

So That You May Know

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

Chapter 6- John's Moral Test of Salvation

49. Obedience- The Proof of Salvation- Part 6

WAOY Wednesday 07/04/07; WOSM Thursday 12/08/22

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1 John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about "The Moral Test of Salvation". So, let's open our Bibles and read **1 John 2:3-6** again together:

- 3** By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.
- 4** The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;
- 5** but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:
- 6** the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

Now on the last broadcast, we were looking very closely at John's example of what true Salvation really is by examining verses 4 & 5- so let's read those verses again together:

- 4** The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;
- 5** but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

Now during our last time together- we were discussing why a man who is lost would *say* that he saved. And we looked at several reasons which could explain why someone who is not saved would say that he is.

Now the prevailing sentiment today is that this is a matter between that person and God and that we do not have the right to judge. But John was not content with simply leaving that kind of person to himself, was he? No, John understood that he had an *obligation* to preach the Gospel rightly- and he had the responsibility to clearly define for the Church who is and who is not truly born again; and he had the duty to confront those who are deceived so that they will be saved.

Now in our culture- we honor heroes- and we should. A man, for example, who rushes into a burning house and drags someone who was unconscious out to safety is regarded as a hero to us and we rightly applaud his actions, and we correctly reward him with honor.

And usually nothing is said about the fact that in the process of dragging that person to safety that the man who rescued him skinned the man's arms or that he banged the man's head against the door stop. We correctly understand that it really doesn't matter how much petty injury that person received in the process of being brought to safety- he would have died if he had not been rescued. So, saving life is rightly viewed by us to be more valuable than temporary discomfort.

But for some strange reason- we do not look at rescuing someone's soul in the same way. A person may be walking in heresy and deception, or he may be lost and yet we are more concerned about offending him or hurting his feelings than we are in telling him the Truth- which is the only thing that can save his soul. So why is that? We tend to not remember that if that person doesn't repent and change, he is going to hell. So, in that context- what difference does it make if his feelings are temporarily hurt if in the end, he sees his error and repents and is saved? I find it so strange that there is infinitely more concern about human life and human relationships- which at best are temporary- than there is with the eternal soul of that same man.

And I believe that our reluctance to say what needs to be said has more to do with *us* than it does with them. I really don't buy the argument that many of us don't say what needs to be said to someone because we don't want to offend them or run them off. I don't believe that that is always the true case.

I believe that this reluctance has more to do with us thinking that if we tell them the Truth that these people may not like us and- perish the thought- they might even accuse us of being unloving or harsh or

judgmental- and we would rather have these lost or deceived people like us and we would rather that these people think well of us than we would have them as a brother or sister in Christ- and that is wrong. That is not looking out for someone's feelings beloved- that is simply being ashamed of the Gospel.

If we really believed that hell was real. And if we really believed that every single lost soul was going to burn in hell forever- if we really and truly believed that- we would not cease to proclaim Christ everywhere- regardless of the consequences to ourselves.

Now when I say these things- I am certainly not advocating that we should be rude on purpose. That is not Christ-like. The Bible is clear that we- as Christ's servants- must be gentle and kind and not simply get into an argument for the sake of arguing.

And I believe that, and I teach that, and I endeavor with all my heart to live that- but we must also understand at the same time- brothers and sisters- that we have become intimidated by people who throw out labels at us when they become uncomfortable at what God has said. And the result of this is that we have cowered in fear that someone might think we are mean or harsh or unloving- and that is simply nonsense when it comes to the Gospel.

My fellow believers- the Gospel is just too important, and the souls of lost and deceived men are in too much jeopardy for us to be concerned in the least what anyone might think of us if we are faithful to Jesus and speak the Truth to them. We must not say- "*What will happen to me if I say something*"- but we must say, "*What will happen to them if I do not say something.*" That is nothing more than a true expression of love toward our neighbor.

Being kind and being gentle and being loving does not mean that we must withhold a statement that a lost or deceived people need to hear. We should attempt to say what we say with love and with all the diplomacy that we can muster- but the bottom line is that lost and deceived people must understand that they are lost if they are to have any hope at all of ever being saved and deceived people must comprehend their error if there is any hope to rescue them.

