

## **The Christian's Confidence**

**1 John 5:14-21**

**Pastor John Miller**

Now, I'm going to back up one verse. Verse 13. We finished with last week. And I'm going to read to verse 21, the end of the chapter. I want you to follow me. John says, "These things ...". Verse 13. "... have I written unto you to believe on the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life." Verse 14. "This is the confidence that we have in Him that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of Him. Now, if any man see a brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death." Now, there is sin. The little word, "a," there should be taken out of the text.

"There is sin unto death. I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin and there is a sin not unto death. Now we know ... Verse 18 ... that whosoever is born of God does not practice habitually sin, but he keeps him or he who is begotten of God keeps him and the wicked one touches him not. And we know that we are of God and the whole world lies in the lap of the wicked one. And we know that the Son of God has become and He has given us understanding that we may know Him that is true. We are in Him, that is true, even his Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children ...". John says in closing. "... keep yourselves from idols."

It was Benjamin Franklin in 1789 that made the well-known statement, "Nothing is certain, but death and ..." What?

Taxes.

Taxes. Now, I know that Benjamin Franklin was a smart man, but he had to know there were many other things that are certain than death and taxes. Actually, taxes are not so certain. There's a lot of people that avoid paying their taxes. Death. You can't avoid death. It was George Bernard Shaw that said, "Ten out of every 10 people living will die."

The statistics on death are quite impressive. The Bible actually says it like this. He says, "Who is he that liveth and shall not see death? Who can save his soul from the hand of the grave?" So, death is certain, but there are a lot of things that are certain above death and taxes. And I believe we find them in the Bible. Christianity is a certain religion. It's a religion of "yes" and "Amen." It's a religion that we can know because it's a relationship. We can know that we have eternal life. We can know that God answers prayer. We can know that God's people don't habitually practice sin. We can know that we've been born of God. We can know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And by the way, I just spilled the beans. I gave you my sermon.

Because those are the very five certainties we're going to see in this text this morning. Did you notice a key word when we were reading that text in verse 13? The word, "know." In verse 15, the word, "know." In verse 18, 19, and 20. "And we know." "And we know." "And we know." So,

seven times from verse 13 to 21 ... The little Greek word oida, which means an intuitive knowledge that is certain and true and trustworthy.

In the entire epistle of John, five short chapters, 40 times we find the word know, know, know, know. Now, John is trying to do two things in this letter. He is warning and protecting God's people against false teachers known as gnostics. And the word, "gnostic," comes from the Greek word, ginosko, which means "to know." So, they were claiming that they had a superior knowledge or information that they could divulge to you and that salvation was actually through their knowledge or through their ginosko.

And so, John is combating that error. And we'll see that today in the text. But John had a second purpose for writing this letter. He was writing that we might know as believers that we have eternal life. If you know a Christian that lacks assurance, if you know a Christian that has been born again but they're not sure whether they're really a child of God, encourage them to study First John. That's the reason this epistle was written that you might know that you have eternal life.

Now, in this text, as I just said, there are five certainties of the Christian life, and I want you to write them down. Number one is in verse 13. "We know we have eternal life." That's certainty number one. And we covered this last Sunday. Verse 13. "These things have I written unto you: to believe, to trust in, to rely on the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that you may know ...". There's our word, oida. "... that you might have a sure knowledge that you have eternal life." Verse stops right there.

"I have written these things." What things? Verses 1 to 12 of chapter five and the whole letter of First John. "These things have I written unto you." I want you to know something. If you're a child of God, you've trusted and believed on Jesus Christ, guess what you have?

Eternal life.

Eternal life. Now, I preached on that text last Sunday, so I won't spend time on it, but eternal life starts the moment you are born again. And it is life with new quality, and it is life with quantity. So, it doesn't just mean that when you die, you're going to go to heaven and you'll exist forever.

