

Gospel Truths that Comfort God's Children

Lesson for Sunday, March 30, 2025

TEXT: 1 John 3:18-24

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ Talk about the power of God's Word to comfort us. Have the class share their favorite verses and maybe some can share specific examples when God's Word had the right verse and thought for the moment they needed it the most.
- ⇒ The Bible always has what is needed for whatever ails us!
- ⇒ The human heart is often described as "the real you." It is a gracious gift from God when it is functioning as our Creator intended.
- ⇒ At the same time, Jeremiah reminds us that our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked! The heart can be a rollercoaster experience!
- ⇒ As Christians, we will experience times of discouragement. And other times our heart can condemn our conscience and cause doubt to creep in.
- ⇒ We must remember to live on the promises of God's Word and not our feelings or even our own thoughts.
- ⇒ In today's text, John reminds us of five biblical truths that we need to remember.

BIBLE STUDY:

1. Truth #1: Love for others reassures our hearts that we belong to God (1 John 3:18-19)
 - a. John uses verse 18 as a "hinge verse" to connect two related passages that have a common subject. The subject is love.
 - i. Vs. 18: When we love with "deed and truth", this reassures our hearts before God that we are of the truth (19).
 - ii. Assurance will spring forth in the heart, in the conscience, when we demonstrate genuine and authentic love for others.
 - b. By loving others in truth (18) we come to know we belong to the truth (19).
 - c. This is a counterintuitive reality. When we are feeling discouraged and our conscience is condemning us, we rarely feel like serving others. But one of the reasons we feel like this is because our focus is completely on self.
 - d. To gain assurance and confidence that we are right with God, we must learn to love and to serve others – especially our brothers and sisters in Christ.
2. Truth #2: God sees everything and judges perfectly (1 John 3:20)
 - a. Even though Christ has propitiated all our sins by His perfect atoning work, we may still experience a condemning heart or guilty conscience, something that God does not want us to have.
 - b. When our conscience sends us on a guilt trip, we are to look in faith to the God Who is greater than our vacillating hearts and Who assures us of our total and complete forgiveness based on the perfect work of Christ. We return to the wonderful promise of 1 John 1:9.
 - c. John addresses this concern in 3:20 in the context of God's omniscience. God knows every aspect of our heart.
 - d. What do we do when we are discouraged and have doubts? Take the threefold test that John has already presented: (1) Do I really believe rightly about Jesus? (2) Am I really obeying God as I ought? (3) Am I loving others?
3. Truth #3: Have confidence that God answers our prayers (1 John 3:21-22).

- a. Follow John's logic in these verses: Loving others as we have been loved by Jesus assures us that we are in the truth, even when we don't love God perfectly. God says, "Trust Me, not your conscience, which is not infallible and is not always correct."
 - b. Now that we are confident before God (20), we can be confident when we pray (21).
 - c. Don't miss this point: When we trust the judgment of our conscience to our great God, Who is omniscient about everything, our confidence shifts from being based on our experience and our feelings to being based on God's Word and what He says about us.
 - d. Believers with clear consciences, confident access, and obedient lives that please Christ can be assured that God will hear and answer their prayers for their good and for His glory.
4. Truth #4: Remember your obligations (1 John 1:23)
 - a. Our relationship with God is never idle. We always have a job to do.
 - b. John summarizes our obligations in verse 23, "Faith toward God and love toward man."
 - c. This is the one all-embracing theme of 1 John that we believe and that we love. These are the foundations of our assurance because these are the evidence of God's work in our lives.
 - d. When we are discouraged, when we are convicted, when we have doubts...return to what we believe and begin to do what we are supposed to do.
 5. Truth #5: When we abide in God, God abides in us (1 John 3:24).
 - a. For the fourth time, John addresses our keeping the commands of God, but now he adds a blessing that flows from our obedience.
 - b. John is making the point that keeping God's commands and abiding in God always go together. This is a major theme of John. His emphasis on abiding includes 54 of the 102 times it occurs in the NT.
 - c. We have the promise of God's Word that when we are abiding in Christ, He is abiding in us. What a promise! What comfort that brings!
 - d. John ends this chapter to remind us that we have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit.

DISCUSSION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ Which of these truths means the most to you?
- ⇒ What difference would there be in our lives if we could remember these truths?
- ⇒ Is there a practical way to remember these truths?

NEXT WEEK'S TEXT: 1 John 4:7-12