

## 1 John 3:19-24 – By This We Know Truth

### Introduction

1. Two Questions from 1 John:
  - a. Do you walk in God's light?
  - b. Do you walk in God's love?
2. Three Tests for the Assurance of Salvation
  - a. Moral Test: Do you obey the commands of Christ?
  - b. Social Test: Do you love the Family of Christ?
  - c. Doctrinal Test: Do you love the truth of Christ?
  - d. Righteousness, Love, Truth
3. Two Foundations for Christian Confidence:
  - a. What God has done for us in Christ Jesus
  - b. What God is doing in us and through us by His Spirit
4. All three tests are given in this passage (**vv 22-23**) and are the grounds for Christian confidence in Salvation
5. The preacher's job: Comfort the Afflicted, and Afflict the Comfortable – this passage does both

**The Chief Aim: The Lord comforts the sensitive believer to rest in God. The Lord warns the unbeliever and the presumptuous Christian to heed the human conscience concerning sin, to believe in Christ, and depend on Him fully.**

### The Challenging Interpretation of This Text (19-20)

1. Early Commentators point back to what John already said; a warning to heed for the unbeliever and presumptuous
2. Later commentators point forward to what John will say; a comfort for a contented conscience of sensitive believers
3. Both are Correct
  - a. Verse 19: *By this* – points backward – By what has already been said, you are warned
  - b. Verse 20: *for* – points forward – By what will be said, you can be comforted

### The Confidence of Contentment in God's Compassion (19-22)

2. There is such a thing as misplaced or imagined guilt
3. The Sensitive Christian gains Confidence as they become Content in the Compassion of God
4. Human Conscience: A reliable tool given by God to signal the soul concerning right & wrong, righteousness & Sin
5. Sensitive believers see everything done by them as weak or imperfect, and tends to feel guilty
  - a. Falls short, therefore Displeases God
  - b. Though imperfect and weak, God is greater

- c. The heart is weak – but do not despair, because God is greater than your heart
  - d. He knows motive, intention, belief, your position in Christ
  - e. God is Compassionate, be Content in Him
  - f. Human Conscience is Fallible – no flawless judgment
  - g. God is more tender and merciful to you than YOU will be to you
1. Reasons the Conscience Troubles the Soul
    - a. The Believer's Personality – Introspective Fault Finding
    - b. The Devil's False Accusations contrasted with the Gentle voice of a Loving Father in Heaven: look to Jesus, not self
    - c. Bad Theology – Traditions of Men added to God's Word
      - i. Unanswered Prayer (**see 2 Cor 12:7-9, Mat 26:39**)
      - ii. Building a Theology on a Few Verses
      - iii. Answered Prayer according to God's Will (**vv 21-22, Matthew 7:7, 1 John 5:14, Psalm 37:4**)
      - iv. God seeks to Correct Doctrine and Comfort Hearts
    - d. Unconfessed, Unforsaken Sin in an Unrepentant Heart
      - i. Repent NOW! God's grace, righteousness, salvation is greater than our failure, weakness, sin, & depravity
      - ii. EX: Woman Caught in Adultery (**John 8:10-11**)
      - iii. EX: Peter Restored by Jesus (**John 21**)
      - iv. Confidence of Contentment in God's Compassion – Nothing Separates Us from God's Love (**Rm 8:34-9**)

### The Conviction of a Condemning Conscience (vv 19-24)

1. Context of 1 John is Warning and Conviction (**4, 8, 9, 12, 15**)
2. Do not presume on the Lord's Grace and Kindness
3. The prayers of sinners, hypocrites, unsubmitive persons will not be heard (**John 9:31, Proverbs 28:9, 1 Peter 3:7**)
4. Do not think yourself comfortable with God if you are comfortable with Sin
5. Love God in word and deed to know you are of the truth
6. A seared conscience does not listen to the voice of God
7. If it does condemn, it is no match for the conviction and condemnation of an all holy, all perfect, all knowing God who knows and judges the heart perfectly – He sees all our sin
8. *Reassure* can be translated *Persuade, Convince, Win Over*
  - a. The seared dead heart cannot persuade the heart
  - b. God is greater than our heart He can triumph over seared hearts, overcome its rebellion – conquer its deadness
9. ONLY by the Work of Our Triune God can a Person (either through comfort or warning) pass the Moral, Social, and Doctrinal tests leading to a Cleansed Conscience
10. Result: Honesty, Repentance, Righteousness, & Appreciation