

1 John 4:13-16 (NKJV)

13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.

15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

Suppose you don't know that you are a believer. In that state of uncertainty you could **believe** all the promises of God toward believers. You could **know and believe** that God truly loves His children and will do wonderful things for them. You could **believe** that God has a wonderful eternity planned for these people He loves. But if you are not sure that **you are one of them**, you will be robbed of the power of all those truths. It would be like knowing that Bill Gates will give a million dollars to every person that his will lists as a beneficiary. But you don't know if your name is on the list. You cannot be certain of the payoff, of the benefit. So it will have little impact on your life. You can see why John wants these people he loves to have assurance of salvation. Assurance is not a luxury in the Christian life. It is a necessity. How will you **bear the difficult price** we sometimes pay for being a believer if you have no certainty you will **receive the benefit**? Assurance of **salvation is also** the assurance that **any price you pay for your Lord will be "worth it."** There is no excuse not to have this assurance. We are **supposed** to have it. And we **need** it. How can we have joy if we are uncertain of the benefit? John wants us to **know it** deep down in our souls. He wants us to know with confidence that **we abide in Christ and Christ abides in us**. Are you sure that you are a believer? You can be. And even more, you **should** be if you truly are. And this morning's text is just one more in the 1 John arsenal of **being sure**.

Now, how do you see the Christian life? We have had a steady diet of what the Christian life is all about. Mike laid very good theological foundations for those of us who remember his ministry. And we have hopefully continued in

that path. But you know what? Humans have good forgetters? We forget even the most important things.

The command to remember is, I think, the second most frequent command in the New Testament. Why is that? Because it is one of the most common human attributes.

It is easy for us to lapse into **bad theology** in **practice** and **experience**, even when we can **quote good theology** for a test. What is salvation? What does it do?

Is the gist of the Christian life to give up favorite sins and to go to church? Do we think that this is the essence of faith? Have we “**arrived**” when that is accomplished.

No. Look at what our text says.

13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

Our Christian life cannot be **defined** by **increased morality**. It does produce that result. But that does not describe the **essence** of it, just the **result** of it. If salvation were only about morality, if it created better law abiding citizens, then we could reach that goal in the flesh. We have the human capacity to improve our behavior morally. We could never reach perfection, which is what God’s standard is. But we **could** improve in not doing bad things and doing more good things. But that is not the **essence** of the Christian life.

Look at the text. We **abide in Christ**. We live in **relationship** with Christ. Christ lives in **relationship with us**. And how do we know? **Spirit**. God gives us His Spirit in our lives. And that Spirit cannot exist without exhibiting itself in changes.

The Christian life is about SPIRIT. Pnuema.

OK how about theology? Is the Christian life simply believing and agreeing to a set of tenets, as a theological list of things we believe. If we see that we agree with the **Westminster catechism**, are we now all good?

No. What we see described in our text is a **relationship**. We are in Christ. Christ is in us. While good doctrine is essential in the Christian life, just like moral actions, they are not adequate to **describe** the Christian life. It is **more** than **doing** the right things. It is **more** than **believing** the right things. It is about being in **relationship with Christ**. And we know all this because we have the Holy Spirit in us.

Now there is one evidence that we have the Holy Spirit that John has already discussed at length. It is **love**. If we love other believers, we can be confident that we have the Holy Spirit in us.

Galatians 5:22-26 (NKJV)

²² **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,**

²³ **gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.**

Many scholars look at the text and say that there is only one fruit described here. It is love. Everything else is an extension of that single fruit. So how do you know if you have the Spirit? Love. We have said many times up to this point that love for brothers may be the best convincing evidence that we are truly children of God. And this is supported by many verses throughout the New Testament.

But since this list does not end and the word love, we need to look at the rest of it.

joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

²³ **gentleness, self-control.**

Among other things, what this list represents is a **picture of Christ**. He was **all these things** on our behalf. And we will take on His family trait if we have the same Spirit in us. It has to be that way.

Do you have **joy**? Do you have a deep seated happiness that runs as a current underneath all the other loss and sorrow you might feel? Does it break to the surface at times as mirth that makes us want to dance around the yard and shout hallelujah. That is what Biblical Joy looks like sometimes.

Do you have **peace**? Even when the circumstances of your life become turbulent and difficult, do you have peace knowing that **God has it covered**. Are you **longsuffering** with the consequences of the sins of other believers? Are you **kind** toward fellow believers.

Is there a **goodness** in your life that does not look like how you would naturally respond?

Are you walking in a way that the only reason **for it** is that you believe God will make it worthwhile. That is **faith**.

Are you **gentle**, looking to provide that which the hearer **needs** to grow **as opposed to** the **harshness** they might **deserve** based on their actions?

