

## Blessed Assurance

*The Bible Study*

By Dr. Steven J. Lawson

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**Bible Text:** 1 John 5:13

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### **OnePassion Ministries**

5622 Dyer St, Suite 200

Dallas, TX 75206

**Website:** [www.onepassionministries.org](http://www.onepassionministries.org)

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So, let's begin in a word of prayer and let's just dive right in this. We've got a phenomenal text today, phenomenal passage. So,

*Father, I pray now as we look into Your word that You will give us great insight and understanding as we study Your word, what a joy it is for us to study Your word and I pray for these men that You would richly bless them. In Christ's name, amen.*

Okay, we're in 1 John 5 and verse 13, 1 John 5 verse 13 and this is the signature text for the whole book of 1 John. So this verse really gives the purpose for the book of 1 John. He writes,

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

The key word there is "know, that you may know that you have eternal life." That's why the book of 1 John was written to provide the basis for assurance of salvation. Now, the gospel of John was written so that you might know how to be saved. 1 John is written that you might know that you are saved and so this is a very important matter. And by way of introduction, there are some reasons why people lack assurance of salvation and I want to give you five reasons why I think people lack assurance of salvation. The first is they have sat under such shallow teaching of the word of God that basically they don't know enough to have assurance of salvation. They don't have enough sound doctrine. They don't have enough theology. They really do not understand beyond just an embryonic introduction to what Jesus did at the cross. They just know something happened at the cross, and they put their faith in him. They have no idea of words like propitiation and redemption and reconciliation and expiation. Those concepts aren't in their mind and so therefore they don't have enough to grab hold of to have assurance of salvation. They just know Jesus died for my sins and I believe in Jesus.

So that's one reason, they've sat under such shallow teaching of the word of God. The second is, is they have been influenced by wrong teaching from the word of God, such as you could lose your salvation. If you're an Arminian, semi-Pelagian, it's going to be pretty hard for you to have assurance of salvation because you're always living in the fear

that you could lose your salvation, and also that you're always just looking to something like, well, I walked forward at the end of a meeting and the evangelist signed my Bible and put the date in my Bible. So therefore I know I'm saved, but I lost that Bible so now I don't know if I know I'm saved or not. So that's a second reason.

A third reason is that some people just have an obsessive, perfectionist personality and I kind of tend to be in that direction as well, but someone like that, they just never can believe enough. They just never can see enough fruit in their life. Anything is just never enough because they are such an obsessive perfectionist, and so it's hard for them to get settled on assurance of salvation.

A fourth reason is they may be living with unconfessed sin and a sense of guilt in their life, and they may be reasoning, how could someone who's actually saved be living like this? And so there's a lack of repentance and a lack of confession of sin, and that causes them to doubt their salvation.

A fifth reason why they might doubt their salvation is they're not saved. How about that one? That they doubt a salvation they do not have and so they just walk around one big question mark and it's because they're not saved. And I would say most of the people that I end up talking to about assurance of salvation are people that fit this fifth category, that there's a reason why they're so unsettled, and they have no anchor for their soul, and they have no knowledge of God in a personal way. They have religion, but they don't have a relationship with Christ.

So having said that, this verse talks about the basis for having a true assurance of salvation and what I want to do is I want to take verse 13, and I want to dissect it into three sections. First, we're going to look at, "These things I have written." Then we're going to look at, "to you who believe in the name of the Son of God." And then we're going to look at, "so that you may know that you have eternal life."

So do you need a pen? Oh, it's not, well, okay. No, I've got the words coming right here. Okay, I've got them coming. So let me get this word to Kent here real quick so we can get going.

So the first thing I want you to see, actually, I have three words, Kent. I've got three words, and the first thing I want you to see is the message recorded. The message recorded, and that's at the beginning of verse 13, "These things I have written." Now, "These things" refer to the entire book of 1 John, the entirety of this letter. And he says, "have written," it means to actually record something in writing. Now, this is very important because assurance of salvation is ultimately based upon what does the Bible say. It's not based upon what someone verbally said to you. It's not based upon even what a pastor said, a parent said, an evangelist said. It is based upon the written word of God, "Thus says the Lord," okay?

