“Assurance of Salvation”

October 18, 2015

John 3:9-21

One of the most important questions ever asked is this. “Can anyone know for certain they are saved?”

And the answer is absolutely yes. I 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.”*

But let me remind you of just where this whole notion of doubting our salvation came from.

Go back with me to the Garden of Eden and listen to the words of the Serpent? Genesis 3:1 *“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

*(2) And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: (3) But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. (4) And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:…”*

The ultimate origin of doubt is the devil himself.

But there’s another reason why some Christians aren’t sure they are saved. We put far too much emphasis on man’s thoughts and ideas and far too little emphasis on God’s thoughts and ideas.

There was a time in my life when I doubted that I was saved. And, over the years, I’ve discovered that there are many people who don’t have the assurance of their salvation. And, you can be quite sure of this. When a Christian doesn’t enjoy the assurance that he’s saved, he’s doesn’t grow up in Christ or he doesn’t experience a true walk and fellowship with the LORD.

So, today, “Assurance of Salvation.” Shall we pray?

Now, I remember when I lacked assurance. But I also remember the peace that flooded my heart on the day I realized that I truly am a child of God, no matter what.

Please open your Bible with me to I John Chapter Five and verse thirteen. I 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.”*

This verse is the preeminent verse in the Bible on the subject of assurance. Here’s what I want to encourage you with today. One of the many reasons the Holy Spirit inspired this first epistle of John was this. Some Christians aren’t sure. But these things, these words, these sentences, these teachings here in I John were inspired so that when we take them into our spirits and souls, we can and will experience assurance.

Let me begin with just some possible reasons you might not have assurance.

First, you might never have had a genuine salvation experience, to begin with; so no one can be sure he’s saved until he’s saved.

Second, you don’t have a specific date. Some people have more confidence in that date written in their Bible than they do in the words of Scripture. And a date in your Bible won’t give you assurance.

Third, you “walked an aisle.” In response to a public invitation you “went forward” and knelt at the altar. And now you are depending upon “going forward” for your assurance.

Fourth, you are counting on your baptism as the “outward evidence” of your salvation.

Fifth, you have little or no control over your thought-life.

Sixth, you have confused assurance with security.

Seventh, you don’t feel you have enough good works or that you pray enough or witness enough and so you feel that you’ll never measure up.

Eighth, some Christians have been taught that you could “lose your salvation.”

And ninth, you have secret sins you are unwilling to give up.

Now, none of these might be your problem. I’m just letting you know that sometimes some Christians do lack assurance because of these things. And besides, you might not lack assurance. But, you likely know someone who does.

First, then, what do you see in I John 5:13? Can you see God’s concern for those who aren’t sure? I 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.”*

There are those who “believe on the name of the Son of God” who have trouble. They don’t quote “know that they have eternal life.” So, in God’s love and grace, He had the Apostle John write his first epistle, in part, to help those who believe to come to have assurance.

God wants every Christian to “know he has eternal life” just as surely as God wants everyone to repent and come to Christ and be saved.

Assurance, as you can see, is a necessary experience for a growing Christian. And yet, some lack it. But, don’t despair. Don’t allow Satan to deny you your birthright.

First, God is concerned that you enjoy assurance.

Second, He has written a NT Book for your benefit. He wrote I John, in part, so that you might come into assurance.

We, in this modern world, are so unbiblical and untaught that some Christians even think they can get assurance apart from the Scriptures. Folks, what did the Holy Spirit write these Scriptures? They were written so that you might be set free. Jesus said John 8:36 *“If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free in deed.”*

One of the glorious freedoms we have in Christ is assurance. You and I should read and study the Bible. But the Bible is not primarily a book to be read as much as it is a book in which we can experience the things God says we can experience. The pages of your Bible are experience-oriented. So, yes, God intends that you read it; that you use your mind to think about it. But He also intends that you listen with your spirit and then obey with your spirit.

And what a joy that is! The LORD hasn’t left you to manage your Christian life on your own; because if He had, we’d all be constantly struggling and never attain.

The beginning answer to those who lack assurance is this. God has written on NT book to help you enjoy the freedom of your assurance.

You might never have heard of Pastor John Donne. He wrote these words in the sixteenth century.

“No man is an island entire of itself;

every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;

if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less,

as well as if a promontory were,

as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me,

because I am involved in mankind.”

John Donne’s point is simple “the entire human race, is vitally inter-connected.” None of us exists unto himself. And this is especially true in the Church of Christ. That’s why we need Christian fellowship.

