

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 15- The Affections of the Heart

146. The Assurance of Salvation- Part 15

WAOY Tuesday 02/05/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to look at what the Apostle John taught about, "The Assurance of Salvation". So, let's read **1John 3: 19-24** again together:

19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him

20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Now here in verses 19-21- the Apostle John deals with a very important subject- the role that our heart plays in our Assurance. Now this is a very interesting aspect of our walk with God and one that we need to discuss. Many times what the Bible teaches about the heart and what we, who live in this modern culture think about our hearts are two different things. We have a tendency to think that if someone is sincere- that that means that they are right. And so if we are not careful- we will think that the sincerity of someone is what determines their relationship with God- and that is not only *false*- it is dangerous. Read with me **1John 3:20**:

in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.

Here John is saying that our hearts are unreliable- our hearts are not to determine who we are and whether our standing with God is correct or not. John says here: “**God is greater than our heart**”. God is more important; more certain; more steadfast; and more reliable than our hearts.

Beloved, we have to acknowledge that the Bible describes our hearts differently than we do. Let’s read **Jeremiah 17:9**:

The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

Now let’s examine that for just a minute. What is God actually speaking here through the prophet Jeremiah? God is telling us three things in this verse:

1. There is nothing about us that is more deceitful than our hearts
2. Our heart is not just sick- our heart is *desperately* sick
3. No one can truly know his own heart.

Now what is fantastic about this verse is that our modern culture doesn’t agree with anything that God says here. Our culture teaches us that we should listen to our hearts; that we should follow our hearts; that we should do what our hearts tell us to do. But do you see how opposed that is to what God says here?

Why should I listen to something that is deceitful above anything else that I have? Why is it that I should follow something that is desperately sick? Why should I, as a believer in Jesus Christ, do what my heart tells me to do if the Bible clearly says that I cannot know my own heart?

Well of course, the answer is that I should *not* listen to my own heart; I should *not* follow my heart and I certainly should *not* do what my heart tells me to do. But if I don’t follow my heart- then what do I follow? Read **Romans 8:14**:

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

As a believer- I have indwelling within me Gods' Spirit- and that Holy Spirit will do four things for me and in me and to me and through me that cannot possibly be done by a deceitful and unknown heart. Let's read what John taught about this in **John 16:4-15**:

4 "But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. These things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

5 "But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?'

6 "But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.

7 "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

8 "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;

9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;

10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me;

11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

12 "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now.

13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.

15 All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.

Now most of the time that these verses are read- people tend to think of them in only one way. People tend to think that this is what happens in us and through us as believers being filled with God's Spirit- and that is true. Thank God we are not alone. Thank God- we have another Comforter who dwells in and walks in us and Who leads us and guides us.

But I want you to see that there is a difference in being led by the Spirit of God within you and being led by your own heart. You see, even after we are saved- we have to *guard* our hearts because our hearts *still*

have the capacity to be deceivable and our hearts *still* have the ability to be desperately sick and our hearts *still* have the capacity to love and crave after things that are sinful and which dishonor God.

The Spirit of God within us however does not have any of those abilities. *Everything* that God's Spirit says is true; *everything* that God's Spirit leads us into is right and *everything* that God's Spirit reveals to us is just the way it is.

Now the reason that I am bringing all this out is because we have a tendency to think that just because we are saved- we can now turn our hearts loose and follow its dictates. We reason that because we are saved and because Jesus now lives in our hearts- therefore- whatever our heart says to us- must be from God. But that is simply not true.

Look at what Jesus said here in **John 16**. Here we have Peter, James, and John and the others standing around with Jesus and Jesus is telling them that He is going to leave them. And they got sad. Now don't blame them for that. Think about this for just a second.

Just think- the entire time that we have been saved- we have been eagerly awaiting the *return* of Jesus Christ to this earth. We anxiously wait for the Eastern Sky to split and to see the glorious coming of the Lord. But here- they had Him. They actually and literally and physically had Jesus. And now Jesus tells them that He is leaving. Why? What possible reason could Jesus have to leave them at this important moment? They didn't understand and I don't believe for a second that any of us would have understood any better than they did. Don't kid yourself- these men were just ordinary people who had ordinary minds and ordinary desires and ordinary ambitions. And most of the time- they didn't have a clue as to what Jesus was talking about or what Jesus was doing- and neither would we. They were really not that much different than we are.

But even though they were just average people- they were called and they were chosen to do something magnificent that nobody before them and nobody after them has been called and chosen to do. These men – as bungling as they were- were chosen to set up the Christian Church; they were chosen to establish Christianity on the earth; they were chosen to articulate the final, full, completed, and finished Revelation of God to Man and to rightly interpret the Old Testament– and so God said specific things to them that He never spoke to anyone else- and

that is not directed to anyone else. And part of that is recorded for us here in **John 16**.

Jesus told His Apostles- the men that He handpicked to set up Christian Truth- that they were going to be endued with Power from on High and that when that Comforter came to them- that Comforter was going to “**guide you into all the truth**”.

Now as believers- we can take great comfort in that phrase and we can trust that God’s Spirit will in fact lead us and guide us today- but when Jesus actually said these words- He was not talking about you and me- Jesus was talking specifically to those men that He had handpicked to raise up the Church.

And as you look at the phrase that Jesus spoke here in **John 16:13** in the Greek- then it is clear that Jesus was not simply saying that the Holy Spirit was going to guide all believers into Truth- but that God the Holy Spirit was going to lead *these* men- the Apostles into the final, full and finished Revelation of God by and through what they would write down for us at a later date.

Jesus said in **Matthew 16** that He was going to build His Church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it- but God chose to use men to build that Church and so men were involved in its foundation. Read with me **Ephesians 2:19&20**:

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*,

The inspired Word of God says that the foundation of the Christian Church is the Apostles and Prophets and that Jesus Christ Himself is the Chief Cornerstone- Who is to have the Preeminence in the Church that belongs to Him. Now when I am speaking here of Apostles and Prophets- I am referring to Peter, James, John, Paul, Moses, Isaiah- those guys. I am not referring to those self- appointed and unaccountable people today who run around claiming to have a special insight into God and a special contact with God and a special revelation from God. Those people are fakes and imposters and spiritual mercenaries and should not be believed or followed. Listen, there is not a dime’s worth of different between Joseph Smith or Ellen G. White –

who have deceived millions of people with their claim to be a prophet or an apostle and any modern person who makes the same claim.

The Apostles of Jesus Christ set up the Christian Church. And however sick the modern Church may be- however in need of repentance and a return to the Bible that the modern Church needs- nevertheless Christianity is established- and it will never be established again. Christianity has already been set up; Christianity and Christian Doctrine and the final, full, and completed Revelation of God has already been received and articulated and written down and put into the Bible for us to learn and study and love and obey and preach to every creature without shame and without fear.

So we don't need any new revelation, beloved- we need to return to already *existing* Revelation of God in Scripture. We don't need new dreams and visions- we need to return to the already existing dreams and revelations that God has already given in Scripture. And we don't need to follow our hearts- but we need to be led by God's Spirit which is made strong and vibrant in our lives as we understand Scripture and submit ourselves to its authority.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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