

## Assurance of our Salvation (6)

### 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**
  - a. Objective way: *God's promises and declarations received by faith*
  - b. Subjective way: *The testimony of our spirit and the Spirit of God*

### Readings:

1. **Canons Head 5, art 10; rej. 5**
2. **Westminster Confession of Faith: Chapter XVIII, art. 2**

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.

**Purpose:** *The Lord increase the number of them which may rejoice that their names are written in heaven. (W. Perkins)*

### Introduction and Review:

- A. God assures His children through *His Word and Spirit* (Rom. 8:16)
- B. The lack of assurance of your salvation may be due to various reasons
  1. Reasons found in God's *sovereign, wise, just and holy dealings*

2. Reasons in the believers
  - a. immaturity in faith (babes in grace): Heb. 5:11-14
    - including the lack of clarity in doctrines of 'grace & faith alone'
  - b. slothfulness: Heb. 6:11-12
  - c. ignorance or prejudice: John 20:24-29
  - d. backsliding: Eph. 4:30
- C. Two additional reasons for lack of assurance of salvation
  1. Incorrect teaching on *how to obtain assurance of salvation*
  2. An unintended yet negative result from a positive & needed emphasis in preaching Biblical truth often neglected in Christian churches
    - a. Historical background: *Puritan preaching on the doctrine of sin and need for self-examination caused spiritual distress*
    - b. Historical correction: *Puritan pastored to these distressed souls with abundant Biblical teaching on the assurance of salvation*
    - c. Application
      - (1) we need to maintain the emphasis on *sin and self-examination*
      - (2) we need to counter-balance this with Biblical teaching to lead God's children to the assurance of their salvation

## VI. God's manner of assuring His people about their salvation

- A. **The objective way: *God's Testimony in Declarations and Promises***
  1. God's Word assures believers that *the facts of salvation* come from the *fountain of salvation, namely God's sovereign and eternal decree of election*

- a. 1 Peter 2:2; Rom. 8:29-30; 1 Thess. 1:4-10
  - b. If we have “one link” of the chain in Romans 8:29-30, you have the ‘whole chain’!
2. God objectively assures His people through *His abundant Gospel promises*
- a. God’s Gospel promises are *divine declarations of truth*
  - b. Examples:
    - John 3:15 *That **whosoever believeth** in Him should not perish but **have** eternal life*
    - John 3:16 *That **whosoever believeth** in Him should not perish but **have** everlasting life*
    - John 3:18 *He **that believeth** on him **is not** condemned*
    - John 5:24: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that **heareth my word, and believeth** on him that sent me, **hath** everlasting life, and **shall not** come into condemnation, but **is passed** from death unto life.*
  - c. Anthony Burgess: *The more noble and excellent way to assurance is to rely on God’s promises in Christ **outside us** than on the evidence **within us***

## B. The **Subjective Way** by which God assures His people of their salvation

1. This ‘subjective way’ cannot be missed: *it is vital evidence*: Rom. 8:16
  - a. Calvin: *There needs to be a corroborating witness inside of me, which is based on the marks and fruit of faith.*
2. The subjective way includes the *sound logic* of our own spirit: Romans 8:16
  - a. ‘own spirit’ is *conscience – co-knowledge or co-testimony*
    - our conscience includes a *co-testimony* of God
  - b. the teaching of Canons V, rej. 5
    - Thomas Goodwin: *The Spirit writes first all graces in us, and then teaches our consciences to read His handwriting.*

c. the meaning of *deduce*

- definition: *to deduce is to arrive at a conclusion by reasoning, drawing a logical conclusion; to reach an answer or a decision by thinking carefully about the known facts*
  
- illustration of 'practical syllogism' leading to a deduction
  - Major Premise:
  - Minor Premise:
  - Deduction:
  
- John's epistle contains 11 deductions
  - 1 John 2:3 *And hereby **we know that we know** (saved) Him, if we keep His commandments*
  
  - 1 John 3:14 *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren*
  
  - 1 John 4:13: *Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit!*
  
  - also 1 John 2:18 (about the anti-Christ)

d. the deduction road to assurance of salvation

- Major Premise:  
*The indwelling of the Spirit is evidenced when we are poor in spirit, mourn over sin, have a meek and submissive spirit, hunger and thirst after Jesus Christ for righteousness and salvation and **only such are saved by God's grace***
- Minor Premise (upon self-examination)  
*I do sense by spiritual poverty daily, and mourn over the indwelling sins as well my daily failings and am convinced I have lost all rights and God knows I long to be holy and righteous and since I cannot find that in myself, I am looking, oh, hungering for the Lord Jesus Christ as my only hope!*
- Deduction:

e. This subjective deduction is illustrated in Canons I, 12

### C. The Witness of the Holy Spirit with our own spirit in being assurance of our salvation: Rom. 8:26 ; 1 Cor. 2:12

1. Among the Puritans there were two views

- a. this testimony of the Spirit is *a reinforcing of our own spirit's testimony*
- b. *this testimony as an im-mediate or testimony **apart** from our personal observations of the marks of His work within us.*

- Thomas Goodwin: *Immediate testimony is not that it is without the Word but it is by a promise that He brings home to the heart; an absolute promise of the Word He applies to the heart.*

2. The characteristics of the Holy Spirit's witness

a. this witness is *not always present* in every believer all the time

b. the Spirit's testimony never *contradicts* the testimony of our spirit for *He will testify **with our spirit** (1 John 3:21)*

c. the Spirit's testimony happen **without** our own spirit's testimony: *for He testifies **with our spirit***

d. the Holy Spirit will not testify this when we live in sin (John 14;21)

e. the Spirit's testimony is *not an outward voice* as God or an angelic visit

f. the Spirit's testimony is *an inward, secret, glorious and unspeakable comforting witness through HS applying a Scripture to heart*

g. the Spirit's testimony is accompanied with a power and majesty that scatters all clouds, doubts and objections

Soli Deo Gloria!