

UNDERSTANDING THE WAY OF LIFE

1 JOHN 5:20 • TV220A

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By

HENRY T. MAHAN

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Zebulon Baptist Church

6088 Zebulon Highway

Pikeville, KY 41501

1 John 5:20

“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.”

I’m not going to try to preach to you so much as to talk to you. I want you to take your Bible and open it to the **Book of 1st John**; that is the little epistle at the end of the New Testament.

Turn to **1 John Chapter 5: verse 20**. My subject today is this: **“UNDERSTANDING THE WAY OF LIFE.”**

John said in **1 John 5:20**; *“And we know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we may Him that is true and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and this is eternal life.”*

My friends, you cannot work your way to heaven. The Bible establishes that very positively and very clearly. The Scripture says, *“We are not justified by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy.”*

Paul said, *“We conclude that a man is justified by faith and not by the works of the Law.”* You cannot work your way to heaven. There is no way that you can work your way into the presence of God.

You cannot buy your way to God. The Scripture says; *“The gift of God is eternal life,”* it is the gift of God. Christ is God’s unspeakable gift. The Scripture says, *“Come without money, without price. Come buy wine and milk without money and without price.”*

You cannot buy your way to God with your tithes, your offerings, your deeds, or with your great programs. It is impossible!

You cannot shout your way to God. I want you to listen to me; you cannot sing and shout your way to God. There has to be a righteousness established before God and there has to be a sin-offering. *“Without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin.”*

So, whatever effort you are putting forth, there is no way to work your way to God, earn your way to God, buy your way to God, ignore the teachings of the Word of God, and sing and shout your way to God.

There is a way to fellowship with God and that is what I want to talk about today. I’m not talking about fellowshipping just with the heart but with the mind.

I know that repentance is a heart work and faith is a heart work. Believing God is a heart work. The Scripture says, *“If thou shalt believe in thine heart; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”*

I know believing is a heart work, but God doesn’t work apart from the mind. That is what our text tells us; *“we know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true.”*

The writer of **Hebrews** said in **Chapter 1**; *“God, who at sundry times and in different manners, spake to our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son.”*

This is what I am saying; *“He that hath ears to hear let him hear.”* Will you hear? You are not going to hear God unless you hear Christ. You are not going to know God unless you know Christ. *“The Son of God hath come and given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true.”*

You are not going to know God unless you know Christ. You are not going to believe God with saving faith unless you believe Christ. You are not going to be able to worship God unless you worship Christ. It is impossible to honor the Father and not honor the Son.

In **1 John 5:11-13**, this same writer says this; *“This is the record that God hath given us eternal life and this life is in His Son Jesus Christ. He that hath the Son of God hath life and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of*

the Son of God that you might know that you have eternal life and that you might believe on the name of the Son of God.”

John Flavel once pointed out four important truths. I think that they are four of the most important truths that can be given to our hearers; listen carefully to them:

First of all: He said, “Everything that God has for men, every spiritual blessing, every spiritual gift, is in Christ.”

Our Lord said that, He said; *“I am the true vine; you are the branches. Without me you can do nothing. I am the vine and you are the branches.”* In **Ephesians 1:3**, the Lord said; *“God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”* Everything that God has for the sinner is in Christ.

Secondly: These mercies and blessings of God are mine only by a living union with Christ.

Everything that God has for the sinner is in Christ and the only way that I can participate in and partake of these blessings is to be joined with Christ in God.

That is what the Scripture says; listen, *“in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, (in Christ), and you are complete in Him,”* as you are in Christ, *“of God are you in Christ Jesus, who is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”*

Do you see how clear it is? Everything that God has for us spiritually is in Christ. We have heavenly blessings in Christ. They are mine through and by a living union with Christ.

These blessings are not a union with a church, not a union with a preacher, not a union with an organization, but a living union with Christ. That union is brought to pass by faith.

This living union with Christ is ours by faith. That is what it says about Abraham; *“He believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness.”* If you can believe God, *“then all things are possible to them that believe.”*

If you will read the **11th Chapter of Hebrews** and learn the secret of all the believers in the Old Testament, the secret of every believer is in **Hebrews 11**; please listen to just part of it:

“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.” How? It was by faith. *“By faith Enoch walked with God. By faith Noah built an ark and saved his house. By faith Abraham was called unto a land that he should later receive by inheritance.”*

“By faith Moses chose the way of God, esteeming the reproaches of Christ, greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.”