Can you **control yourself** when beset with passions or feelings or desires to do things that are contrary to God's word? Do your passions determine your day or does your walk with Christ determine your day?

If you see these things in your life, you can be confident that the Holy Spirit is doing supernatural things in your life. You can know you have Pneuma. You can know you have the Holy Spirit.

OK, how else?

How else do I know if I have the HS?

Philippians 3:18-21 (NKJV)

18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:*

19 *whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.*

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Look at this passage carefully. The enemies of the cross serve their selfish desires. And look at their mindset. They set their mind on earthly things. If you were to put a meter to their thoughts they would continually register in the **here and now** zone.

Where are your interests? At the end of the day, what wins your attention and affection?

Are you absorbed with the world and what is going on in the world? Do current events and current trends and current entertainment and current life circumstances rule your life? Is your life primarily shaped by the stuff of the "here and now"? Are you emotions ruled by the circumstances of this life? Is your life changed by the changing circumstances you are facing? Is your mind primarily dwelling and responding to the here and now? Are you anchored to your circumstances in such a way that when **they** change **you** change? If they are **good** you have **hope**. If they are **bad** you **lose** hope? Or are you dancing to a different drummer? Do you have a rock solid trust in something that cannot change? Are you continually, in your thinking, reorienting to the truths of Christ? Are you living in a bold and vibrant hope where you **look forward** to all the things that Christ has **promised** to you? While no one does this perfectly, how would those looking on describe your life? Would they say it ebbs and flows with the changes in circumstances? Or would they say that it clings to the truths of Christ no matter how the earthly things change?

If the Spirit is **in you**, your primary life driving focus will become **the future** and not the **here and now**. While we live in the here and now, (and the blessing of the here and now at God's hand are amazing at times), the anchor is still continually pointing to the future. The **anchor** is the character of God that we can enjoy now while looking forward to the promises of God that He will provide in the future. And no current circumstance can undermine that.

Why? Because the **Spirit** of God who gave the **Promises** of God is **in** the **child** of God.

Here we see a similar thing.

Romans 8:1-11 (NKJV)

1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

2 *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*

3 *For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,*

4 *that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

5 *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.*

6 *For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.*

7 *Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.*

8 *So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

9 *But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*

10 *And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.*

11 *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*

We see here that if we have the Spirit, we walk in it. There is a difference. We are no longer fixated on here and now. That is carnal. That fixation will not submit to God. It can't. It makes no sense. Success in the grabbing of **every pleasure this life has to offer** is **contrary** to the success in **grabbing the benefits of eternity**. Christ calls us to take up a cross and follow Him for the benefit that would be gained both now and later. But no one picks up a cross, a means of death to one's self, to gain a benefit in **this life**. The cross is not a means of **extending** or **promoting** self rule. It is a means of **ending** it.

Flesh lives to please flesh.

Spirit lives to please God.

And if we have the Holy Spirit in us, He is working in us to please God. And we are learning to set our minds, not on the here and now, but on that which is from God. Our focus moves from the natural to the supernatural. We become spiritually minded.

Do you see that happening in your life? If so, that is a solid evidence of new life. Flesh will not produce that. Only a miracle will.

Next

Galatians 5:16-17 (NKJV)

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

Do you experience a battle in you? Do you find it is almost like two of you fighting inside your mind? Congratulations. That is another sign of the Holy Spirit's presence. We might not **like** that evidence. We might prefer a more pleasant one. But if you have a battle going on, that means there are **two sides** at war. One side would not have a battle. The fact that a battle is going on is a **good sign**. It is evidence that you are in the Christian life. We are told to **expect** this battle as a Christian. We sometimes think we should be **better** than this. We should be a good enough Christian that this battle should not happen. But there is nowhere in scripture where Christianity is defined that way, at least not on this side of eternity. If we are **in Christ**, we are at war against flesh, the world and the devil. But good news. It is a sign of spiritual life. Why else would it bother you that you are doing something wrong that no one but God would know about?

Here is another evidence of the Holy Spirit's work.

Revelation 3:19 (NKJV)

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

The Holy Spirit was given partly to convict of sin. John 16:8

Do you have a sense of sin? Do things bother you for one primary underlying reason, that the thing goes against what God says? Maybe he says to do something that you have not done or He prohibits something that you have done. And that bothers you.

There is something different in the regret over sin in a believer than in an unbeliever.

Sin does not primarily bother a believer because he is afraid of **getting caught**. Most everyone is bothered by being caught doing something that is

clearly wrong. We don't want to face the consequences. But a believers repentance goes deeper than that.

