

Lesson 28
Full Assurance of Faith
Hebrews 10:19-25

Do you realize that it is possible for a person to be genuinely saved and not experience an assurance of that salvation? Assurance of salvation comes for some almost immediately upon conversion, and others may struggle for months or years before full assurance comes. There are some who will die in Christ, and up to the moment of death they will not be able to say, "I am saved and going to heaven."

Some time ago it was my privilege to be at the bedside of a dying Christian woman. She was a Methodist and very freewill in her theology. I had witnessed to her and she told me that she had trusted in Christ for salvation and she hoped to get to heaven. She was sure that she would persevere to the end. I could never get her to say she was saved and on her way to heaven, for she could not know until she died. At her side, when she was dying, she went into a coma, but she kept repeating over and over again, "Lord, be merciful! Lord, be merciful!" This woman never had assurance but she was saved.

There are a number of reasons a person might struggle with the doctrine of assurance. First, he may have been taught a wrong theology and if he has been taught he can lose his salvation, then it is difficult to teach him the doctrine of eternal security. Second, a person may be a babe in Christ and lack in experiential understanding of the doctrine of once saved, always saved even though his head understands the doctrine. Third, there are some personalities who are perfectionists by nature and they are also quite introspective. They look inward at themselves and they realize their great potential for sin and they begin to doubt whether they are really saved. Fourth, there are some Christians who never grasp the Christian conflict with sin, and when temptations, evil thoughts and base desires cross their minds, they feel something is wrong with them, not realizing that this is normal Christian living. Fifth, assurance of salvation is lost when the true Christian is in sin or indifferent to Christ in his life.

The author of the Book of Hebrews was concerned about this group of professing Hebrew-Christians to whom he was writing. Some in that assembly had already left Christianity and gone back into Judaism, and others were seriously contemplating abandoning Christ and going back into Judaism with its temple worship and animal sacrifices. The author is convinced in his own mind that the majority of those to whom he was writing were genuinely saved, but he also knew they were doubting and questioning the reality of their salvation in Christ. Even though most of them had been saved for years, they were babes and tossed around by every wind of doctrine. Many of these professing Hebrew-Christians had become indifferent and cold towards the Lord Jesus Christ, and this in turn caused them to lose assurance of their salvation, for nothing was happening in their lives to assure them that Christ was at work in them.

UNDERSTANDING OUR PRIVILEGES IN CHRIST - Hebrews 10:19-21

"Since therefore, brethren ..." -- The great majority of these Hebrew-Christians were truly born

again of God's Spirit. ***“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus ...”*** (Heb. 3:1). They knew Christ; they were brethren, but they lacked understanding of who Christ is and what Christ came to do. The “therefore” takes us back to the immediate context of Chapter 10 and back further to the first ten chapters of this book. Hebrews 10:18 begins the practical section of Hebrews, but before you can have right practice, you must have right doctrine. Jesus Christ has been declared to be the God-Man, the Great High Priest, the Only Savior, who is superior to angels, Abraham, Moses, Joshua and Aaron. In His death, Christ died once and for all and forever for sin and sinners, and His death saved men, cleansed heaven, brought an end to the Mosaic Law and established the New Covenant.

In light of these doctrinal truths concerning the person and work of Christ, it is important that we as Christians live lives that would be pleasing to Christ, and the first place to begin is with the assurance of our salvation.

“...we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus ...” -- The “holy place” is a reference to the heavenly tabernacle of Christ but the heavenly tabernacle has the earthly tabernacle of the Jews as its type. In the Old Testament, only the high priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year and could only go in with the blood of sacrificed animals. The high priest would enter with fear and trembling because He knew that God was pure holiness and wrath, and one mistake on his part could mean his death. However, the author of Hebrews does not tell his readers to fear, but invites them to go boldly and with confidence into the heavenly Holy of Holies, and tells them they can do so because of the blood of Christ. To go into the direct presence of God was terrifying to the Jewish mind.

Christians, we have access to God through Christ. We can go directly to God through Christ. We can approach God with boldness, confidence and without reservation. What a tremendous privilege! We can come to God, pray to God, speak to God, worship God and all because Christ died for our sins.

Charles Spurgeon used to pray in such a way that people accused him of being too familiar with God. But he said, “I’m just like a little child who runs into its father’s presence, and climbs upon the father’s knee, and strokes his face; I feel with God just like that.” Spurgeon availed himself of his access to God.

