

AM 1 John 1:4

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[0 : 00] The Word of God, and we'll be reading from 1 John, Chapter 1. Your Pew Bibles is page 1227. 1 John and Chapter 1.

Pew Bible 1227. I'll be reading this entire chapter. Hear the Word of God.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the Word of life, the life was made manifest, and we have seen it and testified to it, and proclaimed to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us.

That which we have seen and heard, we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

And we are writing these things, so that our joy may be complete. This is the message which we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

[1 : 29] If we say we have fellowship with Him, while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us. Amen, and may the Lord be the blessing to the public reading of His holy and inspired Word.

As we read earlier in 1 John, chapter 1, this morning we will be looking at 1 John, chapter 1, and verse 4.

The Word of God says, And we are writing these things, so that our joy may be complete. Or as the authorized version writes, And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

[2 : 50] Your joy may be full, your joy may be complete, very much the same thing. The Apostle John, who wrote this, was formerly known as one of the Sons of Thunder.

Very brash, hot-headed young man. Who was one of the closest disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the so-called inner circle, along with Peter and James. He is known as the one whom Jesus loved. Many times you read in the Gospel accounts, that he is the one whom Jesus loved.

We can see a radical change in him. As the Gospel account proceeds in time, you see him change from this young, hot-headed young man, to become very gentle, and some have described him as the Apostle of Love.

And we see this very much in the writings of the Apostle John. John's Gospel, some writers have said that John's Gospel arouses faith.

[4 : 04] He brings up faith. He stirs up faith in Christ. And then one John that we've just read, establishes faith.

It establishes faith. So, John goes from writing something to elicit, to arouse faith in the readers, and then now in 1 John, he's trying to establish faith.

How can we be certain that this is true, this Christian faith is true, and how can we be sure about that? And then finally, he's going to write the book of Revelation, where he's going to utilize faith, and using faith to see beyond the here and now.

So, we read in, for example, in John's Gospel, we read these words, These are written, this is John writing in his own Gospel, These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His name.

Wonderful words there. He wrote this, so that people may know the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And then, when we come to 1 John, we read these words, in 1 John 5, verse 13, for example, These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God.

[5 : 32] See, these are people who have already believed on the name of the Son of God, and that ye may know that ye have eternal life. that ye may believe on him, that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

So, we've gone from arousing faith to establishing faith, and then in the book of Revelation, John is told, To write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

So, we see the progression of the Apostle John, in this way. And, notice that, there's a link between believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and knowing the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's a link there. And, obviously, as the beloved disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, John knew exactly what this is all about. To believe in the Son of God, to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, is one thing, but to know that, is quite another.

We can believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, ought to lead us to know him, and to know that we have eternal life.

[6 : 45] It's a classic case of cause and effect. You believe in him? Yes. But, when you believe in him, you must know that there will be eternal life to come. And so, this epistle of 1 John is written for that purpose.

It's to link between believing in Jesus, and knowing that we have eternal life. Now, interestingly, 1 John is not written to any particular church.

That's why some of the commentators and writers call this a general epistle. It's not written to any particular church, any particular location, not even any particular person, for that matter.

And so, it's very different from Paul's letters, which are very much directed at particular churches, with particular issues, that is very much doctrinal, teaching them the basics of the Christian faith, and so on.

But, 1 John is a bit different. It's more searching. As one Robert Law puts it, 1 John is all about the tests of life.

[7 : 51] It's the tests of life. You read 1 John, you cannot be, you cannot escape the fact that this letter, this epistle is all about are we certain, how are we sure that we are believers in Christ?

And then there's all these various tests to probe us, and to check us, to see whether we are genuine believers or not. And it's meant to be helpful. It's not meant to trip us, or cause us to stumble, but it's meant to show us, and to show us the way to the Lord.

If we haven't found our way to the Lord already, this epistle does just that. And so when we come to this, this particular chapter, and this particular verse, we can see, for one thing, there was a big issue in those times, in the time of 1 John.

There's a lot of new ideas going into the church, or into various churches. Gentiles are coming into the church, coming in with all various Greek ideas, coming into the church, and there was a great battle going on there.

And it's so important for them, at that time, for John to write this letter, because he is trying to point out that true faith in Christ, genuine faith in Christ, will lead to good practice.

[9 : 17] Genuine faith in Christ will lead to good practice of the Christian faith. False faith, false belief, false faith, will lead to bad practices.

