

God Is Listening! What Are You Saying?

1 John 5:13-17

Introduction

1. The Bible teaches us that our God is a talking God. He spoke Creation into existence (Gen. 1), and He spoke to us in the person of His Son, the Word who became flesh (John 1:14). God also has spoken to us in His written Word, the Bible, and He continues to speak to us by that Word and through His Spirit. Our God is a talking God.
2. Our God is also a listening God. I believe He listens to what we think and what we say. Sometimes He listens but we don't speak. For example James 4:2 says, "You do not have [from God] because you do not ask." He is listening, but there are times when we are not asking. Other times He is listening, we pray, and He answers. Numbers 21:3 says, "And the Lord listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites." 2 Kings 13:4 says, "So Jehoahaz pleaded with the Lord, and the Lord listened to him." And 2 Chronicles 30:20 says, "And the Lord listened to Hezekiah and healed the people." Our God is a listening God. He listens when we pray to Him, and He listens when we talk about Him. Sometimes what He hears angers Him, disappoints Him, it can even break His heart. Other times what He hears pleases Him, delights Him, it honors Him.
3. I believe we honor God when we speak His word back to Him. I believe we honor Him when we tell Him, "Lord, I believe what you say is true."

Transition

I want us to consider 3 things we can say back to God as an act of praise and an act of worship based upon what He has said to us in 1 John 5:13-17. God tells us 3 things we can know. In turn, let us say to God I believe these 3 things are true.

I. I believe Jesus is the Son of God. 5:13

- × 5:13-21 constitutes the final section of John's letter. He is vitally concerned that we know certain things. The word know occurs 7 times.
- × 5:13 is the final and climatic purpose statement of the epistle as well (cf. 1:4; 2:1, 26).
 - 1:4 → our satisfaction
 - 2:1 → our sanctification
 - 2:26 → our safety
 - 5:13 → our security

John wants us to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and to experience the wonderful security that belief brings.

1) Put your trust in Jesus.

- × These things looks back, specifically to 5:1-12, and broadly to the entire letter. Why he wrote 1 John can be summed up in this one verse just like his gospel can be summed up in the one verse of John 20:31.
- × To you who believe in the name of the Son of God – John is not writing to persuade unbelievers of the truth of the Christian faith but to strengthen believers who are in the faith.
 - Believe – trust, have faith in, rely upon.

- Name – the character, person and work of the one who bears that name.
- Son of God – denotes His deity and His intimate, personal, and vital relationship with the Father who sent Him. He and He alone gives life (5:12), makes possible the new birth (5:1), is the Savior of the World (4:14), provides satisfaction for our sins (4:10) and is our advocate and atonement (2:1-2).
- × Say to God, “I believe Jesus is the Son of God and I put my trust in Him and only Him.”

2) **Know you have eternal life.**

- × Christianity is a “know so” faith. That truth is never more precious than in its relationship to eternal life.
- × John says you can know you have eternal life, the very life of God. He does not say, “you hope,” “you wish,” or “you think.” He says, “YOU CAN KNOW!”
- × Benjamin Franklin said in 1789, “Nothing is certain but death and taxes.” John would say to Mr. Franklin, “you are wrong.” First of all death is not certain. Second, you can be certain you have eternal life.
- × John wants those who believe/trust in Jesus to know that they have eternal life. That means it is possible to have it and not know it. How? Why?
 - 1) Ignorance of God’s Word and His promise.
 - 2) Faulty theology (salvation is something you can lose/forfeit).
 - 3) Weak faith (trust God to save me but not keep me).
 - 4) Sin! Sin is the great thief of assurance.

Illustration

(Me and my first year at Criswell College and the doubt of my salvation I struggled with.)

- × If you can lose it, it’s not eternal. If you could lose it, you would lose it.
- × The promise of John 10:28-29 is that you cannot lose it, “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand.”
- × You can know you have eternal life. Tell God you know it. Tell God you believe it because He says so.

“Feelings come and feelings go, And feelings can be deceiving;
My confidence is in the Word of God, None else is worth believing.”

II. **I believe God answers prayer. 5:14-16**

- × R. A. Torrey said, “Prayer is the key that unlocks all the storehouses of God’s infinite grace and power. All that God is and all that God has is at the disposal of prayer. But we must use the key. Prayer can do anything that God can do and since God can do anything, prayer is omnipotent.”
- × Spurgeon said, “Prayer moves the arm that moves the world.”
- × John talked about prayer in 3:22 and informed us that 1) keeping His commandments and 2) doing those things that please Him are essential to answered prayer. Now John informs us of a 3rd requirement: that it is according to His will.