“... by a new and living way ...” -- Our entrance involves a new way, but this does not mean that there is a new way of salvation in the New Testament and a different way in the Old Testament. Salvation in both the Old Testament and the New Testament has always been by grace through faith in Christ. The word “new” means “freshly-slain,” or “freshly-sacrificed.” The thought is that a new access to the heavenly sanctuary has been opened up through the death of Christ. Animal sacrifices are no longer necessary for they are “old,” but Christ’s death is “new,” or a freshly-sacrificed way. Our entrance is also a “living way.” Christ is the eternal One; He is not dead, and He ever lives now at the right hand of the Father. There is perpetual entrance into the heavenly sanctuary where Christ reigns, is our advocate and is constantly making intercession for us.

“... which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh ...” -- The “veil” has

reference to the veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place in the tabernacle. The veil shut God in and shut man out for no man could enter into the direct presence of God in the Old Testament economy. The “veil” is symbolic of Christ’s flesh or sinless human body. Christ’s sacrificial death opened up a free access into the very presence of God. Christ, in His person, in His sacrifice, in His walk, and in His covenant, is so pleasing to God that He opened up direct access to God for all who come and avail themselves of the shed blood of Christ.

When Christ died, God literally ripped open the veil in the existing temple. **“And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook, and the rocks were split”** (Matt. 27:51). Direct access to God for all true believer priests was now available, and they were to come with confidence and boldness.

“... and since we have a great priest over the house of God ...” -- Christ is a great High Priest over the entire family of God. The word “great” is a word that implies sovereignty. Jesus Christ is Lord and in sovereign control over His family, the Church. He loves us; He died for us; He cares for us; He disciplines us; He prays for us and He pleads His blood for us. Christ has His people (the house of God) under control. We have the privilege of being God’s people with Christ as our sovereign Lord.

The “house of God” is not a church building. We should never refer to a church building as “the house of God” or the “sanctuary,” for the only sanctuary in the New Testament is the body of a true believer in Christ, and the only “house of God” is the corporate body of true believers in Christ. Many Christians unconsciously are still living in the types and the shadows of the Old Testament. If we call a building the house of God, we miss the true message of the New Testament which is that the house of God is actually the bodies of men and women, boys and girls. That is where God really dwells today.

UNDERSTANDING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN CHRIST - Hebrews 10:22-25

“... let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith ...” -- The words “let us” occur three times in verses 22-25, and they are exhortations to these Hebrew-Christians to bring them out of lethargy, coldness and lukewarmness in their Christian lives.

Access to God is ours but it is only a reality as we avail ourselves of this access. Christians are “to keep on drawing near to God.” They are to approach God in confidence and boldness. Christians are to come over and over again to God through Christ, not for salvation, but for sanctification. There is to be a personal, living, close relationship between the Christian and Christ. This solid relationship with Christ can only be realized when we approach with a “sincere heart.” We are to have a true, genuine heart, not filled with hypocrisy or deceit. We, as Christians, must open our lives to God and stop playing games and wearing masks. We must draw near to Christ and let Him rule in our daily experience.

When we draw near, we are to do it with “full assurance of faith;” that is, we are to have complete confidence in God. We are not to doubt Him and we must take Him at His word in simple, child-like faith. **“And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him”** (Heb. 11:6).

Deepening faith brings one near to Christ, and the nearer to Christ, the more assurance of faith one receives. Assurance comes as we move God-ward in our experience in a responsible manner.

To draw near to God means to continually walk in the presence of God. You do not draw near to God when you come to church. You are no nearer to God at church than you are at work, at play, or wherever you are. You draw near to God when you live in recognition of His presence in your life all the time.

“... having (had) our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our body washed with pure water.” -- This, again, is symbolic language that looks back to the Old Testament priest when he was inducted into his office of priest. At that time he was sprinkled with blood and washed with water.

The reason we can approach God as Christians is because we have had our evil conscience of guilt cleansed by Christ's blood and our polluted bodies cleansed by Christ at salvation. We can draw near to God because we have been cleansed. God has cleansed us in Christ if we have come to Christ.

“let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering ...” -- These professing Hebrew-Christians were exhorted to hold fast to their original confession of faith in Christ. This looks back to when they first believed in Christ and confessed Him before men.

“That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation”
(Rom. 10:9-10).

At that time they had confessed Christ as Lord and Savior; they acknowledged Him to be the only way to God; they believed Him to be their only hope of salvation, but now they were wavering in that original commitment. They were yielding to pressure and compromising truth because of persecution from the unsaved Jews. They had a responsibility self-ward for they were to hold fast their original confession of Christ before men. They were to hold fast to right doctrine about Christ and to speak out for Christ. Just as they originally shared Christ before men, they were to continue to do so.