Now, God in his wisdom had the truth of the gospel written down such that you and I are not dependent upon 2,000 years of oral tradition, of people verbally passing this down

from one generation to the next, because things would be lost in the mix. And I want to give you, I want to pull over and park just for a brief second and tell you, give you four words why this is so to our advantage that it's written down and we're not dependent upon what we actually have had passed down verbally to us. And the first word is precision. The advantage is precision, that the truth is now written down in black and white with specific words that can be read, that can be studied, that can be analyzed, that can be dissected, that can be parsed, that can be compared, that can be interpreted, okay? That's the advantage of having this in writing and like what we're doing right now today, we're just taking one verse and we're diving down into it and giving utmost attention to each individual word. The fact that it's written down, we can now do that. You can't do that with something that's verbal unless you were to write down what was verbal.

The second word is preservation. The fact that it's written down, it's now permanently recorded and can be passed down from one generation to the next, from one century to the next. We're not dependent upon our memory for what someone said to us. The fact that it's written down, it's permanently recorded and it's preserved, okay?

The third word is distribution, that this written message can be copied. Copies can be made of this and distributed now throughout the world. As I look around, everyone has their own Bible. Everyone has their own Bible open. That's the advantage of this being written and it can be distributed to the four corners of the earth, such that what we are studying is what they're studying in India, what they're studying in Zambia, what they're studying in Colombia and Ecuador. We're all on literally the same page of the playbook because it's been written down, okay?

The fourth word is translation, that because it's written down, this word can be translated into the different languages of the world. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the New Testament written in Greek, and so it can now be translated and that's also a part of it reaching around the world.

So the fact that John says, "These things I have written," there's a lot going on there but for us as it relates to assurance of salvation, our assurance of salvation has a firm foundation, and it is the objective black and white, black print on white paper, written word of God. We're not dependent upon some pastor standing up and saying, "You know, I had a dream last night. This morning, God spoke to me in the shower," and we want him to go back to the shower until he gets that rinsed out of him, okay? We want the written word of God. That's the basis of assurance of salvation.

So let's keep proceeding now in verse 13. Second, I want you to note the reader's identified, and that's in the middle of verse 13. He says, "to you who believe in the name of the Son of God." The word "you" is intentionally open-ended. It refers to believers, to you believers, you who believe in the name of the Son of God.

Now, as I was thinking about it, most epistles in the New Testament were written by Paul. Paul wrote 13 epistles, letters, in the New Testament and he wrote letters to one church, for example, the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, so sometimes he

only writes to one church. At other times, he writes to a group of churches, Galatians, for example and Peter wrote, 1 Peter, to a group of churches. There are other letters in the New Testament that are written to one person, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon. There are other letters in the New Testament that are written to a large group of individuals, that would be James and Jude. There are other letters in the New Testament that are written to a certain ethnic group, and that would be the book of Hebrews. 1 John is what we call a general epistle in that it's written to a general audience. It's not written to one person. It's not written to one church. It's not written to a group of churches. It's not written to a certain ethnic group. It's an open-ended to all believers. So there are eight general epistles in the New Testament. This is one of those general epistles. It has a general readership.

Now, to try to bring this into focus a bit as to who the "you" is, the original readers, it most likely refers to Christians in Asia Minor because that's where John was in the latter years of his life. Remember he wrote, he was the recorder or the secretary for the seven letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation. Those are in Asia Minor and when he is released from the Isle of Patmos, his ministry is carried out in Asia Minor and you can get a map and look that up after the study's over, and so most probably he's addressing this initially to churches generally in Asia Minor, and also that's where this heresy of Gnosticism that he is addressing was so prevalent.

So the reader's identified, "to you who believe in the name of the Son of God." So this is addressed to believers, obviously. What I want to bring to your attention is this word "believe." Do you see "believe" there? It's in the present tense and the active voice. That's what we call parsing a verb. And the precision of the Greek language is so beautiful because of the verbs, that we can parse these verbs. Now the significance of it being in the present tense, "you who believe," is that it really could be best translated, "you who are believing," and why that's important is this belief here is not referring to just a moment in time in the past when you were converted, because if you were really converted, you would still be believing. No believer will ever become an unbeliever and so true saving faith perseveres, what we call the perseverance of the saints. Well, there's a persevering faith. It may weaken at times, it may wobble at times, but it will never implode and go away. If you're a believer right now, you will be a believer for the rest of your life and you will be a believer on your deathbed.

