

Essentials of Christianity (pt 27)
9/19/2010

Introduction _____

Good morning! What a glorious time we're going to have today. We'll spend some fruitful time digging into some theology that will challenge our hearts; we'll have a time of communion and worship; then we'll come back this evening for some more worship, food and fellowship.

For our teaching today we're going to spend our time wrapping up the subject of **soteriology: the doctrine of salvation.**

So far this has been a rather involved topic because of the many words and principles that are connected to the subject of salvation.

We have one more topic to cover under the heading of soteriology and that is **the security of the believer.**

The subject of glorification also falls into this category, but we'll cover that when we get to eschatology.

The Believers Security

All of what we've covered so far should serve the purpose of helping a Christian have the confidence of knowing their eternal state is secure. As I stated two weeks ago,

Surely God wants us to know we are saved. Certainly one of the chief reasons behind God's eternal plan of salvation is the re-establishment of fellowship between Himself and man.

The foundation of this fellowship is **assurance**.

The eternal security of the believer has been a much debated subject since the first century. What I cover today is certainly not going to settle the historical dilemma.

But I do believe there is a body of truth that born-again believers should agree upon that *IS* foundational. There is eternal security to be had; an assurance the heart can embrace and be comforted by.

To kick things off let's open our Bibles to **John 6:37-40**. Before we read let me give you a text book definition of eternal security.

The believers security is based on that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer, by which the work of divine grace that is begun in the heart is continued and brought to completion.¹

This is derived from numerous scriptural passages:

^{NAU} John 6:37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.

³⁸ "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

³⁹ "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

⁴⁰ "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

¹ Herbert Lockyer, *All the Doctrines of the Bible: A Study and Analysis of Major Bible Doctrines* (Zondervan Publishing Company, 1966).

The Lord's will is that all who He gives to the Son will be raised up. This is to provide us with assurance.

Turn to John 10:22-30: read

NAU John 10:22 At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem;

23 it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon.

24 The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me.

26 "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep.

27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

NAU Philippians 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

And there are many other passages that offer believers assurance of their salvation being brought to completion.

Since there is a lot of assurance in the Bible concerning a believers security, why is that so many professing Christians lack 100% assurance of their salvation.

Let offer *some* of the reasons why this **can** be the case.

1. Their assurance is sought through the keeping of the Law, through their own good works.

God has said,

^{NAU} Isaiah 64:6 For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

^{NAU} Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

^{NAU} Romans 3:19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;

²⁰ because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

Be it in the initial experience, or in the realm of assurance, we must always look away from **self** to **Christ**; to what was accomplished for us at Calvary.

The security of salvation is not based on what we do, but on what Christ has done.

^{NAU} Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

²¹ "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

^{NAU} Galatians 5:4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

⁵ For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

Reason 2. They have not been born again (must include this one).

Maybe the person has substituted religious ceremony for a vital experience with God.

Many have joined the church without having experienced the miracle of grace in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, “you must be born again.” And no outward ordinance of religious ceremony will suffice.

Others have seen the folly of their sinful way and have decided to live a different kind of life (w/o Christ). Morally they have definitely improved themselves, but this is NOT the new birth which leads to a positive, lasting assurance of one’s spiritual position.

3. (related to 2) No assurance because they have not dealt with the matter of sin in their lives.

Too many have sought salvation merely as a cure-all for sorrow, disappointment or frustration.

That which must be dealt with is the guilt of a soul that has broken God’s laws, and the need for reconciliation.

Not until person comes for forgiveness of sins can a person have real assurance.

NAU Acts 3:19 "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

NAU Hebrews 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

4. Lack of faith in what God says in His word.

Some are afraid to trust in the Word of God. They look within themselves to discover if they “feel” saved rather than to God’s word and its positive declaration.

They examine their conduct to assure themselves that they are living what they think is the Christian life. If their conduct is correct they have assurance; but if they discover weakness and failure their assurance is gone.

If God has been satisfied, and He has seen fit to receive us, it should be our joy to believe what we have received and to rest upon His word.²

NAU Exodus 12:12 'For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments-- I am the LORD.

¹³ 'The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

I use this to support what I’m saying because it’s important to understand that it was God’s estimate of the blood that mattered, not Israel’s.

Their role was simply to apply it and trust in it--to believe in what He said.

² Val Cleave Nathaniel M. Duffield Guy P., *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (L.I.F.E Bible College, 1987).

5. Thinking it is impossible to have assurance of salvation in this life.

Some believe we cannot know until the day of judgment. Thank God this is not true.

NAU John 5:24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

Testimony of Roman Catholic I witnessed to.

Let me address the **positive means we have for assurance of salvation** . What does the Bible teach that gives us positive assurance?

1. By the witness of the Holy Spirit.

We discussed this a couple times in this study. But let's consider a few other things about this.