1) **Be confident when you pray.**

- × Confidence (*parresia*), cf. 2:28; 3:21; 4:17. It means freedom of speech, boldness, in our standing before God, a God who is our Father. We come as children to a perfect, loving Father who only wants what is best for us.
- × When we talk to Him in prayer He hears us as a Father who listens to His children. You can be confident He hears you.
- × Note the confident ring of v. 15. (Know, 2x)

2) **Be careful when you pray.**

- × George Mueller lived from 1805-1898. He was a great man of prayer who refused a regular salary and refused financial support for himself or the ministries he led. A leader of the Christian Brethren movement, Mueller said, “Prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance. It is laying hold of His willingness.”
- × Verse 14 again contains the crucial phrase: “according to His will.” Nothing we ask for lies beyond the power of God except that which lies beyond His will, His purpose, His plan.
- × Question: Why would you want something contrary to God’s will? It is right to pray according to God’s will, and it is wise to pray according to God’s will. He knows what is best and He wants what is best: for His glory and our good.
- × “God wants to give you what you would want God to give you if you were wise enough to want it.”
- × God’s will may be different than what you want, but I believe this: it will always be better than what you want.”
- × Romans 12:2 tells us God’s will is good, acceptable and perfect. I want what God wants for me. I want God’s will.

Transition

Be careful when you pray.

3) **Be concerned when you pray.**

- × Sin(ning) occurs 7x in vs. 16-18.
- × John has assured us God answers prayer that is according to His will. Praying for a sinning brother or sister is always His will.
- × Sees “his brother” sinning (pre. tense) not unto death. Sin always moved toward death and in this case there is still hope. Why? Because the death John has in view is spiritual death and a believer cannot experience this. His sin is serious. It invites the discipline of God. But it cannot lead to spiritual death.
- × Read Hebrews 12:5-13.
- × If we intercede for our brother or sister God will hear us and grant to the sinner life. The meaning of this is not at all clear if we are honest. Some believe physical life is in view with sin unto physical death being avoided. I like what Hiebert says, “In this context this bestowal of life must be understood as a renewal and strengthening of the life already possessed (3:14, 5:11-13) prompting a fuller spiritual life and victory in Christ” (*BibSac*, 1990, 318).
- × What power to such prayer. What privilege to such prayer. Tell God, “I believe you answer prayer.”

III. **I believe sin is serious. 5:16-17**

- × Sin is something God hates and so should we. There should be a holy, righteous hatred in our hearts, not of those enslaved to sin, but of the sin that captivates and dominates them.
- × Verse 16b is one of the most difficult and ominous verses in the Bible. Astonishingly, it tells us there is a sin for which no prayer will do any good.

1) **Sin leads to death. 5:16**

- × There is a sin unto death.
- × Concerning that I do not say he should ask (request, pray).
- × John does not command us not to pray, but it is clear he is doubtful that it will do any good.

★ **WHAT IS THIS SIN UNTO DEATH?** ★

1. **A specific, deadly sin.** High handed sin, willful and deliberate sin of a serious nature. Some, like F. F. Bruce, see the death as physical (ex. Ananias and Sapphira; Acts 5:1-11; Incestuous man at Corinth; 1 Cor. 5:5; Corinthians abusing the Lord's supper; 1 Cor. 11:30).
2. **Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.** (Matt. 12:32; Mark 3:29). A deliberate, knowledgeable, willful, verbal and continual rejection of the truth that the Spirit bears witness to. It is a hardening of the heart to a point that prayer will not help.
- ★ 3. **Total rejection of the gospel and Christ.** The sin of the false teachers who willfully and habitually oppose the witness of God to the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ (cf. 2:19). This one is not called a brother. He is an apostate. Hiebert again is helpful to us: "These false teachers manifested the spirit of Antichrist, separated themselves from the true church, and perverted or rejected the apostolic message of redemption in Christ. In deliberately rejecting the incarnate Son of God, in whom eternal life is available, they committed themselves to a spiritual attitude and course of action that could only be characterized as "sin unto death" (Ibid, 320).

Reject the biblical teaching about Jesus and death, and spiritual death becomes your destiny. To pray for such a one is futile and useless. It will do no good.

2) **Sin is disobedience. 5:17**

- × John is not soft on sin, and neither is God. "All" unrighteousness (*adikia*) sin is."
- × 1 John 3:3 says it is rebellion (*anomia*). Here John says it is a violation of God's standard of what is right.
- × *The Message*: "Everything we do wrong is sin, but not all sin is fatal." All sin is serious, but not all sin is hopeless.
 - Sin is missing God's standard.
 - Sin is rebellion.
 - Sin is disobedience.
- × God hates sin, and so should we.

Conclusion

God is listening, so what are you saying? Perhaps he is specifically listening for your answer to 2 very important questions:

- 1) Do you know for certain you have eternal life?
- 2) When (not if), you stand before God and He asks you, “Why should I let you into my heaven?” What will you say? In these verses you see what God wants to hear.