

Blessed Assurance

Part 4

Confident in Christ

Assurance of Salvation Comes from our Indwelling Savior

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Presented

Sunday, August 26, 2018

at

**Zion Lutheran Church
Cooperstown, ND**

by

Pastor Joshua D. Graber

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Call to Worship

Psalm 34:3

Scripture Reading

1 John 3:4-24

Sermon Text

1 John 3:6-24

(And other texts)

Praise Chorus

Blessing

Philippians 4:23

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Notes and Acknowledgments

Call to Worship

Responsive Reading

Psalm 34:3 New International Version (NIV)

*3 Glorify the Lord with me;
let us exalt his name together.*

Prayer

Scripture Reading

1 John 3:4-24 New International Version (NIV)

4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. 5 But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. 6 No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

7 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. 8 The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. 9 No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. 10 This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

11 For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. 12 Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. 13 Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 15 Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? 18 Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

19 This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: 20 If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. 21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. 23 And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 24 The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

Prayer

Illustration

"If I Knew." by Dwight L. Moody (Modified to be applicable to a contemporary audience)

Many think that assurance is not to be had while traveling through this world—they must wait till they come before the judgment seat of God to know for sure whether they are accepted or not. And some ministers preach this doctrine from their pulpits. There was a minister who, while on his way to a man's funeral, began to talk upon the subject of assurance. He said, "If I knew for certain that I was saved, this car couldn't hold me. I would have to stop immediately and jump out with great joy."

A man should be convinced that he has the gospel, before he preaches it to anyone else. How can a man successfully pull another out of the river if he too is himself drowning in it. Or how can a man lift a another out of a pit if he is confined within the same pit?! No man can preach salvation until he himself knows that he is saved.

When I was young I used to ask my mother quite frequently, "How can I know that I am saved?" I wanted to know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that when I died, I would be with my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Somewhere deep inside, I was afraid that perhaps I had missed something; maybe I had skipped a critical step or had overlooked an all-important piece that might remove me from God's favor.

I once was explaining salvation to a unbelieving man when I got to the part about Jesus dying for Him on the cross in order to remove the penalty of his sins.

"Do you believe in Jesus" I asked.

"Uh huh", the man answered.

"Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross", I questioned.

"Yes I do", the man responded.

"Do you believe that Jesus died for *you*?" I finally inquired.

The man couldn't give me an answer. Why? Because he didn't believe Jesus died for him, personally.

It's one thing to believe that Jesus died on the cross to save sinners, but it's entirely different to be humble and surrender ones self into the lot of sinners and transgressors and to believe that Jesus died for you – this is something much harder to accept.

So how can we know for sure that we are saved? How can we be assured that on that day when we stand before the Great Judge, that we will find favor with Him?

Ill let you sneak a peek into the answer: The assurance of our salvation comes from our indwelling savior.

Explanation

1: The Confirmation of our Salvation (1 John 3:6-9)

1 John 3:6-9 gives us confirmation of our salvation. Our text explains that those who live in continuous sin is not of God; yet a confirming factor of the salvation of a believer is that they are convicted by sin and turn away from those things are are in disobedience to the will of God.

To live in sin continuously is to wallow in it, like a pig wallows in the mud. To turn toward that which is against God's law again and again and again with no feelings of remorse of guilt. This is clearly the mind of one who does not have the indwelling Spirit of God.

John 16:8 tells us that the Spirit of God has come so that we may be proved wrong of our sinful lifestyles. As a result, the one who has the spirit will also desire to please the Spirit. In doing so, they will be made aware of the sin in their lives and not be able to live in it any longer. Disobedience to God will be so repulsive to the believer that they will have no choice but to turn away from it.

