

Hopewell ARP Prayer Meeting, Wednesday, September 23, 2020
Devotional on 1John 5:16

If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that.

We have been hearing, from the previous two verses, about asking for things that are according to the will of the Son of God. Now in v16, the apostle immediately gives us one of those things for which we are to ask: that God would give life to our sinning brother.

The Lord here teaches us something regarding **for whom to pray: a brother**. Yes, we are to pray for ourselves, for the world generally, and for the church generally. But, we are also to be observing, learning, and keeping up with the circumstances of those brothers and sisters among whom the Lord has placed us. We have opportunity to see (and hear) what is happening in their lives. “If anyone sees...” And this opportunity comes with an obligation to be praying for our brother.

The Lord here teaches us something regarding **about what to pray: sanctification**. There are many, many things about which we should pray, but none more than the sanctification of our brother. The Holy Spirit has given this particular apostle, John, a great burden in his gospel, his letters, and his apocalypse, to emphasize the great mission of the Lord Jesus, who has life in Himself, to save—from certain, terrible, and everlasting death—sinners who have only death in themselves.

That is the broad context of this idea of a “sin which does not lead to death.” What a glorious truth! Because Jesus, who has life in Himself, has given Himself as an atonement for sinners, whoever believes in His Name does not perish but has everlasting life. And though believers in this life cannot say that they have no sin without calling God a liar, yet God is faithful and just to cleanse them from all unrighteousness.

The more immediate context can be seen in v13 and v18. v13, “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.” And v18, “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”

A Christian is someone who has a new nature. He has been born of God. He has eternal life already, as v13 says. And this new birth has come by the same Holy Spirit who is at war with our sin. And therefore, as v18 says, the believer, having been born of God, does not sin. This is not to say that he has no sin, but that this sin does not come from his new nature, and that he is at war with this sin. He has hope in Jesus, that he will see Jesus and be like Jesus, and so he purifies himself as Jesus is pure (3:2–3).

The days of the old man, the fleshliness from which this remaining sin comes, are numbered. The posture of the new man, who he is in Christ, as one who has been born of God, is entirely anti-sin. The life of this new man is eternal, and the victory of this new man is sure.

The Lord here teaches us something regarding **for what to pray: life**. The ability to keep believing, as v13 described. The certainty that he is saved. The opposition to sin in which he purifies himself, and the life of Jesus in him by which he pursues this purity. All of this is life. And especially that purified, Jesus-like, Jesus-beholding blessedness that he will enjoy forever. There is much that this letter means by life, as it commands us to ask that God would give our brother life when we see him sinning.

Shouldn't we pray that unbelievers would be saved? Of course. But, we cannot know if the Lord intends to save that particular one, or this particular one. We can pray generally and hopefully and submissively leaving to God what comes of it. But, in this particular passage, the apostle has been teaching us about praying for things that we can be sure that we receive. And there is nothing more sure than the completion of the sanctification of a brother in Christ.

Jesus, who gave His life for our brother... Jesus, who gave Himself to be our brother's life... Jesus will not be denied what He died for, and Jesus will not leave His work unfinished. He will most certainly give him life. And He has ordained to do so as a response to His hearing us pray. What a privilege, that our praying is appointed for this honor. And what an encouragement that, when we pray for a brother's sanctification, we know that we have what we ask!

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are welcome to listen to the audio recording, which you may find via tinysa.com/hopewellarp)

So the Lord say we're going to be hearing first on five or 16. Right before the pastoral prayer. Continues and first time we've been here for three weeks now. So, I'm going to read beginning in verse 14.

And through verse 18 because verse 13 to 18 end up giving us some important context. For understanding. Believers and sin and when a sin is leading to death or or not. So, First John chapter 5 beginning in verse 13. These are the words of God. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

And that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. Now, this is the confidence that we have in him that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us whatever we ask we know that we have the fictitious that we have asked of him.

If anyone sees his brother singing a sin. Which does not lead to death. You will ask he will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. All unrighteousness is sin.

And there is sin not leading death. We know that whoever is born of God does not sin. But he who has been born of God keeps himself and the wicked ones. Does not. Touch him. So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent word. In the portion that we just read, of course, we've solved some of them over the last couple of weeks but there are several statements that have confused believers or have been misinterpreted by believers fairly regularly such as if we know that he hears us whatever we ask we know that we have the participants that we have asked of him.