It means the moment God's spirit comes to live inside of you and He quickens or regenerates you and gives you life, that you have a quality of life. Why? Because you have God in you, and that is life. Jesus is the eternal life, and that eternal life comes to dwell in you. What do you have? Eternal life. So, it's life on a new plane. It's life with a new quality. But when you die, you will live forever in heaven. Amen?

Amen.

Jesus said it like this: "He who lives and believes in me, though he were dead yet shall he ..." What? "... live. And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die." I love that. If I were Jesus, I would've said at the end of that, "Can you dig it?"

Yes, Lord. He who lives and believes in me shall never die. So, I want you to just think about that for just a moment. Child of God, you can be certain. You can take it to the bank. You can know I have eternal life. We know because God has promised in His word, because Jesus died for me on the cross, and because the Holy Spirit witnesses to my heart that I am His child. So, we have the word of God, the Father, the work of God, the Son, and the inner witness of God, the Holy Spirit.

But there's a second certainty that we can have as Christians, and this is found in verse 14 to 17 and that is that God answers prayer. Have you found that to be true as a Christian? God answers prayer. Notice verse 14. "And this is the confidence." So, in verse 13, "We know ...". Verse 14. "We are confident." That's a settled assurance that we have in Him. So, this is our confidence because we are in Christ, that if we ask anything according to His will, He ... What?

Hears us.

That didn't sound very convincing. He what?

Hears us.

Hears us. I hope you're hearing me. When you pray according to God's will, He actually hears you. And that little phrase, "He hears us," indicates that He answers us. I want you to know something. God hears your prayers, and God answers your prayers. And because God hears your prayers, He answers your prayers. The two go together. If He hears us, He answers us. Now, His answer may not be what we want. And I'll talk about that more in a moment. But He does answer our prayers.

So, notice in verse 14. "We have a confidence." This confidence is in Him. Third time we've had this concept of confidence in First John in chapter two verse 28. "We [inaudible 00:09:18] have confidence at His coming," His second coming. In chapter four, verse 17. We're going to have confidence of the future judgment when we stand before Christ at the bema, a reward seat. And now, in chapter five, verse 14, for the third time, we have confidence in prayer.

Now, this word, confidence, means "freedom of speech, our fearless confidence." Do you know that God is far more ready to hear than we are to pray? Think about that. God is far more ready to hear us than we are to pray. And this word confidence means boldness of speech, and it has in its etymology or its origin ... has the idea of face-to-face or being speaking to someone face-to-face.

A few weeks ago, our youngest child, our son, Jared, left for China. And he may be gone for a couple of years. So, we've been eager to make contact with him, and I'm kind of a computer geek. I don't know much about computers, or I'm computer illiterate. So, we had Skype set up on the computer, and we talked with him through Viber and text, but we wanted to see his face. And so, yesterday morning, Christi and I were able to connect with our son in China and see his face.

And if you've ever done Skype, it can be kind of blurry and poor image and then, all of a sudden, the audio and the video just broke in perfectly clear. It's like, "Ah, I can see your face. You don't look like a blob anymore." And that was wonderful, and we were so excited. And what a joy to see him and to hear from him. But it'd be even better if he were face-to-face with us. Amen?

Amen.

The Bible says right now we see God dimly through a mirror, but one day we're going to see Him face-to-face. But did you know that right now as a Christian, you actually have access right into the very presence of God and that there's nothing between your soul and the Savior so that His blessed face, you can see? You can talk to God. And you don't have to be a super saint. You don't have to be a Christian for 40 years. You don't have to have some marvelous gift. If you are His child, you can talk to your Father in heaven. You know, I can't ... You can clap.

I don't have the president's phone number in my phone. I can't call Barack Obama and say, "Hey Barack, what's happening? This is John Miller." "Who?" I don't have access to the president. There's a lot of people that I can't get access to, but guess what? I can come anytime, day or night, anywhere, any place, any circumstance, and I can come right into the presence of God, the Creator of all the universe. Now, that's awesome. Is it not?

Yes.

