

# So That You May Know

## An Expositional Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

### Chapter 15- The Affections of the Heart

#### 135. The Assurance of Salvation- Part 4

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WAOY Wednesday 01/16/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to look at what the Apostle John taught about, "The Assurance of Salvation". So, let's read **1John 3: 19-24** again together:

**19** We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him

**20** in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.

**21** Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

**22** and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

**23** This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

**24** The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Now on the last broadcast- we were looking at how that the assurance that we have about our own Salvation is tied to our understanding of Salvation. So because that is true- then it is vital that we get a true picture of just what Salvation is- so that we may have the full assurance that God has promised to us.

Let me show you how important this is- if, for example, our understanding of how God saves lost sinners is Biblical- then our assurance will also be Biblical. But if our comprehension of Salvation is warped; if it is based on improper or unbiblical concepts- then our assurance will also be warped and will not be reliable.

John teaches here that assurance is not something mystical or

fleeting- but the assurance that genuine believers have about their Salvation is sure; it is strong; it is vibrant and alive and eternal.

So let's examine just what John teaches here so that we all may have exactly what God has promised us and our assurance will be in Christ and in Christ alone. So, let's read verse 19 again together:

**We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him**

Now this verse shows us the great assurance that John had about his *own* Salvation. John says here that we can know that we are in the Truth. But just how did John know that he was in the Truth? Notice that he begins verse 19 as a continuation of all that he has been teaching in this Chapter. So we need to see his statement here in verse 19 that because all that John said before this is true- therefore what he is going to say next is also true. In other words- John bases the truth about what he says here in verse 19 and subsequent verses on the truth of what he has been teaching *before* verse 19. In other words, the truth that John teaches in verse 19 and following is the result of what came before it.

So John is teaching here that the *reason* that we know that we are of the truth is because we love and serve God and because we love the brethren – which is what John was teaching earlier. Notice also that John didn't say that we know that we are “in” the Truth- but that we are “of” the Truth. And this way of phrasing this has the effect of saying that the truth is what brings us forth- not the other way around. You see, dear friends, God's Truth owns us- we do not own God's Truth. We are born out of truth- Truth does not come from us. Holy Divine, pure and eternal Truth does not come the lips or the heart or the mind of any human being. That kind of Truth only from God. So we must acknowledge that we are “of” the Truth; that we are born “of” the Truth; that we come forth “from” the Truth and that this Truth does not come from us.

So John is teaching that it is Truth and the knowledge of Truth that births us; Truth begets us; Truth causes us to be what we are. You see when we are lost- we are not “of” the Truth but are in fact “of” the lie of the world and of satan.

You see, being lost is a total concept. In other words when we are lost- we are totally lost. And conversely, when we are saved- we are totally saved. There is no such thing as being partially saved or partially lost. You are either a child of God and you are saved and you are continually following Jesus and are going to heaven or you are a child of the devil and you are lost and you are continually feeding the lusts of your flesh and you are headed for hell. There is no middle ground. It is one or the other.

And modern unbiblical concepts that we have been taught and come to believe in- such as the concept of “carnal Christians” or “sinning saints” or “being saved and yet being disobedient” are not found anywhere in Scripture. You either belong to Jesus or you are yet in your sins. You are either born from above or you are separated from God; you are either a fish on the right side or fish on the left; a child of darkness or a child of light; a sheep or a goat; a wise virgin or a foolish virgin; a fruit bearing branch or a branch to be burned.

And so if you belong to yourself and you make your own decisions and you follow the dictates of your own heart and do what is right in your own eyes- then that is what the Bible calls being lost.

The Bible says that being saved is all about being given the desire and power to utterly abandon your own dreams and desires and ambitions and of becoming a bought and paid for bond slave to the Lord Jesus Christ- and following Him wherever He goes and living your life to His Glory.

So those who are in the first category- who live their lives to please themselves and gratify self should not have any assurance at all that they are saved- no matter what they have prayed or what they have done- because John teaches that those people are still lost.

But those who are in the second category- who love Jesus and who are endeavoring to serve Him and to please Him and to bring honor and glory to Him- should have a powerful assurance and that assurance should be able to withstand the trials of life.

You see, brothers and sisters, when we talk about assurance- we are really talking about how we can know that we are truly saved- even when things don't go right for us. And in those times- when things are really tough or really bad- it is our assurance that gives us the strength to go on.

And since it is also true that being in a trial is very common for

God's people- assurance is a very important subject.

When we don't get what we dreamed about; when tragedy strikes; when our heart is broken; when we are persecuted; and yes, when we sin- these are all examples when we need to know that God has not abandoned us and that we are firmly and eternally in His Hand. That is what Assurance is all about.

