

Having Assurance of Salvation

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A lot of times, the problems with assurance come especially in that 2nd category, a believer's walk, where there's something that a person's holding back on, he's not fully consecrated, not fully devoted. He's fearful about this, anxious about this, his heart's not just given over. And you know, that can stop the flow. God is not going to give assurance and the witness of the Spirit on top of some reserve in our heart.

And so if people would just plow themselves into God, why, they would find their assurance. They'd find that sweetness, they'd find that intimacy like they've never had before. That's one thing to think about.

But after having said all of that, it comes down to this, and that is, we are justified by faith and faith alone, we're saved by faith, not by assurance.

And I've seen cases where, here's a believer, he's proved out to be a true believer, but he fell into some sin. He fell into fornication. He had a fall, a terrible fall into fornication and he repented of it. And God just stripped him of his assurance. I mean, he didn't know up from down. And he was tormented, he was in agony. "Am I really in or not?" "Am I really born again or not?" And what we had to tell him was, "Don't worry about assurance. You just follow God. The issue you've got to settle right now is, 'Am I going to walk with God from here on out, or not.'" And he began to do that and eventually had the joy of his salvation restored.

Some of you might have heard of Wayne Mingdowl. He was a pastor in China during the Communist take over. And he was arrested, he and his wife both, sent to prison. He was a very outspoken pastor. He was sent to prison and during a time of brainwashing, severe brainwashing and isolation, he cracked under the pressure, denied his faith, signed a confession. Immediately he was set free, but he was bound by the guilt and the depression of that and was known to have been wondering through the streets of his town saying, "I am Peter. I am Judas." Until one day, the Lord broke through with a miraculous breakthrough and brought a verse to his mind and to his heart. And he was instantly set free. It was one of

those surprising visits, and the Holy Spirit set him free. And he went back to the authorities and he said, "That document that I signed, it's not how I truly feel. I tell you, I take it back." And they rearrested him and he spent 24 years in a Communist prison then eventually was released when he was 80 years old, toothless, blind, and deaf from the tortures that he went through there.

Are you really believing? Are you taking God at His Word? Are you? The Bible says, "He who believes in Me has everlasting life." And we're justified by faith. Are you really believing God, taking God at His Word? And are you sincere? And then if he says, "Yes", I would ask him, "Well, how is your walk? I mean, are you keeping up communion with God? Are you feeding your soul? And, "Great peace have they which love Thy law and nothing shall offend them." 'Great peace have they which love Thy law.' Are you reading the Bible regularly? Are you getting filled with the Scripture? Is the Word of God, the Word of Christ dwelling richly in you? If you're not taking time in the Word of God, you're going to find some withholding of assurance. You're going to find you do not have the joy in the Lord you ought to have, you could have. And the same way in prayer. Again, the Lord is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Over a man's souls He weeps. And so we can ask questions like that. And here you find out that a person is not regular in the Word of God, well, it's no wonder you have no assurance.

You know, you look at that list in 2 Timothy 3, he says, 'In the last days, difficult times will come. There will be boasters, covetous, proud, blasphemers and so on. Disobedient to parents, fierce, heady and high minded.' And it sounds like he's talking about the heathen, pagans, those that don't even profess Christianity. But then he adds this phrase, "They have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof. From such, turn away." They deny the power thereof. In other words, they deny regeneration, the power of God in regeneration. And entertain the thought that you can be born again and still be no different than you were, be no different than the world is. And so he says, "from such, turn away". It's a blasphemy. It's an insult to God. It's an insult to His power. To think that you can be invaded by the living God and be no different than you were, no different than the world is, that you can still be, basically, living a life of sin. And it goes on to give other examples. Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, they opposed the truth. So, that's what we're seeing in Christians today, is a very low view of regeneration.

Tim: "You can mention the verse there in 1 John 2:4, and you can talk about keeping

the commandments, or you can refer to something like Matthew 7 and doing the will of the Father. Or you have the 1 John 3 and practicing righteousness. But there are always... I come across those individuals that want to take exception to those passages, or they want to ask the question, 'Well, practicing righteousness isn't perfection and so as soon as we fall from perfection, how far can we fall from that and still have it being a practicing of righteousness?' They're those people that they really want to know where that line falls, which I think is probably an indication of something that's maybe not right in the first place. But what do you do with all of that?"

Bob: Well, admittedly, it's not a 2 plus 2 equals 4 type of thing and it must be acknowledged that there are differing degrees of fruitfulness and consecration from one Christian to another; some 30, some 60, some 100 fold. But even 30 fold is significant, it's substantial. And so we're not talking about perfection but we are talking about obvious direction. Somebody who's born again, he is obviously different than what he was, different from the world, he is progressively seeing victory over sin, he's progressively seeing conformity to Christ. That's the main thing. I mean, you look at David's life, if you just looked at one period of his life where he fell, you would say, "No way!" But you look at the big picture of his life and you can see, here's a man that he did love God, he did have a heart for God, he was after God's heart, before and after the fall.

And so, you know, it's altogether generally too obvious that this person, he does not really love the saints of God; it's kind of a burden for him to make the meetings; he doesn't just really enjoy it; he doesn't really enjoy the Word of God. The other day I asked somebody, "Are you reading that Bible? You've got time on your hands, are you reading that Bible?" And he doesn't go to our church. And he said, "Well, I've got this schedule. I may miss a day or two, but I've got this schedule and I catch up." And I mentioned Psalms 1 to him. You know, "but his delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law he meditates day and night." That's the mark of a born again person. He delights in the people of God, in the Word of God, he delights in prayer. And so that, I think, it's frequently just too obvious in where a person's really at.