So, if you’re going through your Christian life as an islander, you are, likely, missing out on the riches of what Christian fellowship can add to your life. Each one of us needs each other. You are not alone in the things you go through in your Christian walk.

The reason I mention that here is this. There are other Christians right here at EBC who have the very same struggles you’ve had. But because you don’t meet with them; spend time with them, pray with them, study with them, you don’t know how greatly their fellowship can benefit you.

You need the fellowship of the Saints.

One of the richest blessings of our Wednesday evening studies is that we interact to a greater degree than Sunday morning worship hour. One of the many things that we discuss on Wednesday evenings is our experience of walking with the LORD. Christians need each other.

And if you discovered that another Christian lacked assurance, you might must find that together you can find God’s answers in the study of I John.

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Third, Assurance is a matter of not *feeling* saved.

Here in this fifth chapter, John describes the entire picture of salvation.

Look with me at I John chapter five, and verse ten.

I John 5:10 *“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. (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.”*

When I became a Christian, I became a Christian. But, also, at the moment of my new birth I was a baby. You could say I was a “Christian baby.” I’d been born into the family of God. Yet, all I knew was that I’d been forgiven; saved. I didn’t even know who I was in Christ. I just knew that I needed the forgiveness of my sins and I received Christ as my personal Savior.

To be honest, I wasn’t even concerned about whether or not I had assurance. I had very little knowledge of the Bible; just like you when you were saved. I was just happy that God saved me.

But, let me remind you of what the Bible is teaching here. “Assurance is a matter of not *feeling* saved.”

Folks, salvation is not based upon a feeling. Your feelings fluctuate. You can feel frustrated or anxious, or depressed, or hostile; you can feel self-righteous. You see, your feelings can and do change. Your feelings can distort things.

Now, not feeling saved is a feeling; not a fact. Some of us grew up in a family where our parents rarely, if ever, said “I love you.” And as a vulnerable child who needs to hear and know that you are loved, this is a problem. Every human being needs to be told they are loved.

Then, as you grow into adulthood, you might not a much confidence that your parents loved you. It doesn’t mean they didn’t love you. But, as an adult, you might not “feel” loved.

The lack of assurance of salvation might be rooted in many things; one of them being that you never really felt loved as a child.

The Apostle John was led by the Holy Spirit to write this epistle for many reasons. One of them is so that you will come to “know” you are saved. I 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.”*

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Fourth, assurance is not the same thing as security.

Assurance is a feeling. It’s confidence that something is true. Security is far, far different.

Sometimes when a small child is afraid of the dark, he or she will come and tell his Mom or Dad that he’s afraid. Simply put, he lacks some assurance. Now, if Mom or Dad says “Billy, I’m right here. You don’t have to be afraid,” that might be all Billy needs to hear.

But what are the facts. Dad has already provided something Billy isn’t quite sure of. Dad has secured the entire house. He’s locked all the doors. He’s set the alarm. There is very little chance that anyone is going to come into their home.

So, folks, Billy might lack assurance. But his assurance is not the same as his security. Your security in Christ is rooted in the absolute truth of God Himself.

Look back with me at those few verses before verse fifteen. Look at I John 5:11. *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.”*

What John is saying is that there is a record. This term “record” means “a binding document;” “a testimony;” “a witness.” And it’s a record that God has given us.

Now look back at verse number nine. I John 5:9 *“If we receive the witness [record] of men, the witness [record] of God is greater: for this is the witness [record] of God which he hath testified [recorded] of his Son.*

*(10)* *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness [record] 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.”*

Seven times John, by the Holy Spirit, puts the emphasis on the record.

Folks, your eternal security is rooted in the record that God gave us about Hi Son Jesus Christ. Your security is essential to your assurance. It’s rooted in what *He* says. If you choose to reject God’s record, God’s witness, God’s word about Christ, then you’ve, in essence, called Him a liar.

Now, the record states that God gave you eternal life. And that life is found in His Son alone.

Verse ten again. *(10)* ***“****He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness [record] in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”*

Can you see with me the difference between security and assurance? Your assurance is your confidence. Your security is God’s record. Your salvation is rooted in the truth that God gave you His Son and the only place to find life is in His Son.

The moment I believed the simple message that God gave to me a record, an authoritative word about His Son; at that moment, I was saved. God does not and cannot lie. So, simply put, now that I have trusted Christ, I have eternal life. And even if I were to doubt; even if I were to lose confi-dence; even if I were to wonder; even if I were to sin; that can never change the reality that Christ’s work was a work for my benefit both now and in Heaven.

