

AM 1 John 3:11-18

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Date: 18 April 2021

Preacher: Rev Robert Dale

- [0 : 00] A warm welcome to you all to our service this evening. Wednesday night, 7 o'clock, we have our Bible study and prayer meeting when Norman will be speaking.
- Next Lord's Day, 11 o'clock and 6 o'clock, the Reverend Ronnie Christie. A very important announcement, next Lord's Day in the morning, we will have communion for the first time in a year.
- The Lord's Table is for all who put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. So, arrangements will be different because of Covid.
- And if you wish to take part next Lord's Day morning, then as you enter the church, please pick up a piece of bread wrapped in foil and a small individual cup of wine from the table to the left of the door.
- They will have been prepared hygienically with masks and gloves. Put them on the seat beside you through the service. And when the time comes for communion itself, we will remain seated for that communion.
- [1 : 31] And there will be a retiring offering next week for the Benevolent Fund. Psalmist says in Psalm 65, Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion, and to you shall vows be performed.
- O you who hear prayer, to you shall all flesh come. When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions.
- Blessed is the one you choose and bring near to dwell in your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple.
- Let's bow together in prayer. Our gracious God and Father, we are indeed blessed to be able to come into your courts with thanksgiving and prayer.
- We do so because you have called us to come. Not only with an outward call, commanding the whole earth to come and praise the Lord, but for many of us with an inward call as well, the Spirit of God drawing us into the presence of Christ.
- [3 : 07] We thank you that we do come in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the one whom you have sent to be the Saviour of the world.
- Thank you that he has sacrificed himself, has shed his own blood, that we might be saved. Thank you that he is risen from the dead and alive forevermore.
- And we pray that we may know his living presence in our midst this evening. We thank you for the word of God, inspired by the Spirit of God.
- And we pray that as we read it and study it together tonight, it may do us good, that we may be strengthened, challenged. Lord, that we may hear the voice of the Lord speaking to us, each one of us in our hearts, that we may be able to go in due course, that we may be able to go in due course, saying it has been good for us, to draw near to our God.
- Draw near to us, Lord, then, according to your promise, as we draw near to you. For we ask it in Jesus Christ's name. Amen.
- [4 : 32] Our first psalm tonight is Psalm 147 from the Scottish Psalter, page 446, and we're going to hear verses 1 to 8.

Beginning, Praise ye the Lord, for it is good, praise to our God to sing, for it is pleasant, and to praise, it is a comely thing.

God, come, fill the proof of the Son, and he is his of all.

Let God, his mercy, and his mercy, together into one.

Those that are broken in their hearts and grieve in their minds, keep healing and their pain, those he gently abides.

[6 : 15] He comes on the roof of the lost house, he makes them every one. Great is the Lord, and God, and all, his wisdom search can not.

The courts are broken not. The wh spent the Zustand, but in the Lord, that with God came to which was good. The Word of God Mountains grow.

Now let's hear from the Word of God. And two readings. The first one is from Romans chapter 8. And the first 17 verses.

Romans chapter 8. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do.

[8 : 19] For by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh.

In order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. But those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

For to set the mind on the flesh is death. But to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God. For it does not submit to God's law.

[9 : 19] Indeed it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot. Please God. You however are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

If in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit of life, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

So then brothers, we are debtors not to the flesh to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die.

[10 : 27] But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. But you have received the spirit of adoption as sons.

By whom we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

And if children, then heirs. Heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ. Provided we suffer with him in order that we may be glorified with him.

And we turn over now to 1 John. Continuing our studies in 1 John.

[11 : 34] Chapter 3. We look this morning at verses 11 to 18. Continuing the studies we began last year. And we continue tonight with verses 19 to 24.

By this we shall know that we are of the truth. And reassure our heart before him. For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart.

And he knows everything. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God.

And whatever we ask, we receive from him. Because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And this is his commandment.

That we believe in the name of his son, Jesus Christ. And love one another. Just as he has commanded us. Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God.

[12 : 49] And God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us. By the spirit whom he has given us.

We'll come back to that passage a little later. But let's hear now another psalm.

