

WEDNESDAY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

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No: 70

1 John Chapter 5:1-12

Open:

What has convinced you that true life is found in Jesus?

Introduction

Every single person lives by faith in something. The issue is never whether or not you have faith... It is always what you put your faith in. But many people today do not think like this at all. Many people in a society such as ours, so independent, so self-sufficient and so comfortable only come to the point of questioning what their own personal safety net might be when they are already free-falling in the avalanche of one of life's traumas.

If we want to maintain a helpful understanding of faith we need to think firstly of **the object of our faith** - The fixed point that gives our faith it's alleged trustworthiness. It is an issue primarily of quality rather than quantity of faith. That is, it is the quality of the object in which you put your faith and against which you exercise your faith that will determine whether that faith works or not.

John concludes his letter by presenting faith as a very important principle which will see the child of God through every conflict. He recaps some important things in the letter such as: being born of God, belief in Jesus, eternal life in Jesus, resisting temptation, not committing sin, loving fellow believers and overcoming the world and its influence on our lives. John wants us not to forget that the love of God and the love of others are inseparable and that it is very unnatural for someone who calls himself or herself a Christian not to love fellow believers.

Read John 5:1-3

Discussion Questions

1. Who is "born again"- "born of God" and what does it mean to believe that Jesus is the Christ?_____

2. How are belief, love, obedience, and life interconnected in this section? Using these four key concepts, how would you explain to someone what being a Christian is all about?

3. Is it possible to separate love of God and love for neighbours in a genuine Christian faith? _____
Why? _____

Comment

Jesus had said that there were two great commandments. The first tells us to love God with our heart, soul, mind and strength while the second mandates us to love our neighbours as we love ourselves (Mark 12:28-31). In essence, the love of God and the love of others are inseparable parts.

We also know that children naturally love their parents and they just as naturally love their brothers and sisters. "The second part of verse 1 means: 'if we love a father, we also love his child.' John is thinking of the love which naturally binds us to the parents who gave birth to us and to the other children whom our parents have brought into the world." (William Barclay)

4. What proof of love are we told in this passage(v.3-4a)

5. Why are God's commands not burdensome– because He excuses us from keeping them or is it because it is so easy to do (Matt. 11:30)? For example is it easy to love one's enemies?

Comment

Obedience to God is not an easy matter. It is never an easy thing to love those who hurt our feelings or people we do not like. However, John is telling us something very profound about the nature of those who have been born anew through faith in Jesus Christ. When God instructs us to love, He is only commanding us to function in the way our personalities were designed to function.

Furthermore, it is the way of God to give adequate strength to enable His children perform whatever task He gives to them. But there is another great truth here we cannot overlook. "Our response to God must be the response of love; and , for love, no duty is too hard and no task too great.

6. Why the repeated emphasis on right doctrine, holiness and love? _____

What is John combating?_____

Read John 5:4-12

7. From what John says about "the world" elsewhere (2:16; 3:13; 5:19), who has the power to overcome the world? What do you think John means by overcoming the world? (v.4-5)

8. What weapon or thing in our lives do we use to overcome the world, or any obstacle? (1 John 5:4-5; 1 Cor. 15: 56-57) _____

9. How has God given witness to Jesus by his baptism ("water-Matthew 3:17)? _____By his death (blood-John 12:23-33)? _____By his Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26)? _____How do these three confirm that life is indeed found in Jesus (vv6-8)

Comment

John defines conquering faith as the belief that Jesus is the Son of God. It is belief in the incarnation. "If we believe in the incarnation, It means that we believe that, in Jesus, God entered the world and took our human life upon Himself, thereby experiencing the limitations and challenges of humanity, and finally giving Himself up as a ransom for His creation— an act of love beyond human understanding.

“Faith in the incarnation is the conviction that God shares and God cares” (Barclay). Faith in the incarnation means we have the continual presence of God in Jesus Christ and in consequence, we have the strength to stand up to the attacks of the world. Our faith in the incarnation means we believe in a God who is able to help us in that He Himself went through our trials and temptations and other discouragements of life.

10. We do not often hear people call God a liar. But how easy is it to do so from John’s letter? (v. 10-12) _____

11. From John’s perspective, is there a middle ground to being saved or not? Who has life and who does not have life? _____

Conclusion

Some, like Cerinthus whom we have mentioned in this series, taught that Jesus received the “Christ Spirit” at His baptism, and the “Christ Spirit” left Jesus before He died on the cross (for them, it is unthinkable that God could hang on a cross). But John insisted that Jesus did not only come by the water of baptism, but also by the blood of the cross. He was just as much the Son of God on the cross as He was when the Father declared, You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased (Luke 3:22) at the baptism of Jesus.

John here exposes the great sin of unbelief. Those who refuse to believe God (in the full sense of the word believe) don’t intend to call God a liar. But they do it nonetheless. “The great sin of not believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is often spoken of very lightly and in a very trifling spirit, as though it were scarcely any sin at all; yet, according to my text, and, indeed, according to the whole tenor of the Scriptures, unbelief is the giving of God the lie, and what can be worse?” (Spurgeon) Such rejection of God’s testimony over time can lead to a place where a person is permanently hardened against God, to the place where he or she may be one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, as Jesus warned in Mark 3:28-29. What hope can there be for the one who persists in hearing what God says, and calling Him a liar?