

Assurance of Salvation

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Text: *1 John 5:1-13*

I - Two important doctrines

This morning I want to talk about two important doctrines, namely assurance of salvation and eternal security. I will touch briefly on eternal security and spend the bulk of the message on assurance of salvation.

There are those who teach that **you cannot know** you have eternal life and there are those who teach **you can lose** eternal life. One has no assurance of salvation and the other has no eternal security. But the good news is that the Bible clearly teaches assurance of salvation and eternal security. We **can know for sure** that we have eternal life and we **can never lose it**.

Assurance of salvation is knowing for sure that you have eternal life while eternal security is knowing that you will never lose it.

Many times in my witnessing, I ask people if they are 100% certain of their salvation and that they know beyond the shadow of a doubt that they are going to heaven, and the common answer I get is: *I believe so, I think so, I hope so.*

I am glad the Bible salvation is not a "*Hope So*" but a "*Know So*" salvation.

II - A Dangerous Doctrine?

People say, "*If you preach this doctrine of the eternal security of the believer, people will live carelessly?*" Men will say, "*Well, then it doesn't make any difference what I do, I will get to heaven anyway.*"

Eternal security does not cause people to live carelessly. The very opposite is true. The Bible teaches that **the grace of God actually motivates** believers **to live godly** and **to serve God** with a thankful heart.

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12: Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13: Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14: Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

The more a believer understands the unfathomable love God has for him in Christ, the more he wants to please God.

We are saved now and forever because of what Christ has done for us and in us.

III - Is it possible to have assurance of salvation

1 John 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

It is possible for a saved person to doubt his salvation. That does not necessarily mean he is not saved. It only means he has no assurance of his salvation.

But God wants us to know the truth. He wants those who are not saved to know they are lost that they will believe and receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life. He also wants those who are saved to know they are and have complete assurance of their salvation.

Examples of men who have assurance of salvation:

1. Job

Job 19:25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

2. David

Psalms 17:15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

Psalms 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

3. Paul

2 Timothy 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Romans 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39: Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

IV - The importance of having Bible assurance of salvation

This subject is so important that they have been the focal point of confusion. Satan causes the true believer to doubt their salvation and causes the false believers to have assurance of salvation

A well-grounded assurance is related to **joy, comfort** and **Christian service**. You cannot have **joy of salvation** or **comfort of salvation** if you do not have the assurance of salvation.

The **most useful God glorifying Christian** is the man who is accepted before God and knows that he is accepted.

If you have been in an airport and you have noticed **the difference between** passengers **who hold confirmed tickets** and those who are **on standby**. The ones with confirmed tickets read newspapers, chat with their friends or sleep. The ones on **standby** hang around the ticket counter, **pace back and forth** and are **clearly uneasy**. The difference is a matter of confidence. The standby people have no assurance they will make the plane and reach their destination.

It similar to those who know what the Bible teaches about this wonderful salvation that God provides to those who will by faith accept it. They have God's very word and are fully confident knowing that God has saved them forgiven all their sins and given them eternal life. Others live in a state of anxiety, never being sure they have been truly saved.

IV - What are the grounds of assurance of salvation?

It is not based on **what a person may say or claim**. Understand that **what a man says is not a reliable sign that he possesses eternal life**.

*1 John 1:6 **If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:***

*1 John 1:8 **If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.***

*1 John 1:10 **If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.***

*1 John 2:4 **He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.***

*1 John 2:6 **He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.***

*1 John 2:9 **He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.***

*1 John 4:20 **If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?***

These texts tell us that a person can say that he is a believer, and be deceived all the while. Therefore, **the fact that a person has made a profession of faith in Christ** is no sure and certain proof at all.

Where should we based our assurance and confidence?

1. The Testimony of God's Word

Assurance or confidence is not based on **wishful thinking** or **feelings** or **emotions** but should be based on a solid ground and foundation which is the Word of God. Because the Word of God promises eternal life to those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. (*John 3:16*)

1 John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

1 John 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12: He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13: These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

This verse underlines the importance of knowing and rightly dividing the Word of God.

