

WE KNOW THAT WE ARE OF THE TRUTH

TEXT: I JOHN 3:19-24

INTRODUCTION:

1. First John 3:19 says, "And hereby we know that we are of the truth..."
In other words, hereby we know that we are true Christians.
2. Albert Barnes said, "To be of the truth stands opposed to cherishing false and delusive hopes."
3. False teachers were promoting their unscriptural heresies. In I John 2:26, John says, "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you."
4. Unsuspecting people are often "seduced" (led astray) by false teachers. But John says, "we know that we are of the truth..."
5. "The truth" refers to the truth of God as revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel.
6. The Lord Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate and said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John 18:37).
7. First John 2:21 says, "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth."
8. One of the great themes of I John is the theme of assurance (cf. 3:14; 5:13).
9. The epistle of I John teaches us that genuine Christians...
 - * will not habitually commit sin (3:8, 9).
 - * will keep God's commandments (2:3)
 - * will love others, especially the brethren (3:14; 4:7, 8).
 - * will not be worldly (2:15-17)

I. THE ASSURANCE OF THE TRUTH (3:19)

1. Verse 19 begins with the word "And," meaning love is one of the ways we know we are of the truth (cf. 3:18).
2. Love does not bring salvation. Many lost sinners are very loving, and kind, and generous, but they are not saved.
3. Love does not bring salvation, but love brings the assurance of salvation (cf. 3:14).
4. Our Lord said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).
5. "The cause of salvation is grace, the means of salvation is faith, the evidence of salvation is love" (Roy L. Laurin, *Epistle of I John*).

II. THE ASSURANCE OF AN UNCONDEMNING HEART (3:20, 21)

1. The "heart" speaks of the inner man. This is the assurance of the inner witness. Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."
2. First John 5:6b says, "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."
3. First John 3:24 says, "And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."
4. We know whether or not our heart is right. If there is any uncertainty we should pray like David did, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23, 24).
5. If our heart does not condemn us, neither does God (I John 3:20, 21).
6. The word "confidence" (3:21) means, "boldness, freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech."
7. Acts 4:13 says, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."
8. Acts 4:31 says, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."
9. This word translated "confidence" and "boldness" means we have assurance that we are in a right relationship with God.

III. THE ASSURANCE OF ANSWERED PRAYERS

1. There are certain conditions for answered prayers (cf. I John 5:14, 15). Note "confidence" (5:14; cf. 3:21; 2:28).
2. Here in I John 3:22 we see another condition, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
3. Because we please God, He pleases us by answering our prayers. The Psalmist said, "Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:4, 5).
4. Assured prayer is contingent upon obedience. We cannot expect to have our prayers answered until we have obeyed Christ's commandments (3:22).

5. A lady told R. A. Torrey that God had failed her because when her husband was ill, she prayed for his recovery and God didn't raise him up.
6. Dr. Torrey pointed her to I John 3:22, and asked if she were obeying the conditions laid down. She had to admit that she wasn't. Torrey told her, "Then God has not failed you, but you have failed God."
7. "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ" (3:23a). There cannot be genuine obedience unless there is genuine spiritual life.
8. Believing on Christ brings us into God's family (3:9, 10).
9. Believing on Christ brings us into God's family, and our heavenly Father answers the prayers of His children (cf. Luke 11:9-13).
10. "And love one another, as he gave us commandment" (3:23b). If there is genuine faith, there will be genuine love (3:23b; cf. 3:11, 14, 18; 4:7, 8). Love is a mark of genuine Christianity. It is the characteristic of our new life in Christ.
11. Therefore, assurance in prayer is based on faith in God and love toward one another.
12. He who keeps God's commandments dwelleth (abides) in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us (3:24).
13. The indwelling Holy Spirit is our supreme assurance of salvation. The Holy Spirit gives us assurance that our prayers will be answered.
14. Romans 8:26 and 27 says, "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

CONCLUSION:

1. A preacher said, "It is possible...to keep God's commandments in a spirit of fear or servitude rather than in a spirit of love" (W. Wiersbe).
2. Let us make sure our hearts are right with God (3:19, 20).