

10/1/23- 'TRUTH AND DECEPTION' (#3)

'Am I Really a Christian?'

PASTOR LEE

Are We
Saved?

- In 1John 2....Pastor Lee relays how he is often posed with question: ...'am I really a Christian....can I know for sure that I have a relationship with Jesus'....that I'll be with Him for eternity'?? Same question asked as it relates to our loved ones. The Apostle John 'approaches' such questions in 1John 2.
- Being 'saved.....sometimes its in a 'moment'....sometimes its a 'process'. In each case though, there is a sense that the Holy Spirit is in your life and affecting your life. Then life continues to happen....reality sets in...doubts concerning feeling God's love/presence may creep in.

.....Even
As Sinners?

- 1 John 2:1- -My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.

In A Sinful
World...

Jesus
Advocates
For Us!

- Here, John is speaking with kindness/love/compassion ("My little children"). He also set up for reader (them and us today) expectations...ie. don't sin! BUT, recognizing (like children) that we don't always live up to expectations...in the face of reality, our nature, etc., sin WILL happen. Tenderly, as we would do with our own children, He allows that this will happen but WE HAVE JESUS TO ADVOCATE FOR US. What comfort!
- In context, the Christians of that era were living in an extremely challenging and pagan/sinful world facing great challenges in exercising their faith (like us, today!).
- We can relate...as parents, our own kids will sometimes fall short of expectations....we allow for it....and lovingly try to correct them. How much more this must weigh on Jesus who atoned for our sins (past, present and future). AND...in the course of life...even just this week ... we've all sinned. Thank you God, for our Advocate!

Faith,
Repentance
&
Confession

↓
Freedom From
Sins Slavery

- Often, self-professed sinners, potentially interested in joining our Church, inquire of Pastor Lee..."would we be welcome"? Sometimes, implied in the question:....."can I enjoy a certain sin and be welcomed/celebrated in that sin?" As John approaches us...as a sinner himself....he acknowledges sinful challenges/struggles (no matter where we are in our 'spiritual growth trajectory'). BUT...he acknowledges in the context of confession and repentance.....cleansed by Jesus' blood. Remember Romans 6....sin enslaves you (V 16)...Jesus brings freedom!! Forgiveness, restoration and freedom is there...offered by our Advocate.
- Pastor Lee poses: Why not sin??? (since its our tendency and by grace we are forgiven)....(again, Romans 6:15). "SIN IS A DISTORTION FROM SATAN, PROMISING SOMETHING THAT HE CANNOT DELIVER. Consider this particularly if/when you indulge in oft-repeated or habitual/besetted sin....and, if so, you ARE in slavery. At CFD, we welcome everyone!.....and pray for all to be freed from sin's slavery.

Rationalize
Sin... Or
... Do it
God's Way

- We like to rationalize sin.....ie. 'Its my one and only sin'.....or....'yes, its a sin but it doesn't hurt anyone'. **BUT, SIN ALWAYS SPLASHES!!!** You can chose your sin but not its consequences (even with God's forgiveness, the consequences are **STILL THERE**). Instead, do it God's way...its always better...always right. Sin is destructive **AND** an affront to God. Think of your sins nailed to the Cross (and what sacrifice was made for that to happen). Also, if you wouldn't want your spouse or friend, or neighbor to witness your sin, how about God who sees all. But again, if you **DO** sin and while you grieve the Holy Spirit of God, Jesus will advocate for you.!
- Consider God's grace, mercy and love!!!

John 2:2- - He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Via Christ's
Sacrifice &
Atonement

- Propitiation: Definition— "the satisfaction of the wrath of God and the reconciliation of two parties". If God, the Righteous Judge looked the other way, He would cease to be righteous and just (as the ultimate Parent). He cannot, by His nature ignore sin (just like, as parents, if we don't address misbehavior). God in His wrath deals with it.....**BUT**, Jesus, in living a perfect life, in suffering and dying for our sins, paid the price (for us!!!!); took them upon Himself and atoned for them. So He satisfied God's wrath and reconciled us with Him.
- Significance: **WE WILL ALL SPEND ETERNITY SOMEWHERE!! EVERYONE!!** All will depend on how each of us responds to Jesus' atoning on the Cross which he did for all.

Genuine
Faith...

1 John 3-5- - And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. (4) Whoever says "I know Him" but does not keep His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him. (5) but but whoever keeps His word , in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in Him.

... Comes
First;
Obedience
Follows

- An almost paradoxical question: Christ sacrificed/atoned for me/ all Him/ by His grace (unearned)..... at the same time, if I'm really "in Him", I'm keeping His commandments. (???) Using a stairway as prop, Pastor Lee addresses the unsatisfying process of trying to take progressive steps upward(ie good works) to raise self and 'get to God'.....but we **STILL** feel separated so the cycle continues without completion. Some then give up....because religion is about trying to follow...versus... God coming to us.....as did Christ. **OBEEDIENCE FOLLOWS BELIEF!** If we keep His commandments, we have already come to know Him.
- **1John 5: 3 says: For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are NOT burdensome. Obedience becomes a natural response to do it God's way....'rules first/ works first' religions don't work. And its actually more burdensome! Proverbs 13:15- -The way of the transgressor is hard".**

It Will
Change
You!

- **BIG QUESTION: HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU'RE CHRISTIAN.... YOU DO IF HE'S CHANGING YOU!** In religion, you change yourself, in Jesus, He changes you! Mathew 7:16- - (Jesus says) **"YOU WILL RECOGNIZE THEM BY THEIR FRUITS...** Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles.....etc."?

1 John 5-6- -but whoever keeps His word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in Him: whoever ABIDES in Him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

Imitate
Him;

Stay Connected
In Him!

- "Abide means 'knowing'.....abiding in Jesus means living in Him....remaining in Him....having a close relationship with Him....walk with Him. Jesus said: *"apart from me you can do nothing"*. Pastor Lee uses prop illustrating fig branch to truck/vine analogy. It's not about performance or knowledge. Your constant connection (24/7) to Jesus is everything!