

The Heart of Prayer

1 John 3:19-22

Sermon Outline

A. The Heart Matters (vs. 19-20):

1. By this/this then:

a) Six points are made: (a) the practice of love is a guarantee of Christian sonship; (b) so is God's knowledge of the believer; (c) a clear conscience enables the Christian to enjoy a confident spiritual relationship with God; (d) faith and love are the summary of God's commands; (e) obedience to those demands is the basis for living in God through Christ; (f) the gift of the Spirit assures the Christian of God's presence in his daily life. Cf. Dodd, 87–88, who (however) regards these points as "a series of loosely connected statements."^[1]

2. By this/this then – Love demonstrates a life surrendered to Christ.

3. We will know – When a person demonstrates love as described in chapter 3 verses 16-18 it would provide a vivid portrayal of the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life. This exposure creates a full intellectual understanding for everyone involved that this individual is of the truth (2:3-6).

4. We will know – When love is at its best (a love shaped by our obedience), no one must guess.

5. We are of the truth – The true character of a believer is exposed by their day to day lives when they truly walk in complete conformity to the will of God (1:5-7).

a) We can be assured of the presence of eternal life within us when we demonstrate self-sacrificial love to others. Believers who begin to truly love (v. 18) will know their behavior has its source in the truth and therefore will have confidence before God (v. 21). ^[2]

6. We are of the truth – Who we are is exposed by how we love.

7. Will assure – A sincere willingness to walk in conformity with the will of God denounces fear and doubt from a believer's heart. It persuades the believers to accept that their walk with God is sincere (4:16-18). Doubt removed leads to answered prayer (James 1:5-9).

8. Our hearts – The direct object of all the above activity creates a level of confidence in the inner being of the believer. The fear and doubt that may have once affected their emotions is removed because they have a full understanding from the inside out that they are in the will of God.

9. Our hearts – When our emotions get us twisted the word keeps us focused.
10. Before God ('Him' is defined from verse 16-18) – These outer and inner functions bring into the presence of God where there is no need for fear or doubt (4:18).
11. In whatever our hearts – The main focus of being in the presence of God is the condition of our sincere inner desires to do the will of God.
12. In whatever our hearts – How we function in verse 19 exposes who we really are.
13. Condemns – If the consistent demonstration of our hearts 'say to us that we have done wrong' then our own hearts makes a continuous statement against us.
14. God is greater hearts – God is continuously, repeatedly having the better quality or greater value than any activity our inner passions and desire possesses. God can overcome any wrong doing that our hearts portray.
15. God is greater hearts – If the activity of our inner desires seeks to drive us away from the will of God, God continuously, repeatedly is greater and can therefore cause us to come back in conformity to His will.
16. Knows all things – God has a full, comprehensive understanding of the totality of each of everything our heart every desire to do.

B. A Sincerity Heart is Answered Prayer (vs. 21-22; 1 Peter 3:7):

1. Beloved – John is only speaking to those who are saved because he knows they know the truth (1:7; 2:26-29).
2. If – If in the text is a conditional clause in an effort to prescribe a verdict on the heart.
3. Does not condemns – If the consistent demonstration of our hearts does not 'say to us that we have done wrong' then our own hearts does not make a continuous statement against us.
4. If it does not condemn – The answer to our prayers depends on the condition of our hearts.
5. We have confidence – We can continually come in the presence of God with boldness, no fear or anxiety when we pray (James 1:5-9; Philippians 4:4-9).
6. We have confidence – We can continuously come with unhesitating, undoubting confidence, because there is no guilt, when we pray to God.
7. Before God – Our unwavering boldness, no fear or doubt (4:18) can be our approach when we come into the presence of God.
8. Whatever – Whatever represents the complete totality of everything in ever prayer we go into the presence of God to present.
9. Ask – The totality of all that we continually bring before God in prayer, because our hearts does not speak against us, can be done in the same manner a child, who is confidence of their parents love, makes a request. They expect a positive answer.
10. We will receive from Him (God) – Sometime in the future we can continually have full confidence that God will, on His own initiative, respond to our request.
11. If we keep – Faithfully waiting on God, because we trust in His Word, provides us answers to our request.

12. If we keep – We must continuously repeated live, like Abraham, watchfully, expecting God to answer our request.
13. If we keep His commands – We can expect God to answer our prayer when we faithfully submit our lives (reverence) to His authority.
14. Pleasing in God's sight – To live with a worshipful heart because we maintain a consciousness of God's presence each and every day causes God to be well pleased (5:13-14).
15. Pleasing in God's sight – Living with a consciousness of God leading us to genuinely love one-another is so pleasant to God it makes Him happy.
16. Pleasing in God's sight – When the disposition of our heart is good our prayers are good.
17. Pleasing in God's sight – When the disposition of our heart is good it becomes sincere worship to God.
18. Pleasing in God's sight – When our presence pleases God His answers pleases us.