If I'm in a crisis, if I'm facing some difficulty, if I feel alone, if I'm in time of need, I can call out to my Father in heaven. The Bible says that He sends forth His spirit into our hearts whereby we cry, "Abba." Abba, Father. So, I can be certain that, as a Christian, that God hears and answers my prayer, but I want you to notice that prayer has a condition. Verse 14. "My prayer has to be according to His will." According to His will. Do you know the purpose of prayer is not to get your will done? Shucks.

The purpose of prayer isn't to get God's arm up behind His back. "Okay. Okay. I'll give you the new boat. Okay. I'll give it to you." "In the name of Jesus, give it to me." Prayer is not rubbing some genie lamp, where you get all your wishes come true. The purpose of prayer is actually for us to be aligned with God's will. You know, the more time you spend in prayer, the more your will submits to and aligns with the will of God? Until you pray like Jesus, not my will but yours be done. You know that takes more faith than demanding God and commanding God to do what you want? Takes more faith to say, "Lord, I trust you. I believe you. I believe you're smarter than me, wiser than me, and you know the future and you know what I really need more than I know what I really need. So Lord, I'm going to trust you with your answers."

All you got to do is live long enough as a Christian, and you'll discover you can be thankful for even unanswered prayers. Now, when I say unanswered, I mean when God says "No," or God says something different. People say, "Pastor John, I prayed and God didn't answer my prayer." I say, "Yes, He did. He said no." "Well, I don't like that." "Too bad. He's a lot smarter than you,

dumbo." I say that in pastoral Christian love. He's a lot smarter than me. I'm not afraid to say, "Lord, not my will, but thine be done" because I don't know everything. I've learned to thank God for even unanswered prayers.

I remember the late Dr. Walter Martin that used to tell the story about ... When he was young and unmarried, he spied a Christian girl that he thought was really cute and he started praying, "God, I want that one. I want that one in the name of Jesus." He did Jericho marches around her house and sprinkled it with Jerusalem oil in the name of Jesus. And God said, "No."

Then he tells the story. This is his story, not mine. So, don't get mad at me, okay? He tells the story that, about 40 years later, he saw that girl. He said, "I immediately got on my knees and thanked God that He said no." It's not my story. It works both ways, okay? Gals, you're honing in on some guy. "In the name of ... I'm going to pray in tongues over this guy. I want that guy." You don't know what he's going to be into 50 years from now, or what he's going to look like.

God gives the best to those who leave the choice to Him. Now, that's not a Scripture. That's just a little saying. God wants you married, you'll get married. If God wants you to marry that one, you'll get that one. If God doesn't want you to get married, He'll give you the grace to be single. When God says no, sometimes, He has another thing that He wants to do for you. There's been times I've pleaded with God and prayed to God and asked God, and God has said no to me many times. And I now can look back with hindsight to see God knows best. Father knows best. Amen? And we need to trust Him.

So, prayer is to get God's will done. When I pray according to His will ... Jesus taught us in His pattern for prayer to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." First petition. "Thy kingdom come." Right? Did you notice it doesn't say, "My kingdom come"? Did you know there's no personal pronouns in the Lord's prayer? "Give me my daily bread. Forgive me my trespasses." It's our, our, our, our. And the first petition is "your kingdom." "Your kingdom come. Your will be done." That's the priority, and the purpose of prayer.

But notice the consequences of prayer in verse 14 and 15. "He hears us." In the Greek, that's in the present tense. That means He's hearing us and He will always hear us and He will continue to hear us. And then, in verse 15, "Then we see that we have then the consciousness that we have the things that we have requested." God always answers prayer.

Now, to show us that there is an exception to that when we can pray outside the will of God and God will not answer our prayers. We have verse 16 and 17 and especially verse 16. There's a real challenging phrase in there to interpret. Look at it with me. He's still speaking about the subject of prayer. "If any man see his brother sin a sin, which is not unto death." That's the challenge. What is the sin unto death? So if he sins, but it's not a sin unto death, then we can ask, verse 16, or pray and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death.