And let me remind you that this is the teaching of the rest of the Bible. Lister with me to Jesus Himself.

John 5:24 *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me,* ***hath everlasting life****, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”*

John 6:47 *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me* ***hath everlasting life****.”*

John 10:27 *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: (28) And I give unto them eternal life; and they* ***shall never perish****, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. (29) My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*

Colossians 1:13 *“Who hath* ***delivered us from*** *the power of darkness, and hath* ***translated us into*** *the kingdom of his dear Son:…”*

Romans 8:1 *“****There is*** *therefore now* ***no condemnation*** *to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”*

Can you see that this is God’s plan?

Salvation is found by trusting Christ alone.

Security rooted in the record that God has given us concerning what Christ has done on our behalf.

Assurance: I wholly accept the record.

Folks, this is the only way to assurance of your salvation.

First, God is concerned that you enjoy assurance.

Second, He has written a NT Book for your benefit.

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Fourth, assurance is not the same thing as security.

Fifth, at the moment of your salvation, God sent His Spirit to live inside your spirit.

Romans 8:15 *“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:…”*

On the day of your salvation, the Holy Spirit moved in. He took up residence within you. And one of His primary responsibilities to you and me is this. He bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

And folks, when you look to the Holy Spirit, He provides this personal witness to your spirit that you now have a new relationship to God. You are one of His children. And with this personal assurance comes personal stability and real growth in the LORD.

You see, salvation is found by trusting Christ alone.

Security rooted in the record that God has given us concerning what Christ has done on our behalf.

Assurance: I wholly accept the record.

God’s Spirit. The Spirit Himself bears witness with your spirit that you are one of His children.

The concept of confidence and assurance of your salvation is vital.

I want to close today with just a few passages from John’s First Epistle. Look with me at the majesty and enjoyment and wonder of God’s word to you and me who believe on Christ.

I John 2:3 *“By hereby we know that we know Him…”*

I John 2:5 *“…hereby we know that we are in Him.”*

I John 2:12 *“…your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake.”*

I John 2:13 *“ye have overcome the wicked one…”*

I John 2:14 *“ye have known Him that is from the beginning…”*

I John 2:25 *“And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life.”*

I John 3:1 *“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God…”*

I John 3:14 *“We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.”*

I John 3:19 *“And hereby we know that we are of the truth…”*

I John 3:24 *“And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.”*

Can you see that God has given us this NT Book for our benefit?

Last, what is God’s intention for your Christian life? Romans 8:37 *“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”*

Conquerors conquer. But God says you are more than a conqueror; that you are able to absolutely and completely prevail over the challenges you face. And why? Because Christ has already won the war. Your Captain has won the victory on your behalf. Yes, there will be battles for you to fight. But, Christ in you enables you to be more than a conqueror.

So, what will you do with I John 5:13 this week? This verse is the preeminent verse in the Bible on the subject of assurance. What will you do today? Are you walking in assurance of your salvation? If not, why not? The Scripture is here of you to discover this wonderful assurance.

If you are here and are having trouble with assurance, do something about it. Do something today. We are here to help and to bless you.

And last, a word to those who have never put their trust in Jesus Christ.

The first and greatest need in every heart and the largest problem in every life is your sin and the fact that your sin is what separates you from God. The Prophet Isaiah said. *“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”*

Yet, out of love, Jesus became the Substitute for your sins.

The Apostle Paul in the Book of Romans says this. Romans 3:23 *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” and (Romans 6:23) “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

There’s only one way to receive God’s Salvation. It’s through God’s Son. And here’s how. The Bible says Acts 20:21 *“… repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Will you repent and exercise faith towards Him?

Today is the day of Salvation? What will you do about the condition of your heart for eternity?

REPENT - “Will you change your mind about God, Christ, your sin, and God’s free gift of salvation?”

BELIEVE - “Will you simply trust Jesus Christ alone as the One Who paid the entire penalty for your sins?”

Here’s a simple salvation prayer for you to pray if you’ve never trusted the LORD for His free gift of eternal life. Salvation Prayer

* “LORD, I admit that I am a sinner and in need of your grace. I believe that You sent Your Son to the Cross to die for me. Please forgive me of all my sins and make me Your child. Thank you.”

Everyone who calls upon the Name of the LORD will be saved.

Now please turn with me to Hymn # 748 “I Am His And He Is Mine”