

I John 3:19-24

Confident Christians

Introduction:

Jonathan Edwards is considered to be one of America's greatest Theologians. In 1746 he wrote a treatise concerning "Religions Affections." This monumental work argues that the most accurate proof of salvation is the presence in one's life of holy, righteous affections, a zealous and Biblical inclination toward righteousness, evidenced by practical works.

During the Great Awakening, Edwards experienced Satan's deception in the lives of many false converts. He called them 'counterfeit conversion.'

The apostle John was able to distinguish between true and counterfeit conversions. His purpose in this context is to instill confidence in the lives of genuine believers. Satan will do all he can to influence doubt in our minds, while our hearts at times doubt and condemn us.

I. Our Lack of Confidence – v. 19-20

A. Christians are not immune to doubt and depression

1. The heart is the seat of physical life. It is the center of emotional life.
2. John uses (Gk. "kardia") heart four times in this context: v. 17,19,20,21

B. Love in Action – v. 19

1. The test of love is visible and sacrificial

C. How to handle doubt and depression

1. Our hearts must be guarded – Luke 21:34; Phil 4:7
(Spiritual depression – Martin Lloyd-Jones)
2. Our minds must be girded – I Pet. 1:13; John 8:31,32

D. God's Verdict – v. 21 "God is greater than our hearts"

1. God knows us better than we know ourselves – Psa. 102:4; 73:26
2. God declares us righteous before the bar of Justice –
Rom. 8:31-34

II. Our Compete Confidence – v. 21-23

A. Several advantages of an uncondemning heart:

1. **Immediate Access – 21; I John 2:28; 4:17; 5:14**
2. **Answered Prayer – v. 22**
(Two conditional clauses) I John 2:3
Two important verbs: "believe" – aorist tense, completed in the past
and "Love" is present tense – continual attitude.
3. **The Holy Spirit's Ministry – v. 24**
How do we know we are the elect? Ans. The gospel came to us not in
word only but in power of the Holy Spirit – I Thess. 1:4, 5
How does God dwell in the heart of the believer?
Ans. Through the testimony of the Holy Spirit – Rom. 8:16
(John Calvin's comment)

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