Some days are harder than others and there are times when we get weak, and we are tempted to give up and to go into despair. And Assurance rides in like the 7<sup>th</sup> Calvary- right in the nick of time- to rescue us from the depths of our agony and whispers hope to us that we are His and He is ours!

So because we are human and because we are flesh and because we are sinful and because we are weak- we need assurance and we need the comfort that assurance brings to us and we need the stability that only God gives through this great assurance.

But the point that must be made here and the point that John was making and the point that very few of us want to discuss today is that there are literally millions of people who are *not* saved and yet they want to believe that they *are* saved and so they too look to God for comfort when the storms of life assail them- even though they don't belong to Him.

And it is in *that* time of utter desperation that they can look up and they can repent and they can surrender their hearts and minds and lives to Jesus Christ- but if they did that- and God truly saved them- then when the storms cease; when the winds die down; when the waves hush; when the sun begins to shine again- if they were truly saved- then these people will love God and they will serve God and they will obey God- and if they don't – then all their praying and their crying was simply an emotional effort to be rescued out of their troubles and not an earnest cry for Salvation. And John says that these people have no assurance at all.

You see, Christian friends, when a person cries out to God for Salvation- he is crying out of a heart that is broken over his sin- not because the bill collectors are at his door. He is crying out to God out of desperation because he realizes that he is lost- not because he is going to jail or because his wife is leaving him or because he lost his job. Saved people can cry out to God for help in those times- because they

belong to God- but lost people must cry out for one thing and one thing only- that God would be merciful to them and save them from their sins.

So assurance is not about God giving you what you want- and it's not even really about God always rescuing you from all your troubles- but assurance comes from the knowledge that your sins have been forgiven and that you now belong to Jesus- even though you may be in a trial in this present hour.

So there are two things that John stresses over and over in this Epistle that we need to be reminded of. John says that all saved people love God and that all saved people love all those who love God. And this is the test that John puts forth that distinguishes who is saved and who is lost.

So if we are to have strong, steady, eternal Biblical assurance about our Salvation- then these two things must be true and they must be ongoing in our lives. And the *reason* that this is true is because both of these things are outward manifestations of being inwardly born again.

Now here is a very important concept for us to remember. No one loves God naturally. By that I mean that in our natural state of being human- not one single person on earth loves God- as a natural outflow of his own desires. Our love *for* God is a gift *from* God- always remember that. Now I want to say that again- the love that any human being has for God did not come from that human being- but is in fact a gift from God to that individual. Because in our fallen condition- we would never love God- that is part of what it means to be fallen.

When Adam sinned- his first response was to hide from God and we have been hiding ever since. Lost people run away from God- not toward Him. And even though in our minds we know that God is Sovereign- we hope that God doesn't know; we hope that He doesn't see; that He didn't hear; that somehow He won't see us and stop us and change us and correct us or damn us.

And it is a universal fact that every single human being on earth lives like that. That is because every single human being on earth is born with the very same nature that Adam received when he fell.

We live our lives in direct rebellion toward God and toward the things of God. We not only run from God's Presence- but we also commit sin against God. We do what God said not to do. We don't do what God said to do. We run when God says walk; we stop when God

says start. We rebel against God and we rebel against God's ways all the time- we don't even have to think about it- it is second nature to us- because it flows out from our fallen and depraved nature. We are born with it.

And if you doubt what I am saying- look at your own children. As good as you think they are- they rebel against you all the time. Well who taught them to rebel against you? No one. They rebel because it is in them to rebel. It is their nature to rebel. They don't have to be taught- they already know.

Now it is true that some people are able or willing to manifest this internal rebellion more openly or more blatantly than others- but all humans are born with this same fallen nature. And that is what is wrong with us.

And this fallen nature not only rebels against God; and it not only runs from God- but this nature loves to sin against God. And so, this underscores the depth of our problem- we sin and even though we don't care too much for the consequences of our sin- we do love our sin- which is why we engage in it so frequently.

So in fallen unsaved human beings- you have creatures who not only are separated from God- but you have creatures who are sinful and who love their sin; They rebel and love their rebellion; They run from God and they love to run.

And so for someone like that to suddenly and dramatically begin to love God is nothing short of a Divine miracle; it is a wonder; it is a glorious transformation that did not originate from us. And this change *did* not come from us because it *could* not come from us. So John teaches that when we are saved- we love God because God changed our nature and the soul that at one time ran from God and rebelled against Him- now comes to God and loves God and truly that is a miracle- and to those who have received this Divine Mercy- their assurance is real and it is eternal.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.