

So That You May Know

An Expositional Study of the Epistle of **1 John 4:13**

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

211 The Believer's Confidence- Part 7

WAOY Wednesday 07/02/08

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 on the last broadcast- we saw how that about 1700 years ago a great battle ensued over verse 17 that we just read when Pelagius- the father of what is now called Secular Humanism- waged war with Augustine over the issue of God's Sovereignty versus Man's free will.

Pelagius taught that God was *not* Sovereign- especially in Salvation because of something that he termed, "human free will". Pelagius taught that not even God would do anything to violate human free will- not even save them. So in Pelagius' world- Salvation was *not* the result of a Sovereign God working through Grace to save unworthy sinners. No, to Pelagius- Salvation was the natural result of Man exercising his own free will and will power to simply "choose" to love and serve God on his own.

So not only was what the Bible taught about God's Sovereignty and Original Sin challenged by Pelagius- but even the very concept and necessity of Grace *itself* was challenged by the man who invented Humanism.

Now as I told you last time- there are several concepts and terms that are very common and which are mentioned nearly every day that when you hear them spoken – you need to immediately think- “godless Humanism” rather than “Biblical Christianity”. Terms like “human free will”; the concept that Man is a “free moral agent”; and the word “self” added to almost anything else- like “self” esteem; “self” worth; “self” fulfillment; “self” help and “self” gratification.

Humanism is the false religion that has Man sitting in the throne- so all ideas; all teachings; all songs; all sermons that are humanistic are all about Man and what Man does and what Man accomplishes- all to the Glory of Man.

Christianity, on the other hand, is the one true religion that has Jesus Christ sitting in the throne. So all Christian ideas; teachings; songs; and sermons are all about Jesus Christ and what Christ has done; what Christ has accomplished- all to the Glory of Jesus Christ.

So you can see that the two religions are diametrically opposed to one another because they have conflicting goals and desires. And so it is correct to say that a true Humanist would categorically reject Christianity while it is also true to say that a true Christian would categorically reject Humanism in all of its variations and forms.

And to go even deeper it is also true to say that no self- respecting Humanist would tolerate *any* Christian teaching. Because to do so would be to hinder his advancement in worshipping *himself*. And conversely no Blood bought saint of God would in any way tolerate any Humanistic teaching. Because to do so would hinder him from worshipping Jesus Christ. For example- in **John 3:30** John the Baptist said:

He must increase, but I must decrease.

Which gives us the Christian concept that true believers are those who serve the Lord- to the *exclusion* of themselves. In other words- lots of people give money to worthy causes- but Christians give money- not so they can take a tax deduction- but because they love to give- because

Christians would give even if the Government *penalized* them to give. Lots of people do noble things- but a Christian does noble things in loving response to already being saved- not to trying to earn God's Forgiveness by what he does.

So a Christian will obey God- even if it gets him arrested; even if it costs him everything that he owns; even if it costs him his life- because to a genuine believer- obedience is the only way he can prove his love for the wonderful Savior Who purchased his Salvation. So evil men are wasting their time trying to threaten a believer with death- Christians do not fear death- they fear God- Who is able to cast both body and soul into hell fire.

But to a humanist- the "self" is "god". And so whatever builds up the "self" of Man is the highest and best and noblest of all goals. So a humanist will give- but only if it benefits him personally to do so. So a true humanist for example will be happy to help the poor- as long as it is with somebody *else's* money.

The most humble, gentle, and kind people throughout human history like Paul, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon and John Bunyan have all been Bible believing Christians while the hall of fame of Humanism contains names like Voltaire and Adolf Hitler; Joseph Stalin; Pol Pot; and Mao Tse Dung- whose monuments to the glory of Humanism drips with the blood of over a hundred millions murders.

So the very concept of building up "self" is detrimental to genuine Christianity while the exalting of Jesus Christ is detrimental to genuine humanism. So why would any Christian want to be taught that Man needs to build up his own self- esteem or to become self- fulfilled? Why would any Bible believing bond slave of Jesus Christ seeks to build up *himself* rather than exalt Jesus Christ? Well, he wouldn't. And yet it is nothing except raw humanism with its exaltation of "self" that is taught to huge crowds today in the name of "having your best life now" and "think and grow rich".

Now the concept of "Sola Scriptura" which is a Latin phrase that says that all Doctrine and all Teaching in the Church must come from the Scriptures and from the Scriptures alone- wasn't official developed until the 16th century. But the concept that the Bible- rather than visions, dreams, or the rulings by the Church leaders- is the Authority in the Church and the concept that all Church Doctrine must come from

the Scriptures and not from Man- was first put forth by Augustine in his battle with Pelagius 1700 years ago.

