

## 1 John 5:13-17 (NKJV)

**13** These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life,( and that you may *continue to believe* in the name of the Son of God.)

**14** Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

**15** And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

**16** If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *which does not lead* to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is sin *leading* to death. I do not say that he should pray about that.

**17** All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not *leading* to death.

How much of our stress on any given day is due to uncertainty?

Tyler, my coworker, and I were talking the other day. And I told him what I have figured out about why our work can be so stressful. Sometimes it is due to time pressure. More is coming at us than we have time to handle. But those aren't the biggest stressors. Our greatest stress comes when we are given a ticket that we are uncertain we can fix. **Uncertainty** is the problem. **Not knowing** is the problem.

Our lives are floating in seas of uncertainty. On this earth we have a mountain of things that we don't know. In fact it is much easier to list the things **we don't know** than the things **we do**. The **future here** is mostly uncertainty. What will happen to us? What will happen to those we love? What will happen to the economy? What will happen to our society? Who will win the next election? And dear to my heart, will the killer hornets ever reach Maryland.

I really liked our brother's Sproul's talk about the will of God. He was talking about knowing the **hidden will** of God, which is essentially **what will happen in our futures**, and he said something to the effect that if **that** is what you are looking for when you are looking for the will of God, forget it. It is hidden. And it is supposed to be.

Our world exploits our uncertainty. I noticed a long time ago that a lot of the prepper sites make sales based on **fear**. They are continually floating scenarios that **accentuate** uncertainty. They do that because fear can be motivating. If you can make someone fear something, you can sell them a solution. You can control them.

Our world also makes uncertainty a virtue. If you say that you are certain that you know how to be right with God, you are likely to be seen as extreme and bigoted and self-righteous. But if you communicate that you are on a quest to **find** truth, but you don't **know** what that truth is, you will fit right into our culture. I came across this quote in my study.

**It is a strange day in which we live when doubt is deemed a virtue, skepticism hallowed as humility, and absolute truth viewed as absolutely false.**

Reformed Expository Commentary - Reformed Expository Commentary – 1-3 John.

I guess misery loves company. And a person who is **uncertain** brings no **conviction** to the conversation, just **comradery**. But a person who is **certain** about something is a force to be **reckoned with**. He is going to shake things up.

Well, God has no plan to remove our uncertainty about the unknowns of our future up to the time of our deaths. If that is what you require before you can be happy, guess what? You have just reduced your likelihood of happiness. There are some who describe faith as the process of convincing yourself that the good things you want to happen **will** happen. But that is not faith. That is delusion.

Frankly, in this world's future events, we do not know most of what is going to happen.

OK, so if we cannot know what will happen in our futures on planet earth, what **CAN** we know? What certainty can we have? What can we be sure of?

**<sup>13</sup> These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life,**

Our happiness, our Joy, is only contingent upon a few certainties. We don't need to be certain about **a lot of things**. But we must be certain about a **few** things. And **this** is the most important thing.

I would venture a guess that none of us are making plans for what we will do 150 years from now on earth. We have already grappled with **one** certainty. Unless the Lord returns, none of us will be alive on the earth 150 years from now. It is appointed unto man once to die and after that to face judgment. So if we have a **certain answer** to that **certain end**, we have the most important thing in life handled.

And that is exactly what the Apostle is offering us- assurance of eternal life. It is interesting that nearing the end of the **Gospel** of John we read a very similar thing.

## John 20:31 (NKJV)

<sup>31</sup> **but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.**

These are both saying the same thing in a slightly different way. There are some important things we must glean from this simple verse.

It is wonderful that John tells us why he wrote what he wrote. Earlier in First John he tells us this.

## 1 John 1:4 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> **And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.**

John wrote that you may **know you have eternal life.**

He wrote that your **joy may be full.** He wrote that you can be as happy as it is possible to be.

I believe both statements reflect the same goal. Just one reflects **the process** and the other reflects its **logical conclusion.**

We have clung to the belief through this whole book that it is a book telling you and I how we can have **joy.** And what is **fundamental** to our joy? What **must** we have in order to have joy? **Certainty.** We must have certainty that we are the **recipients** of the **great and precious promises of God.** We must be **certain** that our sin problem is taken care of. We must be **certain** that we have new life in Christ.

We must be sure that not only **is there** a wonderful savior but that His sacrifice **counts for us.** Until we are certain of that, we cannot have full joy. Isn't that a wonderful **goal** for this book? Isn't that a **glorious gift.** John is essentially saying this is a book that is ultimately designed to grant you greatest happiness. If you want ultimate happiness, throw yourself into these truths.

If I told you that I am writing these instructions so you can find a **bar of gold** I buried, and you believed me, how closely would you pay attention to my instructions? How important would they be to you? I am guessing they would be extremely important if you wanted a bar of gold.

