

## Authentic Christianity, Part B: Ask the Most Important Question

July 30, 2023

Matthew 7:21-23, 2 Cor. 13:5

A first revealing question is do I believe, "If you love me keep my commandments," John 14:15, 1 John 5:3. The role of the shepherd is to preach the Word and fulfill his ministry by doing the work of an evangelist, 2 Tim. 4:1-5. Christ is the judge in Matt. 7:21-23 and the question that we are confronted with is, "Do we know if we are in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5)?"

### **Ask the Most Important Question.**

**What are some false tests of salvation:** 1) Emotional Experience not a gauge. 2) Finding God in a crisis moment not proven by circumstance but what is needed is rescuing from the wrath of God. 3) Attending a church that proclaims the Gospel, Heb. 6:4-6, you can be enlightened and taste of the goodness of God but not be a believer. 4) Affirmation that others give. 5) A momentary agreement of the Gospel. 6) A personal declaration about myself or others. 7) Personal affection for someone, Jude 4 says that false believers "crept in unnoticed." Even in the case of Demas, he was Paul's companion in Philemon 24 but in 2 Tim. 4:10, Demas was one who forsook Paul.

### **What are some true tests of salvation:**

1) Concern for Obedience: Concern to grow, a sensitivity to sin, do we bear good fruit or bad fruit, Matt. 7:17. Eph. 2:10, "created for good works," Col. 1:10, "walk worthy of the Lord," yearning for Christlikeness, in repentance (Luke 17:3-4), the Lord's ways are not burdensome, 1 Jn. 5:3.

2) Desire for God: No one seeks after God, Rom. 3:11. Ps. 42:1-2, a believer thirsts for the Lord. Paul desired to keep the law of God but was captive to the law of sin and self-righteousness. Heaven is communion with God forever, Ps. 16:11.

3) Pursuit of Humility: is a defining feature of the Christian life, Eph. 4:1-2. Concern and esteem for others, Phil. 2:3-4. Sanctifying one another, Matthew 18:15, "tell him his fault," the result of humility, "if he listens." What is the source of this meekness? There is a keen awareness of the holiness of God. God is holy as shown in the accounts of: Achan, Joshua 7, the rebellion of Korah, Num. 16, the fiery serpents of Num. 21, 3,000 killed who worshipped the golden calf, Exodus 32, Ananias and Saphira, Acts 5, those not discerning the Lord's body, 1 Cor. 11:27-34, illness for unrepentant sin, 1 John 5:15-17, and Uzzah in 2 Sam. 6.

4) Mission for the Lost: The church in Philippi had a mutual fellowship for the sake of the Gospel, Phil. 1:3-5. The Thessalonian church was evangelizing the entire region where Paul was traveling, they needed no prompting to spread the gospel, 1 Thess. 1:6-10.

5) Longing for the heavenly: Col. 3:1-4, 1 John 2:15, 1 Pet. 2:11, Phil. 1:21-24.

6) Love for the Church: for the individual believers, be at peace with other believers, Rom. 12:18, believe the best of others, 1 Cor. 13:7. There is a longing for closeness to others, not of boundaries and barriers, Rom. 12:10.

- From 1 John: 1 Jn. 2:10, loving your brother, there is no cause for stumbling. 1 Jn. 3:10, if you don't love your brother, you are a child of Satan. 1 Jn. 3:11-14, passing from death to life because we love our brother, not loving your brother is abiding in death. 1 Jn. 3:16, we lay down our lives for our brother, we share what we have V17, we love in deed and truth not words V18, we love as He gave us commandment V23. Loving one another shows we are born of God, 1 Jn. 4:7. If you hate your brother, you are a liar if you say you love God, 1 Jn. 4:20. We love those God has saved, 1 Jn. 5:1.
- Our hope in God: that we are presented faultless before the Father, Jude 24-25.

## Further Discussion and Application

What does it mean, “If you love me keep my commandments,” from John 14:15 & 1 John 5:3? What does this require of us in our personal lives? In our families? With our loved ones, what does this mean, how do we put Christ first? In our service and worship to God, what does this mean? When things go badly, what does this mean?

Look at the example of Demas in Philemon and then again in 2 Tim. 4:10. Demas was called Paul’s fellow laborer but then left Paul later loving the present world more than the gospel ministry. How do maintain a focus upon Christ and hold fast to our faith? What do we do? What is the warning of Demas that confronts us? What comfort is 2 Peter 1:1-11 to this situation with Demas?

Examining the actions of Uzzah in 2 Sam. 6. Did the Israelites have a prescribed method of carrying the ark (Ex. 25:14, Num. 4:15, 7:9)? Why was Uzzah driving the **cart** (2 Sam. 6:3)? Uzzah didn’t die based upon a technicality, why did he die (2 Sam. 6:7)? The ark was to be carried, why is the lone death of Uzzah a merciful thing? What were the other leaders doing with the ark on a cart with a large party and band declaring the greatness of their God doing? How was the pride of Uzzah evident in this account and judgement just?

What is our response to 1 John? What differentiates a believer from a false believer? Are God’s instructions to us as believers burdensome or simple? How can the church see the love for each other as a bond of peace and unity that demonstrates a true changed heart? How might we encourage others who are more focused on themselves than others? What would we tell them? What are the commands of Jesus in this issue?

How does a heavenly perspective help us obey the Lord, maintain faithfulness to Him, and sanctify us in humility? Are God’s ways merciful? How are they merciful to us?