But there is sin. Not a sin. He's not talking about a specific sin, but he's talking about a certain general sin that does lead to death. And here's what John says. "I do not say that He ...". That is

the prayer, the intercessor. "... should pray for it." Now, confession. This is a very challenging verse to interpret, and I've read it and studied it for years, and I still am not dogmatic about what is the sin unto death. Some say that it's the unpardonable sin. Well, a couple of things. Number one, I don't believe a Christian can commit the unpardonable sin. I don't believe it's a single act. I believe it's ongoing rejection of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit comes to the sinner and convicts them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. And if you harden your heart and resist His witness of Jesus Christ and of your sin and you do not repent, you cannot be saved. And if you do that over and over and over and over, you run the risk of your heart atrophying until you get to the point where you cannot believe.

Now, John does say in this text that it's a brother. Some say it's just talking about a fellow brother being a human being or a brother Jew. But I would just take it at its face value. He's talking about a Christian brother or sister who has sinned. And if it's not a sin unto death, then we should intercede for them. So, as Christians, we should pray, but as Christians, we should especially intercede. We have an obligation to pray for one another. I want you to notice, also, a little phrase that says, "If you see a brother sin." It doesn't say if you hear from the gossip chain that so-and-so has sinned. It says, "If you see it."

One of the big tragedies in the churches is that people tell each other, "Did you know what so-and-so did?" "Oh, did you hear about brother so-and-so?" "No." "Well, I'll get on the prayer chain right now. Let everyone know that we need to pray for this sinful person." And many times, what we justify as intercessory prayer is nothing more than gossip. We need to pray. Take it to God. We need to talk to God about the person. Then, we need to talk to the person about God before we tell other people.

In Galatians chapter six, "If you see someone fall into sin, you go to them. And you go to them in meekness and you consider yourself lest you also be tempted. And you seek to restore them and bring them back to God." You don't gossip about them. You get on your knees and talk to God about them. You don't say, "Shh! Don't tell anybody. I'm just letting you know, so you'll pray. But did you know what so-and-so did?" "I didn't know that." God have mercy on us. Get on your knees and talk to God alone.

But what about those who are sinning, and it's a sin unto death? John says at the end of verse 16, "I do not say that he should pray or shall pray for it." Now, John doesn't necessarily say you can't pray. He says, I'm just not telling you to pray. And the truth is we don't know if someone has committed the sin unto death. We cannot be certain. So, what should we do? We should pray. But if they have committed the sin unto death, what's going to happen? God's not going to answer that prayer. That I am certain of. But I do know this, and I believe there's biblical support for this, that I believe that sometimes when a Christian is falling into sin, God could take that Christian home to heaven to prevent them from dishonoring God and ruining their witness and their testimony.

I do believe that. Paul wrote to the Corinthians in First Corinthians 11. He said, "When you take communion in an unworthy manner, many of you have gotten sick and some of you have even

died." So, God can chasten a true Christian by death, take them home to heaven, as opposed to letting them continue in their sin and dishonoring God. There's something far worse than sickness, and that is sin. And I sometimes have prayed, "God, if I ever would dishonor you, take me home. If I would ever do anything that would dishonor you or stumble someone else, just take me home to heaven," which I'd be glad to go home to heaven, anyway. I'm ready to go, but I don't want to do anything to dishonor God. So, the problem is it's hard to determine exactly what is the sin unto death that a believer could commit.

I believe that the death is physical, not spiritual. The Bible does say that if a Christian sinning that there's a point in time where you turn them over to Satan. Could be the same kind of concept. Turn them over to Satan "for the destruction of the flesh," Paul says, that in the end, the spirit may be saved. So, again, good scriptural support for the idea that God could take home one of His children in death. And if that's the case, our prayers will be futile, and they will not be answered because they're not in the will of God.