I remember when I was in high school, I was aware I was a believer and I was aware that most of the guys on the football team probably were not a believer, and most of the other guys in the other sports with me were probably not a believer. And so I used to have this thought in my head, "What if when I come to the end of my life, I'm not a believer, and they have become a believer, and the whole thing's flip-flopped and so what good does it do me to be a believer now if I'm not a believer at the end?" Well, I had no idea of the eternal security of the believer, and I had no idea of even this nuance, that saving faith is always believing and that's what is seen in this, "you who are believing." Not just once looking back to the past when somebody prayed a prayer, if that was real, you're going to be continuing to believe every step of the way.

Now, it's also in what we call the active voice, which means it's a very active faith. It's not a passive faith. You're not sitting back as a spectator watching other people live the Christian life. You're not up in the stands, you're not up in the grandstands just watching other Christians live their Christian life. No, if you're a real believer, you're down on the field, you're in the game, and you're running the race, and you're fighting the good fight, and you have a dynamic, energized, active faith that's real, and it's working in your life, okay?

So, "to you who believe," then he says, "in the name of the Son of God." Name represents all that a person is, and I was just trying to think of an example. I thought of John MacArthur. If I just say John MacArthur, there's a flood of thoughts that come to our mind about his life, the integrity of his life, the exposition of the Scripture, the soundness of theology, the ministries that have sprung up under him. When you say the name of someone, it encompasses the whole of who they are. When I think of John MacArthur, I think of his sons. I think of his grandchildren. Well, those who believe in the name of the Son of God, name represents all that Christ is and to just pare that down where we can easily get our hands on it, it refers to the person and work of Jesus Christ. The person and work of Jesus Christ.

Now, under person, there's two things to say: eternal deity and sinless humanity combined in one person, the God-man, such that he is fully God and fully man, or as the ancient confession says, truly God and truly man. For someone to be a believer in Jesus Christ, you must believe that he's the Son of God and the Son of man. You may not be a systematic theologian, you may not be able to walk through all the specifics of the hypostatic union of Christ and humanity/deity, but you know there's something different about him, that he lived a sinless and perfect life and he was the Son of God, he was God in human flesh. You knew that when you were converted. You didn't just believe in some intellectual vacuum of there was nothing really to hang your hook on. No, you believed that he was the sinless Son of God and he was God in human flesh in order to be saved.

So that's the person of Christ. Then the work of Christ, there's two things: his perfect obedience and his substitutionary death. Perfect obedience. He lived a sinless and perfect life. He lived the life that I could never live in my place in order to secure my right standing under the law. He kept the law and his perfect obedience to the law is what is now imputed to me in the act of justification by faith. And then his substitutionary death. And we could obviously throw in his bodily resurrection as well. So you have to believe in a living Savior. A Savior who's still dead doesn't save anyone and so we believe that the cross is empty. We don't focus upon Jesus hanging upon a cross anymore, as it is in the Catholic Church. Jesus is always on a cross. or he's a little baby and he's under Mary's authority, one of the two. No, the cross is empty and he has grown up and he has died for our sins, he's been raised from the dead and he is seated at the right hand of the throne of God on high.

So that's what it is to believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in order to have true assurance of salvation you have to understand these very basic truths, that what I just walked us through, and in the book of 1 John, I just quickly cataloged the key verses that

talk about what Jesus accomplished while he was here upon the earth. And if you want to follow with me, you can, or you can just jot down the references, but 1 John 1 verse 7, "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." When I was converted at age 17, I didn't know everything that I know now about the death of Christ upon the cross, but I sure understood that he washed away my sins, and he cleansed me from the guilt and the stain of sin.

And then in verse 9 of chapter 1, it says, "He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I could understand that.

