

# So That You May Know

## An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John 4:13**

### Chapter 23- The Believer's Boldness in the Day of Judgment

#### 209 The Believer's Boldness- Part 5

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WAOY Friday- Monday 06/27-30/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today we're going to continue to look at what John taught about "The Believer's Confidence in the Day of Judgment". So let's open our Bibles and read **1John 4:17-21**- again together.

**17** By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

**18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

**19** We love, because He first loved us.

**20** If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

**21** And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

Now we have been looking closely at verse 17 over the last several broadcasts because I wanted to give you a foundation for what I will be teaching you today. We have seen that genuine Salvation is the gracious rescuing of our sinful souls from God's Wrath and the transformation of our nature from being depraved to being divine.

So even after we are saved- sin *bothers* and *plagues* and *troubles* us because our bodies are *not* saved and our flesh still lusts to sin. But because our souls have been born from above- we no longer *love* to sin and sin no longer has *dominion* over us. That is point 1.

Now we need to move on to *why* we are forgiven. Lost people are *not* saved because they woke up one day and decided on their own that they wanted to love and serve Jesus Christ. No, part of what it means

to be lost- is that lost people care nothing about God or the things of God. And that is true because our loves and desires rest upon a nature that is fallen and depraved. Here is how the Bible puts our condition in **Ephesians 2:1:**

**And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,**

Now how did Paul describe us here? Paul said that as lost people- we were dead. Dead in what? Dead in our trespasses and sins. Now notice that Paul didn't say that lost people were spiritually "sick" or spiritually "infirm" or spiritually "hindered". Paul said that all lost people are stone cold "dead".

So since that is true how do dead people suddenly decide to do *anything*? Dead people cannot see *anything*; they cannot hear *anything*; and they cannot believe *anything*. It is also true that dead people cannot choose *anything* and dead people cannot act out on their will- precisely because their will is dead!

Now keep in mind that it isn't that *some* dead people are able to do this while other dead people can't. No, there is *nothing* that a dead person can do. So a dead person cannot hear the Gospel preached; a dead person cannot understand what God's Word says; and a dead person cannot desire to repent or choose to be saved.

So what a dead person needs- is to be resurrected. Dead people need life! So, because he is dead- his eyes are blind. And so if that dead person is to ever see- God must sovereignly give that dead person new eyes to see. And because he is dead- his ears are deaf. And so if he is ever to hear- God must sovereignly give him new ears to hear. And because he is dead- the heart of the lost person is stone. And so if that lost person is ever to be soft enough to believe- God must sovereignly take out of him that stony heart and replace it with a heart of flesh.

And God has to do all of these things sovereignly – all by Himself- without any cooperation or action on the part of that lost person. And God has to do all this *before* the lost person can hear and see and believe. And that is true because that lost person *cannot* cooperate and he *cannot* contribute anything to this process precisely because he is spiritually dead.

And once that dead man is made alive; once he has eyes to see and ears to hear and an heart to believe- at that point- he can hear the

Gospel; and at that point he can believe the Gospel; and at that point he can repent and trust in Jesus – and he will. But the only reason why this lost person will do those things is because God has already sovereignly done for him all of those other things.

And all of those things that God sovereignly did for that lost person first- is called: Regeneration or being “born again”. Now I realize that most people have been taught that being born again is the same thing as being saved- but that is not true. Being born again is the spiritual resurrection or regeneration or the sovereign giving of life that God the Holy Spirit must work in us first BEFORE the spiritually dead lost person can be saved.

Now most people have also been wrongly taught that lost people must believe in order to be born again- but again that is not true. Lost people *cannot* believe anything precisely because in their lost condition- they are spiritually dead.

Dead people have to be revived or resurrected or given life *before* they can believe. So the correct way to say this is not that we must believe to be born again- but that we must be born again so that we can believe.

Dear friends- we have been taught very poorly over the last 150 year or so about the devastating effects that the Fall had upon Mankind and we have adopted some very serious errors in our beliefs about Salvation over the years that are in stark contrast to what the Bible actually teaches. And the result is that a lot of what we believe and teach about Salvation is hard to match up with what the Bible actually says and so we really need to look at this closely, dear friends.

Now the good news is that we don't have to have this all worked out in order to be saved. But the bad news is that because we base Salvation more on what *we* do rather than what God does for us- the way we look at sin and the way we look at this thing called “unrepented sin” really throws us for a loop.

You see, over the years Man's importance and Man's role in Salvation has risen in our minds and hearts and the net result of that is that God's importance and God's role in Salvation has been diminished. And please permit me to give you a very clear example of what I am talking about.