But let me move on and give you the third assurance or certainty. And that is in verse 18. "We can be sure that God's people have victory over sin" or literally do not habitually, continually, ongoingly practice sin. And by the way, these closing verses of First John is the whole epistle wrapped up into one paragraph. All the points of the epistle are dealt with in closing. So, it's a fitting conclusion.

Notice verse 18. "We know unless I forget." Notice verse 19. "And we know." And notice verse 20. "And we know." 18, 19, and 20 all open with a phrase, "We know," "And we know," or "We know." And what is it we know? Verse 18. Follow me. "Whosoever is born of God ..." That's all Christians. If you're born of God, you are regenerated. You have the life of God in your soul. You are a child of God. You are a Christian. If you are not born of God, you're not a Christian. I've met people that say, "I'm a Christian, but not a born-again one." Well, whoever says that does not know what they're talking about. The only person that is a Christian is a born-again one, right?

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Unless you're born again, you can't see the kingdom of God." All Christians are born again. And if you're not born again, you're not really a Christian. So, everyone that is born of God does not practice sin. The tense of that phrase, "sinneth not" ... Don't interpret that to believe that Christians never sin. How many of you know Christians do sin? Raise your hand. Okay. If you're not raising your hand right now, you're sinning. You're busted.

You just called God a liar, and the truth is not in you. I've met Christians. "I don't sin." "I don't sin." Bible says ... "No, I don't sin!" Veins popping on their neck. Their fists are clenched. I told you, "Pastor, I'm going to beat you up if you don't believe I don't sin." "Okay. Okay." We do sin, but we don't willingly, voluntarily, habitually, ongoingly, intentionally sin. You show me a Christian. "I want to go sin. I want to live in sin. I want to do something really sinful." I say, "I question whether you are a child of God." Why would a true child of God want to sin? You're going to lose fellowship. You are going to lose joy. You're going to lose peace. You know who are

the most miserable people on planet earth? Not unsaved people. Saved people who are living in sin. They're the most miserable because they've tasted. They've seen. They know. When a Christian goes into sin or falls into sin, those are the most miserable human beings on planet earth.

David committed sin, and he said, "The moisture was turned into the drought of summer in my life. God's hand was so heavy upon me that I couldn't get away from it." And that's a great thing. If you're a Christian and you can't sin and enjoy it, it's an indication you're a child of God. So, those who are born of God do not practice sin. That is for sure. Then, when it says, "But he." And I believe the "He" there should be capitalized, H-E, because I believe it's a reference to Jesus Christ.

A little controversy about exactly who's the he, but I believe it's either God the Father, God the Son. But it says, "He that is begotten of God ..." I believe that's the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father. "... keeps him." Underline the word "keeps him." And it's not himself. It is him. It is him. You didn't save yourself. You don't keep yourself.

Now, there are plenty of passages that tell us to keep ourselves in the love of God and keep pure. Keep looking. A whole string of verses that tell us what to do. But as far as keeping myself saved? Ain't going to happen. I didn't save myself. I can't keep myself saved. I believe that Jesus and the Father have me in their hands, and they are keeping me. I want you to notice this in verse 18. And then, it says, "The wicked one ...", who is Satan, "does not ...". What?

Touch him.

Touch him. Now, the word, touch, there means "to get a hold on or to grasp." It was used in John 20 verse 17. When Jesus rose from the dead and Jesus said to Mary, "Don't cling to me. Don't cling to me." Jesus was going to go back to heaven. And Mary got a death grip on him. I don't blame her. "You're not going to get out of sight from me again. You're not going to get away from me." And I believe she just had her arms wrapped around His legs, just clinging to Him. And Jesus said, "Don't cling to me. Don't fasten to me." Can you imagine Him ascending, and she's hanging on? "Whoo! Mary, hang on!"