Now, it's quite tricky then, how John is going to deal with that. We're not going to go into all the verses, but we're just going to focus on one issue.

And that issue is the issue of assurance. The issue of assurance. And we have here in verse 4, these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. It's evident that there are some amongst them, who are weaker believers.

And they were genuinely concerned. They were genuinely concerned, am I a true believer or not? And they needed encouragement. They needed encouragement. And the fact that he wrote these words, these things write we unto you, so that your joy may be full.

John is writing these words down, so that the people who are reading it, would actually have assurance. Assurance of salvation. And as part of assurance of salvation, they will have joy.

[10 : 25] Joy in the Lord. Joy in that salvation. You know, joy is just only one aspect of assurance. But I think it's such a big aspect that is given and mentioned in this verse 4.

There's many things that we can think about assurance, but joy is certainly one of them. Because nothing can beat a joyful Christian. A Christian who has joy in his heart or her heart, is a mighty Christian.

He or she can do wonderful things, when they have genuine joy in their hearts. You know, even the Lord Jesus himself promised, in the Gospel of John, chapter 15, we read these words, These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

That's the word of Christ himself. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy might be full. Perhaps John was listening at that time, and he's probably thinking as he writes his epistle, Yeah, I remember those words.

Yeah, all the disciples of Christ, when Christ has spoken these things to them, he spoke those words, so that their joy might be full, and that joy might remain in them.

[11 : 50] His joy might remain in them. You know what? I'm going to write this verse, this particular verse, and we are writing these things, so that our joy may be complete.

It's pretty certain that that's what has happened. Now, what is assurance? What is assurance of salvation? Now, there's various definitions out there. I just found one on the internet, on the Gospel Coalition, these few words.

Assurance of salvation Assurance of salvation is a God-given confidence for every true believer in Jesus Christ of their present approval, present approval, and future acceptance by their Father.

Assurance of salvation is a God-given confidence for every true believer in Christ of their present approval and future acceptance by their Father.

The Westminster Confession of Faith breaks it down into three parts. Assurance of salvation is God's objective, unchanging promises of salvation.

[13 : 05] We read in John chapter 6, All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out.

So that is a promise that Jesus has said. All those who come to Jesus in faith and believing in Him for salvation, Jesus will never turn away.

That is a promise. And that is part of assurance. And the second part of assurance is there's the inward evidence of Christian graces.

There's the inward evidence of Christian graces. So for example, in 1 John chapter 2, verse 3, And by this, we know, we know that we have come to know Him.

How? If we keep His commandments. If we keep His commandments. For the true believer in Christ, the commandments of God is not a tiresome thing.

[14 : 07] It's not, Oh, thou shall not, thou shall not. You cannot do this. You cannot do that. No. For the true believer is, I know the Lord. I've come to know Him. Now I hear the law of God.

And you know what? I'm actually going to love it. And we sung some of those, you sing about that in Psalm 119. That the law of God is not there as something to be a burden for the true believer.

But the true believer loves that. Loves the law of God. And again, in 1 John chapter 3, verse 14, we read, We know, we know, see the assurance there, the certainty there, we know that we have passed out of death unto life.

How do we know that? Because we love the brothers and sisters, obviously. We know, we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brothers.

There's an inward evidence there. There's a change in the believer's life. And that is assurance.

That is assurance. And of course, the third part of the assurance is the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

[15 : 20] That is one of the things which is such a hazy thing, it's so hard to explain. Thankfully, it's not my job today to explain that. But we read in Romans 8, 16, The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit. So the Spirit is telling us we are the children of God. So those three parts to assurance, the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of God, of Christian graces, and then there's the testimony of the Spirit.

Now, that may be, sounds very textbook-like. The reality is in any given situation, there are four different types of people in this world.

There are four different types of people in this world. There are those who are truly converted and truly assured. They are truly saved and they are truly assured of their salvation.

Wonderful. If you are in that category, it is wonderful. Nobody is going to knock that. There has been a radical change in your life and it is a wonderful experience that you have experienced conversion and people can see that and you know that you are saved.

[16 : 39] That is wonderful. And then there is the second category of people. There are those who are not saved, those who are unconverted. And, they know it as well.

They know it as well. There are those who, they know they have no time for God. They know they have rejected all the tracts that have been given to them and they, they, they, they are those who have, you know, very, imagine that they are very clever to deconstruct the Christian faith and they say, well, I have done all this research and now I can say I don't believe in God anymore and I am certain I do not want to have anything to do with the Christian faith.