Psalms 125 from Sing Psalms on page 170. Psalm that speaks of our confidence before God.

All those who trust the Lord, like Zion, are secure. Which never can be moved, but always will endure.

Psalms 125. All those who trust the Lord, like Zion, are secure.

[13 : 55] Which never can be moved, but always will endure. Just as the mountains stand around Jerusalem.

The Lord surrounds his home forever, again. The rule of wicked men will not remain for long.

Among the just and sad. Among the just and sad. Blessed righteous men do all. On all those who I could.

Bestow your goodness, Lord. To those of our bright heart. Who never has your word.

But God will banish those. Who choose the broken way. With sinners they will go.

[15 : 24] Let peace on Israel say. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Our Father, we thank you for the peace that we have through our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the confidence that we have. For that rich assurance that we are yours. Children of God.

Heirs of God. Joint heirs with Christ. With the Spirit of God dwelling in us. We thank you for all the many promises of scripture that assure us that we are secure in him.

Just as Mount Zion was secure among the mountains and could not be moved. So Lord, your church can never be destroyed.

[16 : 37] We thank you that the Lord Jesus himself has promised this. That he would build his church. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

We know that there are many wicked foes. As we have heard sung in that psalm. Many who even at this present time would dearly love to destroy and remove the church of God.

Or silence our voice. But we know that ultimately that cannot be. That though wicked laws are passed.

Though your people are persecuted in many lands. Yet the victory will be ours in Christ. Is ours in Christ already. Because Christ has triumphed over the grave.

And all the nations have been given into his hand. And ultimately he shall come again to judge the world in righteousness. And then he shall vindicate his people.

[17 : 47] And we know that we shall be with Christ. Which is far better forever. We thank you for blessings shown to this church here in Dumfries.

And we pray that you would guide us in the coming months and years. Lord, you see that we are in many respects very low.

And very much in need of your gracious hand upon us. But we know that you can build us up afresh. And we know that you can use even us in your service here in this town.

And we pray that you will do so. We pray that this may be a place where Christ is worshipped and loved. And where the saints of God love one another.

And where people come and are saved through the gospel of our Lord Jesus. Help us each one of us in our daily life.

[18 : 58] We pray Lord that you will help us in our work. Help us in our family life. Pray especially for those with young children.

That you will help them in these important years. Of training up these children in the way in which they must go. So that when they are older they may not depart from it.

We pray that you will help us in all our conversations. And particularly help us to be alert. To the opportunities of saying a word in season. To those who are weary.

And of saying a word of the gospel. To those who are in darkness. Lord we pray that you would keep us from straying from the way of Christ ourselves.

And yet Lord we thank you that you do bring us back so often. When we wander. Lord mention was made this morning of that incident over at the farm.

[20 : 06] We thank you that David was able to rescue those sheep that had gone out of the field where they should be. Lord we feel that to be so much an image of the church.

Ourselves sometimes yes. And many others. Sometimes whole congregations. Finding some gate that is open that shouldn't be.

Finding some weakness in the wall. And away they go. Wandering off into the ways of the world. Lord how we thank you for the good shepherd who constantly keeps coming after us.

And bringing us back where we should be. Where churches have wandered into the ways of the world. Where they have wandered into false doctrine.

Where they have broken through the wall. And have ceased to believe wholeheartedly in scripture. Lord have mercy upon them.

[21 : 09] And bring them back into your truth. We pray for our nation. We pray for the complete recovery from this pandemic.

Thank you for all the progress that is being made. We ask that the days will soon come. When we will be free again to live normal lives.

We pray Lord for those in government. For wisdom in all things. Especially at this time we pray for Scotland. In the lead up to the election.

Give all of the voters wisdom in making their choice. We pray for the spiritual state of this country. Pour out your spirit afresh upon us we pray.

And for the leaders of the country. Help them to see that there is one greater than themselves. To whom they must answer. That they may look up to him who is king of kings.

[22 : 09] And lord of lords. We remember our royal family. Before you at this time of loss. We thank you once again for the Duke of Edinburgh.

