

# ASSURANCE OF OUR SALVATION (5)

## Proposed Study Outline:

- I. Introduction
- II. Biblical illustrations of assurance of one's salvation
- III. Assurance of salvation is the gold of the Reformation teaching
- IV. Foundation of the assurance of our salvation
- V. Reasons for the lack of assurance of our salvation
  - a. Reasons why God may withhold assurance temporarily
  - b. Reasons by which we cause a lack of assurance
  - c. Reasons in Satan's activity in the life of believers
- VI. Manner how to be assured of our salvation**

## **Readings from the Confessions:**

**Canons I, 12; V, 10, rej. 5**

## **Westminster Confession of Faith: Chapter XVIII Of Assurance of Grace and Salvation**

I. Although hypocrites and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favor of God, and estate of salvation (which hope of theirs shall perish): yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavoring to walk in all good conscience before Him, may, in this life, be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.

II. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith founded upon the (1) divine truth of the promises of salvation, (2) the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, (3) the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God, which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.

III. This infallible assurance does not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he be partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are

freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto. And therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; so far is it from inclining men to looseness.

IV. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, (1) by negligence in preserving of it, (2) by falling into some special sin which wounds the conscience and grieves the Spirit; (3) by some sudden or vehement temptation, (4) by God's withdrawing the light of His countenance, and suffering even such as fear Him to walk in darkness and to have no light.

Yet are they never so utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart, and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may, in due time, be revived; and by the which, in the meantime, they are supported from utter despair.

### **Introduction:**

- A. Assurance of your salvation is like being a fruitful tree bearing abundantly the fruit of the Spirit: Col. 2, 5; Romans 15:13
  
- B. Therefore it is much in adversary's interest to keep a true Christian in Doubt, struggling under lack of assurance of salvation
  - 1. The case of the doubting wife
  
  - 2. Doubts is opposed to assurance as unbelief against faith
  
- C. Personal assurance of our salvation is like a growing conviction

D. All Scripture verses mentioning *assurance*

1. De 28:66 And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have **none assurance** of thy life:
2. Isa 32:17-18 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and **assurance for ever**. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in a sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.
3. Ac 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given **assurance** unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.
4. Col 2:2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of **the full assurance of understanding**, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;
5. 1Th 1:5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and **in much assurance**; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.
6. Heb 6:11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the **full assurance of hope** unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.
7. Heb 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in **full assurance of faith**, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

**VI. Manner of *how to be assured of your salvation*: Canons I, 12; V, 10, rej.**

**A. Be active in seeking to obtain it: Hebrews 6:11-12; 2 Peter 1:10**

1. Brooks: *Ah, Christians, were your grace more active, it would be more visible; and were your grace more visible, your assurance would be clearer and fuller. (2 Peter 1:2-11)*

2. Brooks: *Remember, Christians, that all your consolations flow, not from the possession, but from the acts of grace. Remember, Christians, that the lack of the exercise of grace is the reason why you do not discern your grace, and why you have no more assurance of your future happiness.*

a. compare with Canons V, 10; Catechism q/a 86

3. God ordinarily crowns obedience with assurance of His love:  
John 14:21-23; Gal. 6:16

a. Brooks: *From these words you see that doing and working Christians are the only Christians that shall have most of the love of the Father and of the Son, and that shall have the choicest manifestations of grace and favor, and that shall have most of their presence and company. (Ps. 50:23)*

b. Be warned therefore of grieving the Holy Spirit: for He is the great Revealer of the Father's secrets.

**B. Pay attention particularly to the abundant promises of God**

1. God's promises are the *primary method* by which the Holy Spirit assures His children of salvation (Canons V, 10)

a. Brooks: *The promises of God are the believers chief evidence for heaven. Let your eye and heart first and foremost be fixed on Jesus Christ if you lack assurance.*

b. A. Burgess: *The more noble and excellent way to assurance is to rely on God's promises in Christ outside us then on the evidence within.*

2. "This assurance springs from faith in God's promises, which He has most abundantly revealed in His Word for our comfort."

a. the case of the doubting wife resolved

b. the strife of God's children is much like the doubting wife

- the upright *knows, feels, sees* how they fail daily
- yet can you deny you love the Lord despite all weakness?

c. the ultimate reason of the upright's downcast frame?

- compare Is. 7:9 and Romans 15:13

Conclusion: Will you believe Me (My promises?)

A. John 3:15: *whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life*

a. what is believing and trusting yourself on Christ?

● Brooks: *Now believing is nothing else but the accepting of Christ for thy Lord and Savior as He is offered to thee in the Gospel: and this accepting is principally, if not only, the act of thy will; so that if thou art sincerely and cordially willing to have Christ upon His own terms, upon Gospel terms, that is to save thee and rule thee, to redeem thee and to reign over thee, then thou art a believer. Thy sincere willingness to believe [in Him] is thy faith. And this gift brings thee within the compass of the promise of eternal happiness and blessedness.*

B. Ps. 2:12: *Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him*

a. what is true even if your trust is wavering, trembling, shy, unsure?

b. why is this true?

- because *faith unites us to Jesus Christ*

C. Matt. 5:6: *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

- Brooks: *Verily, it is no iniquity to pronounce them blessed that God pronounces blessed. It is not piety but cruelty and inhumanity for any not to be as merciful to themselves as God is merciful to them. If God says and promises that the believing, hungering, trusting soul is blessed, who dares judge, who dares say it is not blessed?*

D. Ps. 147:11 *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in His mercy*

E. Acts 13:39 *And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses*

F. Mark 5:34 *Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in (G: into) peace.*

Conclude:

A. Burgess (paraphrased): *It may feel more real to base your 'assurance' on what you feel or experience in you then on the promises of God. However, trusting God in Christ when all we feel is sin, is the greatest honor to God. Living by signs and marks seems more comfortable to us than living by naked faith upon God's promises, yet living by faith in God's promises brings greater honor to God.*