

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John 5:14-17**

Chapter 28- The Confidence That We Have in Him

257 Asking According to God's Will- Part 1

WAOY Wednesday 10/01/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today we will begin to look at what John taught about "The Confidence we have in Jesus Christ"- so let's read **1John 5:14-17** together:

14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

15 And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not *leading* to death, he shall ask and *God* will for him give life to those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is a sin *leading* to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.

17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not *leading* to death.

Now this section of 1John is a very important section- so we want to take our time to go over this carefully so that we get all that John is teaching. The first aspect that John deals with in this section is praying according to God's Will- and I want to go into that so let's read verse 14 again together:

This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

Now John says here that the fact that God hears the prayers that are offered in accord with His Will is what gives us confidence. So we need to understand what John is teaching us about prayer by saying this.

First of all- prayer is one of the most important gifts that God gave to His people. Prayer is the calling Card of Christianity; Prayer is

the aroma of the Church. When God's people gather together to cry out to God- God hears and God moves and things change. Prayer is when frail, weak human beings communicate with the Creator and Owner of the Universe. And of all the things that Jesus did for us prayer is one of the most important.

The disciples never asked Jesus to teach them how to preach or how to cast out demons or how to perform miracles. But they did ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. They watched Jesus pray to His Father and then they saw Him get up and do the things that He did and they said- *"I want that kind of contact with God!"* In **Luke 11:1**- they said,

Lord, teach us to pray...

And in **The Acts 2:42**- Dr. Luke lists four things that all the Christian Churches of the first century remained steadfast in so let's see what those four things were:

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

So every one of the Christian Churches paid close attention to four things that distinguished them from every other organization on earth- and those four things were:

1. The Apostles' Doctrine
2. Godly Fellowship
3. Communion
4. Prayer

So we can see then that without Sound Biblical Truth being taught and practiced- you don't really have a Church. You might have a social Club- but you do not have a real Christian Church unless you possess and teach the very same Doctrine that Peter, Paul, and John taught in the first century. And the one single way that you possess the same teaching as John and Paul and the other Apostles taught is by going line upon line and precept upon precept through the Holy Scriptures.

Other than that- you do not know and you are not teaching the same things that the Apostle's taught.

You see, dear friends, making sure that the people of God have the Apostle's Doctrine is not about giving people "tips on better living". It isn't about teaching them clever phrases and cute slogans from the latest best seller; it isn't about firing people up like a pep rally or a political convention; and it isn't about the people getting an emotional high or about them whooping and hollering and falling on the floor- that isn't giving them the Apostles Doctrine.

There is only one way for the Church to have and to know and to believe and to teach and to practice and to love and to defend the very same teaching that the Apostle's received from Jesus and that is by going to the Holy Bible- and teaching it in an expositional- line by line; verse by verse- so that you get the one true interpretation of every verse in the Bible.

It isn't about what your denominational headquarters says; it isn't about what is popular; it isn't about what makes people feel better about themselves; and it isn't about how we look at it- it is what God has said in the inspired, inerrant; infallible Word of the living God- period.

Likewise in order to have a genuine Church- you must have set aside times of godly fellowship. Now I need to mention something about this because there seems to be a lot of confusion about just what fellowship really is. It is fine to eat together and talk about the job or the game or your garden with friends- that is fine- there is nothing wrong with that. But that is not what this word, "fellowship" means.

As the word is used here in this verse- "fellowship" is when people get together to fellowship over the things of God. This kind of fellowship is when people discuss their personal struggles with each other so we all know how to pray for one another; it is a time when saints get together to get to know each other so they know what needs are there; to discuss a verse of Scripture that is bothering them; to give witness to a great victory that God has brought into your life; or to talk about the great things of God with other brothers and sisters in the Faith. That is the kind of fellowship that Luke wrote about in **Acts 2:42** that will help to make the Church strong in faith and strong in love.

