

Subject: *Straight Talk about Assurance*

Scripture: *1 John 5:13*

Our subject today is assurance of salvation. Can a person know for sure he is saved? Yes, he can and should know. The entire book of 1 John was written for that purpose. The word “know” is found many times in this short letter. God wants you to be sure and you ought to be sure that you have eternal life. Instead of saying I hope so or I think so, you should be able to say I am saved and I know so. You can be an exclamation point instead of a question mark. Some would say that it is presuming too much to say I know that I am saved, but actually it is presuming to say you cannot know if you have eternal life because God says emphatically that you and I can know. What could be more important? In 5:13, John states the purpose of his letter. In 1:4 he also states the purpose of the letter. There is an obvious connection between assurance and joy. Assurance that you have eternal life brings full joy.

The Problem of No Assurance:

Why are so many people not sure about salvation?

- Faded memory of childhood conversion – We can’t remember exactly what happened.
- Dramatic conversion of others – We are not all saved like the Apostle Paul.
- Shocking conversion of a faithful “Christian” – This is someone we thought was saved already.
- Ignorance or misunderstanding of what Bible teaches – That’s why God inspired the book of First John and that’s why I’m preaching it.

The Greater Problem of False Assurance:

There was a church called Hope Baptist Church. This church had a group to leave and start another church called New Hope Baptist Church. A few years went by and another group left and started another church and someone suggested the name, No Hope Baptist Church. Actually there is something worse than no hope and that’s false hope. What is the basis for false assurance?

- Trusting in outward righteousness
***Matthew 5:20** For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*
***Matthew 23:27-28**²⁷ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.²⁸ Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.*
- Trusting in ministry involvement
***Matthew 7:21-23**²¹ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

- Trusting in a superficial faith response
Luke 8:13-14¹³ *They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*¹⁴ *And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.* There is something worse than no hope, and that is having a false hope of heaven.

The Blessed Possibility of True Assurance:

Real assurance is given to all who believe. Believers have assurance in writing, the written words of scripture. R. A. Torrey said: “The blood of Jesus makes us safe, but the Word of God makes us sure.” Do you remember the story of the Passover lamb in the Old Testament? The blood made them safe, but God’s Word made them sure. ***Exodus 12:13*** *And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.*

Assurance is the believer’s birthright. We must look of the believer’s birthmarks. John has given us some evidence by which we can check ourselves.

- The evidence of obeying God
1 John 2:3-4³ *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.*
- The evidence of loving God
1 John 2:15 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*
- The evidence of righteous living
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.*
- The evidence of loving other believers
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.*
- The evidence of the Holy Spirit
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 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.* The Holy Spirit always leads us to do what is right what glorifies God. Is He leading you? ***Romans 8:16*** *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* John Wesley described assurance as “an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God.”
- The evidence of continuing faith in Christ
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. To believe means to keep on believing. The test is not whether you believed on Jesus in the past, but if you keep on believing and believe on Him right now. The real test is a changed life because faith without works is dead. **2 Corinthians 5:17** *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* God loves us just like we are, but He doesn't leave us like we are.

The Bible says to examine yourself, whether you be in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). The Bible says to give diligence to make your calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1:10). Are you saved? Are you sure? Does your life match up with what the Bible says about a real believer? If not, you can make sure right now.

Someone recently gave me a copy of the book, *Stop Asking Jesus into Your Heart*. The author, J. D. Greear, writes: "Salvation is not given because you prayed a prayer correctly, but because you have leaned the hopes of your soul on the finished work of Christ."