The very same Greek word is used in our text. Satan cannot hold on to you. You can take that to the bank. I completely, totally, and utterly reject any idea that a Christian, a true child of God, can be demon-possessed or demonized or in dwell body, soul or spirit by a demon. Ain't going to happen. A lot of people like to blame their sins on the devil. "The devil made me do it. The devil made me do it." Take responsibility for your own sin. So, this idea that if I have a bad habit, I can just get the demon of nicotine cast out or the demon of alcohol or the demon of lust can be just exorcised from me and I'm going to be victory. You're fooling yourself. Number one, Satan cannot take hold of or touch a true Christian. Can he tempt you? Yes. Can he oppress you? Yes. But he cannot possess you or hold onto you or grab you.

You want to know why? Because you're God's child and, like Job, God's put a hedge around



you. Satan has to get permission to even attack you or tempt you. He can't do anything but what God allows. And then, God uses it for our good and for His glory. So, I love this phrase here because it outright tells us that if you have been born of God, Satan cannot get ahold of you. He can't touch you. True Christians have victory over sin, and true Christians keep [inaudible 00:30:35]. And true Christians are kept, excuse me, from Satan by God.

Now, here's the fourth certainty. Verse 19. This fourth certainty is that we belong to God. And this is closely related to verse 13, that we are the children of God, that we're born of God, that we have eternal life. But notice verse 19. "We know." What do we know? "We know that we ...". John and the apostles and the Christians, the children of God. "... are of God." That means that we are in God. We have the life of God. We belong to God. Everything we have comes from God.

But yet the contrast. Verse 19. "The world or the whole world lies in wickedness." Now, I read that, "Lies in the lap of the wicked one" because that's the way it would literally be translated. The whole world lies where? In the very lap of the wicked one. And he uses an image picture there of a child in your lap. Our kids are all older. They're grown up. When your kids are 30, 35, 27, 28, they don't sit in your lap anymore. Right? And you miss that as a parent. So, you get grandkids, and grandkids can climb on you. They can sit on you. They can touch your face. I was doing it with my granddaughter the other day. You know? She loved it. Kept her entertained for hours. She thinks grandpa's so talented. He can make all kinds of funny noises. I'll stop with that noise right there.

But when they crawl up into my lap, oh, it's awesome. "Here, come on up. Sit up in Papa's lap. Sit in Grandpa's lap." But the wicked one, Satan, has a lap in the whole world. Now, what is the world? Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, the pride of life. They're not of God the Father. They're of the world. All these evil things. They're lying in the lap of the ... So, when you watch TV, when you read magazines, when you listen to the devil's music or ungodly music or worldly ... It doesn't mean that you can't appreciate its beauty in itself, but it all lies in the very lap of Satan.

And what John is trying to do is paint a contrast here. We're born of God. We are of God, but these people over here are not born of God. They're not of God. And where are they? They're in the lap of the wicked one. So, just keep that in mind. So, don't be conformed to the world and all that is in the world. Your passions, your possessions, and your pride, lust of the flesh and the eyes, and the pride of life. It's not of the Father. It's in the lap of the wicked one. And you can be sure of that.

Then fifthly and lastly, verse 20 and 21. And I love this closing crescendo, this certainty. "We can be sure that Jesus is the true God and eternal life." Jesus is the true God and He is eternal life. Look at verse 20 and 21. "And we know." We can be sure. We can be certain. You can take this to the bank that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, "is come and hath given to us an understanding." All in the present tense. He's calm. He's still here. He's given us an understanding. What about the true God? That we may know Him that is true, that we are in Him that is true, in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the ...". What? True God and eternal life.

Now, I believe that that verse is actually teaching Jesus Christ is God. I mean, it says that. Even if you study the grammar and the Greek and the whole thing, and remember who ... John is writing to combat gnosticism. They denied the deity of Christ. They denied the humanity of Christ. Christianity teaches that Jesus Christ is the God-man. The God manifested in the flesh. From the moment that Jesus was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, deity and humanity were fused together for all eternity.