Now like all things- the best example of this was Jesus Himself- Who was God's Love personified. Don't ever kid yourself- no one loved like Jesus loved. No preacher; no teacher; no prophet; not you; not me- no one ever displayed anything near the love that Jesus manifested

everyday- and yet Jesus was the most misunderstood and hated Man who ever lived and today- 2,000 years after He rose from the dead- Jesus Christ alone is the most controversial Person in human history- not because of Love- but because of Truth.

Recently I was watching a talk show and heard a so- called guru of self- love say that when Jesus was speaking about sin and hell and about some people not going to heaven – this man said that when Jesus talked about those issues that Jesus Christ was not being a good Christian!

But the Truth is that Jesus loved so much that He never hesitated to tell the Truth- because Jesus knew that only Truth will make men free. Lies never help anyone. Hiding the Truth out of fear that it might offend somebody never delivers anyone out of sin. And refusing to condemn that which God has already condemned is not being loving- it is encouraging and sanctioning sin. The Bible does not call that love- beloved- it calls it hate.

I suppose that the most famous example of this was when Jesus spoke to Nicodemus by night about Salvation in **John 3:1-7**.

1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews;

2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God *as* a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"

5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

7 "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

Now when Jesus spoke these words to this leader of the Pharisees- this was not a sweet little slogan that Jesus wanted Nicodemus to wear on his T-shirt. When Jesus told this man that he needed to be born again- He couldn't have insulted this man any more than this. What

Jesus was actually telling Nicodemus is that the religious system of ceremonies and rituals and washings and animal sacrifices that this man had engaged in so carefully all his life was all in vain.

By Jesus telling this leader of the Jews that he personally needed to be born again- He was telling him that all his effort to make himself righteous in God's Eyes had brought him no closer to God than was a prostitute.

Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed to be born again if he had any hope of ever going to Heaven- which in effect was saying that all that he had done his entire life was worthless. Jesus never even gave this man any credit at all for all the hard work; the many labors; or the intense scrutiny whereby this man had led his life.

Jesus never said- "*Well, you're real close to becoming good enough to go to heaven, Nicodemus- and if you just put forth a little more effort- you will be righteous enough for God to be satisfied and you can then go to Heaven.*" No, Jesus never said anything like this at all, did He? But Jesus looked this man right in the eye and told him that he was lost and that He – Jesus- was not going to give anything that he had done or that he was a part of any credibility at all by encouraging anything that he had done.

If Jesus had followed the pattern of modern evangelism- He would have put His Arm around Nicodemus and invited him out for a sandwich and maybe even took him to a ball game in order to make friends with him before He ever tried to present the Gospel to him. And if Jesus had been a disciple of *The Purpose Driven Life*- He would have found some area of commonality with Nicodemus and emphasized how similar He was with this Pharisee and Jesus would have held off making any judgmental statements so as not to turn him off or offend him.

I just wish that all these Church growth gurus were alive back then and maybe they could have counseled the Lord in the finer parts of soul winning- because obviously Jesus just didn't have any diplomacy at all about Him- He just spoke the Truth right to the face of deception and lies and presented Himself- without apology- as God incarnate and the only way to Heaven.

So, in keeping with what he learned at the Feet of Jesus- John tells those who are deceived and who say that they are saved and yet do not obey Jesus in verse 4- that they are liars. In doing this- John was not

simply engaged in name calling- he was going to the heart of the matter- that Truth is not defined by you or me- but Truth- real Truth- Divine Truth- the kind of Truth that has the power to change hearts and transform lives is not subjective- it is not based upon human reasoning nor is it altered by societies whims or emotional; variations. But Truth is that which God has said and what he inspired to be written down- and Salvation is defined by God- not us- and who is saved and who is deceived is not about personal tastes or personalities or private interpretation- but John tells us here that Salvation is knowable and it is distinct and that it is supernatural and it is a miracle and it is precious and it is valuable and that true Salvation is a Sovereign act of God alone.

And John says that anyone who seeks to put his own personal spin on Salvation; anyone who tries to teach it any other way other than the way that Christ taught it- anyone who says that he is saved and yet walks in darkness is not saved and misguided- John says that he is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

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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