Well, we have certainly met such people before. Well, that is the second category of people. They are unsaved and they know that they are unsaved. They can't be bothered about the Christian faith. But, the next two categories are the categories that we should be concerned about. There are those who are truly converted, genuinely saved. And, people can see that as well.

You know, there is a radical change in their lives. You know, we can see that there is the, the inward evidence of Christian graces brewing in their lives.

[17:52] One day, they are, they are not in the church and one day, they don't care about the Christian faith. The next day, you see them and they are a completely different person. Suddenly, they are reading the Bibles.

Suddenly, they are, they want to be in the house of God. They want to be worshipping God. You know, wild horses cannot take away, take them away from the prayer meetings. And yet, these people, they are genuinely saved.

If you talk to them, they will be saying, well, I'm not sure. Are you converted? You know, I'm not sure. I'm not sure if I truly trusted in Him. Or perhaps, they may be those who are genuinely converted, but when you ask them, you know, are you converted?

And they may say, you know, I think I am, but you know, I sinned, this particular sin, and now I'm not sure whether the Lord has rejected me. That's a very sad situation to be in.

And that is the third category. The fourth category is those who are unsaved, but they think they are saved. And again, I say, this is, the last two categories are the categories that we should be concerned about.

[19:04] All four categories we should be concerned about, but the third and fourth are to be concerned, we should be concerned about. Those who are unsaved, and yet, they think that they are converted, and yet, they have all, they believe that they have assurance.

Surely, I must be a Christian. You know, I'm a good person. You know, I go to church. You know, I can't be, you know, can't be not saved. Now, when it comes to assurance, you know, that last category, you know, before, I hope none of you are in that fourth category, where you are not saved, but you think that you are.

Before you, we can even talk about assurance, certainly for the fourth category. Before we can think about assurance, we need to ask ourselves, well, am I genuinely converted? Have I truly had a work of grace in my heart?

You know, the issue of assurance is very much needed for the serious-minded Christian. The doctrine of assurance, what the Bible has to say about assurance, is for serious-minded Christians, it's not for those who are nominal.

You know, those whose Christianity is only skin deep. You know, those who are, what we call, you know, Sunday-only Christians. You know, assurance is all, is about, is needed, is an important subject for the serious-minded Christian.

[20:37] Christian. I was just on my way, this morning, I just got a message from my friends in Singapore, where I was from, and, somebody put on a WhatsApp group, I'm part of, asking the question, why are there such things as cultural Christians?

What are they? And, you know, my response is very much, is very, very simple. Cultural Christians, people who, like the idea of being a Christian, in a Christian country, cultural Christians are not genuinely converted.

Now, some may be, not going to knock that, but majority of them are not. Because, all they think about, all they think about, their Christian faith is, I'm in a Christian, so-called Christian country, I like to be amongst Christian people, in a Christian church, but, that's, that's it, you know, I do not want anything more than that, I do not want to know, anything about, what the Bible just say about my sin, I do not want to know anything about, about assurance, you know, that's not important, that's for, that's for the clergy, that's for all the, you know, for the religious people.

Yeah. I like enough, I like enough Christianity, so that I can go into heaven, even if you mean going into heaven sideways, you know. Now that is not, that's not, assurance is not, for that sort of people.

We need to deal with, with assurance. Certainly the Apostle John, when he writes these words, we are writing these things, so that our joy may be complete, is writing to people who are, in that third category, am I a genuine Christian?

[22 : 23] My joy is not full, I'm troubled, so many times, even though people can look at you, and say, this person is genuinely converted. Now, it's, it's, it's sad that, you know, in the Bible, we have examples, of, true believers, struggling, with, their faith.

It's, it's a, it's a genuine issue, it's not something, that is unheard of. We have in the Bible, these verses, for example, Isaiah 50, verse 10, who among you, fears the Lord, and obeys the voice, of his servant?

That sounds good. Who among you, fears the Lord, and obeys the voice, of his servant? Wow, that's a good person, to be, to know. Let him, who walks, in darkness, and has, no light, trust, in the name, of the Lord, and rely, on his God.

See, there are those people, what we call, the child of light, walking in darkness. A person, who fears the Lord, obeys the voice, of his God, and yet, walking in darkness, and has no light.