And then in 1 John 2 verse 2, "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins." Now, I had to have someone explain to me what his propitiation means, and the word means satisfaction, it means appeasement, that the death of Christ satisfied the wrath of God that was upon me. That wrath, instead of falling on me, it was transferred to Jesus, and Jesus absorbed the wrath of God that was due me as he died upon the cross. That is why there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

And then in verse 12 of 1 John 2, "your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake." And I had to look up at some point, what does the word forgiveness mean? And what it means is to send away, that my sins have been sent away from me and sent far, far away. They're no longer on me. They were laid upon Christ and Christ took them all away from me. So you have to have the assurance of salvation, you have to know this. You can't be lingering, replaying your past and wondering could God ever forgive me? The answer is he has forgiven all of your sins, all of them. You have a clean slate with God.

And then in chapter 3, verse 8, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil." And the works of the devil was to bring condemnation upon me, and he's the accuser of the brethren, and Christ by his death has destroyed the works of the devil, my archenemy.

And then chapter 4 verse 10, he "sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." And then verse 14, "the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world."

So that's just a quick survey or walk through 1 John, which we've already looked at in detail, but to have assurance of salvation, you must be deeply convinced what the Bible says is true, that in the death of Christ, all of your sins have been forgiven, your soul has been cleansed and washed clean before God, and it is the Holy Spirit who brings the reality of this home to your heart, that you are persuaded of the truthfulness of this. Now, there's a third part of this verse that I want us to look at and the third heading is the purpose stated. Here's why this letter was written, but it really becomes the third basis for our assurance of salvation. One is the written word of God. Two is the work of the Son of God. This third aspect here is a new, changed, transformed life, that as you see God transforming your life, you have the assurance that God is in your life and that God is at work in your life, okay?

So let's look at this. The verse ends, "so that," that introduces what we call a purpose clause, here's the purpose for which it was written, "you," referring to believers, "may know." Now let's just stop right here for a moment. This word "know," as I told you at the beginning, is the key word in the book of 1 John. If you remember any one single word from our study on 1 John, you must remember the word know, K-N-O-W. It is found 40 times in these five chapters, 40 times. That's a staggering number. And there are two different Greek words that are translated for know, and I'm not going to go into that, all of that but this word here stresses a full assurance, that you would have a present certainty that you have eternal life. And ultimately, this is a work on the inside of you by the Holy Spirit to persuade you that you have received eternal life. And at the end of chapter 4, verse 24, it says, "we know by this that He abides in us by the Spirit whom He has given us."

So we "may know that you have," and I just want to bring this to your attention, this word "have" is a very strong word and it means to lay hold of something, to hold something very fast in the grip of your hand, that you have, you have laid hold of eternal life. Now, we need to talk about what this means, eternal life. We have addressed it before, but I want to drill down with this a little bit more. This is uniquely two words that are used by the Apostle John; you don't find it in Matthew, Mark, or Luke, except on rare occasion. Eternal life is part of John's vocabulary and the word "eternal" literally means pertaining to the age to come. It's another word for eternity, pertaining to the age to come, and the word "life" indicates that you possess a state of vitality and animation that is dynamic and makes you alive unto God, and when you put the two together, it says that you and I have the life of the age to come right now because look at the word "have." It doesn't say "will have." Like if I could just make it to heaven and slide into home plate and the umpire in the sky will call me safe, then they'll give me eternal life. If I can just hold out and get into heaven, then I can close the door behind me and I'm safe. Well, there's no security in a place. The devil fell from heaven. A third of the angels fell from heaven. Just because you get into heaven doesn't mean you'll never leave heaven. There have been plenty who have fallen out of heaven, Lucifer and the fallen angels that have become demonic spirits. No, your security is not in a place, it's in a person, it's by being in the Lord Jesus Christ. But what I want you to see here is the word "have, that you have." It's in the present tense. Right now, you have eternal life. You're not waiting to receive it at the end of the race, like it's the reward at the end of the race. You have it right now.