2. The Testimony of God's Holy Spirit

We have assurance of salvation because of the witness of the Holy Spirit.

*Galatians 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the **Spirit of his Son** into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

*1 John 4:13 **Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.***

*Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the **Spirit of God**, they are the sons of God. 15: For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received **the Spirit of adoption**, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16: **The Spirit itself beareth witness** with our spirit, **that we are the children of God:***

It is the Holy Spirit who gives real assurance. He speaks to the heart of the child of God and ensures him and enables him to say, Abba Father.

*1 John 5:6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. **And it is the Spirit that beareth witness**, because the Spirit is truth. 7: For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8: And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. 9: If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. 10: He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11: And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12: He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

The Holy Spirit bears witness through the Word

The witness of the Spirit does not mean that the Spirit of God gives some direct revelation like, audible voice and testifies to him, and tells him that he is a child of God. No! **The Spirit bears witness that we are children of God through His Word.** He does not bear witness apart from the Scriptures.

It is the Holy Spirit that bears witness

It is the Spirit that bears witness **not the personal worker.** Assurance of salvation is the work of the Spirit. **It is not our responsibility to tell them that they are saved.** Our responsibility is to tell them how they could be saved. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to give us the assurance that we are the sons of God; no man can give us this witness. That's the role of the Spirit not man.

So be careful of persuading people that they are saved. That's the work of the Holy Spirit and He is the One that truly knows and searches the heart. Be careful of giving false sense of assurance to the false professors. For many make profession without truly understanding their spiritual condition and what salvation is really about.

3. The Testimony of a Changed Life

How do we know that we are children of God? We can know them by the **manner or pattern of life** that the person lives.

Matthew 7:18-23 ... by their fruits ye shall know them.

1 John 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

What things did John write that I may know that I have eternal life?

a. Keeping of God's commandment

1 John 2:3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4: He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5: But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

A true child of God has the desire to know and to keep His commandments.

1 John 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

1 John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

b. There is love for the brethren

Loves others

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. 15: Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

1 John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 19: And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8: He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

The love of the brethren has something to do with knowing we are born again.

When our Lord asked Peter about the reality of his love for Him, He related it to the feeding of His sheep and the lambs. There is a connection between our love for Christ and love for His Church.

c. There is hatred toward sin

1 John 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 9: Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

1 John 5:18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

This verse does not mean that he no longer sins, but rather it means he **no longer sin as a way of life**. Sin bothers him, sin grieves him. He has been given a **new heart** that **hates sin** and **longs to be delivered from it**.

d. There is practical righteousness

1 John 2:29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

1 John 3: 7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

We can know for sure that we have been made righteous if we practice righteousness.

V - Closing Thoughts

In all these things that he has written, **John is not telling men how to be saved**. He is talking about **knowing that we have eternal life**, and is saying that obedience to God's commandment, love for the brethren, hatred toward sin and love for righteousness have something to do with knowing we are born again.

The mark of a true child of God, is not that he is perfect, but that he completely believes the Bible regarding salvation through faith in Christ alone, and the Spirit bearing witness in the heart through the Word and through the transformed life.

God wants you and me to enjoy the reality of our salvation

It will make us better and stronger Christians. To know and to say you are saved is not pride or presumptuous but it is simple faith and trust in God's Word. It takes humility to be saved. It takes humility to acknowledge your sins before God, that you deserve to be punished for your sins, to acknowledge that you cannot do anything to save yourself, to acknowledge and cry out to God for Christ's sake.

God gave us principles whereby we may know that we have been born again, that we have been justified, that we possess eternal life. It is through the Word of God, through the witness of the Holy Spirit and through the supernatural life that we live.

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

The word "reprobate" signifies those who have been tried and found wanting.

The goal of examination is not to condemn but to save. Condemnation is not the goal but salvation for the lost and assurance for the saved.

Even if a person fails the test, the goal is not to condemn him but to save him.

6: But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.