Many a terrible and wicked and fleshly promise has made by many a terrible and wicked and fleshly preacher from that passage failing to connect it to knowing that we believe in the son and have eternal life and having our confidence in him and therefore asking according to his will tying all those things to it.

Well a couple more difficult statements appear in verse 16 and verse 18 both of which will have to deal with the night in order to solve and understand what verse 16 is teaching. First of all, that's idea of a sin that doesn't lead to death. How can there be a sin that doesn't lead to death?

And then in verse 18, we know that whoever is born of God does not sin. How can that be true in this life? You ever met somebody that doesn't sin? Well, certainly hope you've met some people who will have been born of God. So how are we to understand verse 16?

If anyone sees this brother. Sinning a sin not unto death you will ask and he that is God will give him life. For those who commit sin not unto death. There is sin unto death. I do not say that he should pray about that. So we've been hearing from the previous two verses about asking for things that are according to the will of the Son of God.

Now in verse 16, the Apostle immediately gives us one of those things for which we are to ask. That God would give life to a sinning brother he says if anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death he will ask and he that is God will give him life and so we know that as we try to act for things that are according to the will of the Son of God one of the things that we're to ask is for a brother who sins that God would give him life, so the Lord here teaches us something regarding for him we are to pray.

He tells us about a brother a specific brother, yes, we are to pray for ourselves and for the world generally and for the church generally but here we learn that we are also to be observing and learning and heaping up with those lives and circumstances of those brothers and sisters among you and the Lord is placed us.

He says if anyone sees his brother sinning a sin. We have opportunity to see and hear what is happening in the lives of specific brothers. Too often we can turn ourselves with all of the sins of all of the Christians that we are able to hear about all over the world the social media has not slowed that down at all but the Lord has put us in in the lives of in proximity to specific brothers it's a similar to earlier when he talks about seeing a brother in need and having the things of the world the Lord has not equipped us to address in the earthly means of all.

The brothers and sisters around the globe but he has given us special obligation to those who we see and we have a special obligation to our brother or sister among whom the Lord has placed us to see when we see them sinning and that first obligation is to pray.

If anyone sees his brother sinning. He will ask. So the opportunity that God has given us to be involved in particular brothers and sisters lives is an opportunity that comes with an obligation to be praying for those particular brothers and sisters. And the Lord here teaches us not only about for whom we are to pray but also what about we are to pray and he focuses here on sanctification there are many many things about which we should pray for ourselves and for our brothers and for our sister, but none more than the sanctification.

Of our brother the Holy Spirit has given this particular apostle. John a great burden in his Gospel in his letters in his Apocalypse to emphasize the mission of the Lord Jesus whom he introduces to us in John chapter 1 as the one who has life in himself. He emphasizes the mission of the Lord Jesus to save from certain and terrible and everlasting death.

Sinners who have only deaths in themselves. This is the great scope who will live and who will die. We have death in ourselves and the heart from Christ we would perish. But as one of his most one of the most favorite or most famous most well-known verses from his writing tells us God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that the ones believing in him would not perish but have everlasting life.

And so, his writing is full of this language of passing from death into life and those who don't believe being condemned already and, Having in themselves eternal death and those who have the first resurrection not having the second death and and so forth. So this language about when he will give him life comes in this wide context of all of the writing of John and indeed of the whole scripture.

And so within this one within this broad context this passage reminds us of a wonderful truth that John celebrates and the Holy Spirit teaches us to celebrate throughout Scripture and especially in the writing of this apostle that there is such a thing as a sin that doesn't lead to death.

Not our debt that if you believe in Jesus Christ, his death is counted for you in this particular letter the love of God and of Christ is presented to us in the fact that Jesus has given himself as an atonement for sinners and that the father has given his son as an atonement of pitiation for sinners.

So though believers in this life cannot say that they have no sin without calling God a liar yet as we learned at the beginning of this letter. God is faithful and just to cleanse them from all unrighteousness. And so that is the sin that is the is not leading unto death.

