

Assurance in Our Salvation

Sermon 10 in the 1 John Series

1 John 3:19-4:3

Jeremiah 17:9-10 -- “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*,
And desperately wicked; (incurably sick)
Who can know it?

¹⁰I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, (Heb. kidneys – innermost parts)

I. A Condemning Conscience 3:19-20

There can be a number of reasons we struggle with our conscience.

A. We are truly Guilty.

B. Other Reasons for a Condemning Conscience

1. Bad training.

To overcome false guilt we need to understand Christian Liberty.

God alone is Lord of the conscience.

Our confession makes that clear in Chapter 21 (page 681).

2. Some people are simply more prone to be introspective and melancholy than others.

3. It can be a matter of health.

4. We might find ourselves in difficult circumstances – or be simply be depressed, overwhelmed by things like – the current Covid-19 situation.

II. Assurance in the Truth 19. 21-24

A. There is a three-fold test.

1. Belief – do I really believe in Jesus?

2. Obedience – do I really desire to do what He says?

3. Love. Do I really love my fellow brothers and sisters as I should?

B. How does God use His Word to comfort us? v. 20

v. 20 – this should give us comfort.

Our hearts can excuse us too easily – but they can also condemn us too severely.

Romans 8:1 – there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

v. 21-22 -- Spurgeon quote: “He who has a clear conscience comes to God with confidence, and that confidence of faith ensures to him the answer of his prayer. Childlike confidence makes us pray as none else can. It makes a man pray for great things which he never would have asked for if he had not learned this confidence; and makes him pray for little things which a great many are afraid to ask for; because they have not yet felt toward God the confidence of children...

The man of obedience is the man whom God will hear; because his obedient heart leads him to pray humbly, and with submission, for he feels it to be his highest desire that the Lord’s will should be done. Hence it is that the man of obedient heart prays like an oracle, his prayers are prophecies, is he not one with God? Doth he not desire and ask for exactly what God intends? How can a prayer shot from such a bow ever fail to reach its target?”

v. 23 -- Often 1 John doesn’t help those with weak consciences, because the standard is set so high – but the high standard is correct, because it is not our righteousness, but His that makes us right with God. Our duty and privilege is to believe

v.24 – A “Christian” living in known unrepentant sin – and continuing in it should not have assurance. A professed Christian who is abiding in sin and has no conviction – is most likely not a Christian at all – he or she certainly isn’t abiding in Christ, through the Spirit.

III. The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error 1 John 4:1-6

Six times these verses reference those who are of God and the truth – and Six times those who are of antichrist, of the world and of error.

It’s all about Jesus. What do we need to know about Jesus?

1. He is the way the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father except through Him.
2. He is the eternal Son of God.
3. He is the second person of the Trinity – equal in power and glory with the Father.
4. He is the perfect Son of God -- who came in the flesh.
5. He is a gracious Savior to all who believe on His Name.