

Theme: Christians know that they have eternal life, that God hears their prayers, that their sins are forgiven, and that they are protected by Christ because they know the One True God.

I. Intro - Seinfeld Tying Mini-plots Together

- A. Seinfeld considered a groundbreaking show
- B. Most episodes two or three mini-plots within it
- C. These would suddenly be tied together in conclusion
- D. But ending would make no sense if not seen in context
- E. John does this in his letter - tying many things together
- F. Critical that we read this last section in context of letter

II. Authentic Assurance For Believers

- A. Assurance for Christians to know they have eternal life
I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 1 John 5:13
 - 1. John wants believers to know they have eternal life
 - 2. Heretics have caused some to doubt; John assures
 - 3. This is really the purpose for the whole letter
But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. John 20:31
 - a. Gospel written so we might believe and have life
 - b. Letter written to those who believe - know they have life

- 4. Christians should always be assured - no matter what else may happen - that they have eternal life in Christ. Nothing can take this away from them.

B. Assurance of answered prayer

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. 1 John 5:14–15

- 1. John wants us to have confidence before God
- 2. Confidence at final judgement (1 John 2:28; 4:17)
- 3. We also have confidence in prayer - “ask”
- 4. This is great assurance - I am His child & He hears
- 5. But do not lose the context
 - a. “According to His will” - not according to my will
 - b. “Prayer is not a convenient device for imposing our will upon God, or for bending his will to ours, but the prescribed way of subordinating our will to his. It is by prayer that we seek God’s will, embrace it and align ourselves with it. Every true prayer is a variation on the theme ‘your will be done’.” (John Stott, Commentary, 185)
 - c. Prayer is not a battle, but a response; its power consists in lifting our wills to God, not in trying to bring his will down to us. (Gary Smalley, WBC, 295)
 - d. In pagan religion, prayer was a means of manipulating the god; in Christianity it is a means of conforming the disciple to the will of God.
- 6. Furthermore, vv16-17 give the real prayer in mind

C. Assurance of forgiveness of sins

If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that. ¹⁷ All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death. 1John 5:16–17

1. The particular prayer in mind in vv14-15 - forgive sin
2. We can be sure God answers this prayer, forgives
3. But what is sin that leads to death? (Four options)
 - a. Sin that leads to physical death is in view
 1. Like Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)
 2. But life & death in context are spiritual not physical
 3. In fact, all 10 occurrences of “life” in 1 John are spiritual, eternal life
 - b. Mortal and venial sins are in view
 1. Venial (little/trivial) sins - don't “kill” grace of life
 2. Mortal sins - kill the grace of life
 3. But this idea developed much later
 4. Nothing in the context - or rest of Scripture - supports such an idea
 - c. Unintentional and deliberate sins are in view
 1. Numbers 15:27-31 speaks of these two types
 2. Deliberate sins required cutting person off from Israel
 3. Some specifically list “suicide” as unforgivable

4. However, we are in New Covenant, not the Old
5. And thank God - for we ALL sin deliberately
6. So this would give no assurance at all
7. And the NT only speaks of one unforgivable sin

- d. The unforgivable sin - rejection of Authentic Christ and His Gospel
 1. This is what John has dealt with throughout the letter - false Christ and false Gospel
 2. Notice - brothers sins not to death; does not say “brother” sins unto death; ‘that’ or ‘that one’
 3. V17 - all sin is serious, but Christian's sins are forgiven
4. Rather than trying to create worry and speculation, John wants to assure Christians that our sins are forgiven because of Christ.
5. This is another reason we need the local church - to speak words of assurance of forgiveness in our times of despair and struggle.
6. We can pray for each other and speak the word of forgiveness with assurance - for we are fully forgiven in Christ.
7. But we can NEVER speak such a word of assurance to those who reject the Authentic Christ or His Authentic Gospel. In that case, we pray for their salvation and call for them to repent and embrace the Gospel.

D. Assurance that Christ will protect and keep us

We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; **the one who was born of God keeps him safe**, and the evil one cannot harm him. 1 John 5:18

1. The one born of God - I think it refers to Jesus

- a. He is contrasted with the Evil One - Satan
- b. Clear echo of John 17:12,15

While I was with them, I **protected them and kept them safe** by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled...¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you **protect** them from the evil one. John 17:12, 15

1. Same Greek word in John 17:12,15 as 1 John 5:18
2. John is telling us Jesus will keep His prayer!

2. We are protected from three things

- a. We are protected from the power of sin

We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. 1 John 5:18

1. Not speaking of sinlessness - but embracing sin
2. Same as 1 John 3:4-10 - see teaching there
3. This is good news - for sin destroys and distorts

- b. We are protected from the grasp of Satan

We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and **the evil one cannot harm him**.¹⁹ We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. 1 John 5:18-19

1. Literally 'evil one can not touch him'
2. Satan can not snatch us from Jesus; we are protected!
3. The whole world is under His evil control - but we are free!!!
4. 1 John 2:12-14 - we overcome Him as Christ's people. This is your inheritance!!!

- c. We are protected from perishing in death

We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. 1 John 5:20

1. The world is under Satan - but we are in God
2. The world dwells in death - but we are in life!
3. Jesus our True God is so strong to protect us that nothing - not sin, not Satan, not even death itself - can keep us from God and eternal life. This is the protecting power of God.

III. Applying the Authentic Word

A. Do not turn from the Authentic God to idols

We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

²¹ Dear children, keep yourselves from idols. 1 John 5:20-21

1. This is not some strange ending about idols
2. We must embrace the Authentic God - not counterfeit idols
3. The culture clamors for us to turn away - but don't!

4. The false gods can not deliver on their promises
5. And do not buy their “gospels” - they are counterfeit
6. Cling to Christ and His Gospel!

B. The Table of Authentic Assurance

1. This Table points us to Authentic assurance
2. Our assurance is in broken body & shed blood
3. Christ lived, died, and was raised for us
4. If you embrace Him - your many sins are forgiven
5. We are weak, but He is strong - and He keeps us
6. Come be strengthened in life today

Authentic Assurance From the True God

1 John 5:13-21
 August 16, 2015
 Communion
 Jude 1:24-25

Teaching keywords: confidence; sin; false teaching and heresy; idolatry and false gods; prayer; regeneration; Satan and demons; perseverance

24 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy — 25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. Jude 1:24–25

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¹⁸ We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. ¹⁹ We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. ²⁰ We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

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