

This We Know  
1 John 5: 13 – 21  
The Laurel Center  
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**Main Idea:** As we wait on the Lord, he has given us confidence to live for him.

Introduction

We live in the time between the promise and its fulfillment. We are waiting for the Lord to return as he promised. During this time of waiting we have certain confidences that we know we can operate in while we live here. There are certain things that Jesus has left us with that we can have guaranteed for us. This is important since we live in a time where some promises are fulfilled and others are not yet fulfilled. We need to know what we can do and how we can operate in this time between the ages. So Jesus has left us with confidences that we know we can use when we need them. Let's take a look at some of the things that John says we can be confident in.

**Text – 1 John 5:13–21**

**13** I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. **14** And this is the confidence that we have toward 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 that we have asked of him. **16** If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. **17** All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death. **18** We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. **19** We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. **20** And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. **21** Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

**I.** We Can Ask Jesus for Anything (vv. 13 – 15).

**A** We can be confident when we ask God for anything.

- 1 John spends most of this first letter writing to encourage the Saints and to remind them of their place in God's plan and the confidences we can have in him.
- 2 We must remember that historically that the whole of Scripture, the New Testament canon, had not yet even been completed. They did not have the New Testament that they brought to church every week.

- 3 Since the apostles were still writing Scripture and confirming what Jesus taught, it was important for the believers to be affirmed and encouraged by the apostles.
- 4 These confirmations and reassurances helped the believers to do something immediate as they were waiting for Jesus to return. John confirms for them some of the power that Jesus had given them.
- 5 We find Jesus teaching the same truth about prayer. When we ask God for anything in his name, he grants our request. Jesus was teaching this from the Sermon on the Mount onward.
- 6 Our belief in Jesus as the divine son of God means that when we ask anything in his name, he has the power to grant it because he is all-powerful.
- 7 Asking anything in Jesus' name does not mean that we get anything we ask for completely. It means that when we ask according to Jesus' reputation and person, we receive what we ask for.
- 8 This requires that we ask for things that Jesus is interested in giving to us. Asking for money to have money is not asking in Jesus' name. We must ask for money in the context of wanting to use it for his kingdom. We must have a pure heart in such kinds of requests.
- 9 One of the first questions that we can ask of God is if we have eternal life and that question is answered readily as yes. But there are many things that we ask God for.

**B** God hears our requests and answers us.

- 1 Notice that John mentions both Jesus' name, or reputation and character, and his will within the same two sentences. When we pray for anything we will receive it if it agrees with Jesus' character and goals on this earth.
- 2 It must be within his will to grant. He will not give us whatever we want if it is something that we ask for improperly or with the wrong motives. We learn this from James 4. To ask selfishly is to ask the way a pagan would.
- 3 The first part of our confidence and asking God for anything through prayer is that we know he hears us. This is very important because if God does not hear, he cannot grant.
- 4 In ancient times, pagans could ask anything of their gods but they had to bribe them with worship to get what they wanted. Beyond this, there was a question as to whether or not their gods even listen to them at all.
- 5 But we do not have to worry about this with our God. He always hears our requests. We can be confident that he is always with us when we call on him. Then John tells us that if we can be confident he hears, we can be confident of the answers.

- 6 Sometimes we pray over and over for something and it does not come. There are many reasons why does not come a moment that we ask for it. Neither John nor any of the New Testament writers tell us we will get what we want immediately.
- 7 There are matters of God's timing, God's plan, God's will and his character. All of these factors factor in for when we receive all we ask for. Sometimes there is a matter of waiting on our part.
- 8 We must be patient and persistent as we ask God for things that are within his will and character. There may be a part of his plan that must be fulfilled before we can receive only last for.
- 9 **Application:** our confidence in God's ability and willingness to answer our prayers must not be questioned when we don't immediately receive what we ask for. We must have the maturity to understand that God is working everything out for our God. There are questions of timing, sitting within God's will, sitting within his character and other issues that must be addressed first. But we can be sure that prayer is effective and moves the hand of God.