Sin does not primarily bother a believer primarily because it is an **embarrassment** to him personally. There are lots of sins we regret because they put ourselves in a horrible light and when we look back on those sins they are a humiliation to us. We demeaned ourselves in ways we would not want others to know. We certainly all know that experience. Our sin can be tremendously embarrassing. But our repentance has a deeper source than that.

Sin does not primarily bother a believer because it has **caused harm** to others. Lots of criminals regret the harm they have done to other humans. Yes, we regret that deeply. And without doubt, our sin often harms others deeply. But our repentance goes deeper than that.

The conviction of God in a believer bothers us primarily because we have sinned against God. The best test is when no one knows. We won't get caught. It may not have even visibly hurt anyone. But we still cannot live with the sin. We are driven to God to confess in and repent of it. We cannot stand to have it in our lives. Because it ruins our fellowship with God. And it is an offense against the one our heart loves.

While we may hate that experience because it represents **one more failure**, that is supernatural evidence that the Holy Spirit is in us. There is no explanation for it otherwise. Why else would we care about sin that we can get away with?

Are you noticing that assurance comes in the most unlikely places. This is encouraging. We do not need to give up, just because we may not be doing as well as we should be. Even when we fail we can see God's convicting hand in our lives. We can know He is at work. We can know the Holy Spirit is active in our lives. And that should be the proof that we should run to Him and not away from Him when we have sinned against Him.

Next

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹ But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

¹⁰ But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

This is actually talking about the Gospel. The Spirit has revealed to believers what God did in sending Christ for our sins. That is what He had prepared for us. This is what the Spirit taught every believer. So if that has gripped you in

a way that continues to **bear fruit** in your life, you can know that the Holy Spirit is in you. The fact that you **believe in Christ** is evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence.

Next

Philippians 2:12-13 (NKJV)

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Do you notice things in your life that you cannot easily explain from a naturalistic, here and now, no supernatural involved, perspective? That too is evidence of the Holy Spirit's work. If you are a believer, God is willing and doing for His good pleasure through you. That means that strange things are likely to happen. Have you ever had someone tell you that **God used you** in their life in a way that you had no knowledge of, nor could you have ever planned it?

Do you find that God leads you to contemplate a scripture that you **then use** in a conversation shortly after?

Do you find that God does not allow you to get away with certain sins?

Do you end up reading the exact solution to a problem you have been grappling with?

Does God send you things right when you need them?

Do you find that, even when you try, you cannot shake off the Holy Spirit's conviction or leading?

Again, that is evidence of salvation. God is working to **will and to do** for His good pleasure.

I can look at many times in my life that God clearly directed me through people or His word or circumstances in ways that pleased Him. **I didn't think** of it. I surely would not have **chosen it** if given the choice. But God orchestrated His plan. I suspect we all have stories like that. Again, that is proof of salvation.

Isn't it sometimes just wonderfully surprising? If you are like me I am nearly always surprised that God would choose to use a person like me. But it is **He** who gets the credit.

And lets look at one more.

Rom 8:15 we cry Abba Father

Romans 8:14-16 (NKJV)

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

Where do you run to when you sin?

Where do you run to when you sin?

Guess what? If you actually **run to God when you sin**, that is a very good evidence that you are a believer. Do you cry out to God, **Dad, help me. Dad forgive me.** I know I have sinned. But I know you will forgive me because you love me. Please forgive me.

That is a supernatural response. When Adam and Eve sinned, they hid. They did not run to God. God sought them out or they would have been isolated. But believers who have received the Spirit of adoption **cry out**. And in their deepest need they cry out to the one who can meet their need. They cry out to God. And they do that because **God has changed their hearts.**

God has won them to Himself with His Spirit.

Do you have His Spirit this morning? Is your understanding of salvation much greater than a decision than you have made. Do you see that, if you are **in Christ**, it is a miracle of God's doing?

This is not just a change of moral practices. It does not consist of just deciding to join a Christian club. It is not signing our name to a bunch of written beliefs.

The Christian life consists of **God doing a miracle** in a person's life. And He has given us **new life**. He has placed His Spirit in our lives and He is now in us and we are now in communion with Him relationally.

And when that Spirit is present Christ changes things about us. These changes are solid evidence that our lives can no longer be explained by **the natural**. We need to start explaining things based on the work that God has done and the work that God is doing.

And praise God we can **see** that work and define it and have **confidence** because of it. Our cooperation with the Spirit's work will never be perfect. But we can be convinced of the work by its **clear evidence** in our lives. And scripture gives us a boatload of places to look. But primarily it will lead to us loving God and loving God's people and loving those who have not yet come to Him.

I hope we will consider these things this week in our pursuit of our assurance that God has truly saved us and that all of His promises are true for us.