When someone is born again there comes to his heart a witness that something definite has been transacted between them and God.

That this witness is a true, scriptural experience is borne out abundantly by a number of passages.

NAU Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

NAU 1 John 3:24 ... We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

What is the witness of the Spirit? How does it manifest itself? What does it feel like?

It is not easy to put into words just exactly *how* this is manifested, for it is a witness not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

This is not a matter of feelings, but the witness of a new relationship.

And so the Holy Spirit witnesses within our being when the new relationship with God becomes a reality in our life. There is a **witness** that's as real as the nose on our face.³

2. By the testimony of the Word of God. Turn to John 3:36: read

^{NAU} John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

This is a simple statement of God's truth. If you believe on the Son of God you have eternal life. After all, salvation is *of* and *from* God, and if He says I'm saved that should be enough.

It is His holiness which has been abused by my sin, so if He is satisfied then I should be too.

Sometimes we think there's merit in not presuming too much on the grace of God. We live on the edge between works and grace.

³ Val Cleave Nathaniel M. Duffield Guy P., *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (L.I.F.E Bible College, 1987).

We're afraid to let grace be grace because we're fearful of abusing it.

But what we may lack depth in, is understanding that grace is equally abused if I doubt it's efficacy⁴ in my life.

Keep in mind...

^{NAU} Hebrews 3:18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?

¹⁹ So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

Explain.

Turn to 1John 5: 9-13: read

^{NAU} 1 John 5:9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son.

¹⁰ The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.

¹¹ And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

¹² He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

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.

⁴Capacity or power to produce a desired effect.

3. By a possession of love toward the brethren.

If one loves the children of the Lord is a real proof that God has wrought a work of grace in the heart.

Turn to 1John 3:10-14: read

^{NAU} 1 John 3:10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

¹¹ For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;

¹² not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

¹³ Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

There is a real fundamental principle behind this indication of salvation. It is brought in the reference made, in these verses, to Cain and his attitude to his righteous brother Abel.

Why did Cain hate, or *not love* his brother Abel? We are told it was because his own deeds were evil and his brothers were righteous.

In other words, if Cain's works had been righteous, he would have loved his brother Abel; but because they were evil, the very presence of Abel convicted him, and made him miserable, and hatred filled his heart.

So here's the bottom line of this: one can only love the children of God when his own life has been transformed through Jesus Christ.

Otherwise, the life and experience of the Christian become a source of condemnation to his soul, and he does not enjoy the company, nor love the fellowship, of those who have been made clean through Christ.⁵

This is clearly shown in **John 3:19-21: turn to read.**

^{NAU} John 3:19 "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.

²⁰ "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

²¹ "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

When alleged Christians spend their time defending a worldly point of view and agreeing with the unsaved, and becoming irritated with Christian behavior, but sympathetic toward non-christians and their behavior--**SOMETHING IS WRONG!**

New birth is characterized by a love for Christian brethren.

^{NAU} Psalm 119:63 I am a companion of all those who fear You, And of those who keep Your precepts.

⁵ Val Cleave Nathaniel M. Duffield Guy P., *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (L.I.F.E Bible College, 1987).

4. By the desire to obey God's commandments.

Turn to 1John 2:3-6: read

NAU 1 John 2:3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

⁴ The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

⁵ but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

⁶ the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

Remember in our earlier discussions about the nature of regeneration and sanctification. If any man is in Christ he's a new creation--right?

Jesus said,

NAU John 3:8 "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

This is not a works versus grace issue. This a simple litmus test to provide assurance to the heart.

Read through the book of 1John. 1John is the assurance book. Almost the entire book is dedicated to contrasting the genuine article from the counterfeit; from distinguishing between true and false conversion; and true and false teachers.

Benefits from the **believer security**. Assurance of salvation removes the fear of death.

It will stabilize the Christian experience.

It will enable him to enjoy a positive life of prayer, giving faith that will appropriate the promises of God.

It will give him power over Satan.

It wasn't an over confidence in their security that led Israel to sin in the wilderness. The scriptures don't bear that out at all. It was a lack of confidence in God's salvation power that led them to sin.

^{NAU} Psalm 78:17 Yet they still continued to sin against Him, To rebel against the Most High in the desert.

¹⁸ And in their heart they put God to the test By asking food according to their desire.

¹⁹ Then they spoke against God; They said, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?"

²⁰ "Behold, He struck the rock so that waters gushed out, And streams were overflowing; Can He give bread also? Will He provide meat for His people?"

²¹ Therefore the LORD heard and was full of wrath; And a fire was kindled against Jacob And anger also mounted against Israel,

²² Because they did not believe in God And did not trust in His salvation.

We can conclude our time on soteriology by turning to
2Peter 1:1-11: read

