

SERMON: Walking Close with Jesus is Knowing you have eternal life**GOOD Morning OIC & Welcome to Father's House**

Today, we continue verse by verse, to exegete or bring out the meaning of the First Letter of John the Apostle. As is the whole Bible, it was inspired by Holy Spirit. In my previous messages from the First Letter by the Apostle John, I have attempted to bring out the meaning of John's instructions to Christians. This was to help them to do the will of God, by **Walking Close with Jesus**. Today's Message I have titled **Walking Close with Jesus is Walking & Knowing you have eternal life**. In my last Message from First John I presented some thoughts regarding his conclusion of this Letter:

(1 John 5.13) *I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.* Therefore he was writing this Letter to Christians, *you who believe*. His Letter confirmed Jesus' humanity and divinity, the eternal Son of God who came to earth in flesh and blood. A Christian is someone who *believes in the name of the Son of God*. But, a Christian also believes in the same things John believed in as an eyewitness! I like the summary of the 1st Letter of John in the Life Application Bible (LAB): "Entering into human history through the Incarnation, the Son of God became the very embodiment of God in the flesh --- seen, heard, and touched by the author of this Letter, John the Apostle. John walked and talked with Jesus, saw Him heal, heard Him teach, watched Him die, met Him arisen, and saw Him ascend {back into Heaven.} John knew God --- he had lived with Him and had seen Him work."

John wrote in **(1 John 5.13)** *so that you may know you have eternal life*. John wanted to encourage their confidence. He used *oida, Greek*, for *to know*. This implies a knowledge of knowing, not so much as by experience. Therefore John wrote to teach the Christians to have a deeper understanding or knowledge of their faith, with greater confidence in having eternal or everlasting life. The other Greek New Testament word for *to know* is *ginosko, to know by experience*.

Most Christians are born-again from knowing with understanding Jesus' Gospel. They *know (oida)* they have eternal life. Bible study and Christian fellowship strengthens this *oida knowledge*. But, as John had written earlier in this Letter in **(1John 3.6) 6 Anyone who continues to live in him**

will not keep on sinning (Greek). But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know him or understand (Greek-ginosko) who he is.” John here uses the Greek verb *ginosko*, which means to know in a personal way by experience. He did not use the Greek word *oida*, which means intellectual or *head knowledge* only.

So when a sinner is born again by believing the Truth of Jesus, it is more “good” head knowledge, than experiential knowledge. This begins their relationship with Jesus. They are now betrothed to their spouse or Heavenly Husband, Jesus. They are just learning to walk in victory over sin, but will not *keep on sinning* as their lifestyle. They do not want to let sin separate them from their Beloved fiance', Jesus. It is a holy engagement. The longer they walk with Jesus, the more their *oida* knowledge becomes *ginosko* knowledge.

I believe that all Christians will find that true confidence in Jesus only comes through tests of their faith. Their relationship with Jesus then grows with *oida or head knowledge* plus ever increasing personal experiences with Jesus, *ginosko or heart knowledge*. This would be the experiential side of *knowing you have eternal life*. As C.S. Lewis a famous 20th Century Christian writer, once said: “Only a real risk tests the reality of a belief.”

So this dovetails or fits seamlessly with John's next thought for his audience. For the real test to John's 1st Century Christians' confidence was the presence of “heretics” in the church. These “heretics” held the beliefs of Gnosticism. They “confessed” faith in Jesus, but it was untrue. For Gnosticism claims “spirit” is good, and “flesh” is evil. So they denied that Jesus was God because He came in the flesh. John's audience were those *who believe in the name of the Son of God*. He was strengthening their confidence, their faith for Victory over this heresy.

Next John writes next in **(1John 5.14-15)** *14 And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. 15 And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for.* This may be a difficult Bible verse for recently born-again Christians. They are wonderfully surprised by the joy of being accepted into God's Family. Rightfully, they are excited about their future in receiving good things from God. As James wrote in **(James 1.16-18)** *16 So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. 17 Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. 18 He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.* God never wants to cool or diminish that good attitude to receive good and perfect gifts from our Father's hand. But, He

knows when to say no, wait, or yes! He has a marvelous way through Jesus to keep us aware of being *his prized possessions* even when He says no.

But we must take notice in **(1 John 5.14)**, *And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for **anything that pleases him**.* New Christians are like someone transported to a foreign culture without moving in geographical location. In that sense, all new Christians are like missionaries. That foreign culture is the Christian thinking and lifestyle.