So, for example- for the leaders of a Church to cancel a Sunday Night Church Service so that the men of the Church can eat chili and watch

the Super Bowl is not the “fellowship” that Luke was talking about. That is something that the lost world might do- but not believers.

The third thing that made the Church strong in the first century is that they conducted the Communion Service regularly. And each time they did partake of the Lord’s Supper together- they were compelled to examine their lives and their relationship to each other so that any unforgiveness and divisions among believers could be exposed and put under the Blood and to remember that it took the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus in order for them to be saved- so the focus of God’s people was regularly taken off themselves and their own needs and wants and put back where it belonged- on Jesus and what Jesus has done for us.

And the fourth thing that made the Church to be the Church in the first century was that they engaged themselves in regular times of earnest, sincere; passionate; effectual; and fervent prayer. They prayed when they were scared; they prayed when they were happy; they prayed when they were threatened with annihilation; and they prayed when they were at rest. They prayed and they prayed and they prayed and they prayed.

In fact- the very first Church Service in the Upper Room was not a Bible Study; nor was it a leadership conference- but it was a prayer meeting that went on for at least ten days as 120 scared and trembling souls gathered at the command of Jesus Himself and they prayed without ceasing until they were endued with power from on high. And the result of that time of prayer was that those 120 souls went down the steps of that Upper Room and they went out into a sin cursed universe- and they changed the world!

In **The Acts 4**- the disciples were arrested for preaching the Gospel and they were ordered by the Government to never speak about Jesus ever again. So, what did these early believers do? Did they boycott Roman stores? No. Did they write a letter to Caesar to protest their treatment? No. Did they campaign on behalf of other politicians? No, they didn’t. So what did they do when threatened with death for preaching about Jesus? They went back to the Church and they prayed! What did they pray? Did they ask God to keep them safe and prosperous so they could enjoy a better life down here on earth? No. Did they ask God to destroy the wicked people who were persecuting

them? No, they didn't pray like that at all. Well just how did they pray? Let's read **The Acts 4:24-31**:

24 And when they heard *this*, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is You who **MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM,**

25 who by the Holy Spirit, *through* the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, '**WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS?**

26 '**THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.'**

27 "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,

28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

29 "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence,

30 while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus."

31 And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and *began* to speak the word of God with boldness.

God had called these men to preach the Gospel to every creature-even as He has called us to do the same thing. And so when the Government told them not to do what God had told them to do- they prayed that God would empower them to do God's Will anyway- in direct opposition to the Government. And God answered that prayer and these men went out in open rebellion to the Government ban on preaching- and they obeyed God and not Man.

You see, dear friends, the Government of the United States didn't empower us to pray or call us to preach the Gospel. The Company that you work for didn't give you the gift of prayer or anoint you to preach the Word of God- God did. And so no one in Government or in Corporate America has the authority to ban prayer or preaching in any way shape or form. The Public School Administration does not have the authority to keep you from praying. God said to pray and so as children

of God- we should pray. We should pray at school; and we should pray at work; we should pray at the Courthouse; and we should pray in the market place.

No human being; no elected official; no law enforcement officer; no judge; and no boss equipped believers to pray- God called us to pray and God empowered us to pray and God has authorized us to pray and the result of that is that no human being or agency on earth has the right to say you can't pray.

Now you may get punished for praying. You may be fired or lose your job or be penalized for praying- but you can absolutely pray. And when you suffer as the result of doing what God said to do- don't bellyache or whine about it- but thank God that you are worthy to suffer reproach as a Christian- and keep right on praying!

So it is not true that we can't pray in this country. That is really not the issue at all- because we absolutely can pray. We may be persecuted for praying- but we can pray. So the real issue is do we value prayer enough to suffer for it and go right on praying and not allow anyone to silence our prayers or are we more afraid of what Man may do to us? That is the real issue. So don't ever be guilty of saying, "They won't let me pray" because John said that if we pray according to the Will of God- God will answer our prayers.

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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