Assurance comes as we hold tight to our original confession of Christ before men and then continue to confess Him before men. When we do this in faithfulness, we will see some come to a saving relationship with Christ, and this will also bring us assurance of salvation.

“... for He who promised is faithful ...” -- God will not fail His children. His promises are true and they are backed up by His perfect character. We can hold fast because we know that God is faithful.

We must learn in our daily experience to rest back upon the faithfulness of God. He has everything under control, even the persecution that comes our way as we represent Christ before

men.

“... and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds” -- These Hebrew-Christians also had a man-ward responsibility.

This teaches that the Christian is to give deep contemplation on how to stimulate other Christians to practice love and good works, lest their profession of faith be sham and not reality. The end of doctrine is not to have a head full of knowledge but to make us more Christ-like in love and good works. Christians are to stimulate, arouse, stir up one another to do good works and exercise love. Notice carefully, it is not the preacher who is to do this job of stimulating, but the average Christian.

Love and good works are the two things that mark true Christianity. Christians are never judged by the confessions they make (although confessions are necessary), or by the creed they recite (although creeds are important), but always by love and deeds.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35).

“So then, you will know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:20).

There is no place for selfish individualism in Christianity, but we must be constantly seeking to build one another up in love and good works.

How much practical love have you manifested recently? How far have you responded to the cry for help from someone near you, someone who is destitute or disappointed, who needs an encouraging word or a helping hand or a generous check?

Do people bug you when they prod you on to get into the Bible, to pray, to live a holy life, to show concern for others and to do good works? This should not bug us, for this is necessary if we are going to push on in the Faith, for without love and good deeds there will never be any full assurance of salvation.

“... not forsaking (abandoning) our own assembling together, as is the habit of some ...” -- One good work that some of these professing Hebrew-Christians were guilty of was that they were not going to church. They were failing to assemble with other Christians. They grew cold and indifferent to Christ because they had no genuine Christian fellowship. Isolation from other Christians is a very dangerous thing and it is a sign of spiritual coldness.

All Christians need one another, for each Christian manifests his love for Christ by loving the brethren. We cannot see love except as it is expressed for the people of God. The more we love Christ, the more we love each other. If we are cold to other Christians, the real problem is that we are cold and indifferent to Christ.

Christians who do not come to church, except for sickness or feebleness, are going to grow

spiritually cold and indifferent to Christ. Gathering together should not be a burden but a privilege. We do what we want to do, and if we want to go to church, we will.

It is even quite obvious at many local churches. People come for the morning service. In the evening we have less than half of the morning crowd. At prayer service we have even less. On nights when there is a sharing time or a missionary we quite often have even fewer people. Why? Well, people obviously feel as though one hour of church is enough, and there is no real need to learn the Bible and to encourage one another in the Faith.

“... but encouraging one another ...” -- Church meetings are to be times when Christians encourage one another. A real gathering of the local church is not to be just a time of Bible teaching, but a time to encourage one another to persevere in the Faith. Church services ought to provide time for people to share what God is doing, which encourages the saints.

Church is often boring for many because it leaves out sharing and encouraging. If church services were more like this, it would not be nearly as hard to get people to come out.

A local church is not to be a glorified Bible school but a place where Christians learn the Bible and grow in grace and knowledge of Christ. When there is real community and fellowship among the believers, God will bless that local church.

Too often church services are the kind pictured in the story of the father who was showing his son through a church building. They came to a plaque on the wall and the little boy asked, “Daddy, what’s that for?” His father said, “Oh, that’s a memorial to those who died in the service.” The little boy said, “Which service, Daddy, the morning or the evening service?”

“... and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.” -- These Christians are exhorted to assemble, encourage one another, love the brethren and to good works because Christ is coming again. When Christ comes, all true believers will give an account to Christ for their faithfulness.

The “day” is the return of Christ, but there were events happening at that time that made them think that Christ would return soon. Jerusalem was then being surrounded by Roman soldiers and the city would be destroyed in 70 A.D. by the legions of Titus. Every generation of Christians has seen signs that make them think that Christ’s return would be soon.

CONCLUSION

Not just the Christian will give an account to God, but all men will give an account to Him, and those without Christ shall perish in their sins. **“For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome of those who do not obey the gospel of God?”** (1 Pet. 4:17) Men without Christ shall face the eternal wrath and judgment of God.

If you are not a Christian, if you do not have the forgiveness of sins, if you do not know you will go to heaven when you die, turn to Christ who alone forgives sins and grants eternal life. Christ is the answer to life and death.

If you turn to Christ, you can know you are saved and you can have full assurance of faith. How is that possible? Because God is faithful, and He promises to save forever those who come to Christ through faith.