Now, eternal life has a two-fold meaning and this is really important in having assurance of salvation. Number one, eternal life means a new quality of life that you have never experienced before. It means literally, as I've already said, the life of the age to come. So it means that the life that you will have in eternity has already been deposited within you. Heaven has come to you before you ever go to heaven. This means that you have the life of God within you, that you have a life unlike anything this world could ever give you. It's unlike anything the world of business could ever give you. It's unlike anything the world of sports could ever give you. It's unlike anything the world of marriage could ever give you. It's unlike anything the world of politics or education could ever give you. It's an other world life that has come down from God upon his throne of grace. It's an out of this world life that is now inside of you while you're in this world. And so eternal life

lives in us now before we live in eternity. Eternal life has come to us now before we step into eternity. We have a quality of life now that belongs to the world to come. Let that sink in. We have a foretaste of the life to come now while we are in this life.

So that's what it means to have eternal life. Now, I want to spell that out, flesh that out a little bit more. Eternal life is new life, it is spiritual life while you're in this physical world. It is spiritual life while you're in this physical world. It is new life while you're in this old world. It is resurrection life while you're living in this perishing dead world. It is supernatural life while you're living in this natural world. It is heavenly life while you're living in this earthly existence. It is the life of God in the soul of a man. Eternal life is abundant life, which means, the word "abundant" means exceeding the limit, literally beyond the number. It means you have more resources in this life than you could ever use or that you will ever need. Eternal life is dynamic life. It empowers you to live the life that God has called you to live and you can't live the Christian life without eternal life inside of you or you would just end up being a Pharisee or just going through the empty motions of religiosity, you would just be an unconverted church member, you would just be spiritually dead. But when you have eternal life, okay, now I can live the Christian life because I have this dynamic of life inside of me. It is a quality of life that only God can give.

Now, let me drill down a little bit more on this and flesh this out. Eternal life produces a changed life, unlike the life that you were living before you were born again. Eternal life produces a Christ-like life. It produces a godly life. It produces a holy life, unlike the unholy life you previously lived. It produces a righteous life unlike the unrighteous life you were living. It produces a loving life unlike the selfish life you once lived. It produces a radically different life. It produces a God-honoring, God-glorifying life. It is a life completely unlike how you previously existed. That is eternal life. It's a new quality of life.

Now, that's the first aspect. The second will be very quick. The second is what we normally think of when we think of eternal life, which is the duration of this life, that it will go on through eternity, that it will last throughout all of time, and it will extend through all eternity future. It will never end. It's a never ending life. And that's the secondary meaning, but it's not the primary meaning and so the good news is that this new, spiritual, supernatural, God-honoring, God-glorifying, holy life that has been given to us, it's not for a season. This isn't a fad we're going through. It's not for a particular part of our life. It will go on forever throughout the rest of our days here upon this earth, and it will go on throughout all eternity future. And so eternal life means there is a present reality and a future certainty. There is a present reality of knowing God and experiencing the life of God now, and then there's this future certainty that you will live with God forever. Forever.

I don't know that you and I could ever hear anything any better than this, quite frankly. And so the assurance of our salvation, back to the big idea of what we're talking about, the assurance of our salvation is seeing this new life being worked out in my life. It's seeing this change of life, this transformation of life, this new experience of life. As I see



my life growing spiritually, that is assurance of salvation that God is in my life and that God is at work in my life. And so that becomes really the ultimate acid test, because you could believe in the inerrancy of Scripture and be lost, and you could be doctrinally sound about the death of Christ and be lost, but to have a changed life, that's the ultimate validation, the ultimate stamp of assurance that God is in your life. It goes deeper and goes far beyond just believing that the Bible is the word of God, and just believing that the death of Christ was a sufficient satisfaction of the wrath of God. I can't fake a changed life. That reality is God is in me, and God is at work in me.

So, this is the basis of assurance of salvation. It's based upon the foundation of the authority of Scripture, "These things I have written unto you." It's based upon an understanding of what Christ did at the cross, he has forgiven us and cleansed us of all of our sins. And it is ultimately confirmed by this new life that God is working out, that God has placed in me and God is working it out in me. Philippians 2 verse, I guess it's 13, "For God is at work within you both to will and to work for His good pleasure." He's not doing that in unbelievers. He's not doing that in unsaved church members. He's only doing that in those who truly have received eternal life.