## II. We Can Pray for Sending Brothers (vv. 16 – 17).

### A There are sins not leading to death.

- 1 In the second section of our passage John introduces something that seems to contradict Scripture. But as we look at it more closely we will find that it does not contradict Scripture.
- 2 To get a better idea of what John may be referring to, we should observe the context of the idea starting with the preceding subject and parsing out the phrases of the verse.
- 3 First, we must notice that the context of this idea of a sin not leading to death has to do with praying and having the confidence that we will receive whatever we ask as long as it fulfills the criteria of fitting the name (character and reputation) of Jesus and whatever God's will is.
- 4 Since we are asking for anything that fits this criteria and it will be granted to us, John then raises the issue of praying for a brother that we see sending.
- 5 Second, this type of sin relates to a brother committing it. "Brother" is John's word for a fellow believer. So the sin that is being committed is committed by a Christian, someone who is born again to a life everlasting.
- 6 Third, this kind of prayer request requires that we see our brother committing the sin. This is an observable sin, not a premonition that we have or possibility that we might think were something we heard someone

else say they might do. This must be an observable Howard sin that we see.

- 7 Fourth, the verb of this passage may suggest an ongoing observable sin rather than a one-time sin. Either way that it occurs, all sin leads to death. This is taught throughout Scripture.
- 8 Fifth, we must consider the issues of life and death. This is the same author who wrote the book of Revelation, which mentions “the second death.” Death throughout the old and new Testaments has always had two meetings in Scripture, spiritual and physical.
- 9 So now if we put all of this together, we get the type of idea that requires us to think about a Christian who commits a sin or sins but does not pay the ultimate penalty of “death.”
- 10 Our best probable option is that the sin not leading to death does not lead to eternal death, or separation from God, because it is committed by a Christian who was born again unto eternal life already. John later clarified that there is sin that leads to death even for believers. But this is a sin that is not detrimental to a person’s salvation.

#### B There are sins leading to death.

- 1 It is very possible that a Christian who commits a sin or commits to a lifestyle of sin can lose their salvation and therefore die spiritually. The Bible records a couple of possibilities here.
- 2 The first is that of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit that Jesus speaks of. This is only a credit wicked deeds to the Holy Spirit. They could also mean that we credit to the devil deeds done by the Holy Spirit.
- 3 Another possible sin leading to spiritual and final death for a believer could be apostasy, or the final choice of someone who once believed to fall away from salvation of their own free will.
- 4 John then reminds us in verse 17 that there is sin that leads to death. He also tells us that there is no need to pray for that. It is too late for the believers who turns to these types of sins.
- 5 But for every other sin that may be committed by a believer, it is not too late to turn back to life. Because we are brought into the family of God as his children, it is extremely hard for us to lose our salvation and therefore be victims of a final, spiritual death.
- 6 Thus, these sins can be prayed for and be rescinded by the Lord after repentance and forgiveness. Because these death-causing sins are committed by a believer they do not necessarily lead to final death.

- 7 This is not to say that sin should be committed without consideration of one's final destiny. Never should sin be committed against God with carelessness or wonton neglectful attitudes.
- 8 John has gone out of his way in this letter to describe different types of sin and the danger is that they lead to. If a Christian decides to willfully commits sins against God and not repent, then there is no forgiveness for these.
- 9 But John has already made a way in his letter for those who commits sins and are repentant to be forgiven when they confess their sins to Jesus. Such a one who is born again must not be worried that he/she will lose salvation.
- 10 **Application:** Only in this way can there be sin that does not lead to death. All sin leads to death, especially when it is done with a willful desire to disobey God. But his grace abounds to the sinner and the saint. Just because God is gracious does not mean we need to test the bounds of his love for us. The prayer of fellow believers goes a long way in the preceding for our souls when we have committed sins against God. In this sense, John may be referring to the same type of ministry within the body that James is referring to in James 5:20. This is a vital ministry to protect those who have grown weak in their faith, stumbling in their walk with God momentarily.