Well John is telling us, .... "Do you know what? If you want the **ultimate joy** that comes from the **assurance of your salvation,** these instructions will give it to you. I am writing so you have this final goal." If we **believe** John and we **want this end,** how important should this word be to us?

Note too that these things **were written.** They are words on the page that our minds comprehend and we respond to by thinking about them and accepting them as truth. Notice that this is how John **expects spiritual business** to be accomplished. He is not describing some mystical process of, as Mike used to say, contemplating one's naval. He is talking about **reading** and **believing**

content. He does not count on our joy being full by receiving some experience that John is mystically sending with this letter. It is the **content of words on our page** that should result in the assurance of our salvation and our ultimate joy.

So how can you have joy? **Read 1 John and believe it.** That is how John tells you to have it.

Now let's look at this verse more.

**13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life,**

Who is this written to?

Those who believe in the name of the Son of God. There are a number of different ways of describing this. But it is for those who believe the **apostles eyewitness testimony** of the truth of Christ and have believed in Christ by **placing their faith upon Christ for salvation.**

John is not trying to grant joy to those who think that Jesus is just alright, or that Jesus is cool, or that Jesus is respectable, or that Jesus was some kind of moral trendsetter.

No this belief is in **the name of the Son of God.** This is someone who believes in the actual person who was **God man.** And they believe that because of His **unique qualifications** He could **take our sins** upon Himself, **die** as the full payment for our penalty, and then grant us **new life in Himself.**

That is what it means to believe in the name of the Son of God.

Now when this life is given to us, is it without evidence? Not for long. No John has spent lots of ink on the **new life monitors** we can watch for **signs of life.**

There is the **loving God by obeying** Him monitor.

There is the **loving the brothers** monitor.

And there is the **believing in the historical presentation of Jesus Christ that the apostles passed down** monitor

We will see signs of life in each of those monitors.

Will the signs be perfect. No. Not until we receive new bodies. But they will be substantial. They will be visible.

Ok

So these things were written

And they were written to those who believe in Christ.

And what for?

**that you may know that you have eternal life**

They were written to give us **CERTAINTY.**

Let's think about that a little more.

First this means that certainty is **attainable**. There are some who believe that they **cannot** have assurance of salvation. They think it is unattainable. But that is very clearly the opposite of what this is saying. John is saying that it is **possible** for human beings such as ourselves to have assurance that when we die we will be granted eternal life. We can be certain we will have a place in the New Jerusalem. Is that **haughty**? Does that sound **prideful**? Only if we do not understand the message. We aren't getting in by how good **we** are. We are not getting in even by how good **our faith is**. We are trusting our entire self on the hope of getting in because of **how good our Savior is**. There is nothing prideful at all about that. We certainly do not get in our merit. We only get in on Christ's merit.

So certainty is **attainable** for every believer in Christ. But not only is assurance attainable. Assurance is an **obligation**. We **should** have assurance. We should look at the signs of life and read them accurately. If Christ did **all this** for us, and if he made **great and precious promises** for us, and if He provided everything we need for life and godliness, how can we not believe Him?

Do you see the problem? John is telling us we **can** have assurance of salvation. He is telling us we **should** have this assurance. And living the most joyful life of faith will grant to our Maker the greatest of **glory**. We are testifying by our joy how happy He has made us.

Suppose your spouse walked around just miserable. Suppose he or she never portrayed any pleasure that they received from their relationship with you. Do you think that would be a good reflection of your efforts to love that person? Would you appreciate that they be **perfectly loyal** but continually **discontent**, focusing on everything they don't have? Or worse yet, never certain that you will stay even though you never had any intention at all of leaving?

Do you see how we dishonor our Lord when we **refuse to take delight** in the salvation he offers us? Do you see how our living a joyless insecure life would reflect on our Lord. He is worthy of **more**. He is worthy of our **joyful security**. He is worthy of our **reveling** in the grace that we are **certain** of. He is worthy of us acting like we are the most fortunate people in the world. So not only is assurance **attainable**. We **owe it** to our Lord to **attain** this assurance and to **cling** to it and to **revel** in it.

And there is another reason that we should attain this assurance. What happens when you sin and lose confidence in your salvation? What happens to you? Do you not find that you get internal focused, that you get self focused? Maybe you beat yourself up. Maybe you are continually asking

yourself if you are truly saved. Essentially when we are not walking in the **assurance of our salvation**, we will not be much good to God until we get it back. Our ministries will be side tracked. Our boldness will be squelched. Our joy will be lifeless. Our thoughts will be distracted.

I suspect we all know what that is like. Either that, or I have just portrayed myself as being **abnormally** despicable.

When we are not assured of our salvation, our efforts will be poured into getting our assurance back. So it is much better to **live in this state** that is offered to us by John.

Now I want to go back to our text to the second half of the verse we are looking at.

