carnal pleasures, and still enter heaven. This is not the truth of God's Word, nor what the apostle John personally heard and was taught by Jesus Christ. If any believe otherwise, they have entered into conflict with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and shall as a result, forfeit the salvation offered through Him.

I John 1:5-6 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him [Him] is no darkness at all.

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.