

1 John 5:14-21

John ends his letter with some final instructions to the church.

1. He knows that their citizenship is not here! They are citizens of another kingdom.
2. He knows that they will be living as aliens here and it will be the goal of their neighbors to assimilate them into their culture.
 - a. It is the same today!
 - b. The entertainment industry, media, etc ALL desire to draw you away from a biblical culture and biblical worldview and assimilate you into their culture
 - c. We have to recognize and understand this!
3. He knows that they will be persecuted for their faith, they will be pressured to conform to the world, and some of them might be deceived by the false prophets that abound.

So, he ends his letter by explaining to them God's design for preserving them faithful until the end.

I. The Family of God v14-17

Verses 14-15

1. If you ask according to His will...he hears.
2. If we know He hears, we know that we have what we asked for.
3. Prayer is powerful. Prayer is productive.
4. Matthew 7:7-11 *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!*

We often take verses 14 and 15 by themselves, but we need to be careful here. If you look carefully you will see that verses 14 and 15 lead into verses 16-17.

Verses 14-17

1. If we see our brother committing a sin not leading to death, pray for him. Ask!
2. That is something much bigger and important than a new car or a new house etc.
3. If we have this spiritual discipline at our disposal, we need to be using it to hold up our brothers and sisters in Christ.
4. If we see our brother committing a sin not leading to death, pray for him. Ask!
 - a. We need to be careful about attempting to identify any particular sin, or any type of sinning, as what is here said to be "unto death."
 - b. John does not tell us in his letter specifically what he means...which means one of two things.
 1. Either he assumed they knew already very clearly
 2. He did not want them to know very clearly what he was referring to.
 - c. There is a reason John could have left it rather vague. He wants there to be tension present.
 1. We see none of our "little sins" as sins leading to death, and we are tempted to accept the serpent's lie: "ye shall not surely die."
 2. No sin of ours is serious enough to be, "a sin unto death."
 3. That is why it is left vague...because we need to be careful and feel the tension.

So how do we apply this text as we consider praying for our brothers and sisters in Christ?

1. The simplest application, I believe is, if they are living and they are sinning...pray!
2. If they are not living...there is obviously no need to pray...but if they are still alive, pray.
3. If we pray for our professing brother, knowing that he cannot have abundant life while continuing as a sinner, we must do what we can to bring him to repentance.

Matthew 18:15-17 *If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector*

1. The body of Christ protects and preserves one another by prayer support and accountability
2. This is vital to us remaining distinct from the culture around us and vital to us being good citizens of a greater Kingdom.

II. The Son of God v18-20

We are not characterized by sin because He who was born of God keep us and the evil one does not touch us.

1. John 10:27-29 *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*

2. Jesus Himself protects us
 - a. The whole world lies in the power of the evil one
 - b. But not us...Jesus has us in His hand protecting us and enlightening us etc.
3. He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it!
4. The family of God and the Son of God cooperate to keep us!

III. The Child of God v21

Doesn't this seem odd, that John would just abruptly end his letter with these 6 words?

1. This is not incidental or accidental. Every word of God's word is intentional.
2. It is no coincidence that John ends with this command.
3. *The human heart is a factory of idols...Everyone of us is, from his mother's womb, expert in inventing idols.* Calvin

This is John's reminder to us, that though we have the family of God and the Son of God, we must take action ourselves

1. We cannot sit back and coast into heaven. You be on Guard yourself.
2. Hebrews 12:1-2 *Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith*
 - a. Sin clings closely...it is crouching at the door and it's desire is for us
 - b. *"It is always acting, always conceiving, and always seducing and tempting."* John Owen

If we are going to persevere in the faith in the midst of antichrists: false prophets, a godless culture, and potential persecution we not only have our brothers and sisters in Christ holding us up....we not only have Christ holding us secure. We have a responsibility to go to war with sin.

1. *“Do not take a day off from this work; always be killing sin or it will be killing you.”* Owen
2. Romans 13:14 *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.*
3. *“Sin will not spare for one day. There is no safety but in a constant warfare for those who desire deliverance from sin’s perplexing rebellion.”* Owen
4. Little children, keep yourselves from idols!

Discussion Questions

1. Take some time to review the sermon notes from Sunday.
2. Was there anything from this sermon that was difficult to understand or that didn’t make sense to you? Discuss it with the group to try and get a better understanding.
3. What do we learn about God the Father...God the Son....and/or God the Holy Spirit from the main Scripture text that was used?
4. What do we learn about man from the main text?
5. Are there any commands to obey? Promises to believe? Sins to avoid in the main Scripture text?
6. What do you believe was the most impactful part of the sermon Sunday? Discuss.
7. How do you plan to apply some portion of what you learned to your life? For example, “In response to this sermon, I will _____