Okay, that's the best I've got, guys. That's the best I've got. So, before I open it up, just for 30 seconds, have you believed in the name of the Son of God? Have you committed your life to Christ? Have you entrusted your soul to him? If you never have, now's the time to do it. You could never be in a better situation, in a better environment, for you to commit your life to Christ, for you to cross the line, for you to enter through the narrow gate, than to do so this very second, right in the middle of this Bible study. And so it's between you and God so we're not going to ask you to stand up, raise your hand, sign a card. We're not going to ask you to stand in the corner. It's in your heart right now. You could commit your life to Christ if you've never done that. And for those watching by live stream, wherever you are around the world, whatever country you're in, whatever continent you're on, "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." And I can't do that for you, and nobody else in this room can do that for you, and your parents, your friends, nobody else, that's between you and God, and that's the trigger you've got to pull. That's the decision you must make, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you've never done that, wherever you are watching this, do so this moment. And Jesus says, "Him who comes unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." He will receive you with open arms, if you will come with humble saving faith.

Okay, let me open it up for questions, input, thoughts. We've got a microphone, I think, to go around. We've got 13 minutes, something like that to chase any fly balls. You know the hard thing about golf as compared to baseball, you have to go play your foul balls. You've got to find them and then go play them.

Okay, Kent, you got anything there?

Kent. One question. Can you hear me okay?

Is that on? Yeah, Paul, is it on? Okay. Yeah, now it's on.

Kent. All right, so a question here came in.

We always turn his mic off. He hadn't figured that out yet. That's fine. That's fine.

Kent. Do teachings such as on the new perspective of Paul, you might... popularly propagated by NT Wright, undermine this doctrine?

Yes, it does, completely.

Kent. You want to explain what that is?

Yeah, NT Wright is a British theologian. He's totally, completely wrong and he's known for, unfortunately, the false teaching that on justification by faith alone, that you're not justified until you stand before the Lord on the last day, and that's just like as erroneous as erroneous can be. He says some good things but at this point he's dead wrong and so it's kind of like a clock that doesn't even run is right twice a day. And so he just happens to be right on this one, or wrong on this one. So it's kind of odd. Wright is wrong. No, you receive eternal life now. That's clearly what this text says that we looked at today. And you are justified now. There's now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And here's a great verse, Romans 5 verse 1. Therefore, listen to the verb tense, "having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." So it's a transaction that has already taken place the moment you believe.

So thank you for that, Kent. You got anything else?

Kent. Well, here's another question, should we evaluate everyone we meet on whether they're saved or not?

Well, I think that probably crosses the line just to evaluate everybody. I meet a lot of people. I mean, you know, so I can't go around doing that and you have to get to know a person. And so if you just initially meet someone, you know, you're not some mystic where you have some kind of insight into that person's life just in meeting them someplace. I mean, you have to get to know them a bit. Sometimes you can tell by what they're saying and how they say it that that's just really off target but I don't think we need to be so tied up into evaluating everyone, every single person. I mean, look around this room, there's no way I could evaluate every single person in this room. I can't go home with you. I can't go to work with you. I can't eavesdrop on your phone conversations. I can't gather enough information. I just think that's like trying to drive your car with the emergency brake on. I mean, you're just not going to be getting down the road. And you really need to evaluate yourself first and foremost. That's the deal on a Pharisee. He's an expert on everyone else's life, but he's blind to his own life. But we should show discernment as we get to know people and they may be someone we need to share the gospel with, and so that would be naive of us to think, oh, okay, well, they're a Christian because they showed up at the Bible study. No, I mean, I can walk us through stories of people who've been converted while I've been, you know, ministering that it is probably

like the last person in the world you would think needed to be saved. And here's another thing too, when Jesus said, "One of you will betray Me," they didn't all stand up and say, "Oh, it's Judas, we knew it all along." They said, "Is it me, Lord?" So we don't always know where someone is. We will know them by their fruit but you've got to be around them a while to be a fruit inspector.

OK, Kevin. I see that hand back there, Kevin. What are you doing at that table back there? You're usually up here with the first string.

