

- D. You, dear children, have overcome them for...
- i. Not only is God greater than our hearts, God is greater than the misleading tactics of the enemy!
 - ii. How had the Greater One in them caused them to overcome these false teachers?
 - a) 1 John 2:14, 20-21
 - b) 1 John 2:14
 - c) John 5:38

Our hearts condemn us; the enemy wants to deceive us; Our God is greater and knows, loves, and teaches us by the Spirit of His Son within us!

LIVE THE STORY

The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- In 1 John 3:19—4:6, John identifies two problems at work against the faithful follower of Jesus. What are they?
- Likewise, John identifies the solution to these problems as “God is greater than...” (3:20; 4:4). Why do you think this truth would have been important to John’s disciples who had remained in the churches and resisted the false teachers? Why is it important to you?
- What are some illegitimate ways that our hearts might condemn us?
- What are some legitimate ways that our hearts might condemn us?
- Why is God knowing all things helpful to our confidence before Him?
- Is God’s activity in the fleshly, human life of Jesus important to understanding God’s saving activity in the world? How so?
- Why is John’s commanded “to believe in the name of God’s Son, Jesus Christ consistent with the teaching of Jesus?
- What do you think John means by saying that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh? What are some different possibilities?

Light, Life, Love – the Gospel we heard from Him God is Greater: *Your Superpower and Why You Need It* Jerry Cisar — October 25, 2020

Text: 1 John 3:19—4:6

Introduction

I. God is Greater Than Our Hearts that Condemn (3:19-24)

- A. John starts with a solution.
 - i. “This is how” or “by this” often refers forward to what follows, but in this case it refers back to v18.
 - a) 1 John 2:3, 5b-6
 - b) 1 John 2:29
 - ii. We know that we belong to the truth and set our hearts at ease in his presence *because* looking at our lives we can see that *we love not merely in words but in actions and in truth.*
- B. A problem: “our hearts condemn us...”.
 - i. Genesis 3:8-10
 - ii. When it comes to sacrificial love, the needs are so great and we are so limited that we are frequently plagued by the accuser that we are not good enough.
- C. *God is Greater than our hearts that condemn us!*
 - i. *Your works prove that God is greater than our hearts!*

- ii. When you feel *legitimate* guilt over sin, John has already told us that cleansing is available by the blood of Christ upon confession (1:7; 2:1– 2).
- iii. When you feel *illegitimate* guilt, we can still take this to God and place it before Him.

- D. Why is it important that God is greater than our hearts?
- a) It gives us boldness before God (v21).
 - b) It leads to praying effectively.
 - c) It empowers us to love!

James B. Smith: “When we grasp the magnitude of God’s love for us, we will begin to feel it flow out of our hands and feet and mouths and into the lives of others. God has given us his Spirit, a Spirit of love that will drive us to care for one another.”

Karen Jobes (ZECNT): “A heart that constantly accuses us of disappointing God will erode our resolve to love, and it will keep us from enjoying our relationship with our heavenly Father.”

- E. Did John add a new command (23)?
- i. “...to believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ.”
 - ii. Our belief in Jesus, along with our love for one another, evidences that we are born “of the Spirit” which he gave us.

II. God is Greater Than Heretics that Deceive (4:1-6)

- A. Not everything that parades itself as the truth is true!
- i. Two important commands:
 - a) Do not believe every spirit
 - b) Test the spirits to see whether they are from God.
 - We must test the spirits by testing those who speak in His name.

- ii. Jesus spoke of false christs and false prophets (Mark 13:22-23).

- B. John doesn’t give us many details about this false teaching.

- i. What did John mean when he said that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh?

- a) 1 John 3:8b
- b) John 10:10
- c) John 18:37
- d) John 5:36

- ii. Does our version of the Gospel rarely talk about the human life of Jesus or His teaching (truth)?

- a) Jesus Christ laid down his life for us both in his *life* and *death: love the Gospel.*
- b) And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters: *live the Gospel.*

The life and teaching of Jesus tell us something significant about what it means to lay down one’s life... just as the death of Jesus does.

- C. These are the same antichrists that, in 2:19 “went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.”