When it tells about all these people, the Word says; *“these all died in faith.”* Do you see what I am saying? Everything that God has for the believer, every spiritual blessing, He has vested in Christ. He has put it in Christ and has accomplished it by Christ.

These blessings become ours only as we are in the Vine. Separated from the vine, Christ Jesus, we are only like dead branches, withered, dried, and fit for the burning. This saving relationship, this living union is brought to pass by faith, by believing on Christ.

Now listen, here is what I am getting to; this faith comes by hearing the Word; *“He that hath ears to hear; let him hear. He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath life. He that seeth the Son and believeth on him hath life.”*

We are going to have to hear some truth. That is the reason that I say, the way to God is not accomplished by activity, religious works, religious ceremonies, and religious requirements.

Our way to God is not accomplished by singing, shouting, and good times had by all. It comes through an understanding. This faith in Christ which brings a man into a living union with Christ only comes by hearing and believing the Word of God.

“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God: It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

There was an Ethiopian Eunuch, who was a very influential and wealthy man who was the treasurer of the country of Ethiopia. He had been to Jerusalem to worship. He was on his way back home riding in a chariot and reading the Word of God.

God sent a preacher to him by the name of Phillip. Phillip was walking along side the chariot observing this man reading the Scriptures. He was holding the Scriptures in his hand and was reading **Isaiah Chapter 53**.

Phillip looked up at him and said; *“do you understand what you are reading?”* The man said, *“How can I except some man show me?”*

So, Phillip got up into the chariot and sat down beside him. This is what I am doing this morning. I am just bringing this message to you as you pull your chair up and listen to me talk to you about understanding the way of life.

Phillip got up and sat down beside him *“and began at the same Scripture and preached unto him Jesus Christ.”*

That is what I am trying to do and this is my point. I will stress it over and over again, we are going to have to have some understanding of who God is, who Christ is, what sin is, and what is included in this matter of saving a sinner and presenting him holy and faultless in the presence of God.

UNDERSTANDING THE WAY OF LIFE

1 JOHN 5:20 • HENRY T. MAHAN

I know that **Romans 10:13** says “*whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*” I know that it is so; salvation is in that name. I know that “*there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.*” I know that; “*God has given him a name above every name.*”

My friend; you are faced with four tremendous questions right after Paul wrote those words (“*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*”).

Listen to these next four questions:

First of all: “*How are they going to call on Him in whom they have not believed?
How are they going to believe in him of whom they have not heard?
How are they going to hear without a preacher?
How are they going to preach except God sends them?*”

Now, those are the four questions there that I am dealing with in this message. There is going to have to be some kind of understanding of the way of life. A man cannot walk in a way that he does not see. He cannot walk in a way that he does not comprehend. He cannot walk in a way that he does not, to some extent, understand.

That is what our text is saying, “*the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true and that we are in Him that is true and this is the true God and this is eternal life. How are they going to hear without a preacher?*”

You might say, “Do we have a preacher?” Yes sir; we have the greatest preacher. We have that prophet and that preacher called “*His beloved Son.*” God said; “*This is my beloved Son; you hear him.*”

“*God hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.*” Are you prepared to hear from the Son of God today? I hope that you are because I am going to go through some of the writings in the **Book of John**. I am going to tell you what the preacher, that prophet, said, what that preacher said.

“*This is my beloved Son; hear Him.*” Hear Him with the ears. Hear Him with understanding. Yes, hear Him with the heart. You cannot believe what you do not, to some degree, understand, and that is exactly right.

What did He say?

First of all: The Lord Jesus Christ said this; “*I and My Father are one.*” Let that sink in. He said, “*I and My Father are one.*”

One day, the disciple said to Him; “*Show us the Father, just show us the Father and we will be satisfied.*” He said, “*Have I been so long time with you that you don’t know me? He that hath*

seen me hath seen my Father.” He also said; “You believe in God; believe also in me. I and my Father are one.”

You might say; “Ok preacher, in plain, every day language, so that everyone listening to you can understand; what are you getting at? What are you saying and what are you implying?”

I am saying, that the man who was born of Mary in Bethlehem’s manger, lived and worked in the carpenter shop with Joseph. He was the one who walked the streets of Galilee and Judea, Capernaum and Nazareth. He went about doing good.

