

Anxiety About Eternity

1 Jn 3:18-22

Introduction:

- A. In the song "There's a Great Day Coming" we find that the judgment is spoken of and then it asks an important question, "Are you ready for the judgment day?" The question that is asked in that song has a way of making many feel uncomfortable.
- B. Some because they know they are living out of sync with God. They feel guilty, but their guilt is not strong enough to bring about conversion -- action to change. The remedy is repentance. Without repentance, their destiny is clear (Lk 13:3, 5).
- C. Others have anxiety about eternity for an altogether different reason. These are people who are so conscientious about trying to please God. They are concerned about the possibility of falling short after they have truly put forth their best efforts. Scriptural statements about judgment and eternity can be scary (Matt 7:13-14 1 Pet 4:18 Heb 10:31). The epistle of John is written to give our hearts assurance if we have done the things necessary to be pleasing to God.

I. Genuine Love Demonstrates We Are Of The Truth

- A. Christians should reflect the love of Christ in the way we treat others - 1 Jn 3:16
 - 1. Most circumstances where we can show love for others are mundane and ordinary
 - a. Seldom called upon to 'lay down our lives for the brethren'
 - b. However, if necessary, should be willing - Jn 15:13
 - 2. If God expects us to demonstrate the greatest love, does He not also expect us to show love in more ordinary situations
- B. Love demands the sharing of our resources with the needy - 1 Jn 3:17
 - 1. Story about the rich man and Lazarus - Lk 16:15f
 - 2. Lack of love implied from fact beggar died "desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's

table” - Lk 16:21

3. A person with a shut up heart does not have the love of God living in him
 - a. We should not just talk about love
 - b. We must demonstrate the truthfulness of our profession of love by our actions
- C. Love is a test of discipleship
 1. Others see our love and know that we are followers of Christ - Jn 13:34-35
 2. We can also examine ourselves and see how we demonstrate love for others - 1 Jn 3:19
 - a. Showing love by helping the needy does not prove that everything in our lives is pleasing to God
 - b. We can demonstrate love and fall short in other specifics
 - c. However, if we flunk this test, we can know that we are not prepared for eternity - 1 Jn 4:20

II. *How To Be Confident Toward God*

- A. Our aim is to be “confident when we stand before the Lord” - 1 Jn 3:19
- B. There are people who have a false sense of security
 1. They feel good about their salvation although they have not obeyed the gospel of Christ.
 2. Those who do not love the truth will suffer a “strong delusion” about the state of their souls - 2 Thess 2:10ff
 3. John stresses the need for obedience to the Lord's will
 - a. One who has not obeyed the gospel is condemned
 - b. No matter how he feels about his relationship with the Lord - 1 Jn 2:3; 3:22
- C. The apostle is discussing the opposite problem
 1. Those disciples whose hearts condemn them with doubts and anxieties
 2. They need assurance to be able to come before the Lord with confidence
- D. Many of us can probably identify with those feelings
 1. Sometimes wonder if have made any real progress at all in Christian life
 2. Still see your sins and failures in stark relief while your

- accomplishments and growth seems hazy and uncertain
3. We do have failures and we know about them
 - a. This is normal
 - b. The ignorant and the apathetic don't have these concerns
 - c. Only the conscientious care about their souls
 - d. One writer wisely points out: "Some sensitive souls desperately fear that they may have blasphemed against the Holy Spirit and so be beyond the reach of God's forgiveness. ...their concern is evidence that they are not guilty of that sin" (David Jackson, "The Message of John's Letters: Living in the Love of God," Inter-Varsity Press, 1988, 104).
 - E. Should be great confidence in the obvious truth stated by John -- God is greater than our hearts
 1. His judgment of us will not be subjective... based on feelings and anxieties
 2. It will be based on objective realities by an all-knowing, all-powerful God
 - a. If there is unforgiven sin in our lives that is a fearful thought
 - b. There is a great deal of comfort in leaving our destiny in the hands of our loving God - cf. 1 Jn 1:7
 3. Does not mean that we should be indifferent to the condition of our souls.
 - a. Not a "Don't worry about it -- everything is going be alright" attitude
 - b. It is essential that we "keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" - 1 Jn 3:22
 - c. It is possible for us to know whether we are doing that - 1 Jn 5:13

Conclusion:

- A. Having confidence to think of eternity without anxiety offers some wonderful blessings for the Christian. We don't have to live in fear (1 Jn 4:17-18). Our prayers are powerful because we can ask them with bold confidence that God will hear and answer them (1 Jn 3:21-22). We can experience the joy of

walking in the light (1 Jn 1:7).

- B. This is far different from the “once saved, always saved” doctrine. We must keep His commandments. We must do those things that are pleasing in His sight. We must walk in the light. Otherwise, we are not saved.
- C. However, because of God's grace -- and the blood of Jesus Christ -- we have cleansing of our sins. Have you done what the New Testament teaches to receive the forgiveness of your sins? (Faith--Mk 16:16; Repentance--Acts 2:38; Confession—Rom 10:9-10; Baptism--Acts 22:16) Are you continuing your walk in Christ? Are you faithful? Answer that question YES or NO! If change is needed, change. Get right with God today!