Kevin. What encouragement could you offer, I want to say a new believer, but a person that's kind of trying to get into believing, but has kind of traveled the road before and seems to always kind of find a reason not to believe or, you know, like what type of encouragement or Scripture specifically could you give that person?

Yeah, no, that's a great question, Kevin. I think someone who has kind of believed and then they're looking for reasons not to believe and then they come back to a point where they kind of believe but then they fall back, I've got reasons not to believe, is evidence that they really have never heard a clear presentation of the truth and they've never made a firm commitment to Christ because Christ holds us fast. He keeps us. It's not us holding onto him, it's him holding onto us ultimately. And so I don't know the situation and the person enough to be able to accurately give a specific answer so this is just a broad general answer. I'm going to say that they haven't had a clear understanding of the truth of the gospel and have not truly been convicted of their sin to the point that they surrender their life to Christ in a decisive way and they want to fall back. Well, I mean, to believe in Christ, I mean, it's like being pregnant. You either are or you aren't and if you're pregnant, you don't kind of fall back to whatever. I mean, it's an all or nothing deal. So it's the truth. They need a better grasp of the truth and why they desperately need to believe this truth. You're not going to let go. If you really understand the wages of sin is death and I need to be delivered from this death, I'm not going to let go of that.

But anyway, thank you for the question very much. Someone else, I saw another hand someplace. Okay. Yeah.

Speaker. So, so the conversation about NT Wright. He's brought this up because I've been thinking about this a lot. You said a phrase that I specifically say about other people, but like more extreme, like like Michael Todd, Transformation Church, you know but I say a broken clock is right twice today because he happens to be right sometimes instead of happens to be wrong sometimes, but how do we differentiate between people who are just in error, who are like messing, they're sloppy with the word of God from the pulpit and like false teachers and wolf in sheep's clothing?

That's a great question. That's a great question. Kent likes that question. That's a great question. Well, a false teacher is a heretic and a heretic is wrong on the essentials of the faith, which you have to believe in order to go to heaven. You can be wrong on a second or third level area of doctrine and still go to heaven. You could believe in, for example, infant baptism and still go to heaven. I think it's wrong, but you'll still go to heaven. R. C.

Sproul is in heaven. That's not an essential part of the gospel message. There's a difference between the substance of the gospel and the sign of the gospel. You can be wrong about the sign and go to heaven, but you cannot be wrong about the substance of the gospel and go to heaven. So it comes down to the person and work of Christ and you would also have to have a basic understanding of sin in order to see your need to believe in the person and work of Christ. So, it concerns the heart of the gospel and there are various secondary and third level and maybe even fourth level areas of doctrine that you could be wrong in, but you're not a deceiver concerning the gospel.

Yeah, that's a great question. I'm really glad that you asked that. Thank you for asking that. Who else we got over there? Yeah, okay.

Speaker. Hi. I wanted to ask you, how do you harmonize the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints with the possibility of shipwrecking your faith from an external perspective?

How do I harmonize the perseverance of the saints with what?

Speaker. The possibility of shipwrecking your faith, like Demas?

Yeah, well, he wasn't a believer. So a true believer is not going to shipwreck his faith. That's someone who professes Christ but does not possess Christ. I mean, that would be like Judas. That would be like King Saul. I mean, that would be like the first three soils in Matthew 13. That would be like just, you know, the five foolish virgins.

Speaker. I'm thinking more of an external perspective in regards to giving advice or how to handle other people's faith in regards to, I want to help you being assured of your faith, but on the other hand, I want to give you warnings in regards to the possibility that your faith might not be genuine in itself. How would you practically would advise somebody in that?

Yeah, I would tell them to watch today's Bible study. Yeah, I mean, we just spelled it out as clear as a bell. I would have them read the book of 1 John and tell me, do you see all of these evidences in your life? A new obedience to the word of God, a desire to obey the word of God? Do you see a decreasing love of the world? Do you see an increasing love for the world to come? Do you see your prayers answered? Do you love the brethren? Do you see spiritual growth in your life from an infant to a young man to an elder in the faith? Do you see these things in your life? Because if you have genuine faith and if you're truly born again, this will be true across the board in your life. You can't fake a transformed life.