Nearly everybody on earth- saved or not- believes in something called “The Free Will of Man”. And this commodity called, “Human

Free Will” has become so important in our minds and eyes that it is the preeminent aspect of everything in the earth- including Salvation. Some very popular groups have taken this aspect so far as to teach that God Almighty *cannot* and *will not* do anything in the earth without Man *allowing* Him to do so.

And this is a very important topic and one that goes straight to the heart of what John is teaching here in verse 17 about the Assurance and Certainty of Salvation. So just what is human free will?

Really what people mean when they say, “human free will” is that we are responsible- because human will has never and will never be “free”. Man is absolutely responsible before God for what he does or does not do. And that is taught in Scripture. God can judge us precisely because we are responsible to God for what we do. And even though the Bible clearly teaches that God is Absolutely Sovereign over every aspect of His Creation- He works out His Sovereignty in such a way that He never eliminates or reduces our accountability to do what God has said to do.

But our wills are not “free”. Even before we were saved- we were not “free”. Nothing about us is “free”- before or after we are saved. Human beings have always been a slave to someone else. Now it is common to suggest that we were in charge of ourselves before we were saved. Many people teach today that lost people were out there “doing their own thing” before they were saved- but that isn’t true- the Bible doesn’t teach that.

The Bible teaches that lost people are slaves to sin. And so lost people don’t do their own thing. They are *forced* to obey the orders of their master- satan. And the Bible goes on to say that *after* Salvation- people aren’t “free” either. The Bible says that saved people are bond-slaves of the Lord Christ. So we are slaves- either way we go. We have *never* been autonomous. We have *never* been the Master of our own souls and we never will be. The only “freedom” that the Bible speaks about is that we have been set free from slavery to sin to now be a slave to Jesus. But human beings are always slaves to somebody else.

Now here is how this all works. Our “will” or our “choices” are simply the reflections of our “loves” and our “desires”. So, can we choose? Yes. But our choices are not “free”. Our choices are *predicated* on our loves and wants. So we choose- but we only choose what we love; what we desire and what we want. So in the case of a lost person- he

only loves sin and self. Lost people do not love God; they have no capacity for any love for God at all. But why is that? Because their nature is fallen. And so all of our choices as human beings are predicated on what we love and what we want and what we desire. And all of our loves and desires are predicated on our natures.

And so lost people can choose all day long- but since their nature is fallen- they only love sin and self. And so- left to themselves- absent a sovereign intervening by God the Holy Spirit- lost people will *never* choose Jesus; they will never choose to obey God; they will never suddenly choose to enjoy the things of God.

Being born again is the sovereign giving of life to the lost person. And that Act of God transforms our nature. And with that new nature comes new loves and new desires. People who have been born again now love God and they love the things of God. Now it isn't their fault- they didn't do anything to be like this- this is a sovereign Work of God.

But now that they are born again- these people love God and they love the things of God and their choices will now reflect those new loves and desires

So our choices are not autonomous- they don't stand alone as though they were free from any influence. No, our wills and choices are reflections of what we love and desire. And our loves and desires are simply reflections of our nature. No one can choose something that is contrary to their loves and our loves cannot be changed apart from changing our nature.

Now this has the net effect of putting lost Humanity in the worst possible place. Because not only are we lost- which would be bad enough- but we love our lostness. The Bible doesn't say that lost people merely "do" darkness. Jesus said that lost people "love" darkness.

So, because the nature of lost people is fallen- the unsaved not only doesn't love God- but they have no capacity to ever even *want* to love God. And then to top it all off- the Bible also says that the plight of lost unregenerate people is so bad that they don't even have the power to change any of this unless God does a Sovereign Work in them *first*.

And so not only does lost unregenerate people *not* have the *ability* to choose God- they don't have the power or even the inclination to choose God- because he is spiritually dead in trespasses and sins.

And this is why Grace is so magnificent. And this is also why humans rebel so much against what the Bible teaches. The Gospel

insults the pride and arrogance of Man because part of what it means to be lost is that we do not believe that we are lost. In our heart of hearts- we do not believe that we are as bad as the Bible says that we are. And we spend an enormous amount of time trying to convince ourselves and God just how good we really are.

So we rebel against God and we rebel against God's Word and we try to climb up into Heaven based upon what we do for ourselves and based upon our own efforts.

The crown jewel of godless Secular Humanism is the concept of Human Free Will that is autonomous and that stands alone in its pride and arrogance without any influence by God. But the Crown Jewel of Christianity is the Old Rugged Crossed stained with the Blood of a sinless Sovereign and merciful Savior- Who died to save God's people from their sins.

So we must take heed to our hearts, dear friends and make sure that that we have not adopted what the godless humanists teach about human free will but that we are trusting in what God has said in His Word about Man and about God and about Salvation and about Grace so that we can do what John says here and be able with all confidence to stand in the Day of Judgment.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.