For his example of dutiful service. And in this Lord we pray that you will teach us all. To walk in that same way.

Lord we pray for members of the royal family. Spiritually. We understand the Queen to have a true faith in Christ. But many of the others sadly give no evidence of it.

Lord we pray that they may come to know the Lord Jesus. Whom to know is life eternal. Draw near to us all in our personal needs.

We thank you that you do care about us in body and soul and spirit. And we do pray Lord that you would draw near to those who are suffering in any way today.

[23 : 12] Those that are going through times of poor health. Those that are anxious and worried. We pray Lord for your servants in every part of this country tonight.

As the word of God is proclaimed. May great good be done throughout our country. And throughout the world. We pray that your servants may continue to take forth the gospel.

That the kingdom of our Lord may grow. Draw near to us now. As we shortly will look into the word ourselves.

For we ask it in Jesus Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Well let's hear another psalm now.

Psalms 130 from Sing Psalms. That's on page 173. Lord from the depths I call to you.

[24 : 19] Lord hear me from on high. And give attention to my voice. When I for mercy cry. Lord from the depths I call to you.

Lord hear me from on high. And give attention to my voice.

When I for mercy die. Lord hear me from on high.

knowing that your corpse diesen people will come. Laomone and teaching you. Lord woo! Thank you so much. In■■■■■■!! Lord says,■■■ Christians■■■ her being.

A day for him,■■ us■■■om ■ also! Let us learn... nas opposed y we then bail. We we go, hong hong hong hong hong hong hong hong hong hong hong hong hong hong hong hong. What! He says, oh power of me to assist you.

[25 : 35] O provide us, you may hate me from may, em on high pot of mercy Truly not behold. His■■ hong hong hong & soctong hong hong hong to including He made me hear you, Lord. I pray my soul rich for the Lord.

My hope is in His word. For man that was shall be far gone.

My soul rich for the Lord. O Israel, Israel, O God.

For mercy is with Him. God will redemption promises.

Let me ask you to turn, please, to 1 John chapter 3.

[27 : 21] And continuing our studies through 1 John, I want us to look at verses 19 to 24. One phrase, I believe, sums up this passage.

In verse 21, confidence before God. Confidence is vital in many areas of life.

In work, for example, think of a skilled carpenter cutting through wood. How confident he is that it will all come out right.

That he will make a clean cut and it will be precisely the right length. Whereas I won't even go near a saw. Or in education.

I've always been confident with reading. And therefore, I've come to love books. Whereas other people, I find shy away from them.

[28 : 39] Or in sport. Like our former minister, I support Aston Villa. And I like to watch match of the day.

And in the post-match analysis, they often speak about confidence. A confident player will shoot from 30 yards out.

Whereas someone who's lacking in confidence will dither and do nothing. It's important in relationships too.

I've always lacked confidence in meeting people. I worry about whether I've got their name right. And whether I've said the right thing.

You can imagine that as a pastor, that was quite a trial. Whereas others seem to be supremely confident in talking to anyone.

[29 : 44] Well, here we have the most important relationship of all. Our relationship with God. Real Christians can have confidence before God.

This is essentially the doctrine of assurance. And it takes us to the very heart of 1 John.

The grand theme of 1 John is real Christianity. But the grand aim of the book is assurance.

Assurance. Now we need to be clear. Exactly what John is talking about here. He's not talking about confidence in God.

Faith in God is of course absolutely vital. As Christians we believe in God the Father who made the world.

[30 : 58] We believe in God the Son who saved the world. We believe in God the Spirit who can change the world.

Or I hope we do. We can hardly call ourselves Christians otherwise. He is also not talking about confidence in ourselves.

However important self-confidence may be in practical matters. In spiritual matters self-confidence is disastrous.

Paul says in Philippians 3 and verse 3. We glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

That is in our own ability or our own good works. If we imagine that our good works will count for anything with God.

[32 : 03] Then we're in for a nasty shock. Remember the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. The Pharisee was full of confidence.

But it was all self-confidence. God I thank you that I am not like other men. Extortioners, unjust, adulterers.