That's, that's, that's, the third category there, of those, who are genuinely, converted, but lacks, assurance. Again, in Psalm 42, famous verse, why are you, cast down, O my soul?

[23 : 44] Why are you, in turmoil, within me? Hope, in God, and I shall, again, praise him, my salvation. You know, and this is not, just in the Bible, this is not, just in the experience, of Christians, I've got, an example here, of a man, in England, a Baptist, minister, in England, during the time, of Spurgeon, so, during the Victorian times, a man, named, Gray Hazelrick, Hazelrick, converted, perhaps, during his army days, and, struggling with assurance, and this is what he wrote, in his diary, diary, or a letter, that he wrote, quote, at times, in reading, or meditating, faith, would spring up, and come, into lively exercise, faith, would stir up, and come, into this person's life, this, Gray, Gray Hazelrick, in the Lord's light, as shining, in the word,

I see light, and then, I felt happy, and assured, then I was persuaded, I was a believer, at other times, I was swallowed up, in all sorts, of questionings, do I have faith, was God, with me, or not, was I sincere, and so on, see, even amongst, the Lord's people, people do struggle, with assurance, but you know, assurance, as I said, at the beginning, of this point, assurance, assurance, is a reality, it's not just a possibility, it's a reality, that's why John wrote, we write these things, so that our joy, may be complete, he wouldn't have written, those words, if it wasn't true, and we need to ask ourselves, do we have this assurance, it is, not just a possibility, but it's a reality, perhaps, maybe, when we don't, have assurance, and we do, you know, Christians do go through, periods of darkness, as I've read, those verses earlier, and we do face, time of testing, perhaps, you know, dark clouds, may block, the brightness of the sun, and we may think, that we are in darkness, but remember this, the sun is still there, the sun is still there, we may be facing, dark clouds, in your life, but the sun is still there, and it's for us, to pray for patience, and pray for strength, to bear with the trials, that we are facing, and we do face that, certainly, for the genuine believer, that is very much, the experience of, genuine Christians, or perhaps, maybe, you know, we are cherishing, sin in our hearts, and that could be a reason, why, there's a lack of assurance, we may be trusting in Christ, for our salvation, and we may, seeking to live for him, but perhaps, we may be cherishing, certain sins in our lives, the psalmist writes, if I had cherished, iniquity in my heart, if I cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened, if I cherished sin in my heart, or iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened, you know, so for the genuine Christian, these are all possibilities, these things do happen, but, assurance is a reality, you know, what good, what good is our salvation, if those who are saved, are not assured, that they are saved, you see what I mean, what good is this salvation, if those who are saved, are not assured, that they are saved, you know, for any parent, to withhold love, and assurance, and comfort to their children, it would be cruel, for any parent to do that, it would be cruel, for any parent to say, no,

I'm not going to show you any love, I'm going to put that distance, between you and me, and you're not going to get, any assurance that, that I love you, you're not going to get, any of my love, you're not going to get, any of my comfort, no, you're going to stay, in one side, look, as a parent, you know you will not do that, and it's the same with God, if the Lord has worked, a work of grace, in your heart, and you've been changed, and you've been converted, to Christ already, well, it would be a bit, odd, for God not to actually, tell you that, it would be, cruel, for God not to tell you, that he has, loved you, and that he has saved you, and that he wants you, to have, joy, in your hearts, so joy is not, assurance is not just, a possibility, but it is, a genuine reality, but, my next point is,

assurance is rooted, in God's word, assurance is rooted, in God's word, and we see this, in a few verses, verse 3 for example, verse 3,

