

Sermon Handout

Confidence in Prayer

I John 5:13-15

I. The Purpose of John's Letter v. 13

- a. Ties into his summary of vv. 11-12
 - i. Eternal life is in the Incarnate Son of God v. 11
 - ii. Possession of the Son is life v. 12
- b. "Trust in his Name" (twice) is a synecdoche
 - i. "The name" = the Incarnate Son as described by John
 - ii. The Incarnate Son brought salvation to mankind
The Incarnation is essential 4:14-15; 1:1-3; 2:12; 2:22-25; 4:2-3
- c. Yet, v. 13 provides the premise upon which what follows rests.

II. Confidence in our Prayers vv. 14-15

- a. Three assertions concerning the prayers of God's people
 - i. We ask "according to his will"
 - ii. He hears us v. 14
 - iii. He grants our petitions v. 15
- b. "Hearing" is not a meaningless element
 - i. Believing that God hears is an act of faith *cf.* Heb 11:1
 - ii. Not doubting his ability and faithfulness Jas 1:5-7
 - iii. Faithful prayers are aided by the Holy Spirit Rom 8:26-28
- c. The meaning of "according to his will"
 - i. We listen to God's Word and trust his goodness Ps 85:8-13
 - ii. We abide in him and his Word in us Jn 15:5-11; I Jn 4:15-16
- d. The Father gives "good things" to his people
 - i. According to Jesus Mt 7:7-11
 - ii. According to James Jas 1:17-18
 - iii. According to St. Paul Rom 8:28-29
 - iv. With this confidence we approach him in prayer *cf.* Heb 10:19-22

III. What Does Bold Prayer Look Like?

- a. Trust in Christ as our Savior and Intercessor Heb 7:25 *cf.* I Tim 2:5
- b. Request actions that we know are in harmony with God's will.
- c. Don't rely merely on appending "if it be your will" to our prayers.
- d. Trust the Holy Spirit to interpret our faithful desires to the Father.
- e. Be prepared for a negative answer; God knows his own perfect plan.