He was the one who died on the cross, who was buried and rose again. He is God Almighty in human flesh. He is the God who created the worlds, through them into space, and *“in him and by him all things consist.”* For His glory, all things are created.

I don’t understand all that is taught in the subject of the Trinity. I just know that it is so. I know that the Father and the Son and Spirit are one. *“Hear O Israel; the Lord our God is one God,”* yet three, three in one.

The revelation of God is Christ. *“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.”* In **Isaiah 9:6**, the prophet said; *“His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. I and My Father are one.”*

These people to whom He said that to understood what He was saying. They took up stones to stone Him. He said, *“Many good works have I done among you; for which of these do you stone me?”*

They said, *“We are not stoning you for doing good works, but because you are a man and you say that you are God.”* They understood what He was saying. This is what He is saying; *“Here ye him; this is my Son, hear him.”*

“The Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true and that we are in him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ and this is the true God and this is eternal life.”

Do you understand me? Jesus of Nazareth is God incarnate, God in the flesh; it is *“God reconciling the world unto himself.”*

Second: He said this; *“I am come that they might have life, (spiritual life), and that they might have it more abundantly. I am come that they might have life. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life and shall never come into condemnation.”*

“He that believeth on the Son shall live; He has passed from death unto life. Because I live ye shall live.” Christ is our life; do you hear what I am saying?

I am saying that out of Christ there is nothing but death. He is life and out of Christ there is death, eternal death, spiritual death, and all kinds of death.

Christ is the light. Outside of Christ there is darkness, complete darkness. Christ is love. Outside of Christ there is hatred, enmity, and malice. Jesus Christ is our life, He is our life; that is what the Scripture says.

Without Him we are dead, twice dead. We have been plucked up by the roots and have no hope of ever living again. *“He is life.”*

God Almighty vested life in Christ and *“he that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son of God shall never see life.”*

Third: Christ says this; *“I am not come to condemn the world but that the world through me might be saved.”*

Our Lord Jesus Christ didn't come to condemn us; we stood condemned. We were condemned in Adam. He is saying, “I didn't come to condemn the world. My coming doesn't condemn the world. My Gospel doesn't condemn the world. My message does not condemn the world.”

The world stands condemned; *“in Adam we die; in Christ we are made alive. By man came death; by Christ came the resurrection.”* That is what the angel said to Joseph; *“Mary is going to bring forth a Son and you call His name Jesus for he shall save;”* He shall save, not damn.

Adam's sin damned us; our own sin damned us. Christ's righteousness and Christ's death saves us. *“He shall save His people from their sin.”*

Christ said, *“I'm not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”* Sinners, *“the Son of man is come to seek and to save.”* That is His mission, to save. Paul said, *“He has come into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief.”*

Christ didn't come to condemn; He came to save. He came to a world already condemned. He came to a people already condemned. We are *“children of wrath even as others.”* In Him is life. He said, *“I am the resurrection and the life.”*

Fourth: Notice what else He says, *“Will you hear Him? This is My Son, will you hear Him?”* God speaks to us by the Son.

Christ said this; *“I am not come to destroy the law.”* He didn't come to whittle God's law down, to make it less affective, and to make it less strict. *“He came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it.”*

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He came in the flesh and was subject to the Law. Listen to **Galatians 4: 4 and 5**; *“In the fullness of the time, God sent forth His Son made of a woman, (made in the flesh), made under the Law, to redeem them that were born under the Law.”*

Jesus Christ didn't come to set the law aside. Someone got the bright idea some years ago that in the Old Testament, God saved men by keeping the law. They thought that now that Jesus Christ has come, God has set the law aside. We are no longer saved by the law but we are now saved by grace.

That is the biggest bunch of foolishness that anyone has ever tried to put over on the American public. God has never saved men by the law; it has always been by grace. God has never redeemed people by obedience to the law; it has always been by the mercy of God through Jesus Christ and through the blood sacrifice.

All of those types in the Old Testament point to the cross. Everyone saved prior to the cross was saved by looking to the cross. Everyone after the death of Christ is saved by looking back to the death of Christ.

These men brought these sacrifices as a picture, type, and a symbol, of their dependence upon a redeeming God in Christ Jesus.