I'll read from my, from the authorised version, that which we have seen, and heard, declare we unto you, declare we unto you, or proclaim we also, to you, we proclaim also, to you, it's something, that the apostle John, is writing to them, it's something, that is being, declared, maybe, in a previous occasion, he has said to them, but something, now is written down, assurance is, declared, proclaimed, to the hearers, and then we have, in verse 4, obviously, we are writing, these things, so that your joy, may be complete, he's written this down, he's written this down, in the word of God, that we have here, and then in verse 5, you see, this is, what, the message, we have heard, from him, and proclaimed to you, three verses in a row, there's a proclamation, there's a declaration, there's a writing, there's a message, assurance, assurance, must be rooted, in God's word, you know, that's the, one of the problems, one of the fundamental problems, of the, what we call, the charismatic movement, a lot of it, is all about feelings, and sometimes, feelings, very subjective feelings, without the word, without the word of God, signs and wonders, and without the word of God, to actually, provide the assurance, for those who are hearing, in the charismatic circles, or at least in some, charismatic circles, and again, you can also see this, in the Roman Catholic Church, for example, there's no assurance, unless you are in, the Roman Catholic Church, and you are, basically, you are in bondage, to the ordained priesthood, and as long as you pay money, to the church, that's where you get your assurance, no, assurance must come, from the word of God, so it's not just me saying it, read what the word of God, has to say, you know, sometimes, you may see, some well-meaning Christians, well-meaning, well-meaning Christians, say, say something like this, well, if you lack assurance, maybe you need to look, to your baptism, maybe you need to look, to your baptism, well, the problem with that, is, there's those who have, been baptized, and later, turn away from their faith, so, how can you offer, assurance, of salvation, when what they need, is actual salvation itself, so you can't just say, look to your baptism, when a person, has turned, his back, or her back, to the Lord, what that person needs, is actual salvation, not assurance of salvation, it's two different things there, some well-meaning Christians, have said something like, well, you know, if you lack assurance, maybe you need to look, to your fruit, look to your fruit, well, the problem, with looking to your fruit, is, when we are struggling, with assurance, the likelihood, is we are probably, going to be quite cold, to the things of God, when we lack assurance, the likelihood, is, we are struggling, to read the word of God, we are struggling, to pray, we are struggling, to be in the Lord's house, on the Lord's day, or, the prayer meetings, well, so, it would be slightly odd, to tell such a person, well, look to your fruit, when the person is, evidently, not, bearing any fruit, at that, precise point in time, so, we need to, be clear, assurance, must come from, the word of God, we can ask, one another, you know, or we can ask somebody, who is struggling, with assurance, are you reading, your Bible, and if the person is not, which, is likely to be the case, then we need to, encourage them, to read, because that's where, they will gain, their assurance, and they will gain, their encouragements, from the very word of God, itself, Joe B.

[33 : 07] Key, wrote these words, the church today, is crippled, with a, absence of strong, and full assurance, assurance, the church is crippled, with an absence, of strong, and full assurance, and perhaps, worst of all, most of us, are scarcely aware, of it, we live in a day, of minimum, not maximum, assurance, very, astute, insightful, look at the church, today, we are not, we are not even, used to the idea, of assurance, of full assurance, and so, because of that, well there's many, in our churches, that don't have, full assurance, well so, like I said, so how do we obtain, full assurance, well John's answer, to that question is, what is being declared, what is the message, where do you find, the message, what did John, and other, the other writers, of the Bible, write, what is their message, that's where you get, your assurance, that's where you get, your assurance, these things, write we unto you, that your joy, may be full, so the question, to ask ourselves, is what are, these things, what are, these things, these things, write we unto you, that your joy, may be full, what are these things, what are they, well I think, it's pretty evident, first three verses, it's about, all about the person, and work of Jesus Christ, that which was, from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen, with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word, of life, well that's a great place, to start, that's a great place, to start, the assurance, the doctrine of assurance, the teaching of assurance, there's a great start, and it evidently, teaches us, evidently teaches us, that,

God was, before time began, in eternity past, he was there already, how far can we look back, into history, well we can look, as far back as we can, but, Jesus Christ, the son of God, was already there, he was there, from the beginning, from the beginning, he was there, before time began, Jesus had no beginning, like some of the, like the Jehovah, when this would make us believe, but we read, in John's gospel, and the word became flesh, and dwelt among us, he came, John, Jesus Christ, came into this world, and, in his gospel, he says that, the word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and by the time we come, to his, his letter, we have heard, we have seen, we have handled, the word of life, it's so important, our assurance, must come, from the word of God, and what does, the word of God, has to say, about the Lord,

Jesus Christ, these things, are written, and we are writing, these things, so that our joy, may be complete, you want your joy, to be complete, you want to have, assurance, of salvation, well, what did John, write, he wrote, about the person, and work, of Jesus Christ, for salvation, and the life, was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testified to it, and proclaimed to you, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was made manifest to us, verse 2 there, person, person, and work of Jesus Christ, so, how well do we know, Jesus Christ, you know, the Christian faith, is one of those things, which, we don't have exams, just a couple of days ago, a few days ago, on a Thursday, last Thursday, the class, that I was teaching, in the university itself, we had a test, class test, about 300 students, took their class test, you know, so that they can, get their 40%, for their module, and of course, you know, they have to do, they have to study, they have to study, they have to answer those questions, and blah, blah, blah, now, the Christian faith, is not quite like that, there are no exams, there are no exams, and thankfully so, but, what the Christian faith has is, do we know,