Or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get. He went back to his home.

Unheard. Rejected by God. Whereas the tax collector who could only cry out. Lord be merciful to me a sinner. He was justified before God.

And his prayer was heard. Now what John is talking about here. Is confidence before God.

[33 : 07] Confidence in God. We must have. Confidence in ourselves. We must not have. But confidence before God.

Assurance. John wants us to have. Now this as I say is the grand aim of 1 John.

He says. He says. In chapter 5. In verse 13. I write these things to you. Who believe in the name of the son of God. That you may know.

That you have. Eternal life. That is assurance. Knowing. That you have. Eternal life. Faith and assurance.

Are not the same. John's gospel. John's gospel. John's gospel is concerned with faith. John's gospel was written. He says. That you may believe.

[34 : 11] And that by believing. You may have life. Whereas 1 John. Was written. That you may know. That you have.

Eternal life. Faith. Should. Lead. To assurance. But they can become.

Disconnected. The Westminster Confession. As always. Is very wise. In its statement on this. Here's what it says.

Such as truly believe. In the Lord Jesus Christ. And love him in sincerity. Endeavoring to walk. In all good conscience. Before him.

May in this life. Be certainly assured. That they are. In a state of grace. And may rejoice. In the hope.

[35 : 09] Of the glory of God. This certainty. It goes on. Is founded. Upon the divine truth. Of the promises of salvation.

The inward evidence. Of those graces. Unto which these promises. Are made. And the testimony. Of the spirit. Of adoption.

Witnessing. With our spirits. That we are. Children. Of God. That's virtually. An exposition. Of this passage.

In 1 John 3. If you really took all that in. Then I can stop now. It's all been said. But the confession. Goes on to admit.

True believers. May have the assurance. Of their salvation. In diverse ways. Shaken. Diminished. And intermitted. John knows that.

[36 : 11] And he wants to strengthen. Our assurance. Here in this passage. And he does this. By calling.

Two witnesses. On our behalf. The first. Rather surprisingly. Is our own heart. The second.

Is the spirit of God. It is in a sense. A courtroom scene. That he sets up for us here. The soul.

Is on trial. You say. You're a Christian. But are you really? These two witnesses.

We hope. Will testify. For us. John has used this. Language of the courtroom. Before. Hasn't he? Back in chapter 2.

[37 : 09] For example. There. The issue. Was sin. And Christ. Was our advocate. Here.

The issue. Is doubt. And the heart. And the spirit. Are witnesses. For us. I want tonight.

To consider these two witnesses. In turn. And the confidence. That they can give us. So first. The witness of the heart.

In verses 19 to 21. By this. We shall know. That we are of the truth. And reassure. Our heart. Before him.

For whenever our heart. Condemns us. God is greater than our heart. And he knows everything. Beloved. If our heart.

[38 : 05] Does not condemn us. We have confidence. Before God. That phrase. By this.

Occurs no less than nine times. In this letter. It refers here. Back to verse 18. And to our love. For one another. Read those verses together.

Little children. Let us not love. In word or talk. But in deed. And in truth. By this. We shall know. That we are of the truth.

It is in effect. The mirror image. Of John 13. 35. Jesus famously said. By this. All people. Will know.

That you are my disciples. If you have love. For one another. Now John is saying. By this. You yourselves.

[39 : 06] Will know. That you are my disciples. If you have love. For one another. As he said.

Previously. In verse 14. We know. That we have passed. From death to life. Because. We love the brethren. By this.

He says. We shall. Reassure. Our hearts. Before him. When doubts. Arise in our hearts. As they do.

We can be assured. That we belong to God. By the change. That he has brought about. In our lives. By the love. That he has put.

Within us. This is the language. Of certainty. Notice. We know. That we are of the truth. We don't merely.

[40 : 05] Think we might be. We know. We are. That word. Know. Occurs. Twenty-seven times. In one. John. And it's always.

A silent rebuke. To the heretics. Of the day. The Gnostics. Who claimed. To have a secret. Knowledge of God. We know. That we.

Are of the truth. Not them. Now this witness. Of the heart. Is very precious. Because doubts.

