

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 6- John's Moral Test of Salvation

52. Obedience- The Proof of Salvation- Part 9

WAOY Tuesday 07/10/07; WOSM Tuesday 12/13/22

Welcome again my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1 John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about "The Moral Test of Salvation". So, let's open our Bibles and read **1 John 2:4&5** again together.

4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;
5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

Now on the last broadcast, we were going over the contrast that John made between these two kinds of people. In verse 4 John describes a person who is not really saved- but only *says* that he has come to know God and in verse 5 John describes a genuine born again believer. Notice the one single aspect that divides these two people- the one attribute that differentiates between a truly saved person and a person who only thinks that he is saved: Obedience.

So, John is telling us here that obedience- the long term; day in and day out; consistent; heartfelt and sincere obedience to the Word of God is what John says is the one single distinguishing mark that separates those who are saved from those who only *say* that they are saved.

So, it was obedience that is where the rubber meets the road as far as John was concerned as far as Salvation is concerned.

Contrast what John taught here about the true mark of Salvation with what many are teaching today. Some teach that as long as you walk down the aisle and shake the preacher's hand- that you are saved. But the Bible doesn't say that. Others teach that as long as you are

baptized – that God bestows certain graces upon you in the baptismal waters. But once again- the Word of God doesn't teach that. Still others teach that if you speak in tongues- you must be saved- but the Bible is silent about that. And still others teach that as long as you are faithful to attend Mass and keep the sacraments of the Church- that that equals being saved.

But John didn't say that any of that was true, did he? No, John taught that there was one single deciding factor that would root out the sheep from the goats; the wheat from the tares; the fish on the right side from the fish on the left; the children of God and the children of the devil- and that one single attribute was obedience.

But John went even further in verse 5 and said that only in those who walk in obedience is the love of God perfected or developed into a mature and godly thing. So, by default we can deduce that John was also saying that in those who only *say* that they are saved- no love of God is made perfect.

So, we must emphasize that very same attribute that John emphasized here. Obedience is the name of the game when it comes to Christianity, beloved. We must get it down into our hearts that without obedience- without us humbly and graciously submitting ourselves to the authority of Scripture as a normal and ongoing part of our daily life- we have no authorization to even think that we are saved.

Now one sweet lady wrote me a letter and was troubled by this statement that I make. She said that if what I am saying is true- then there are very few Christians. My response is this:

First of all- there are very few Christians. And I don't say that with any degree of joy because it breaks my heart to see what is happening today to the Christian Church as a whole. But forget what I think- Jesus told us how many were really saved in **Matthew 7:13&14**, when He said:

13 "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.

14 "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

So, we can see that Jesus Himself said that only few would even

find the narrow path much less actually walk on it. So yes, I believe that few are truly saved.

Secondly, I didn't say that obedience was inextricably linked to Salvation- the Apostle John did. And John said that there is no true Salvation outside of obedience as he was moved along by the Holy Spirit to write down these inspired, inerrant, infallible Words.

So, if you have a problem with this particular part of this teaching on **1John**- you are going to have to take that problem up with God. I am but a messenger who is simply struggling along with many of you to live in accordance to Divinely inspired Revelation and by the way- I also am bound to live in accordance to that which I teach.

Thirdly- what is the real objection to teaching that obedience proves genuine Salvation? Is there anything *wrong* with obeying Jesus Christ? How could it be wrong to obey the Lord? The way that people talk today- you would think it was evil to live in humble submission to the Words of God. You would think that something terrible is going to happen to us if we walk in humble obedience to Jesus. But the reality is that only "good" will come to us if we obey Jesus.

Now it is true that we may suffer persecution by obeying God- but are we not glorifying God when we obey Him? And isn't glorifying God supposed to be the goal of all believers? Aren't all genuinely saved people endued with a passion to bring honor and praise and glory to Jesus Christ?

So, I ask again. What is the problem with teaching that true Salvation is inescapably linked to obedience? Isn't the real problem with teaching that without obedience we really aren't saved is that so many who *say* that they are saved will be uncovered to be the frauds that they are- isn't that the real problem with teaching like this?

And isn't that precisely what John was talking about here? Does not the contrast between verses 4 & 5 prove to us that there are those who *say* that they are saved and there are those who are genuinely saved and that the deciding factor which distinguishes between the two people is obedience? Isn't that why John wrote these two verses?

You see, to walk as Christ walked is not to live by rules- it is not to be legalistic as some claim- but to obey Jesus Christ is simply to live by example- to follow Jesus out of love for Jesus. So in reality- our obedience to Jesus is the only way that we humans have of proving our

love for Him. And that is why I say that without obedience- talk is cheap.

