

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

Evangelist W. Paul Redmond Sr.

Volume 4, Issue 12

May 2008

Profession or Possession: What Do You Have? (Part 3) (I John 5:13)

We will conclude in this issue the message, “Profession or Possession: What Do You Have?” We have considered that a true believer will Be Looking after the Commandments, will Be Living like Christ, and will Be Loving the Christians. Now we consider the fourth evidence or proof of salvation. A true believer will **Be Led by the Comforter**. The Holy Spirit indwells the believer at the moment of salvation. Romans 8:9 says, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Jesus promised in John 14:16-18 and 16:7-11 that He would send “another Comforter” when He ascended back to Heaven. That was fulfilled for the disciples in part in John 20:22, and more fully on the day of Pentecost. For believers today, it is fulfilled at the moment of salvation. The Holy Ghost convicts the sinner; when the sinner believes in Jesus as his Savior, the Holy Ghost regenerates and renews him (Titus 3:5), and then indwells him. I Corinthians 6:19-20 speaks of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost when it says that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.

John, as the Holy Ghost leads him, picks up on this thought of the indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost. I John 3:24 says, “And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” The word know is used in this verse as it is 26 other times in I John. One can know that he is saved because the Holy Ghost lives inside of him. If the Holy Ghost is not in us, then we are not saved, as Paul wrote in Romans 8:9, and as John writes here in I John 3. A true believer has the Holy Ghost living inside of him, and there will be some results of the Holy Ghost living in us. Do not allow false teaching to say that the sinner does not change at salvation. The Bible says that we will change. One of those changes is that we will be led

-2-

by the Comforter.

Notice the first aspect of being led by the Comforter. We will Look for Deceivers. Because of the chapter division following 3:24, we may miss the full impact of what the first 3 verses of chapter 4 are saying. Immediately after speaking about the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, John commands us to look for deceivers. I John 4:1 says, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” The word try means “to prove by trial; to test; to examine; to scrutinize.” A true believer, because he is indwelt by the Holy Ghost, will not succumb to just any teaching. He will test it to see if it lines up with Scripture. It is not being mean to the preacher to see if what he is saying is right. It is being obedient to Scripture. Just because a man calls himself a preacher does not mean that all that he says is right. If he is a good, honest preacher, he will want the people to search the Scriptures to make sure he is preaching the truth. Beware of a preacher that wants the people to remain ignorant. It may mean that he is a deceiver and a false teacher. None other than Paul the Apostle was examined by his hearers when he preached. In Acts 17:11, it says, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” If Paul was examined by his hearers, how much more should we examine those that we listen to, so we can make sure that what they are saying is right.

John in particular is combating the Gnosticism and Docetism heresies that were around in his day. These false teachers said that God could not take on human flesh; therefore, Jesus was not really in the flesh; He only seemed or appeared to take on flesh, but was really always a spirit. John, inspired of the Holy Ghost, refutes this heresy in the first few verses of this epistle. John clearly says that Jesus was really human—John says, “I saw him with my own eyes, and I touched him” (I John 1:1). He reminds his readers that it is heresy to deny the humanity of Christ. A true believer will believe that God became a man and took upon Himself human flesh. To deny the humanity of

Christ is as much a heresy as to deny His deity.

John specifically was warning the readers of his day to be on the look out for those who denied the humanity of Christ, but the application is far-reaching. We must be looking for those deceivers that will deny any part of Scripture and warn others about them. It does not matter if they are popular and well-known; if they deny Scripture, they must be pointed out for the heretics that they are, and people must be warned not to listen to them. Preachers such as Billy Graham who denies the literal fire of Hell, Joel Osteen who teaches a “feel-good” gospel, Robert Schuller who teaches salvation based on works, and many, many others, must be identified as false teachers, and we must warn others about them. Also, Catholics, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and many, many others must be identified and declared to be false religions. A true believer will examine all religions, and he will examine all preachers, and he will be able, because of the Holy Ghost living inside of him, to determine what is right and what is wrong. He will not fall for error because the Holy Ghost will reveal truth.

The second mark of being led by the Comforter is that a true believer will Listen to Disciples. A true believer will be able to discern false teachers and not listen to them, but he will also yearn for and want to listen to right preaching. You will not have to beg a true believer to come to church. He will not want to stay away. He will not be able to get enough preaching. He will hunger and thirst for the Word of God so much that he will love preaching. I John 4:6 says, “We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.” Do you understand what John is saying? A true believer will hear right preaching and will love it and will try to live by it. Do you love to hear preaching? Do you argue and bicker about what the man of God is saying? Do you reject what the preacher is saying even though what he is saying matches up with Scripture exactly? Then you are not truly saved. If you were truly saved, then you would love the preaching and would try to live by it. The Bible says, “He that knoweth God heareth us.” If you do not hear, it is because you do not

know God—you are not saved. A true believer will listen to disciples—he will listen to and obey preaching that is right with Scripture.

The final evidence of salvation is that a believer will **Be Listened to in their Cry**. Does God hear and answer your prayers when you pray? If you are His child, he will. If you pray and never have an answer, it may mean that God does not hear you because you are not His. I John 5:14-15 says, “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” What a blessed and wonderful truth—God hears His believers. We are not left to fend for ourselves in this wicked and perverse world. When we have a need we can call upon God and have the confidence that He will hear us. We do not pray to a deaf God—He hears us! We do not pray to an incapable God—He will give us our petitions.

Now some may wonder about these verses. Someone may foolishly say, “I will pray for a million dollars, and God will have to give it to me because the Bible says that God will give me whatever I want.” That is not what Scripture teaches. The Bible does not promise you that you will get whatever you want. Notice The Guideline that is given about prayer. The Bible clearly says, “If we ask any thing according to his will.” The true believer will be sensitive to God’s will and will pray accordingly; he will not pray selfishly. The true believer will not selfishly pray for a million dollars just so he will not have to work and can lay around and be lazy. If he does pray for that reason, God will not give it to him. James 4:3 gives some more guidelines about prayer. It says, “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts.” The word amiss means “wrongfully, evilly.” There are many reasons that could be described in those meanings, but I think that the most common reason that believers do not have answered prayer is that they pray selfishly. They do not pray as Jesus taught us to pray, “Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.” The true believer will have their prayers answered and they will pray by the guidelines—according

to God's will. They will become so consumed with pleasing God that they will naturally let God's will become theirs.

The final aspect of being listened to in their cry is The Granting. God will not just hear the believer; He will answer their cry. Our prayers are not just empty and vain words. They are words that will move God. He will respond to us! When we become so close to Him, that His will becomes our will, and we pray for His will to be done, it will be done. God will answer our prayer! John said, "We know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." One preacher said that he had never prayed a prayer that God did not answer. Someone else commented about that and said that they could not believe that. I now know why that preacher always had his prayers answered—his desires were God's desires. He had become so close to God that what he wanted was what God wanted. He did not pray selfish prayers. He prayed for what God wanted, and God answered each of them. May God help us learn to pray like that. Do you have prayers answered? A true believer will. Do you ask for things, but never receive them? Perhaps you are not really saved, because God will respond to His children.

Are you looking after the commandments? Are you living like Christ? Are you loving the Christians? Are you led by the Comforter? Are you listened to in your cry? Do you profess or possess—what do you have?

(For the first two parts of this message, please see our March 2008 NewsLetter and our April 2008 Newsletter.)