Often do arise. In our hearts. Not doubts. About God. But doubts. About. Not doubts. About the gospel. But doubts.

About ourselves. True. Doubts. About God. Can arise. Even in a genuine believer. And those doubts.

[41 : 02] Can be answered. By the word of God. Doubts. About ourselves. Are more difficult. We know.

That Christ. Came to save. Those who believe. In him. Ah yes. But. Have I believed. Have I really believed. Or is it all.

Just a pretense. We know. That Christ. Came to save. His people. From their sins. Yes. But. Am I. One of his people.

The world. The flesh. And the devil. All conspire. To raise doubts. Like that. In our minds. And for some Christians.

That can be. A real problem. In those dark moments. It's precious indeed. If the heart.

[41 : 56] Can reply. Yes. I am his. And he. Is mine. Now that I hope.

Is how it is. With many of you here. You know. In your heart. That your faith. Is real. You know. In your heart.

That your sins. Are forgiven. You have. Peace. With God. In your heart. You know. That you have been washed. In the precious blood.

Of the lamb. In the precious blood. And the proof. Of that. Is the change. In your life. You know.

In your heart. That you belong. To God. Because he has changed. Your life. And filled you. With love. How else. Could that change.

[42 : 52] Have come about. You didn't do it yourself. You couldn't do it yourself. It's God. Who has changed you. He has given you. A new heart.

Christians. In former times. Used to speak. About their. Evidences. I don't. Hear that expression. Much. These days. I read about it. In old books.

But it's a good phrase. Isn't it? Your evidences. Love. Is one of those. Evidences. That shows us. To be his.

It is only. Evidence. Remember. We're not saved. By our love. We're not saved. By a changed life. We're saved. By Christ. But a changed life.

Bears evidence. That we are his. Of course. It's possible. That our hearts. May not. Bear witness.

[43 : 51] For us. That must always. Be a shock. In a courtroom. Isn't it? When the witness. Stands up. And you're expecting. Them to speak for you. And they don't. Instead.

They point at you. And they condemn you. Sometimes. That can happen. With our hearts. And John. Recognizes. That possibility. If our hearts.

Condemn us. God. Is greater. Than our hearts. Now. Some. Modern. Commentators.

Take comfort. In that. Sometimes. They say. Our hearts. Condemn us. Falsely. But God. Knows. That you're his. Even if you doubt it.

Well. That certainly. Can be true. The heart. Is not always. A reliable witness. It may condemn us. When we're innocent. It may justify us.

[44 : 52] When we're guilty. The heart. Is not the final. Arbiter. Paul writes. In 1 Corinthians 4. I'm not aware. Of anything. Against myself. But I'm not.

Thereby acquitted. It is the Lord. Who judges me. You can take it. That way. If you wish. But most.

Older. Commentators. Took it. The opposite way. As a warning. If. Even. Your own. Heart. Condemns you.

How much. More. Will God. Who knows. All of your sins. If your heart. Condemns you.

Then. Urgent. Action. Is required. You need. To come. To Christ. And come. Now. For cleansing.

[45 : 48] In the blood. And renewal. By the spirit. Even. As Christians. If you. Know. In your heart.

That there's. Something wrong. Then you. Urgently. Need. To put it. Right. Sin. Is. Always. A cloud. Between. Us.

And God. And it. Always. Needs. To be. Dealt. With. But if. Our hearts. Do not. Condemn us. John says. We have.

Confidence. Before God. Now. What is. That confidence. Confidence. Well. It shows. It shows. It shows. It shows. It shows.

It shows. It shows. It shows. It shows. It shows. It shows. In prayer. In how. We approach. God. In how. We speak. To God. In verse.

[46 : 39] 22. Whatever. We ask. We receive. From him. Because we keep. His commandments. And do. What pleases. Him. And he defines. What that means.

In verse 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. As so often.

In this letter. John has in mind. The last supper. John 15. Verse 7. Verse 7. If you abide in me. And my words abide in you. Ask whatever you wish.

