

February 25, 2018 -

I John 5: 14-21 - "Confidence in Pray"

### Introduction:

If you were to travel around the world you would pass through various land and climate conditions. For example you would encounter hot and cold climate and rainy and snowy places just to name a few. You would cross over mountains, canyons, islands, forest, jungles, rivers, lakes, oceans, marshes, tundra; vast prairies and even dry parch deserts. Our spiritual life is somewhat like one making their way through these different types of terrain. That includes making our way through the dry parch desert. I am talking about spiritual dryness, it is something that many Christians experience but least often will admit or discuss. Pastor Steve Harper in his book "Talking in the dark" says, "Spiritual dryness is a condition that makes' prayer feel as though we are talking in the dark." I believe it is like going through a long dark tunnel on the subway and wondering when you are ever getting out of it. You feel shut out, closed in but you don't jump from the train. You stay the course you wait and eventually you get back to the light.

In working with people over the years, I've discovered that in certain life situations prayer becomes more of a struggle particularly when we go through these extended periods of dryness and troubles. I believe as a pastor that this problem has directly hindered church worship and of course payer meeting. During these times we may begin to doubt God, we pray but we do not believe God is listening. Christians can lose confidence in prayer. It happens to the best of us.

Asaph who wrote Psalm 77 experienced the sense of God's absence in his life. He reminds us to pray -with the realization that this lack in confident in our praying is normal. When Asaph was dry, he prayed-right in the middle of it all, he talked with God. Too many Christians come to this point and basically quit praying.

C.S. Lewis once said, "The Problem of Prayer is we can get to the place where we regard God as an airman regards his parachute; it's there for emergencies but he hopes he'll never have to use it"? Faith leads to confidence in prayer. Faith is praying when you don't feel like it.

### I Confidence in Pray 14, 15

1. So, a person can lose confidence in their praying. The fact that this is true can be seen in John's closing remarks to the brethren he address in this letter and us. Verse 15- He hears!

Sometimes we pray and don't receive the answers we want, or we feel like we get no response at all. We have done all we can do, we're walking in step with Him – but sometimes we will still pray for something and it will not turn out according to our request. When this happens, what is going on? How can we stay motivated to pray even when the response we seem to be getting is silence? Christians can lose confidence in prayer?

2. The apostle John wrote to restore the believer's confidence in prayer. The letter of 1 John is largely written to combat false teachings that undermined the faith of believers by saying that Jesus was not fully God or by teaching that Jesus was not really human. The result of these false prophets teaching false doctrine was that the joy and confidence of the believer's experience was being greatly distressed.

Now John wrote to restore their confidence in basic Christian certainties like prayer. He goes on and affirms that this assurance (the child-father relationship) gives us confidence in prayer. The word confidence means boldness or freedom of speech. *parrhesia* --- *boldness or freedom of speech*... No power can separate us from this. **Romans 8: 37-39.**

In times of unrest, going to our Father in prayer is the best thing we can do even when we don't feel it. God honors faith... When life feels overwhelming, we can pray. While you and I cannot anticipate the trials of life, we can pray to our Father who fully understands what we face.

3. John writes in verse 14 - How can we know we are praying in the will of God? We remembering God's will never contradict His Word. Praying according to his will reveals the purpose for prayer is not to get our will done in heaven but heaven will done on earth. --- C. S. Lewis said, "Prayer doesn't change God; it changes me."

4. John makes certain that prayer is not a time for demanding what we want from God. Prayer is talking to God about what He wants. Note that John does not say "we SHALL have what we ask," but he writes we know that we have. This means the answer is immediate-the instant we ask. This doesn't mean the answer will be immediately realized. We may not realize the answer for days, months, or years. God always answers our prayers in one of three ways: "yes," "no," or "wait."

5. We need to focus on another element of prayer that of intercession and since so much of what is left here in this text is John reaffirming confident in things we should know. I want to spend most the remaining time on intercessory prayer v.16, 17: It is our duty to pray for one another, to intercede on their behalf. We often neglect this duty.

In the Jewish law and Old Testament there were specific sins punishable by death, though that is not the meaning here. John is repeating his idea from 1 John 3:6: *Whoever abides in Him does not sin*. There are several facts you must note about this "sin unto death". **First** the article "a" is not present in the Greek text. So John was not meaning any one particular sin.

**Second**, the verb translated sin is in the present tense and means a continuous engaging in sin. In Greek it literally reads "continually sinning and does not refer to an isolated act of sin. Therefore, this verse may refer to the premature physical death of an unrepentant believer whose sin is premeditated, prolonged, and defiant of God's commands. Some modern interpreters fall back on the "unpardonable sin" that Jesus mentioned blasphemy against the Holy Spirit as the "sin unto death." This does not fit one's Greek NT but fit with one's Systematic Theology.

In John's community there were those falling away from the faith, returning to Judaism, apostatizing. Then, there were those who kept on sinning, whose lives were marked by false faith, disobedience to God's commands and lack of love. Prayer for them might well be an exercise in futility. For example, some people in the church at Corinth habitually made the Lord's Supper into a drunken party.

When believers fall into sin, as Peter did when he denied the Lord, they need our prayers. God promised to bless the prayer made on behalf of a brother in sin. Perhaps such prayers have special power before God because they are prayers in fulfillment of the command to love the brethren. We must re-commit ourselves to prayer for one-another.

## II Confidence in Protection (5:18-19).

1. This verse basically means the Evil One can't drag a believer into sin. Remember I John 4:4- **Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 1 Cor. 10:13**

2. This is true in spite of the fact the whole *world lieth in wickedness* (1 Jn 5:19b). To confirm this truth, just look at the filth, vulgarity, and profanity on TV or listen to some of the music on the radio. **Because the world lieth in wickedness and is under the influence of the Evil one.** Jesus pray for us in John 17:15 to keep us from the evil one. Even though the world is under the control of the Evil One, he cannot harm us because of the promises of God and the prayers of Jesus. As Christians, we can be confident in prayers, we can be confident in protection and...

1. Verses 18-20 use the phrase we know three times. Now John writes: **And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true (5:20a).** Jesus is God spelling Himself out in a language we can all understand. The most documented life in history is that of Jesus Christ because His life split history into B.C. and A.D. Each time you write the current year on a check, the number denotes that many years from His birth.

2. Jesus came to give us an understanding, that we may know him that is true. He came to give us the capacity to know God in a personal way. Not only did Jesus come so we could know God through Him, but also to change our spiritual position. John puts it like this: **and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life (5:20b).**

Our spiritual position in Christ means we are part of the family of God because in him we have eternal life.

## Conclusion:

John concludes this great epistle: Little children, keep yourselves from idols (5:21). Idols are not only made of stone and precious metals. Anything that reduces our devotion to God is an idol or pagan god. An idol is anything we love more than God. It can be pleasure, possessions, popularity, positions, or whatever. God is a jealous God for our love.