

Week 12: "Assurance of Salvation"

Memory Verse

But then the right time came, God sent his Son. A woman gave birth to him. He was born under the authority of the law. He came to set free those who were under the law. He wanted us to be adopted as children with all the rights children have. Because you are his children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts. He is the Holy Spirit. By his power we call God "Abba." "Abba" means Father.

So you aren't slaves any longer. You are God's children. Because you are his children, he gives you what he promised to give his people. *Galatians 4:4-7 NIRV*

Day One

Sunday, January 5, 2003

"Assurance of Salvation"

Read: I John 5:1-13 (p. 1472) and Commentary (p. 1471)

Reflect: How would you answer the question, "if you died today would you know for certain whether you would go to heaven?"? Do you have *Life Assurance*?

Dig: If there is an "orthodoxy test" (measurement of whether you really believe the essentials) then this passage seems to give one. According to this passage, what would you say in the "orthodoxy test" that John gives?

What circumstances provoke John to write these things? To answer this question, turn to the "introduction" on page 1464 and also chapter 2:3 and 2:20-23 p. 1466-1467.

According to the commentary, what is the difference between "believing Jesus is Lord" and "believing Jesus is my Lord"?

Apply: If you have any lack of assurance that you trust Jesus completely and are loving God's children, take a moment to ask God to help you to trust Jesus and to love his children.

Day Two

Monday, January 6, 2003
"The Witness of the Spirit"

Read: Revelation 2:1-7 (p. 1485) and Commentary (p. 1485)

Reflect: The author, in the commentary, makes the point that if we hear God speaking to us about what is wrong in our life, it is evidence that God's Spirit lives in us. Is the Spirit speaking to you about some area in your life?

Dig: What insight do these passages contribute to the main concern of this passage and the commentary?

1. Psalm 37:4 (p. 616)
2. Isaiah 29:13 (p. 782)
3. John 14:15-17 (p. 1221)

Apply: Are you aware of the Spirit calling you to a deeper and more intimate relationship to the Father? If so, thank God for that call and ask him to take away half-heartedness. If not, ask God for the Spirit's presence and his witness to what is wrong in your life.

Day Three
Tuesday, January 7, 2003
"The Witness of a Changed Life"

Read: Read: 3 John (p. 1477) and Commentary (p. 1477)

Reflect: In which ways are you different because of your relationship to Jesus Christ? How have you seen changes in others who have become Christ-followers?

Dig: What word does John use to describe the way we live the Christian life? (see verse 4). How does that contrast to our way of thinking of the Christian life? What seems to be a Christian practice that John expects from those who have been changed by God? Look up the five references to "hospitality" in the Concordance in the back of the Bible (p. 1637). What did you learn from this word study? How do the three persons mentioned by name in this short book compare and contrast in terms of the practice of hospitality?

Apply: When you follow Jesus, your heart is changed in so many ways. You treat strangers and others very differently. Ask God to give you a heart for the stranger or the one who is left alone. Decide today how you can practically offer hospitality to someone who needs it. Pray that God will wonderfully fulfill your prayer.

Day Four
Wednesday, January 8, 2003
"The Sinner's Prayer"

Read: Ephesians 2:8-9 (p. 1357) and Commentary (p. 1356)

Reflect: Are you more like a "Paul" (can name the place and date when you accepted God's gift of salvation) or are you more like a "Timothy" (you were raised in the faith and this gift of new spiritual life was more like a slow awakening)? Are both ways of believing equally a gift from God?

Dig: This classic text teaches us a lot just in understanding the use of the little words "by" and "through." (saved by grace and through faith) What is the difference in the meaning of these prepositions? How would the sentence change if you switched them around?

What is not of yourselves but a gift of God? (verse 8) What might this mean for teachings that emphasize that we need to pump up our faith in order to be healed or to be prosperous (sometimes called the "Health and Wealth" gospel)?

How does the "sinner's prayer" fit the teaching of Ephesians 2:8-9?

Apply: Ask God today to help you see that now that you have been given this spectacular gift of faith that trust in Jesus for salvation, you are "created for good works" and then ask God to lead you in some very specific good works today.

Day Five
Thursday, January 9, 2003
"The Defeat of Satan"

Read: I John 3:7-8 (p. 1468) and Commentary (p. 1469)

Reflect: Jesus compares the Spirit to wind. In which ways does God's Spirit possess the characteristics of wind?

Dig: What does the surrounding context of verse 7-10 tell you about the author's main concern in this text? (hint: how is behavior tied to truth here?)

According to this text, is it possible to be "neutral" spiritually, that is, to be neither on God's side nor Satan's side?

What is your understanding of how people were being led astray (see the

beginning of the paragraph)?

What great assurance do we take away from this teaching?

Apply: There is a saying, "the next time the devil reminds you of your past, remind him of his future." How can that saying empower you to new freedom today over temptations and discouragements and troubles? Conclude with a "power prayer," that is, with a prayer commanding Satan to submit to the power of God and leave your life alone.