2: The Compassion of the Saved (1 John 3:11-18)

1 John 3:11-18 speaks of the compassion of the saved. These verses explain that a mark of every believer is the love of Christ that they share with others. Led Zeppelin once wrote a song called, "Whole Lotta Love". That should be the title for everyone who calls themselves a disciple of Christ. We as a church have a whole lotta love to give because our source of love – that is, Jesus Christ – is an everlasting well that never ends. The love of God is not the same as the love the world solicits. It isn't about satisfying the desires of your body or fulfilling the covetous lusts of the eye; nor is it a manipulation of others' trust in order to gain power and authority – but rather the love of God is unconditional and sacrificial in nature. We give of ourselves with no expectation of anything to be given back in return. It's the same love that Christ displayed on the cross as He suffered the recourse of our sin so that we could gain salvation.

3: The Confidence in the Savior (1 John 3:19-24)

1 John 3:19-24 reminds us that our confidence to enter into the presence of our Savior fully justified comes through obedience to the commands of God. And this is what God commands: to believe in the name of God's only Son, Jesus Christ and to love one another as He loves us.

This obedience, even the obedience that is required to believe, does not come from ourselves, for we understand that no good thing comes from the heart of man. The heart of man is fully corrupt and unable to yield to God, even in something as simple as belief.

C.S. Lewis has said, *"The Christian does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us."*

And the Spirit, which God gave us as a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance testifies about such things. He continually points to the wondrous work of Christ in the life of the saved. He regularly reassures us that our sins are paid in full and we have been gifted life eternal. Similar to the title of the song by Stevie Wonder, we truly are "signed, sealed, and delivered".

Application

Temptation's final category manifests itself in the desire for excess greatness. It boasts in the accomplishments of self rather than God and desires to steal away the glory and credit of the achievements of God.

Isaiah 14:12-14 New International Version (NIV)

*12 How you have fallen from heaven,
morning star, son of the dawn!
You have been cast down to the earth,
you who once laid low the nations!*
*13 You said in your heart,
“I will ascend to the heavens;
I will raise my throne
above the stars of God;
I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,
on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon.*
*14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.”*

Do these words sound familiar. They are the words of Lucifer as he sought out to lift Himself up to the glory of God Himself. And yet, all too often, we adopt these words as our own.

The great preacher and Bible teacher, Pastor Charles Stanley once said, *“No one enjoys feeling weak, whether it is emotionally, spiritually or physically. There is something within the human spirit that wants to resist the thought of weakness. Many times this is nothing more than our human pride at work. Just as weakness carries a great potential for strength, pride carries an equally great potential for defeat.”*

For the Christian, our strength is discovered and realized in our greatest weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). If we are willing to humble ourselves before God, He promises to lift us up in due time (1 Pet. 5:6). On the contrary, Scripture tells us that arrogance precedes a destruction and haughty attitude comes before a great fall (Prov. 16:18).

Application

Let's wrap things up this morning by looking at the three keys to overcoming every temptation.

1 Corinthians 10:13 New International Version (NIV)

13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

First, we must recognize the commonplace of our temptation. Remember that every enticement we face is nothing new but is common to every human on planet earth. As a result, we ought not isolate ourselves in some dark corner and attempt to be victorious alone, but instead we should seek out Godly counsel from other believers. Surround yourself with others from the church that will hold you accountable and affirm you in the message of the Gospel.

Second, we have every tool necessary to bear up under the weight of temptation. God is faithful and has given you grace upon grace (John 1:16) which is fully sufficient and capable (2 Cor. 12:9) to keep you standing upright as the waves of temptation crash down upon you. The one who has overcome the world resides inside you and has given you all you need to be overcomers with Him (John 16:33).

Thirdly, with every temptation, God provides an escape hatch. You may think that there is no other option other than to give in to your desires, but that is simply not true. In fact, the idea that there is no other way is a common lie of the devil. God promises that with every temptation He will provide a better way, a more holy way – a way of escape so that you can be victorious through His great provision.

This week, when you are beset with temptation, claim victory through God who gives you the power to be overcomers in Christ.

Prayer

Blessing

2 Corinthians 13:14 New International Version (NIV)

14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And together with one voice we proclaim, *Amen.*