Jesus Christ, in our heart, not just in our heads, but in our hearts, how well do we know him, well, how well do we actually, read the word of God, do we read the word of God, never mind how well we read it, but do we actually, read the word of God, have we, seen Christ, in the scriptures, have we seen Jesus Christ, in the Bible, not just described to us, but have we seen him, with eyes of faith, have we looked upon Jesus, as what John, the apostle John wrote here, have we seen him, and testify, and proclaim, this is Jesus, this is the one, whom I know, whom I love, have we looked upon Jesus, the author and finisher, of our faith, have we looked upon him, the one whom the father, has sent, into this world, to live, that perfect, sinless life, and to die, on the cross, of Calvary, why, so that these things, can be written down, for us, these things, are written for us, so that our joy, may be full, so the, the whole point, of assurance, is not only, it's a reality, for the Christian, but it's also, it's there, it's there for us, it's written down, for us, to embrace, we can only, obtain assurance, when we come before, the word of God, and we seek, and find Christ, in the scriptures, and as we know him, and as we know him, more and more, we are built up, we are encouraged, and before you know it, there is assurance there, but then, what's the purpose, of assurance, what's the purpose, of assurance, of course,

I already mentioned, it's joy, there is joy in them, we are writing, these things, so that your, our joy, may be complete, well, what is joy, what is true, joy, I'm not talking, about false joy, I'm not talking, about something, that is fake, something that can be, trivialized, there is that kind, of joy, where you see, in football games, where people are all, joyful, when the team wins, you know, there's all the, trivialities, silliness, people get drunk, when they are joyful, you know, we are coming, to Christmas, and if you are those, who have to, endure the Christmas lunch, you know, in the workplace, you know, where you see, everybody being, very joyful, after, you know, several drinks, I'm not talking, about that kind, of joy, the word of God, is not talking, about that kind, of a joy, we are talking, about a kind, of joy, that comes, through, our Lord himself, joy, it's not a kind, sinful kind, of joy, through the drinking, culture, of this society, but we are talking, about a kind, of true joy, it's a kind, of joy, which rejoices, in the Lord, as we read, in Paul's epistle, to the Philippians, rejoice, in the Lord, always, and again,

[40 : 43] I say, rejoice, rejoice, in the Lord, in the Lord, and again, in Luke's gospel, remember the angel, saying to the shepherds, fear not, behold, I bring you, what, good tidings, of great joy, which shall be, to all people, and of course, you know, what that message was, what was that, good tidings, of great joy, and that's of course, the birth of Christ, so true joy, must come, in the Lord, in Jesus Christ, and we can have, real joy, full joy, complete joy, fulfilled joy, when we come, to faith in Christ, when we know Christ, in our hearts, not just in our heads, but in our hearts, this is a complete joy, it's not half done, it's not half now, half when you, when you die, no, this is a complete joy, the Christian faith, is not about, half now, half later, you know, you negotiate, payments, you

know,

I'll pay half now, and I'll pay half, when the service is done, that's not the Christian faith, the Lord himself said, we are writing these things, that our joy may be, complete, now, complete, not just, when we, at our point of death, then we suddenly realize, oh yes, I've got full, no, now, this is for now, this is a joy, that is for us, for us today, it's a reality, it's real, and it should be for all, true believers in Christ, and we must embrace that, we must find it, only in the word of God, only in the word of God, one writer puts it this way, the joy of Jesus, is the joy that arises, from a sense, of a finished work, it is a creative joy, like the joy of an artist, joy of living, the perfectly fruitful life, Jesus desire, that his followers, do likewise, the joy of which, Jesus speaks, comes only, as they are wholeheartedly, in obedience, to his commands, to be half-hearted, is to get the worst, of both worlds, to be half-hearted, is to get the worst, of both worlds, there's one writer, wrote, concerning joy, Christian joy, and so, are we seeking, after true joy, in Christ, or are we just, seeking after, a false joy, in this world, so assurance, is not only a possibility, but it's a reality, assurance, can only be found, in the word of God, and assurance, must lead, to a sense, of true joy, in the Lord, well may the Lord, bless those, few thoughts, to our hearts, this day, we will conclude,