

Alive?

I John 5: 13-21

¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. ¹⁴ This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

¹⁶ If you see any brother or sister commit a sin that does not lead to death, you should pray and God will give them life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that you should pray about that. ¹⁷ All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.

¹⁸ We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the One who was born of God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them. ¹⁹ We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. ²⁰ We know also 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 by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

²¹ Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.”

First off, John says that we should have confidence in approaching God (v.14) because we are asking for His will in our prayers. Listen to these reassuring words: **“If we ask anything according to his will, He hears us.”** Your prayers are not empty, meaningless words. Your prayers are not a mere formality. Your prayers are not only heard by the walls. The key here is **“according to His Will.”** Given the next verse, the assurance that God “hears us” should be taken to mean He answers our prayers.

We live in a time where many people are wondering around without the any idea of what they are doing, let alone, if what they are doing is right or wrong in the Lord’ sight? The world is telling them, **“Live as you wish to live!”** I covered this last week. **“Do whatever you want to do.” “If it feels good, if you enjoy it, then it can’t be wrong.”**

Thus, some find themselves shoveling out from under a pile of compromise, conviction and guilt. Many are felling the weight of life brought upon themselves is so heavy because of the choices they make. Some may even cry out things like, **“I don’t know what to do?”** I believe confusion comes upon our lives when we don’t listen to the Lord and we start following own will, or the influence of the world around us.

I also have noticed, that what use to be a firm **“No”** in life, now seems to be acceptable for many, without even a second thought. Many people accept worldly lifestyles as the norm, because everyone else around them is doing it. **Isn’t that how we justify what we want to do? If everyone one else is doing it, it can’t be that bad or wrong.** But what do the Lord say about this choice?

Then, if someone does say something about it, we might hear something like, **“Shame on you for judging.”**

Well, I have a few questions for us to consider, ***“Is it wrong for us to point out or question certain activities in life, for our own well fair? To ascertain whether or not what we see taking place might be consider sinful?” “Are we “judging” others, or, are we trying to discern what activities we should, and/or should not participate in?”*** I think these thoughts are worthy of consideration. As children of the Lord, are we supposed to accept worldly philosophy as the path we walk on and live by? The right lifestyle for our lives without stopping to examine what is taking place?

As we read this passage, I believe John shares a different perspective on what many are doing in the world, and what those within the church should be doing? So, today I want us to take a closer look at what we see happening in this world. One of my greatest concerns has been, and is, giving justification to worldly philosophies and lifestyles, in the name of God.

So let me begin by sharing a few observations I see, while I was examining this passage:

1. He calls into question how we are living life?

Are we in a right, or Godly relationship with those around us, or not? Are we seeking to find joy, and spiritual wholesomeness in our relationships? If we are not doing or living the way the Lord calls us to live, can that even be possible? ***The kind of lifestyle we seek to live makes a difference.***

2. People who seem to enjoy the wrong activities in life, do they wear it as a badge of honor?

Drinking, partying, sleeping around, without any thought of the consequences for what they are participating in, is that something the Lord wants us to hold up and honor to the rest of the world?

And, even if we are not participating directly in the activities of those gathered, when we are at these places, or locations, are we thus saying to those who attend that we are supporting it by being there? Giving validity to what is taking place?

3. Language habits...

Words which we never would have spoken, at least while I was growing up, or, even just a few years back - are now being voiced with little or no concern. What kind of impact upon our lives, our friends, our families, and upon other we live with, does this have?

Not to mention the double meanings of many words today. Words used innocently, by past generations, which now mean something totally different, causing people to look at you with amazement. What did he or she just say? Redefined definitions, which are causing a whole new set of issues. Should we be more careful of what we say or how we say? Is it defusing into our hearts and minds? If it is, what affect does that haver upon our lives?

4. Shallow worshipers.

Seeking to have a message which only provides comfort, ease, and enjoyment, all the time, so we might obtain a feel-good attitude even while our lifestyles are questionable?

I have actually heard some says things like, ***“I don’t want to hear about wickedness, evil, sin or wrong doing. I don’t want to have to change the way I live. Just, leave me alone.”*** As if to say, ***“Just let me find a place where I can try to get rid of some guilt for the week, then go back to what I was doing.”***

It is my prayer, and my hope, that God’s Word will help us find ***His JOY in life, Peace within our hearts, and at the say time challenge us to grow in Christ!*** Worship of God is not all about entertainment, it must also include learning, growing and discovering His wisdom for life. In that place is where we will find the kind of feel-good life inside in side us.

5. Traditions replacing truth... Are you simply worshiping, living or doing what we do, because that’s the way my mother, father or family has always done it. So, that’s the way it’s too be done, forever, and that’s it?

I think we are missing some special times in life when we don’t allow the Lord and the holy Spirit to lead us, as He deems He should. When we place God in a box and say ***“this is the only way He can work.”*** My God is greater than that, and I believe we should allow Him to lead instead telling Him how it is to be done.

One last thing I have seen in our world,

6. Lying has become more the norm, more so than truth...

In part, because if we speak the truth, some are afraid that someone else will get hurt. So, let’s just change what we say a little bit, or ignore the truth all together. Just say what everyone wants to hear and accept.

