

Are You for Real? The Test of True Salvation

LAST WEEK'S MESSAGE

John, having encountered Jesus, wrote based on personal experience. He urges his readers to focus on Jesus so that their joy will be made complete (1 John 1:1-4) and that they would believe that Jesus is the Son of God through whom we have eternal life (1 John 5:13).

The Bible commands us to “test” and “examine” ourselves if Jesus is in us (2 Corinthians 13:5). How do we do this?

TEST OF RIGHT BELIEVING

John warns of false prophets denying that Jesus is the Christ, the only Savior (1 John 2:22-23). He says that every spirit must be tested (1 John 4:1-2). Those who confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh from God are real Christians, true followers of Christ that are identified by their fruits (Matthew 7:20-21). As we confess Jesus as both Lord and Savior and believe that He died and rose again, this belief should influence the way we live (Romans 10:9-10). Unlike Judas who heard everything but was not transformed because he did not fully believe, true salvation cannot just be about what we know but should impact our lives and bring about positive change.

REPENTANCE (*Gk. metanoia, change of mind leading to change of heart, resulting to change of behavior*) is crucial! It is turning away from sin and turning towards God with faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). God gives us the power to repent (2 Timothy 2:25-26) and be free from being enslaved by sin. It is God who will touch hearts and take people through their journey of faith.

TEST OF RIGHTEOUS LIVING

God is Light: He is all-holy and all-pure (1 John 1:5-6). We are sensitive to sin when we draw near to God because His light repels the darkness. If we walk in the Light (*walk with God*), we have fellowship with one another (1 John 1:7-8). Righteous living, however, does not mean perfection — we may still sin, but we can confess (*Gk. homologeo*) and agree that we have committed wrong against God and others. God is faithful and righteous to forgive us and cleanse us from all sins (1 John 1:9-10). Furthermore, when

believers do fail and sin, John reminds us that Jesus is our “Advocate” (*lawyer*) (1 John 2:1-2). Jesus died for our sins (*as “propitiation” – the satisfactory payment accomplished*) and so He has power and authority to grant forgiveness and cleanse our records!

Nevertheless, this truth cannot be used as a license to sin. A.W. Pink said “*the Christian who has stopped repenting has stopped growing*”. God will not allow His children to keep a life of sin, so He disciplines us for our good and that we can share in His holiness and bear the fruit of righteousness (Hebrews 12:6, 10-11). If we truly KNOW God, we will keep His commandments and practice righteousness (1 John 2:3-7, 10). The evidence of true faith and salvation is a transformed life: living in the righteousness Christ imputed on us.

TEST OF REAL LOVING

1 John 4:7-8 tells us to love one another, practicing our experience of God’s love. If we do not love, then we do not know God at all. If we have the love of God, we can forgive and love others even in the most difficult situations. The opposite of this love is INDIFFERENCE, and when we cancel others, avoid others, and brew bitterness, hatred, and anger for others as “Christians”, it puts our faith in question. Indeed, if we say we love God, but we do not love our brother, we make liars of ourselves (1 John 4:19-20).

Is there enough evidence in our lives that we are real Christians? Jesus commands us to love one another the way He has loved us (John 13:34-35). We are truly Christ-followers when we love even those most difficult to love. The most powerful weapon we have is love towards one another, and loving this way is impossible apart from the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Let us live like Christ — have the right belief, progress in right living, and be more loving each day. We pray we will always do so!

last week's memory verse

This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

1 JOHN 1:5-6

discuss this message

- Why is it important to know for sure that you are truly saved?
- How should your faith in Christ impact the way you live? Does your lifestyle reflect your relationship with Him? And how can you make it better?
- Why is love important in salvation? How can you grow in this area?

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
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God loves you.

He desires for you to have a meaningful life with Him in the present and gain eternal life with Him in the future.

Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments – Deuteronomy 7:9

God is holy.

We are sinful, and our sin separates us from Him.

Everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence. – Romans 3:23

God is merciful.

In His love, He made the only way for us to be reconciled to Him: through His son, Jesus Christ. Jesus had to die on the cross for our sins and be raised to life for eternity.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. – Romans 5:8

I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. – John 14:6

God is gracious.

By placing our faith in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven of our sins and saved from eternal death.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. – John 3:16

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. – Ephesians 2:8-9

Would you like to place your faith in Jesus Christ today?

Lord Jesus, I need You. I confess that I am a sinner. I believe that You died on the cross to pay for all my sins. With Your help, I will turn away from my sins. Please come into my life and be my Savior and my Master. I accept Your gift of eternal life. Make me the kind of new person You want me to be. Thank You for giving me eternal life. Amen.

God keeps His promises.

You can be sure that you have eternal life when you trust in Jesus.

And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. – 1 John 5:11-13



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