And it will be done for you. And in John 16. 23. Truly. Truly. Truly. I say to you. Whatever you ask of the father. In my name. He will give it to you.

In other words. Assurance. Will. Give us the confidence. To come boldly. Before the throne of grace. And to pray.

[47 : 40] Knowing. That he will hear us. It's the boldness of a child. Jesus says. We must become like little children.

Most of us can remember. As children. Asking. Dad. Can I have an ice cream? Or maybe as we got a bit older.

Dad. Can you lend me a hundred pounds? And usually. The answer was yes. At least as long as the request. Was reasonable. We knew that it would be.

Because our fathers loved us. And we knew that they could do. Almost. Anything. Well God loves us.

And he can do. Absolutely. Anything. The only possible reason. For saying no. Is if we ask something. That really isn't good for us.

[48 : 38] But John envisages here. A state of perfect sunshine. A state of perfect sunshine. Where all of our prayers. Are answered. There is however. This condition.

Because we keep his commandments. And do what pleases him. Now that doesn't mean. That we have to earn. The right to be heard.

In our prayers. Any more than we earn. Salvation. But just as salvation. Always leads to. A godly life. Life. So prayer.

Prayer. If you are walking. With Christ. Then your mind will be attuned to his.

And then everything that you ask will be according to his will. And it will be granted. The ultimate example is our Lord himself.

[49 : 35] Who could say I always do those things that please him. And could therefore also say you always hear me.

Always. And John makes it clear in verse 23 what it is that pleases God. Faith and love.

Love. Calvin with his characteristic clarity remarks on verse 23. He defines clearly and briefly what the complete perfection of the holy life consists in.

Love is the fruit and evidence of a genuine faith. Love is indeed both the evidence and the expression of faith.

And that's why it's linked here with prayer. If there's no love in your heart. Then your relationship with God is wrong. And then it will be no surprise if your prayers go unanswered.

[50 : 48] We must of course beware of turning prayer into a mechanical exercise. Do what he says and he will do what you ask.

It doesn't work like that. The aim is not to bribe God into doing our will. But to do his will. Your will.

Be done on earth as it is in heaven. But if we are walking in truth and love. John says. He will answer our prayers.

Now we could end there. A confident Christian life. Sure of our salvation. Coming confidently before God. And talking freely with God.

And seeing answers to our prayers. What more could we wish? But John doesn't end there. He adds a second witness.

[51 : 51] And a very important witness. The Holy Spirit himself. In verses 24 and 25. Whoever keeps his commandments.

Abides in God. And God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us. By the spirit. By the spirit. Whom he has given us.

Scripture says. By the mouth of two or three witnesses. Every word shall be established. We have the witness of our own hearts. Which sadly.

Can be a rather weak and hesitant witness. But here is a second. And a greater witness. The Holy Spirit. John's mind would go back.

Yet again no doubt. To the last supper. John 14 and verse 13. If you love me. You will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father. And he will give you another helper.

[52 : 53] To be with you forever. Even the spirit of truth. That's almost word for word. What he says here. In 1 John. The Holy Spirit is promised.

To every true believer. Peter said on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2.38. Repent and be baptized. In the name of Jesus Christ. For the forgiveness of sins.

And you will receive. The gift of the Holy Spirit. No ifs and buts about that. It will happen. Paul says in Romans 8 and verse 9.

As we read earlier. Anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ. Does not belong to him. The spirit is the seal of our salvation.

It's the mark of ownership. That proves that we belong to Christ. Christ. There's an old hymn that says. Christ is our advocate above. The spirit.

[53 : 59] Our advocate within. Now Paul speaks of. A mysterious. Inward witness of the spirit.

In Romans 8.15. I hope you noticed that. As we read that passage. And made the connection. With 1 John. You have received.

The spirit of adoption. As sons. By whom. We cry. Abba. Father. The spirit himself. Bears witness. With our spirit.

That we are. Children. Of God. Most of you here. Will. Have that. Inward witness.

And you'll know. By experience. What it means. And how precious it is. That voice of God. Within you. Assuring you.

[54 : 54] That God is your father. And you. Are his child. That may be. What John. Has in mind here. More likely though.