Certainly, we are told in God’s Word to do everything in love. So, at times, we may need to keep our mouths closed. I have prayed that the Lord’s children would stop repeating whatever they hear people around them saying, thinking it is truth, unless we know it is the truth, found in or back up by God’s word. Then as they share it, do it with His love and grace.

There is little doubt in my mind, that John, would view many things taking place in this world today, differently than a number of those worshiping the Lord do...

Let’s examine John’s words to his readers...

First - Confidence in approaching God!

“¹⁴ This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.” **When we pray - approach God with confidence.**

We don’t approach Him thinking, ***“I wish God would hear this?”*** Or, ***“Man, God I sure could use your help, if you would?”*** As if to tell God what He needs to do, or should not do...

We are to approach God with confidence in prayer for various reasons... Especially since,

• ***We are asking for what is a part of His will for us...***

If we go before God seeking things, ***we know to be opposite of His will for our lives***, you can almost be certain that He (God) will most likely not give us whatever we ask for. He loves us too much, to give us things which will destroy us. He will never negate His own teaching, His Word, or His will for our lives.

God's Word often comes with promises which are prefaced by conditions.

Example: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, (Our part) and all these things shall be added unto you." (His promise...)

It's that simple. Yet, often seems so hard for us to comprehend and follow.

Secondly - We can approach with confidence because we know He hears

US... John reminds us, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we ask of Him."

Remember the time when Solomon came before God, after he was made King, hearing that His Heavenly Father offered him anything he wanted. Solomon said, "***So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong.***" This was his way of saying: "***I am seeking for the Lord's will, always!***" This is one reason why we know we can approach Him with Confidence. When we are seeking what the Lord wants us to do, then doing it.

The Lord answered Solomon by saying, (let me paraphrase it) "***Yes, I hear you and I will give you what you ask. You will be one who stands out for time to come because of what you ask for.***" The same promise is our today!

Third - Pray for those who sin...

"If anyone sees his brother commit a sin, that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life." (1 John 5: 16)

This is a complex statement to understand. Doesn't all sin lead to death? Isn't all sin evil and wrong? In fact, in verse 17 John says, "***All wrong doing is sin...***" yet he then says, "***and there is a sin that does not lead to death.***" So, what is John trying to tell us?

• ***First, We, are directed to pray for others, not just ourselves.***

We need to pray for those who don't know Jesus, those who think they are living right in Jesus's sight, yet may not be. Pray for those who are blatantly lost, that they will find Him as Lord and Savior. So today, I want us to know that sin, as to its merit and legal stance, leads to death, separation from the Lord, if it is not addressed.

Remember that Paul said, "***For the wages of sin is death...***" The longer we live in sin, the greater the separation between us and the Lord, as Paul states in Romans 6, verse 15.

•**Second, pray for those who have the opportunity to be redeemed.**

This issue of sin leading to death, and sin not leading to death, deals more with the issue of the heart of the unsaved. There are many people in this world, some who have even stated they don't believe in God, who need our prayers. People struggling with sin, evil and the world's frustration, who need our prayers. People who one day, may discover the miracle power of Jesus Christ's love for themselves. Right now, they know the need of someone, something, they just don't understand who or what it is? People who need the Lord!

•**Third - Pray specifically**

As I read this scripture, I see John saying, ***"look around you for the people who truly need the Lord, and are susceptible to hearing about Him, and lift them up regularly."*** Lift them up in prayer daily, consistently, invite them to worship, read the Word with them, keep praying for them. Specifically, and individually, lift them up before the Lord.

So, here is a simple challenge: *This week, find one person around you, and start lifting that person up in your prayers, keep lifting them up until they come to know Jesus as Lord.*

Now, this may take some time, so be determined in our efforts.

•**Last – It is simple – listen to these words:**

*"We know that anyone born of God, **does not continue in sin.** the one who is born of God, (meaning Jesus) keep him safe and the evil one cannot harm him."* (1 John 5: 18)

What a promise! Key word here, ***"continue."***

Illustration: *One day a girl knelt in the confessional and said, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned." "What is it, child?" "Father, I have committed the sin of vanity. Twice a day I gaze at myself in the mirror, and tell myself how beautiful I am." The priest turned, took a good look at the girl, and said, "My dear, I have good news. That isn't a sin - it's only a mistake."*

Here is a danger I know of in this world. It is sin which causes harm to our spirits and souls, it is the idea that ***when we sin, we are only making a mistake,*** which may cause even greater harm. As if to say, ***"Oh, well, we all do it, so, what's the big deal?"*** Lord, help us, because, as we just read, ***we are not to continue in sin.*** So, we ask for Your help, Father, to stop living in that way. Mistakes intentionally repeated, or, allowed to be repeated, are sins.

Our relationship with Christ was never meant to be momentary event, or a single point in time. It is a lifelong pursuit. To me, this is where we find life or death. God or the World.

As for me, I chose Life. I am ***ALIVE!***

Closing Prayer