



BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

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BUILDING BLOCKS OF FAITH PART 4 : "Understanding Reconciliation"

August 7, 2005 Study 13 : "Assurance"

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

"Building Blocks of Faith" is a Series of basic Christian beliefs. The studies will be kept as simple as possible. Those who are considering following Jesus will have the main issues of the Christian Faith explained. New Christians will gain an insight into what God has done in their life ... and why. Older Christians need to revisit the basics from time to time in order to check that what they are building is consistent with the blueprints! Part 1 of the Series; "Three Little Words" - Grace, Mercy and Peace. Part 2 - Two Studies on "Understanding God;" Part 3, three Studies on "Understanding Man."

So far in Part 4 (Understanding Reconciliation) the studies have been "The Death of Jesus," "Repentance," "Saving Faith" and "New Life"

INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S STUDY

"Christians today often lack assurance about their relationship with God or the forgiveness of their sins. The result is invariably a weak and uncertain faith that, instead of shaking the world, is shaken by it" David Watson, "Discipleship" p99

How do I know that I am a Christian? Will I always be a captive of my emotion and plagued by episodes of nagging doubt? If I fail God, will he write me off? Can I have any confidence, any assurance, about my status before God and my future with him?

At the end of Study 12, the notes included the three aspects of our regeneration; our "New Life" :

1. **JUSTIFIED** Declared by God to be forgiven on the basis of Jesus bearing our sin and guilt. Therefore, since we have been justified ... Rom5:1 Past tense - This HAS happened.
2. **SANCTIFIED** The process of being changed into the likeness of Jesus. We are being transformed into his likeness" 1Cor3:18 Present tense - This IS happening.
3. **GLORIFIED** The process completed. When he appears, we shall be like him. 1Jn3:2 Future tense - This WILL happen. (see also Rom8:29-30; & Php1:6, 3:21)

Where do we stand in this process as our present experience? (Draw a line after 1, 2 or 3.) Locating where we stand now, will give the framework for the answers to the questions we have just posed.

A. ASSURANCE : CHRIST'S DEATH FOR ME

1. The FACTS of History

Jesus DIED, was BURIED and has been , RESURRECTED (1Cor15:3-5) These facts

- a. Are the CENTRAL truths of the Gospel -: Acts 2:22-24, 29-33 "God raised Jesus to life and we are all witnesses of this fact" (Acts2:32)
- b. They VALIDATE the Gospel - 1Cor15:14-19 "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile" (1Cor15:17)
- c. They MOTIVATION us to communicate the Gospel - Acts 4:20 "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (See 2Cor5:14-20)

2. Faith Is BUILT On These Facts

The facts were recorded as the BASIS for faith. Luke 1:1-4; Jn20:30-31

"I remind you of the Gospel which I preached to you, which you received, and on which you have taken your stand" (1Cor15:1)

Note ...more precisely, built on the Facts and what those facts mean ...

FACT	INTERPRETATION	
Delivered over to death	for our sins	Rom4:25 cf 1Cor15:3
and was raised to life	for our justification	

The basis of assurance is objective, - completely outside of ourselves and our feelings. It is based not on what we do or feel, but on what Jesus has done for us.

The Christian, who is trusting in Christ, will readily identify the FAULT in the question asked by the "Rich Young Man" of Lk18:18, "What must I do to inherit eternal life"

Conversely, A Christian will identify with the TRUTH of Paul's statement in 2Tim1:12, "For I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day."

B. ASSURANCE : A LIFE BEING TRANSFORMED

How can I know that I am a Christian? Secondly, by the EVIDENCE of God's work in my life.

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works" Eph2:10

Note the imperatives of 1 John 2:3-6, 3:9-10, 17-19 -17. John does not teach "sinless perfection" (see 1Jn1:8-2:2) but that those who claim the name of Christ will show evidence of lasting change and spiritual growth over the long haul. That is, over time, there will be observable change in the Christian's life regarding :

ATTITUDES So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.
Php2:12b in the context of verses 3-11

ACTIONS Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble.
2Ptr1:10 in the context of verses 1 - 8

PRIORITIES I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.
Php3:12b in the context of verses 7 - 9

C. ASSURANCE : A CONVICTION OF THE SPIRIT

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. Rom8:14-16

No one can say of another with certainty, "assuredly, you are a Christian!" Only God looks on the heart. And only he can bring the conviction of assurance to confess it ourselves.

Christ Died for me. The life of Christ is Transforming me. The Spirit of God Assures me.

A person's basic temperament will affect their assurance. Eg. a melancholy person will struggle with assurance most of their life and will need to stay close to 1Cor15:1-5 and 2Tim1:12.

Also our lives have seasons just like the weather. When it is winter for us, we need to listen to Is50:10 "Who walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely upon his God."

IN CONCLUSION

ASSURANCE? TRUST in Christ ("What he has done for me") PLUS
observable CHANGE in me. ("What he is doing in me")

"I have written these things to you who believe in the Son of God so that you may KNOW that you have eternal life." ... 1 John 5 : 12-13

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand" ... John 10:27-29