To know God hears us we must answer the question: How do we find out *anything that pleases him*? The Apostle Paul instructed the Christians in Rome about this. In **(Romans 12.2)** *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

In most of my Messages from the John's First Letter, I have emphasized how it connects with a Christian's desire for a "closer walk with Jesus." This is definitely a request that *pleases him {God}*. So as in **(1 John 5.15)**, *And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for.* At the same time, God cares about every detail of our lives. Don't be afraid to ask Him for everyday favors or gifts. He is our Heavenly Father. Fathers like to bless their children with things that simply bring temporal happiness. The difference is that when we know "Who" gave the gift, that memory of our Loving Heavenly Father outlasts the blessing. Years ago a close friend invited me to a Boston Red Sox baseball game. These were seats I could never afford. I will never forget how Jesus showed up in a personal way during that game to say how much He loves me. As Jesus said in **(Matthew 7.11)** *So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.* And, yes, I had been asking God for a Red Sox game someday!

We know that God is pleased when Christians pray for each other. This is obeying Christ's Command *to love one another as I have loved you.* So John places that here to connect with **(1 John 5.14)** *And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for **anything that pleases him**.* In **(1 John 5.16-17)** *If you see a fellow believer sinning in a way that does not lead to death, you should pray, and God will give that person life. But **there is a sin that leads to death**, and I am not saying you should pray for those who commit it **17 All wicked actions are sin, but not every sin leads to death.***

We believers in Jesus have power to move God to give life to other Christians, more than we seem to realize. John here declares that *God will give that person life*. Since we know that the Bible tells us in **(Romans 6.23)** *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord*. For a brother or sister in Christ who is losing their battle against sin, interceding for them pleases God and moves Him to give Help from Above over sin.

John then instructs Christians **not to pray for Christians who are committing** *a sin that leads to death*, You might ask, Pastor Bruce, what is this sin? This is a difficult question for a difficult verse to correctly bring out its meaning. My answer relates to relationship with Jesus more than typical stumbling of sin by a Christian.

As I mentioned regarding **(1John 3.6)** *6 Anyone who continues to live in him will not keep on sinning (Greek). But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know him or understand (Greek-ginosko) who he is.*” So when a sinner is born again by believing the Truth of Jesus, it is more “good” head knowledge, than experiential knowledge. **This begins their relationship with Jesus.** They are now betrothed to their spouse or Heavenly Husband, Jesus. They are just learning to walk in victory over sin, but will not **keeps on sinning** as their lifestyle. They do not want to let sin separate them from their Beloved fiance', Jesus. It is a holy engagement.

The sin that leads to death must be willfully breaking off the **Engagement**, or demanding a **Divorce** from you espoused Groom, Jesus. This shows no desire on the Christian's part to prevent separation from the Sacrificial Lamb who shed His blood for him. This is not the same as neglecting one's relationship with Him. We all seem prone to wander from the “Closer Walk with Jesus.”

The parallel warning of a **sin leading to death** is seen written in **(Hebrews 6.4-8)** *4 For it is impossible to bring back to repentance those who were once enlightened—those who have experienced the good things of heaven and shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the power of the age to come— 6 and who then turn away from God. It is impossible to bring such people back to repentance; by rejecting the Son of God, they themselves are nailing him to the cross once again and holding him up to public shame. 7 When the ground soaks up the falling rain and bears a good crop for the farmer, it has God's blessing. 8 But if a field bears thorns and thistles, it is useless. The farmer will soon condemn that field and burn it.*

Some keywords In particular: -- **(Hebrews 6.6):** *and who then turn away from God. turn away-* **(NTG)** Greek is *parapito* : to fall by the side, make defection from. As in many communist

countries we see that a defector escapes against the authority and will of the rulers. *The sin unto death* is rejecting the Son of God. This is demanding a Divorce. It is not just complaining about treatment by your spouse. Of course, Jesus, our Heavenly Spouse, is the Blameless Lord of Lords. Sincere Christians may be tempted to complain or murmur to Jesus during their hardships. But they know that God's Word has told them this is normal Christian life. They desire to please their Jesus through all adversities. They know that *It will be worth it all when they see Jesus*.