The law must be fulfilled. *“Christ didn't come to destroy the law. He was tempted in all points as we were, yet without sin.”* He fulfilled *“every jot and tittle of the law.”* He imputed to us a perfect, legal, standing, before God and before the Law.

“By one man's disobedience we were made sinners. By another man's obedience we were made righteous.”

Now, God can justify, sanctify, and redeem us, without dishonoring His holy law. That is what Christ said, He said; *“I didn't come to destroy the law.”* He didn't come to set the law aside. He didn't come to ignore the law. *“He was made of a woman, made under the law.”*

God in sending Christ didn't substitute for the law; He fulfilled it. He didn't figure out a way around the law; He figured a way straight through it by perfect obedience to it.

Do you see what I am saying? Christ is our representative and He did what we couldn't do. That is what He is saying when He says; *“I didn't come to destroy the law.”*

They kept saying, “He's got no use for the law; He heals on the Sabbath. He is trying to destroy Moses' law.” He is trying to pervert the people and teach them that Moses' law is not binding.

Moses' law was binding on Christ. Christ fulfilled every word of it, every requirement of it.

Fifth: Then He says this; *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so, must the Son of man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

Out there in the wilderness of sin, the people murmured against God and were rebelling against God as we have. They were bitten by the fiery serpents under the judgment and condemnation of God.

Moses came to God and cried for relief. He cried for deliverance. He cried for a way of salvation. God told him to *“make a serpent of brass just like those fiery serpents that had bitten the people. It was lifted upon a pole and whosoever would look would live.”*

That is a picture of Christ our sacrifice and our sin offering. We have been bitten by the serpents of sin. We are under the death and condemnation of sin.

“Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh,” in the likeness of that which condemns us, and He was lifted up on a cross between heaven and earth. He was crucified between two thieves under the judgment and wrath of God for our sin. God says, *“Look and live.”*

Look sinner! Look to Christ and live. Don't work, don't give, but look. Don't earn your way but look, don't try to be worthy, but look.

Look out of your helplessness. Look out of your disease. Look out of your darkness. Look out of your death. Look to Christ and live.

I will tell you this; even as the law of God requires a perfect obedience, the justice of God says sin must be punished. Christ was punished in our stead. That is substitution.

“He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed.”

**“There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.”**

Do you understand? *“The Son of God has come and hath given us an understanding.”* You can't shout your way to heaven. You can't feel your way to heaven. You can't sing your way to heaven. You can't work or buy your way.

There has to be some understanding. There has to be some judgment, some discernment. There has to be some understanding. What do you believe in and why do you believe it? What authority do you believe? Do you see what I am saying?

What did He say? Listen; He said this, *“Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.”* Yes, He died and He was buried but He arose again.

Those blessed women came to the tomb on that Sunday morning, that first day of the week, and the stone was rolled away. They were startled and astonished. The angel said to them; *“Why do you seek the living among the dead?”*

We have a living Lord. We have a living Saviour. We have a living Sovereign. He is not dead; He is not on a cross. You need not wear that crucifix; that is not the Son of God.

He is not hanging on a cross. He is not in a casket. He is not in a tomb; He is in glory *“exalted to the right hand of the majesty on high.”* He said, *“I live.”* Because He lives; we live. *“If Christ be not risen there is no resurrection of the dead.”*

Then He said this; do you hear Him? *“I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you I will come again.”* He is coming again!

The angel said when He was caught up in the clouds on the mountain as the disciples were standing around, *“ye men of Galilee; why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus who is caught up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go.”*

Yes, He is coming back, yes He is. He is coming back. He went away but not to stay; He is coming back again. He promised that He would.

Then He said this; *“You go into all the world and preach this Gospel.”* We have got to preach the truth. We are going to have to quit hollering *“believe, believe, believe, and start telling people what to believe and whom to believe.* The apostle Paul said; *“I know whom I have believed.”*

Do you know something about Christ? Do you know something about His sacrifice? Do you know something about His obedience, His righteousness?

Do you have some understanding of what I am talking about today? You cannot intelligently believe what you do not understand to some degree and that is what I am saying.

“How are they going to call on Him in whom they have not believed? How are they going to believe on Him of whom they have not heard? How are they going to hear without a preacher?”

God’s preacher is God’s Son. *“In these last days He has spoken to us by His Son!”*