Such discipleship that is bathed in godly love is personal; active, and costly. It is personal in that it cannot be passed on to anyone else. I follow Jesus because I love Jesus; I obey Jesus because I love Jesus- you follow and obey Jesus because you love Jesus- or we don't obey Jesus and we do not follow Jesus because we do not love Him. John says that it is just that simple.

We who are genuinely saved are to be the same as Peter was right after the Resurrection when Jesus asked him in **John 21:15**:

... "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" ...

More that "these" what? To what exactly was Jesus referring here? Was Jesus asking Peter if Peter loved Jesus more than the other disciples loved Jesus? Or was Jesus asking Peter if Peter loved Jesus more than Peter loved the fish and his fishing business? I really don't know the answer to that question. Jesus *could well* have been asking Peter if he loved Him more than John and Andrew and all the rest loved Him, or Jesus could have been asking Peter if he loved Jesus more than he loved his former occupation. But it really doesn't matter which one Jesus meant- because the one single way in which Jesus told Peter to prove that he did love Jesus was to **"Feed my sheep"**.

So, if Peter would have accomplished great things in his life and yet had not fed the sheep of God- he would have proved without any doubt that he did not love Jesus. He could have become a world class fisherman who made millions of dollars franchising his fish houses- but if Peter didn't feed the sheep of God- Peter would have proved that he didn't love Jesus because he would have been dis-obedient to what Jesus told him to do.

Peter could have been more moral and in many ways far superior in stature than John and James and Andrew. But if Peter did not feed the sheep of God- Peter would have proved that he didn't love Jesus.

Now why is that? Why couldn't Peter just have become a wealthy man and given millions to the Cause of Jesus Christ? Wouldn't that have proven that he loved Jesus? Well, in this case- no- it would have proven that Peter did *not* love Jesus. But, Brother Blair how can you

say that? Isn't the fact that a person gives to God proof that he loves God? Not necessarily. Here's why.

As human beings- we do not have the right to establish how we are to prove our love for God. Only Jesus can make those kinds of demands upon us because only Jesus is Lord and only a lord can establish the parameters by which the subjects are to live.

You see, part of the unbiblical philosophy of modern worship is that we think that we have the right to worship God in our own way. And there is a frightening form of extreme arrogance in that concept, beloved, that is not found anywhere in Scripture.

We sing songs today which says that we can come to God "just as we are" and worship in "our own way"- but concepts like that defeat the entire purpose of what true worship is all about.

Now I understand that if we are talking about lost sinners- then I agree that a lost person must come to God "just as he is" because he cannot come any other way other than as a lost sinner- begging God for Mercy and Grace for Salvation.

But after we are saved- we have the ability to come to God in the prescribed way that God has demanded that we come to Him- and that way is clean and pure. And so, any attempt to worship God which violates or tries to alter the prescribed way in which Jesus sovereignly established- is not love, brothers and sisters- it is rebellion.

For example- let's say that I come before God to worship Him, and I raise my hands and let the tears flow down my face as I look upward. I may be very sincere, and this may be true heartfelt worship. But it may not be worship at all.

Because if in fact as I am doing this- I hold unforgiveness in my heart against another brother for example and instead of going to that brother and working it out as Jesus commanded us to do in Scripture- I simply choose to ignore the Command of my Lord and attempt to go to God in my own way and throw my hands up and expect God to receive my worship with this sin still unresolved in my life- I am saying that I really don't care what God said and I expect God to receive my worship anyway.

But because I chose to disobey that which Jesus commanded- I am not walking in humble worship, beloved- I am walking in arrogant rebellion and God will not accept my praise nor hear my prayers until I bow my knees and obey what He already said to do.

And this is true because only God has the Authority to establish the parameters for my obedience and only by humbly submitting to those parameters can I prove my love for Him.

So, in order for Peter to prove his love for Jesus- he had no choice- he had to feed the sheep. And if we are to prove our love for Jesus- we must first read and study the only Source which gives us the parameters for our obedience- and that one source is the Bible- and then when we come across one of the Commandments that Jesus gave to us- if we love Him- we must all graciously and humbly bow our knees to the authority of Scripture and move aside and start or stop and change whatever we have to and actually do what Jesus said to do- or else we prove without doubt that we do *not* value what He said enough to obey Him and we prove that we do *not* love Him enough to obey Him and we do not intend to inconvenience ourselves so that His Words may be carried out in our lives- because we have placed a higher priority on what we want than we have on what He wants- and we love ourselves more than we love Him and that beloved is the very essence of what being lost is all about.

So, the Apostle John is underscoring how vital obedience is to proving our Salvation and we must place just as high value upon it as did John. 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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