You know who Jesus is right now? The God-man in heaven, which is interesting. As I meditated on that the other day, I'm thinking, "How unique and how special are human beings?" He's not the God-dog or the God-cat or the dog-cow or the dog-horse. And they're all great animals. He's the God-man. Humanity and deity were fused together in one person, Jesus Christ, for all eternity. And He has resurrected, conquered sin, death, and the grave. He has ascended back into heaven, and He is exalted by the right hand of the Father. And He lives to make intercession for us, and He's coming again, praise God, to establish His kingdom on planet earth.

And you may not know if your job is going to last. You may not know if your marriage is going to last. You may not know how much gas is going to be when you go to the gas station today. Changes every day by six or seven bucks. You don't know how much milk's going to be. You don't know what's going to happen. You don't know what the future ... We don't know who the next president of the United States is going to be. But we know Jesus is God.

And we know He's the only true and living God. And we know that God became a man. He died in my place upon the cross. He took my sin, and He rose again victoriously from the grave. And if I will put my faith and trust in that God-man, Jesus Christ, I will spend eternity in heaven with Him. What a glorious prospect. And we can be sure about that. It's not a "I hope so. Keep your fingers crossed. Put a rabbit foot in your pocket. Oh, I hope I go to heaven when I die." If you're here today and you're a child of God, you have these divine certainties.

We know the Son of God has come. Christianity is Christ. It's not a creed. It's not a code of conduct. Christianity is Christ. We know that. He has given us an understanding. Jesus told Philip. John 14. "Have I been so long with you? You've never seen me. He that has seen me has seen the Father." Jesus is not the Father, but He came to reveal the Father, to give us an understanding of the Father. This is the ultimate reality. And Jesus is the true and eternal life. Verse 20. "He has also come to bring us salvation." Jesus said it like this in John 14:6. "I am the way. I am the truth, and I am the life." He is eternal life. He's the life that is real. Because men are lost, they need the way. Because men are deceived, they need the truth. And because men are dead and trespasses and sins, they need the life only found in one person. That's Jesus Christ. Amen?

And He alone is the answer to man's greatest need. Man is lost. Man is ignorant. Man is dead. And Jesus is the answer. Now, notice how he closes this letter that we've been spending so much time in these last 15 weeks. "Little children ...". John's pastor's heart for his flock. "Little children," spiritually speaking, "keep yourselves from idols. Amen." This is a pastor's heart for

the congregation. "Little children, my beloved, keep yourself from idols." What is an idol? Anything that comes in between you and Jesus Christ. Your husband can become an idol. Your wife can be an idol. Your car can be an idol. Thank God I don't have any idols in my house. You go home and wax your idol. You start your idol. You rev your idol. You cruise your idol, and you know you're looking good.

An idol can become a philosophy. An idol can be an idea. Do you know that an idol is you thinking about God wrongly? If you have a wrong thought about God, that's idolatry. We must think biblically. We must think scripturally when it comes to God. So, what can we be sure of? That we have eternal life. That God answers prayer. That Christ gives us victory over sin. That Christians walk in victory. They don't practice sin. That we belong to God and that Jesus Christ is God.

Now, I can't really finish this series on the life that is real without saying this morning, "If you're here and maybe you've sat through this whole series on First John, but you haven't been born again ... The Bible says, "Now is the acceptance time." The Bible says, "Today is the day of salvation." And I don't want anyone to leave the sanctuary this morning without being given the opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ, to be born again, to have your sins forgiven, to have the hope of heaven, to know that you have been born of God and have eternal life. God's life and the soul of man. That's what Christianity is. And it's the only life that is real.

You have sinned. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. So, when He died on that cross, He died in your place. And your sins were placed upon the sinless Holy Son of God. And He paid its penalty fully. And then, He rose victoriously from the grave. And the Bible says, "Whoever believes on the Son of God has the life of God," has eternal life.

So, if you're here this morning, you say, "Pastor John, I don't have this certainty. I don't know that if I died, I'd go to heaven. I don't have the joy of the Lord. I don't know if I'm really born again" ... Then, you can receive Christ today. You can be forgiven of all your sins, and you can be set free.