

Assurance of our Salvation (2)

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
- VI. Manner how to be assured of our salvation

Intro: Why is this subject so important?

- A. Because *assurance of salvation* is essential to flourishing the practice of faith
 1. Increased godliness is the ultimate fruit of assurance (V, 12-13)
- B. Because doubts are hugely detrimental
 1. Doubts about your own salvation makes you weak, uncertain, fearful and leads to inaction

When I live in a settled and steadfast assurance about the state of my soul, methinks I am as bold as a lion. I can laugh at all trouble: no affliction daunts me. But when I am eclipsed in my comforts, I am of so fearful a spirit, that I could run into a very mouse-hole"
(Latimer Ridley)

2. Doubts takes away the joy out of a relationship and weakens it
 - a. Doubts not only affect the doubter: also the doubted (Eph. 4:30)
3. Doubts weaken your Christian life and usefulness
 - a. God exhorts His people to be assured: Heb. 6:11; 2 Peter 1:10
 - b. Being sure of your calling and election makes for the holiest Christians (1 John 3:3; Canons V 12)
 - J. C. Ryle: *None are so likely to maintain a watchful guard over heart and life as those who know the comfort of living in near communion with God. They feel the privilege and will fear losing it.*

- C. Because we need to fight the adversary where he concentrates his fight
 - 1. Satan has made fighting the 'assurance of salvation' his main aim
 - a. He wastes no time to dislodge elect out of God's hand: John 10:28
 - b. But if he can be successful to keep God's children from believing **that** they are securely and eternally in His hand, he is all smiles!

III. THE FOUNDATION OF THE ASSURANCE OF OUR SALVATION

Intro: A main cause of the lack of assurance: *wrong thinking about the Gospel*

- A. The sovereign grace foundation of the Gospel of God's salvation: Eph. 1:3-14
 - 1. Meditate much upon the benefits and the guarantee wording
 - 2. The reason anyone will be saved is *because God saves sinners*
 - a. He preserves His people, so they persevere (Romans 8:37-39)
 - b. His commitment is not dependent upon our performance
 - 3. The guarantee for our salvation is God Himself: Canons V,1
 - a. The 'call' is the effectual call: Canons III/IV, 10
 - 4. Canons V, 3, 6-9 highlights this objective foundation of salvation

- B. The union foundation of our salvation: *the truth of our 'union with Christ'*
1. This 'chapter' of NT theology is *one of the most neglected chapters*
 - a. the failure of many genuine believers to look at themselves through the GOSPEL Lens of the 'union with Jesus' is disastrous to the assurance of our salvation
 - b. 'Union with Christ' is not true because we *feel it to be true*
 2. Union with Christ in Heidelberg Catechism, q. 20 (Romans 5:12-21)
 - a. the reality of your union with Christ is **not dependent on** the quality of your faith
 3. To describe this *spiritual union* with Christ, Paul invented new words
 - a. S. Ferguson: *One particular expression Paul uses seems to be without parallel in ancient Greek literature. He speaks not only about believing **in Christ** (en Christo) but also about believing **into Christ** (eis Christon). Faith **in** the Son of God means believing **into** Jesus Christ.*

*First century people no more thought or wrote about 'believing into' someone else than we do. But Paul realized that this is in fact what faith effects. When we believe **on** or **in** Christ, we actually believe **into** Him. Faith brings us into a person-to-person union and communion with Jesus Christ so that what is ours becomes His and what is His becomes ours. This perspective was so central to Paul's thinking that (in contrast with us) we **never** find him describing believers as 'Christians'. In fact the expression is used very rarely in the New Testament. Instead because we believe **into Christ** believers are most frequently described as those who are 'in Christ'.*
 - b. When did this truth 'dawn' on the mind of Paul? (Acts 9:4)

4. Many genuine believers fail to embrace this *new identity* (HCat 1)
 - a. 'being in Christ' means *absolute security & victory* (Rom. 8:35-39)

5. The Gospel pictures of the *union of Christ*
 - a. the *Food and Life* analogy: John 6:53-57

 - b. the *Head and Body* analogy: Eph. 1:22-23; Acts 9:4

 - c. the *Vine and Branches* analogy: John 15:1-4

 - d. the *Husband and Wife* analogy: Eph. 5:23, 32

6. What are the implications of this union? (Romans 5:12-21)
 - a. That I am righteous in Christ before God and an heir of eternal life

 - b. That I despite my daily failures, accusing conscience, inclination to all evil, I am righteous before God in Christ

 - c. That I despite my record of sin, both original and actual, I am seen by God as if I never had had, nor committed any sin

 - d. That I despite having totally failed on every count, I am seen by God as if I lived a perfect life all the days of my existence

C. The *legal foundation* of our salvation: to *doctrine of justification by faith in X*

D. The *personal (subjective)* foundation of our salvation: *experience of Christ in us*

Q & A