**The NJK says <sup>13</sup> These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, ( and that you may *continue to believe* in the name of the Son of God.)**

### **1 John 5:13 (ESV)**

**<sup>13</sup> I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.**

This again appears to be one of those later additions where the Scribes attempted to aid the Holy Spirit. So this section does not appear in the original:

**( and that you may *continue to believe* in the name of the Son of God.)**

It does no harm to the text and it is something that should happen. But nevertheless, it is probably not part of the original scriptures.

OK so John is closing out His epistle. He is circling back now to what he has written and he is summing things up. And he reminds us again why he has given us this great gift. He wants us to walk in the joy of the overcomers. He wants us to represent our Lord well.

He is about to tell us other things that we now know. This is what is coming in the next few verses:

We **know** that he hears us—whatever we ask.

We **know** that we have what we asked.

We **know** that anyone born of God does not continue to sin.

We **know** that we are children of God.

We **know** also that the Son of God has come.

We... **know** him who is true. ([vv. 15](#), [18-20](#))

We started this sermon with **uncertainty**. We will end with **certainty**. I said there were **few** things about our future on planet earth that we know. But here are some very vital things that we can and must know.

Again

We **know** that he hears us—whatever we ask.

We **know** that we have what we asked.

We **know** that anyone born of God does not continue to sin.

We **know** that we are children of God.

We **know** also that the Son of God has come.

We... **know** him who is true. ([yv. 15, 18-20](#))

We will be looking at these verses next week Lord willing.

There is something I came across that I thought might be encouraging to you.

It is similar to what RC Sproul taught to us months ago.

It is from our friend Martyn Lloyd Jones.

**“So I would put it in a practical form at this low level. If you are concerned about this question of eternal life, if you feel you have not got it and if it is your greatest ambition to know that you have got it, then you may know that you have got it or you would not have this desire. If you feel that you are empty, if you feel you are nothing, if you feel you are poor and wretched and blind, if you hate your inclination to sin and have any suspicion of a feeling of self-loathing and hatred, you can take it from me that you have eternal life, for no one ever experiences such things until the life of God comes into his or her soul.”**

As an apt summary this morning I thought this was appropriate. It is a quote from the Expositors Bible Commentary.

**The false teachers present a different "knowledge" as well as a different lifestyle. The author counters with a series of tests by which the believers can evaluate the false teachers' claims and practices. Walking in the light, obeying his commands, loving one's brother, being steadfast in the community of faith, doing what is right—these serve as tests of whether the life that is from God has been received. When it has been received, it is only because God's witness to his own Son as the source of that life has been accepted and believed. On this basis, we can expect God to hear us in prayer, free us from the presence and power of sin, and forgive our transgressions. Those who know these things know also that they have received eternal life.**

We will have lots of choices this week. One of those choices will be a choice to dwell on that which we are **certain of**, or that which we are **uncertain** of. We do **not** have a choice to remove the many things that are **uncertain** in our lives. That is not one of our options.

We can focus on **knowing** that we are **saved**, that we are **born of God**, that we are a **new creation**, that our eternity with Christ in a sinless environment is **assured**. As that knowledge gets applied across all of the arenas in our lives, we will see **joy blossom and grow**. And this is not some kind of powerless joyless joy that is some theological construct that has little bearing on our feelings. No. This is a **deep joy** that will display itself in our **demeanor** and our **faces**. It is sort of like the steam that exists under the ground in Yellowstone park. It always exists and it is always working its way to be released through the ground to the sky. There may be temporary obstructions that will mask its existence. But if the steam is there, it will express itself whenever there is opportunity.

Events in our lives may mask that joy for a while. The mourning of loss may make it appear that we have no joy. But in the end, the joy will display itself. How can it not? If we really really believe, in our heart of hearts, that Jesus Christ has selected us to be with him in a **sorrowless joy filled eternity**, if we get to **live there** with a **family of believers who also love us**, how can that not find expression in our day to day lives?

Or, we have the other alternative. We can focus on the things that are **uncertain**. And if we do, it will be evident. We will have a joyless life, always bummed out by the bad things that we can **imagine** but cannot **control**. And this too will be evident in our demeanor. There may be flashes of happiness when all the stars align in our favor. But our day to day will be hopeless and helpless.

Why would we choose that for one moment? Why would we dishonor Christ in such a way? We owe it to His glory to choose the path of certainty and joy. And not only that, this gift is ours to enjoy. He has given it to us at the price of His blood.

We can **bask** in the truth of what we are **certain of**. This will result in **gratitude and praise**. And at the end of the day that is the sacrifice He wants from us.

The writer of Hebrews said this:



**Hebrews 13:14-15 (NKJV)**

**14 For here we have no continuing city** (there is little certainty in this city),  
**but we seek the one to come.**

**15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God,**  
**that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name.**