---(Hebrews 6.5):*who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the power of the age to come*. These defectors demanding divorce from Jesus actually after having tasted God's goodness, and something of the age that Jesus has bought for them when they will be taken to Heaven. ---

(Hebrews 6.8) *But if a field bears thorns and thistles, it is useless. The farmer will soon condemn that field and burn it*. These traitors to Jesus have received from God, but never produced any Fruit as a result. These similar warnings for a Christian fit into (1 John 5.16) for the meaning ***there is a sin that leads to death***. **To summarize that sin, it is a willful divorce of Jesus, your spouse who died to buy your forgiveness and eternal life. It is out of an apparent indifference to Love God back after He has loved them! Thus they bear no fruit after tasting His goodness. Defecting from Jesus' authority and Kingdom on Earth denies the grace all Christians need to finish their pilgrim walk to Glory. God continues to give Christians the undeserved favor they need through every trial and suffering in this life. *The sin onto death* rejects God's favor, thus God's Holy Spirit. God has promised us imperfect earthenware vessels all the help we need as in (Jude 1.24): *Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault*. God promises to bring us all into His Glorious Presence, perfect like His Son, and with Great Joy!**

Next John refers back to Christians not practicing sin because of Jesus' hold on them. He will not allow the "evil one" to control them back into their old sinful life. For in (1 John 5.18) **18** *We know that God's children do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them. 19* *We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the control of the evil one*. The *evil one* or *devil* threatens Christians with calamities, disasters, and afflictions. His threats are always lies as he is the *father of lies*. God may plan an affliction in a Christian's life to strengthen him. The devil tries to take credit for what he has no power to control. God controls Christians' welfare both spiritually and physically. Don't believe the devil's lies. The *evil one* is only interested in attacking your perseverance through it all. He may whisper during a painful time: "Curse God and die!" The devil's threats are LIES. God's promises are TRUE as in (Jude 1.24) *Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault*.

Verse **(1 John 5.19)** says: *We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the control of the evil one.* The control the devil has over the world around us is not permitted by Jesus over His Sheep, the Church.

(1 John 5.20) *And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life.* Jesus, the Word of God, became flesh and blood. As John wrote in his Gospel in **(John 1.1)** *In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.* So, here in **(1 John 5.20)** *the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding.* People gain understanding by conversation. They speak words to each other. God spoke His Word. God spoke Jesus to the people on earth. It is written in **(JOHN 1.14)** *So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.* So Christians know the true God. They have understanding! As we live in fellowship with His Son, walking with Jesus, we have fellowship with the Father too. And as Believers walk with Jesus through this world with evil around us, we are safe by Jesus' protection. The head knowledge type of understanding matures into experiential type of knowledge. This is the relationship that God wants mankind to have with Him. As John said in **(1 John 5.20)** *He is the only true God, and he is eternal life.* Jesus protects His sheep from the evil world. His commitment is like a Husband to His Bride to be. The Church is Jesus' fiance'. The Wedding Feast will truly be Glorious in Heaven.

John's last words in this Letter are a simple reminder to keep Jesus as Lord of their lives. In **(1 John 5.21)** *Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts.* John had previously written in **(1 John 5.17)** *All wicked actions are sin.* But John knew that outward actions of sin don't just happen. Of course, he knew that the *evil one* tempts Christians to sin. But God promises protection, for in **(1 Corinthians 10.13)** *The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.* No, John knew as a Jewish boy the wisdom of the Older Testament prophet in **(Jeremiah 17.9)** *"The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?"*

I am convinced that Christians should be more prayerful regarding what is getting attention in their own hearts, than in their outward actions. We can keep many of our hearts' desires. But we must tell Jesus about our desires, and ask Holy Spirit to keep them at the feet of Jesus. Jesus needs to be on the throne of our heart. John warns sincere Christians to *keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts*. As James taught Believers in **(James 1.14-16)** *14 Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. 15 These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. 16 So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters.*

John has built up these Believers to be confident in their walk with Jesus. He encouraged them to have a deep understanding and thus to know that they have eternal life. After so many words of encouragement for confident Christian living, John closes his Letter, to his "*Dear Children.*" This is an expression of fatherly love from the elder Statesman of the Church, an Original Apostle. It carries a warning but with heartfelt love for them all. This is similar to how James opened his Letter. **(1 John 5.21)** *Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts. Let's not forget John's words of encouragement.*

Let Us Pray,....

REFERENCES

LAB – Life Application Bible/ *The Living Bible*, Tyndale House Foundation. 1988

NLT - *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

NTG – Novum Testamentum Graece/Nestle-Aland, Pinter in Germany 1898 & 1979

NOTE- Pastor Bruce puts {...} around words not in the original exact text, but either the original Greek text, or his decision for more clarity, make it needed.