It's the sin of a believer and we have that emphasized to us or open for us by the first and last verses that we read at the beginning of this lesson. Verse 13 and verse 18 these things. I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

And that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God and so those who believe already have eternal life. So can it be possible that the sin of a believer would be understaffed. No because death is not the final word for the believer life is the eternal word for the believer.

And then verse 18 these things. I have written to you believe in the name of the son of God. I pasted the wrong verse verse 18, we know that whoever is born of God does not sin. But he who has been born of God peace himself and the wicked one does not touch him well this cannot mean that believers never sin because we said in chapter one that if we say that we have no sin we're calling God a liar but that if we confess our sins is faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And in chapter three it says that the one who hopes that he will be like Jesus because he will see Jesus what does one who hopes who has that hope do he purifies himself even as Jesus is pure so he knows that he has sinned and the work of his life is not in sinning anymore that belonged his flesh to his original nature the work of his life is for killing and cleansing being cleansed from purifying himself from.

The sin that was in his original nature and so it's very important to see verse 18 talking about the believer in his new nature doing that purifying work we know that whoever is born of God. Does not sin. A Christian is someone then who has this new nature having been born of God having been born from above having a new birth from the Holy Spirit the Christian has eternal life already and this new birth and dislike had come by the same.

Holy Spirit him we recently learned in Galatians chapter 5 is at war with our sin. So in verse 18 says that the believer having been born of God does not sin that does not mean that he has no sins anymore, but it means that this sin does not come from his new nature.

Rather the believer having a new nature is that war with this he has hope in Jesus. He knows that he will see Jesus and that he will be like Jesus and so he purifies himself even as Jesus. So verse 18 doesn't describe someone in whom the war is over verse 18 describes someone in whom the war is raging.

We know that whoever is born of God does not sin. The days of your old man, if you are Christian are numbered. The posture of the new man your new nature who you are in Jesus, which is your identity because you do not have two natures at once. You have a new nature and a new identity and you are fighting against what remains from your former nature.

It aposture of your new man is entirely anti sin. And the life of this new man is eternal to the victory of this new man is sure. So we pray for a brother and we pray for him regarding his saintification. And it tells us what to ask for. As we pray about his sanctification that God would give him life.

If anyone sees his brother sinning the sin not unto death, he will ask. And he will give him life. So we are to be praying for life as we pray for our own sanctification or as we pray for a brother sanctification dislike as the ability to keep believing that verse 13 has described.

The certainty that he is saved that chapter 3 describes the opposition to sin in which he purifies himself as chapter 3 and dear chapter 5 and verse 18 described. The life of Jesus in the believer. All of these things are like, but we are especially praying. That for that purified.

Jesus liked. Jesus beholdings blessedness that every believer will enjoy forever. Everything else Jesus does for us aims at that completion of his work. There is much that this letter means by life as it commands us to ask that. God would give our brother life when we see him sinning.

And so what we're being instructed about in verse 16 is actually something that is optimistic and confident and participating in something that we can be sure the believer already has. To also show that will be perfected and completed. It is as it were the Apostle John version of Philippians 1:6.

Being confident that he has the gun a good work will bring it to completion and so when we see a brother sitting that's a reminder that the work isn't complete yet and the apostle here is instructing us to pray for its completion and to rejoice over the certainty of it.

Now, Should we pray that unbelievers would be saved the force. But if we're talking about a specific individual we cannot know if the Lord intends to save that particular one. For this particular one, we can pray generally and hopefully and submissively leaving to God what comes of it? But in this particular passage in the second half of John first John chapter 5, the apostle has been teaching us about praying for things that we can be sure that we receive and there is nothing more sure than the completion of the sanctification of a brother or sister in Christ.

Jesus who has given his life for that brother and Jesus who has made himself to be that brother's life. He will not be denied. He will not leave his work unfinished. If anyone sees his brother thinning a sin not unto death, he will ask. And he will most certainly give him life.

The exciting thing for us this evening, and as we pray for our brothers the rest of our earthly life is that the Lord has ordained to do this work partially as a response to hearing our prayers. And so we have this great privilege that our praying is appointed a position of honor in that sure work of the Lord Jesus.

What an encouragement that when we pray for a brother sanctification, we know that we have what we ask.