

The First Epistle of John

(Week 36 – 1John 3:19-24 part1)

I. Review:

A. 1John 3:14-18

1. Loving the brethren shows that we have passed out of death into life
2. As Christ laid His life down for us, we are to do the same for each other
3. Be a blessing to others: If someone is in genuine need of the basic necessities, help them out if you have the ability.
4. 1John 3:18, “*Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.*”
 - a. Love is an action: Do not speak love, live love.

II. BLESSED ASSURANCE

A. 1John 3:19-24

1. 1John 3:19-20, “*By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; ²⁰for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.*”
 - a. There are two views regarding this passage:
 - i. Verse 20 as a warning
 1. Some understand this passage as being aimed towards those who tend to love “*in word or talk but in deed and in truth*” (1John 3:18)
 2. This school of thinking says: “If your conscience condemns, how much more would God condemn you, since He is greater than our hearts?”
 3. This view says this passage was not intended to comfort disturbed hearts, but rather, to disturb comfortable hearts that “talk” love but don’t “do” love.
 - ii. Verse 20 as a consolation
 1. This school of thinking says: “Although we should never shrug off our shortcomings or ignore a guilty conscience, this passage is intended to console those who see themselves as not having loved the way they should.”
 2. This view sees verse 20 as John giving the child of God the reassurance of their standing before the Father, as well as urging them on towards faith, obedience and love.
 - b. We will focus on the latter (that is, as a consolation)
 - i. Every child needs the assurance of their parents’ love
 - ii. Even when a child is disciplined for wrongdoing, it is important for the parent to reaffirm their love for their child
 - iii. Assurance of love is necessary for close relationships.

- c. This is true in the spiritual realm as well
 - i. Our Heavenly Father disciplines us for our good so that we may share in His holiness (Hebrews 12:6, 10).
 - ii. He does this out of love for us!
- d. John starts chapter 3 by saying, *“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”*
- e. He then calls them *“brothers”* in verse 13, *“little children”* verse 18 and *“beloved”* in verse 21 to remind them that they are loved by God and by the apostle, John...
 - i. God wants His children to know that they are loved, even when they go through difficult times
 - ii. Sometimes, we find ourselves falling short of God’s standards
 - 1. As a result, Satan, the Accuser (Rev. 12:10), comes and says *“You’re not saved! A true Christian doesn’t act that way nor does he have thoughts like that!”*
 - iii. Satan’s goal is to drive a wedge between us and God – he does it when our hearts condemn us!
 - iv. But God is greater than our hearts...
- f. The phrase *“By this”* in verse 19 refers back to verses 17-18, where love is shown by good deeds.
 - i. **Question: How many here has failed to love the way a Christian ought to love?**
 - ii. **Question: How many here has felt condemned because you failed to love the way a Christian ought to love?**
 - iii. **Question: What disciple hasn’t failed at times?**
- g. So what is verse 19 and 20 saying?
 - i. Focus on the many times that God’s love has flowed through you since your conversion rather than the times you failed!
 - ii. Let these acts of self-sacrifice be your evidence that God is in you and that you are His child! Stop doubting!
- h. It is good to examine our failures and learn from them.
 - i. Questions like:
 - 1. *“Why did I sin that way?”*
 - 2. *“How can I avoid that sin in the future?”*
 - ii. But to dwell on a sin can lead to depression and Satan will drive that wedge, if you let him!
 - iii. Although we ought to be sensitive toward sin and hate it with a passion, remember that God is at work in your life and that you are His beloved!
- i. When John says, *“By this we... (by our loving deeds)... shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him”* (vs.19)
 - i. This is truly a blessed assurance that we are His, even when we fail at times!

- ii. And even though, the times when our conscience is made to feel guilty, God is greater than our hearts
1. He knows all things and He knows if you love Him or not
 2. And what do we know of Him?
 - Here are some highlights of Psalm 103
 - a. ²Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, ³who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, ⁴who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, ⁵who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
 - b. ¹⁰He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.
 - c. ¹³As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear Him
 - d. ¹⁴For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.
 - Here are some highlights of Romans 8
 - a. ¹There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus
 - b. ³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us