

Refuge City Church — June 18, 2023
“Sacrificial Confidence” (1 John 3:19-24)

Introduction

- **1 John 3:16-18**, “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.”
 - From last week, we discussed something crucial to our fellowship with God.
 - Not just that we *say* we love Him and others, but that we *show* it by our actions.
 - How are we supposed to love... sacrificially.

“Abiding assurance” [Verses 19-20]

“By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.”

- “By this” = By what? What we just read about the selfless sacrifice of love and service to those around us.
 - When we respond to others with the love of God, we can rest assured we are practicing His righteousness.
 - Have you ever felt like you haven’t done enough? [as a spouse, parent, employee...]
 - Ever felt ‘ashamed’ by those who seemingly do more than you for the Lord?
 - Ever felt guilty because you don’t feel like you’ve *done* enough for God?
 - What’s your typical response? Do you tend to do more to make yourself feel better?
 - As we practice righteousness and love for others, we should also learn to quiet our heart before God. He knows our heart. He knows our motives.
 - **Psalm 46:10**, “Be still and know that I am God.”
 - **Romans 8:1**, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”
 - If we simply rest on our feelings, we will be a wreck! [all the time]
 - Satan is an accuser [Revelation 12:10], a deceiver [Genesis 3], a thief [John 10:10], and a liar [John 8:44]
 - Slow down and put your feelings up against God who is Truth, Life, Light, and Love.
- **QUOTE:** “Sometimes our heart condemns us, but, in doing so, it gives a wrong verdict, and then we have the satisfaction of being able to take the case into a higher court, for ‘God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.’” [Charles Spurgeon]
- The confirmation of abiding in the truth of Jesus = Obedience to God & a Sacrificial heart to love and serve others.
- Consider the words again [re-read v. 19-20]:

- Take pleasure and have confidence in who you are, who you belong to, and what He has given you to do!
- There is no greater sense of joy and confidence in being a child of God!

“Divine confidence” [Verses 21-22]

“Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.”

- **Hebrews 9:14**, “how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”
- Stand confident by the blood of Jesus!
 - This is who you are! You belong to the family of God. Let that reassure you.
 - There is nothing that you can do, or need to do in order to ‘assure’ your salvation, your Christianity, or your identity in Christ. [thief on the cross]
- The works we do [love in action] is not to be done to make you *feel better* about calling yourself a Christian.
 - You don’t do things to prove anything.
 - We serve and love because that’s the very nature of Christ in us!
 - **Hebrews 10:1-4 NLT**, “The old system under the law of Moses was only a shadow, a dim preview of the good things to come, not the good things themselves. The sacrifices under that system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship. If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time, and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared. But instead, those sacrifices actually reminded them of their sins year after year. For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”
 - You’re not going to please God simply by external signs.
 - You’re going to please God by the condition of your mind and heart in *why* you are doing those things. [Remember Cain & Abel]
 - **Hebrews 10:19-24**, “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,”
 - It was Christ’s sacrifice that allows us to enter into His presence, not our ‘do-goodedness’.
 - Shame, guilt, and uncertainty may cause you to wonder whether or not you’ve been or can be accepted.
 - None of that is of Christ! You are a child of God = stand firm and unwavering.
- So what’s keeping you from living in this truth?
 - Fear, uncertainty, anxiety, shame, guilt, etc...

- **James 5:16**, “The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.”
- In what you identified, does God want you to live this way?
 - If the answer is no, ask Him what you need? Humble yourself to admit you don’t know how to let go.
 - Making a commitment to Christ, and then making no concerted effort to conform your life to Him, is no commitment. Pressing in to Jesus takes nothing less than radical change to become the person He made you to be. There is a difference between being a Christian, and being a follower of Jesus.
 - Live it. Be obedient. Go and do what pleases Him!
- Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac at the request of God. [**Genesis 22:1-14**]
- **QUOTE**: “How could God demand a human sacrifice? The answer must be given as follows: What God actually wanted Abraham to give was the spiritual sacrifice of his son... But then the problem arises, Why did God ask for the spiritual sacrifice in the form of a material sacrifice?... God asked for one thing only: the spiritual surrender, the giving back to Him of this great gift which He had granted to Abraham.” [Herbert Carl Leupold]
- Raising children is not easy! [**raising kids, and being the parent you need to be**]
 - What’s the best thing about being a dad? Watching your kids grow up. What’s the hardest thing about being a dad? Watching your kids grow up.
- **Romans 12:1**, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”
 - Dedicate and submit yourself to the Lord in all you do. This ought to be a daily practice [**Luke 9:23**, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross *daily* and follow me.”]
 - If that be our aim every day, our worship & sacrificial service of God is our testimony to the world that we love Him, and seek to love others in the same way.
 - **2 Corinthians 4:7, 9-10**, “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us... persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.”

Conclusion

- [Verses 23-24]** “And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.”
- A reiteration of the great commandments of God = Love God. Love others.
 - When we do this, we abide in Him, and He in us.