The witness. Here. Is the fruit. Of the spirit. In particular. Once again. Love. Calvin.

Calvin again. Expresses it. Very succinctly. There can be no genuine. Assurance. Before God. Unless his spirit. Produces in us. The fruit.

Of love. The sum of it is. Calvin says. We are God's children. When his spirit. Rules. And governs.

Our lives. By his spirit. By his spirit. We. Know. That he abides in us.

[55 : 52] That phrase again. We know. Beginning and ending our passage tonight. We know. We are his. So let me ask you in closing tonight.

Do you have this confidence before God? God. It's a wonderful thing if you do. If you can say. Yes. My heart is at peace with God.

Yes. The spirit is within me. Yes. I am a child of God. I belong to God. And yes.

God answers my prayers. God. God. Maybe. That some of you here. Lack that assurance.

For the simple reason. That you've not yet truly come to Christ. If that's the case. Then. There's no point in pretending.

[56 : 54] That all is well. All is not well. The day will come when you must come. Before God. In judgment. Not just in prayer.

But in judgment. How will you stand then. If even your own heart. Condemns you. There is an old hymn.

That says. Pause my soul. And ask the question. Art thou ready. To meet God. Am I made a real Christian. Washed.

In the Redeemer's blood. God. Come to Christ now. And make sure. Others perhaps.
May be genuine Christians. And yet you still struggle. With assurance. For some
Christians. Assurance comes. Easily.

[57 : 52] And those. For whom that's true. Sometimes just can't understand. Other Christians. Who
appear to have doubts. Some have never had.

A shadow of a doubt. From the moment they were saved. And it seems strange to them.
To meet Christians. Who are always questioning. Their own salvation. But it is a real
phenomenon.

It does happen. And it's possible. There may be someone here tonight. For whom
assurance. Is more elusive. If that is you.

Then John. Wants to reassure you. He wants you to be bold. He wants you to be
confident. Before God. May be that some lack assurance.

Because they expect too much. They expect perfection. They question their salvation.
Over the slightest sin. Or it may be.

[58 : 55] That some lack assurance. Because they rely too much. Upon feelings. Or perhaps
they're just too. Inward looking. Has been said.

That for every look. Within. There should be ten looks above. Our hope is in Christ. Not in
ourselves. But for any who are.

Genuinely struggling. Genuinely seeking. Comfort from God. The Lord can. Bind up. Your
wounded soul. Seek and you will find.

Full assurance. Is possible. Where the heart and the spirit. Cry out together. I am his. And
he is mine. Again.

There may be some here tonight. Who have that assurance. And yet you still hesitate in
prayer. Could be many reasons for that. One.

[59 : 57] That I believe is quite common. Is that people become. Inwardly disappointed. They've
prayed. And it doesn't look as if God has answered.

Some Christians. If they're honest. Might even go so far as to say. God never answers my
prayers. Well. That's another sermon. That's another sermon.

To answer that. But if that is your experience. Read again the promise. This promise of
answered prayer. And pray again tonight.

Confidently. Expecting an answer. And you will. God grant to us all. Full assurance. And
may we be.

Confident Christians. Amen. We're going to close by. Hearing the hymn. Blessed
assurance.

[60 : 59] Jesus is mine. Oh what a foretaste of glory divine. Heir of salvation. Purchase of God.
Born of his spirit. Washed in his blood.

This is my story. This is my song. Praising my saviour. All the day long. Blessed
assurance.

Jesus is mine. Oh what a long day. Blessed assurance. Jesus is mine. Chairman Jesus is
mine. Jesus is mine.

Praisemore. Lord, anyway. Lord, I will. Please bless, ■y.

Ladies and gentlemen. Thank you.

[62 : 28] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Father grant that this may be our experience.

Blessed assurance. And grant that we might praise our Saviour all the day long. Grant that we may go into this coming week confident before God, praising you for all your goodness toward us, for the goodness of salvation, for the multitude of blessings that are ours in Christ.

Now may grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit be with you all evermore.

[64 : 17] Amen. Amen. Amen.