

Part 8 – 1 John 3:22-4:6

I. Obeying And It's Results – 3:22-23

A. Vs. 22 – This verse deals with our prayer life and what is involved in that.

1. The idea of “asking” means “to request.” We can go before God with our requests.
2. The “receiving” of the request is tied to something. Note what it is: obedience, the keeping of the commands of God. 2 things to note:

A. We receive because we “keep” His commandments. The idea of “keep” is “to attend to carefully, to observe.”

B. We do the things that are pleasing before the Lord.

3. Our obedience is based on our striving to please the Lord. A heart attitude, we want to serve God out of love for Him, and be obedient to His commandments.

4. Does it mean we automatically receive whatever we want? Let us consider this for a moment:

A. If we are doing what is right before God (obeying the revealed Word of God) from our heart, we will want God's will.

B. We will pray for God's will if our heart is right with Him.

C. All answered prayer is contingent on it being the will of God – 1 John 5:14-15. See also passages such as John 16:23-27; Eph. 6:10-19; Phil. 4:6-7 which discuss the issue of prayer.

B. Vs. 23 – This deals with the commandments mentioned in vs. 22. This verse tells us what John specifically has in mind.

1. The commandment is to believe in Jesus Christ. Belief always implies obedience to what Christ commands us to do as revealed in the Scriptures. It is not the Old Testament law, but what we see commanded in the New Testament.

2. The logical conclusion to the first point: we are to love one another.

C. Vs. 24 – This verse finishes chapter 3, specifically dealing with assurance, as mentioned in 1 John 3:19-21.

1. Our “abiding” or “living in fellowship” with Christ is contingent on some things. We must “keep” (present participle) His commandments (The Word of God).

2. John's very words indicate that this is the mark of a true Christian. Note he tells us that the Spirit was given to us, and that He brings us into this abiding relationship with Christ. The outflow of this is that we do “keep” or “obey” His commandments. The Holy Spirit permanently indwells the believer – See John 14:16-17; Rom. 8:9,11,13-15; Eph. 1:13-14; Eph. 4:30.

3. The Holy Spirit's ministry includes the conviction of sin and the teaching to us of the Word of God.

II. Discerning Truth From Error – 4:1-6

A. Vs. 1 – Here John warns us about being on guard against false teachers and false believers. This is a stark reminder as seen in 1 Thess. 5:20-21.

1. The idea of “test” means “to scrutinize, examine, or to prove something as being genuine or not.” This word is also used in 1 Peter 1:7; Romans 12:2.

2. Any one claiming to be a prophet needs to: (a) be truthful; (b) be right; (c) not lead people to follow false gods or false teaching.

3. This passage introduces a very simple test: What does one think of Christ?

B. Vs. 2 – Here is test #1 in determining true teachers from false ones.

1. Note that the Holy Spirit is mentioned as being part of the equation. His ministry is to teach us truth (1 Jn. 2:27), so we can count on His work in this area. See also 1 Cor. 2:12-16; Jn. 16:13.

2. The test: Anyone who confesses with their mouth “that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.” What does this exactly mean? It deals with the Incarnation, and the entire ministry of Jesus Christ. Here are some of the things that are included in this confession:

- A. His Virgin Birth – Mt. 1; Lk. 1-3
- B. His sinless life – 1 Jn. 3; 1 Peter 1
- C. Salvation by Him alone – Jn. 5:24; Jn. 3:16
- D. His Substitutionary Atonement – Mt. 20:28
- E. His teachings – Mt. 5-7
- F. His claims of Deity – Jn. 5:14-17; Jn. 8:50-59
- G. His resurrection – Jn. 20

3. Some, we must remember, denied the bodily existence of Christ.

C. Vs. 3 – This is the antithesis of vs. 2. John spells out clearly the result of not confessing Christ properly.

1. Every world religion can be measured by this standard. What do they say about Christ? There is a constant denial of the Incarnation.

2. Anyone denying the Incarnation and all its aspects cannot be a Christian.

3. The attitude is very important to consider – Mt. 5:21-26; Mark 7:14-23; Gal. 5:19-21.

4. We read here that the person with this type of attitude does not have eternal life in them. See John 8:40-47.

D. Vs. 4 – John gives us the fact of our victory over these false religions.

1. We are God's "children" – this term is common in John's letter to describe his readers. See 1 Jn. 2:1; 2:12; 2:18 as examples.
2. We have already "overcome them" or "won the fight" against the false teachers, because God is greater than the enemy in the world.

E. Vs. 5 – These false teachers make different claims than Christians would make.

1. They are of the world. The opposite fact is that we are not of the world.
2. They speak like those without Christ, and those in that condition hear them.

** Some things to note about vss. 1-5:

- (1) Christians tend to get caught up in the glitz – more emotion, more spiritual, so they think.
- (2) We often fail to check out teaching by Scripture.
- (3) 1 Cor. 12:1-3 gives us an example of "spiritual phoniness."

F. Vs. 6 – John gives us test #2 in this verse to help in weeding out false teachers. The test: What is their view of the Word of God?

1. Those who truly know God listen to the Apostolic teachings about Christ and Who He is.
2. Someone who openly denies the tenets of the Christian faith is not a child of God.
3. The "spirit of error" denounces the truth of God as taught by the Apostles.
4. The "spirit of truth" accepts the Apostolic teachings.

Questions To Think On:

1. What is the relationship between obedience and answered prayer (**1 John 3:22-24**)?
2. What are some of the marks of a false teacher? What criteria should we look at when trying to determine what makes someone Biblical or not? (**1 John 4:1-6**).