

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

(1 John 5:1-15)

DO I REALLY BELONG TO GOD'S FAMILY?

God is such a merciful heavenly Father! He knew millions of us would sooner or later struggle with assurance of sonship. So He gave us a complete record of infallible proofs, requirements, and character traits. I offer only eight for your consideration here

- Receive Jesus, believing on His name by faith (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26; 1 John 5:1).
- Accept the Spirit's leading (Romans 8:14).
- Leave the world and be separate to God (2 Corinthians 6:17,18).
- Be a peacemaker (Matthew 5:9).
- Do what is right (1 John 2:29; 3:10).
- Love your brother and your enemies (Luke 6:35; 1 John 3:10).
- Be an over comer (Revelation 21:7).
- Do not habitually practice sin (1 John 3:9).

But what about those times when I get down and discouraged with my failures and shortcomings as one of God's sons? As much as I want to, I just don't appear to be His son all the time! The following verse encourages me; seize hold of it right now: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

ONLY FAITH IN CHRIST

I do not believe there exists any significant difference between *being* saved and *staying* saved. Salvation is always by Jesus Christ. That truth remains unchanged regardless which side of the cross we live on. Only faith in Jesus will save us; only faith in Jesus will keep us. None of my works brought me into salvation, and none of my works will keep me in salvation. Christ, and Christ alone, is all I need.

Does this mean that all I need to do is believe? Yes!

"Then I can *do* whatever I want to! Yipee!" Ah, my friend, if that is our response to this, we have revealed the shallowness of our understanding, of our faith, and of our commitment. Saving faith is much more than just a disposition of the heart. Belief unto salvation far supersedes the mere acknowledging of something to be true.

Such faith and belief form the foundation of a relationship. And that relationship touches the entire being, not just the heart and the mind. In other words, genuine faith will change your life.

Let's put it another way. Saving faith is a living faith. If mine is a dead faith, it will not save me because it cannot. And what, I ask, is the primary difference between a living faith and a dead faith? Here, hear it from God Himself: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:17,20,26).

When the Scripture says that our salvation is by faith alone, we need to understand what it teaches about faith! Whether you are a sinner needing that first work of redemptive grace, or whether you are a saint needing that ongoing work of grace, the only faith that will bring about your salvation is a living, working faith. If your faith is living, it is also working. If your faith is working, it is also living. And you are saved. But if your faith is works-free, it is also life-free; you are yet dead in your trespasses and sins.

My friend, how is your faith? Is it working?

WHAT DETERMINES WHO IS CHOSEN?

God's will. This is God's choice. As the Sovereign over all, He has the incontestable right to do as He pleases. Therefore, He is free to choose whom He will and reject whom He will. We must believe and accept that His choices are always purely right and just, even if it doesn't all make sense to us.

We are just pawns! If that were true, would there be anything wrong with it? How could we demand to be anything else, we who had no control over our entry into life and have no control over its circumstances? But we are not mere pawns for some universal deity to toy with.

The Eternal One has always known the full life span of every being. To my finite mind, it makes sense that His choices are based on that omniscience. He chose those who would be holy and blameless before Him (Ephesians 1:4). He chose those who would show forth the praises of the Caller and Transformer (1 Peter 2:9). He chose those who would be faithful (Revelation 17:14). He chose those who would bear permanent fruit (John

15:16). In short, He chose those who would conform themselves to the image of His Son.

UNCONDITIONAL ASSURANCE?

God has chosen us and sealed us. Does that make our niche in heaven secure? Does it guarantee our eternal security?

Absolutely!

Unconditionally so? Well, what does God say? What do you think?

Can I live in deliberate disobedience and still be holy and blameless? Can I live in deliberate disobedience and still show forth the praises of He who called me from the darkness of disobedience? Can I live in deliberate disobedience and still remain faithful? Can I live in deliberate disobedience and still bear permanent fruit? Can I live in deliberate disobedience and still conform to the image of Jesus?

To presume that our lives need not measure up in obedience to the Word is to mock the truth.

God guarantees absolute permanence to those who live in daily no-holds-barred surrender to His Son.