Kent, what do you got there? I see the microphone up. It's in a ready position.

Kent. There is a great book that everybody needs to get, if they can, called "Settle the Question of Eternal Life, Absolutely Sure," that I've got, that I got many years ago written by you. It's on Amazon. Can you... I mean, I hate to... I get no piece of this, but I think you ought to... I mean, maybe you give me a little bit, but I think you ought to

mention it because it is a great... it is a great book if people want to and you wrote that a long time ago.

I wrote that book 20 years ago. Yeah. It's called "Absolutely Sure." And I pastored a church, a huge Southern Baptist Church, that was largely an unconverted church and after I'd been there for a year, I realized that these people don't even know the Lord. And so I preached Romans, they hated Romans. I preached the gospel of John, they're ready to tar and feather me. I remember I walked into the office one day and there were a stack of cassette tapes, like three stacks this high, and it was of my sermon that I preached, you know, the day before on Sunday, and I preached that Jesus came unto his own and his own received him not and I just talked about why his own received him not, how you could be religious but lost, how religious people would not receive the Lord Jesus Christ. I mean, people were just furious with me for questioning, you know, their salvation. So, I preached 1 John, what we've been going through. In one year, I saw 100 adult church members converted in one year. I had one 70-year-old deacon converted in a deacon's meeting while he's sitting next to me. It was the most remarkable thing that I've ever seen and so I put them in the baptistery and have them give their testimony, and people are trying to sort this out. "Well, this guy's been in our church for 40 years. What do you mean you just got saved?"

So I wrote, the publisher says, so what's going on in your ministry and going on in your life that would be worth, you know, writing about? And I said, "Well, I said, we're just having so many church people converted. I mean, like dramatically converted that I could write about that." So I wrote, it's not the in-depth study we've been doing here on 1 John, and I couldn't go in depth with that church and hold their attention. I mean, there's no way I can parse verbs for them and so I'm kind of having to hydroplane and almost like baby feed, you know, the book of 1 John, just enough for people to look at themselves and say, "Well, if this is what it is to be a Christian, then I've never been a Christian." Hello. Now we're getting somewhere.

So anyway, I, I guess you can still get it. I think they only...

Kent. No, it's right here. It's on Amazon.

Is it on Amazon?

Kent. Yeah, I just looked it up.

I think they print it on demand and there's been no demand, okay? So that's why they're not sitting in a warehouse someplace.

Kent. No, it says, they deliver it by tomorrow if you want it.

Oh, my word. Revival is coming.

Kent. It also says...

Amazon got converted.

Kent. It also says I purchased it in 2010.

Is that right?

Kent. Yeah, but it's a great book. I would suggest everybody order if they'd like it.

Yeah. Well, thank you, Kent, for bringing that up.

Kent. It's fine. We'll settle the.

Just put that on my tab here at Herb's house. We've had visitors come and I'll be nice to them and I'll walk them over and say, give them a free cup of coffee and I'll say, just put that on my tab. And Kent goes, you don't have a tab here. Okay, so it goes on Kent's tab.

So, okay, guys, thank you for the questions. Great study. I love you guys. It's going to kill me not to be with you for some short, short period of time, but I go on a family vacation at the end of June and first part of July. I go to Master's Seminary and teach for like two to two and a half weeks in July and then I go back to Master's Seminary and I teach first week in August or the end of July, first of August. So I just have some things I've got to take care of but my heart is here and my priority is here and so please be here next Thursday morning, and then we'll be off for just a little bit. So I don't want you to miss this, and it's on prayer, and we all need to be encouraged in the matter of prayer. So that's what we'll be looking at. So, having said that, let me just close in a word of prayer. I hope to see any or all of you across the street on Sunday. I'll be in Colossians 2:4 through 8. Colossians 2:4 through 8. "As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and grounded in Him and firm and stable in your faith."

*Father, thank You for this study. Thank You for the assurance that You give to us through Your written word and understanding the death of Christ. Thank You for the changed, transformed life that You're slowly yet surely and progressively producing in us. In Jesus' name, amen.*

God bless you, men. I'll see you next Thursday morning, seven o'clock.