

15. ASSURANCE – WHAT DO I DO WHEN I LACK ASSURANCE?

2 PETER 1:1-15

1. LOOK TO CHRIST – AND NOT AT YOURSELF

- An illustration: do I trust the bridge?
- Discuss: what are the top 5 best things about who Jesus is and what he's done?
(And where do you get that from in the Bible?)
- Preach the Gospel of Jesus – to yourself and to others
- Why begin here?

"My mother [spoke to me] in those dark hours when the lamp burned dim, when I thought that faith was gone and shipwreck had been made of my soul. "Christ," she used to say, "keeps firmer hold on us than we keep on him."

My mother's word meant...that salvation by faith does not mean that we are saved because we keep ourselves at every moment in an ideally perfect attitude of confidence in Christ. No, we are saved because having once been united to Christ by faith, we are his forever. Calvinism is a very comforting doctrine indeed. Without its comfort, I think I should have perished long ago in the castle of Giant Despair." (J. Gresham Machen: Selected Shorter Writings, 561)

"Your best moments of assurance are not the moments when you're thinking about your assurance. Because the very moment that you're thinking about your assurance, you have the capacity at that moment to doubt your assurance." (John Piper)

2. TRUST IN CHRIST – AND NOT IN YOURSELF

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

- Do you trust in Jesus rather than in yourself?
- When you're in your right mind what do you feel about Jesus?
- When you're in your right mind how do you feel about your sin?

3. USE THOSE TOOLS WHICH GOD USES TO WORK IN US

God's preferred tools = "means of grace"

(a) The Bible

2 Peter 1:3-4, 12-15, 3:1-2, 18

(b) Praying

For assurance Romans 8:15-16

For anything Hebrews 4:15-16
1 Peter 5:6-7

Confession Psalm 32:3-5

(c) Other Christians

Hebrews 3:13, 10:24

1 Thessalonians 4:18, 5:11

(d) The church gathering

Preaching 1 Peter 1:23-25

Lord's Supper 1 Corinthians 10:16

Singing Colossians 3:16

4. EXAMINE YOUR LIFE

(a) What? The Bible commands that we examine ourselves

2 Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you-- unless, of course, you fail the test?"

Hebrews 3:12, "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God."

(b) Why? Our works are an indicator

2 Peter 1:5-10

1 John 2:3-6, 3:14 (and 3:23), 4:13-15, 5:13

= love God... love neighbour... especially other Christians

(c) How? Look for progress (not perfection)

CONCLUSION

***** Get the order right *****

Christ → faith → means → works

Next week: Q&A.

CONCLUSION

I will glory in my Redeemer

Whose priceless blood has ransomed me
Mine was the sin that drove the bitter nails
And hung Him on that judgment tree
I will glory in my Redeemer
Who crushed the power of sin and death
My only Savior before the Holy Judge
The Lamb Who is my righteousness
The Lamb Who is my righteousness

I will glory in my Redeemer
My life He bought, my love He owns
I have no longings for another
I'm satisfied in Him alone
I will glory in my Redeemer
His faithfulness my standing place
Though foes are mighty and rush upon me
My feet are firm, held by His grace
My feet are firm, held by His grace

I will glory in my Redeemer
Who carries me on eagle's wings
He crowns my life with lovingkindness
His triumph song I'll ever sing
I will glory in my Redeemer
Who waits for me at gates of gold
And when He calls me it will be paradise
His face forever to behold
His face forever to behold
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