Now what is interesting is that unlike many of the false teachers of today- Pelagius didn't make the claim that his theology was Scriptural. In fact- it was precisely because what he taught was *not* from the Bible- that made Pelagius think what he said was so right. Pelagius said that by virtue of the fact that he was filled with God's Spirit- he had the authority to teach whatever he felt "led" to teach- *regardless* of whether or not it was found in Scripture. So long as it made sense to his own human reasoning- Pelagius said it must be right. Sounds just like many teachers in the modern Church today doesn't it?

But Augustine taught that God is only properly understood by and through a correct understanding of the inspired Scriptures. And so for anyone to promote concepts and teachings that are *outside* of Scripture is to, in effect, *create* another religion that is not Christianity- but that competes *against* Christianity for the souls of men.

And so Augustine denounced Pelagius and began to refute his teachings point by point using only Scripture. So after all the dust settled- Augustine's gift to the Church was a very thoroughly researched and documented written response to *anyone* who rejects God's Sovereignty; Original Sin; and the necessity of Grace for Salvation using only Scriptures.

And part of Augustine's argument was that **1John 4:17** proved that God- not Man- was Sovereign in Salvation because Man *cannot* have confidence in the Day of Judgment by and through human will power- because of the reality of sin.

And this is where I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall during the great battle between Pelagius and Augustine and listen in to their debate about just who is in charge of Salvation- Man or God.

And I want to come at this from this angle. Many of us today have pondered the notion of just what happens to us if we die with unrepented sin in our lives. And the reason that this has become such an issue is because we really do not completely understand just what Jesus paid for in His Life, Death, and Resurrection. And because of real bad teaching- many of us believe that we got saved because of what we did. And consequently we also believe that the only reason that we *stay* saved is because of what we do. And I hope that by now you can see that this concept has much more in common with what Pelagius

wrongly taught than what the Bible teaches. Because the Bible teaches just the opposite. The Bible teaches that we are saved because of what God does *for* us and we are *kept* because of what God *continues* to do for us. Now please remember, dear friends, that Humanism is all about what Man does for *himself* while Christianity is all about what Christ does for us.

The Bible teaches clearly and repeatedly teaches that God chooses us. And the Bible goes on to say that because we are fallen and depraved creatures- we do not have the capacity or even the *inclination* to choose God in our lost unsaved condition. So consequently, God must graciously do *for* us what we *cannot* do for ourselves- and that is to initiate Salvation- all by Himself.

The only way that any lost unsaved Man would be able to choose God for Salvation is if Humanism was right and Man was *not* radically and negatively affect by the Fall. But the Bible clearly teaches over and over in hundreds of verses about just how absolutely *devastating* the Fall of Adam was to Man.

As we have already studied- the Fall was so horrific that Man was completely ruined- down to the level of his very own nature- which is now- utterly corrupt. So in his fallen condition- the Bible says that people don't just sin- but the Bible teaches that lost people *love* their sin and that all lost people are *slaves* to sin- that sin completely *dominates* and *rules* over every area of the life of every lost person.

And so because the nature of lost people is now corrupt- all of the loves and desires of that lost person are also completely corrupt. And because our "choices" are predicated upon our loves and desires- the so-called "free will" of lost unsaved people is really not "free" at all. It is in bondage to his corrupt fallen nature.

So in that state- lost people are not simply separated from God- but the Bible says they are actually "dead" in their sins and trespasses as **Ephesians 2:1** declares.

So before any lost person could ever suddenly choose God or even *want* to choose anything about God or the things of God- God has to sovereignly give that lost person new spiritual life. God must sovereignly resurrect him or make him alive and give that lost person new birth. And so being born again is God sovereignly giving that fallen lost person eyes to see; ears to hear and an heart to believe. And with that new nature- God instills new loves and desires into that

person. And with those new loves and desires- that person will now make new choices that reflect those new loves. And so God has to do all of this first. And he has to do it sovereignly- all by Himself- precisely because the lost person is spiritually dead and can't even *want* God to do this- much less *ask* for it or cooperate with it.

And this sovereign giving of life to these lost people is what is called, "Regeneration" or being "Born Again". And it is a sovereign Act of God that God does all by Himself- precisely because, in his lost condition- Man cannot contribute *anything*. And so after God does this Work- the lost person has the ability and the desire to hear the Gospel and to believe the Gospel and to repent of his sins and to trust in Jesus Christ for the saving of his soul. But all of this- the hearing and the believing and the repenting and the trusting are merely human *responses* to the Work that God has already done in that lost person's life.

So we are saved because God chooses us and *not* because we choose God. And that makes Salvation to be wholly "of" God and not in any way "of" Man. It makes Salvation to be entirely "by" Grace and entirely "through" Faith and *not* the result of any human effort or work. And *that* is the only reason that Salvation is eternal- and the only reason why we can have great confidence 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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