### III. We Can Trust in Jesus to Protect from Sin (vv. 18 – 21).

#### A There is a clear difference in sides in spiritual warfare.

- 1 John moves on to a final conviction that we can have as believers. This is the conviction that Jesus is protecting us and that we are protecting one another in fellowship.
- 2 We live in a world and environment surrounded and tainted by sin, a fallen place. It is difficult for believers to not be tempted on a regular basis by sin.
- 3 The discussion of these final versus reminds be of the opening chapter of First John. In the beginning of the letter John told us that it is unusual for Christians to send.
- 4 This is like a hick up or a stumbling in the walk with God. This while it is not normal for Christians to send, it is probable that they will send from time to time rarely.
- 5 I believe there is a link between Beginning discussion in these final versus. The point that John is making again is that when this rarity occurs, Jesus has made a way to become right with God again through repentance and forgiveness.

- 6 Added on to this discussion in this last chapter dealing with prayer and God's power to answer us is the idea that intercessory prayer allows for Christians to be involved in their fellow believers' lives for their benefit.
- 7 Through intercessory prayer believers can help one another in their walk with God. When sin becomes an issue in the community rather than judgmental is some Christians can turn to intercession for one another.
- 8 When sin and wickedness attacks the community through an infected brother or sister in Christ, God has given us the power through Jesus' advocacy for us and through intercessory prayer to see the victory.
- 9 While the world is already the devil's playground, the church stands in opposition to this rule of the enemy. The church should not become the devil's playground and only we can avoid that through intercession rather than judgment.

**B** We have a clear advantage in spiritual warfare.

- 1 Our relational knowledge of God gives us victory over sin and the evil one. Because we know him it was true we can see the devil and his schemes for what they are.
- 2 In the battle for human souls, the devil is easily recognizable as counterfeit to the one that we know. Everything that he tries, every scheme and fiery dart, is easily recognized as those who can see the truth.
- 3 Because the devil is the father of lies and uses lies in his battle, we can see them coming. The world cannot see these things because it lies in his power. He has won over the world and blinded it to the truth.
- 4 This ability to know God as the true one and to know everything that he tells us is true gives us a weapon unlike any other in this world. The truth he tells us about ourselves and about the world rescues us from falling for the devil's schemes.
- 5 Truth is at the heart of the issue in the heart of the battle that we wage. Because truth comes out of God's character attributes, only see can disperse truth and help people see it.
- 6 It is most important that we keep ourselves from opening the doors that the devil can enter. We must be vigilant so that the devil does not gain a foothold in our lives or the Fellowship.
- 7 Idols are demons claiming to be gods. They would love to fool us and win us back over. But we know the true God instead of the false gods. This helps us in our fight to remain pure and purely his.
- 8 Many people think that idols are a thing of the past because we do not make graven images to put in our houses today. But we could make an idol out of anything that we put before God in priority and time.

- 9 Especially in this sense, John's final sentence of his letter does not just ring true back then in the Roman world but even more so today since idols are not as clear and not as concrete.

### Conclusion

we have seen three final concerns that John gives us in his letter. Each of these has to do with the most powerful weapon we have in our spiritual warfare, prayer. The first confidence that we have is that God answers our prayers. The second confidence that we have is that there is hope beyond sinning. In the third confidence that we have is that we know the truth because we know the true one.

We need not fear the devil or this world. God has given us everything we need to defeat the devil on his home turf. Remember that this world is not our home and while it may try to convince us otherwise, we are waiting for Jesus to return and take us home to heaven. While we wait, there is a battle raging for our friends and family and the people that we care about. Jesus put us here to fight this war with his help. Let us have confidence not only of these three things but also of the fact that he is the final victor and we will be victors with him!