

Assurance of Life

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[0 : 00] And for a little to the chapter we read in 1 John chapter 5, 1 John chapter 5, I'm reading at verse 12, 1 John chapter 5, reading at verse 12.

Whoever has a son has life. Whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. Now, as we all know, it's a very serious thing to have to bear witness or to testify in a court of law.

It demands absolute truth because a person's future depends upon the truth that is being told.

And it's, I think we're all very conscious when we find miscarriages of justice where we have seen things being twisted and where people have received sentences and people have been convicted of things of which really they are innocent.

And that has been done through things being twisted and turned. And there is always a tremendous sense of injustice when something like that happens.

[1 : 20] So, particularly in a court of law, it's so important that truth be told. But of course, truth should be part and partial of everyday life.

And here John is at pains to explain and to promote the fact that what he is saying is truth. It's as if he was in a court of law and that he is bearing witness that he is testifying to what God is saying.

And he wants people to take on board and say, look, this is the absolute truth. I want you to lay hold upon this fact that here we have this really clear testimony.

And so this is what John has been saying to us. And in fact, that the word to bear witness or testimony or testify is used over and over and over again from verse 6 to verse 11.

You will find it being used over and over and over and over again. This word bear witness and testify. Because John is wanting to emphasize to the people the importance and the absolute truth of what he is saying.

[2 : 32] However great human testimony may be, John is really saying to us, there is a greater testimony. And that is the testimony of God. It is the greatest. That is what he says in verse 9.

If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. For this is the testimony of God. And then it runs on eventually into what is our text.

And we cannot have clearer than that. And part of the reason why John is at pains to deal with these things is, he wants God's people to be persuaded and assured in their own heart that the Lord is God and that the Lord is their God.

Because John knows that a sense of knowing that the Lord is your God really brings life to a new dimension.

John doesn't want believers to be, as it were, going along in a state of uncertainty all the time. There's a tremendous assurance in John's writing.

[3 : 40] It's we know. We know. Even our text, whoever has the Son has life. You see how definite everything is.

Whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. John is dealing with vital issues and there's no ambiguity.

There's no uncertainty. This is it. Bang, bang, bang. And that's how John wants it to be. And he wants us to have this persuasion and this assurance as well.

Because often we don't. Many believers, and maybe in here today there are some Christians who are so plagued with uncertainties, so filled with doubts.

Maybe some of you in here just don't know. Maybe some of you one day were bright and assured and persuaded. And your faith was like a rock. And other Christians looked at you and said, Oh my word, I wish I had faith like him, like her.

[4 : 42] But it's not like that today. You find you're rocking. You find that you, or you feel that you've drifted. In fact, you may be saying to yourself, I don't even know if I ever was a Christian in the first place.

Maybe things have been going just at a fairly even keel spiritually, but today you've plummeted. And that's often true in the Christian life.

Where not all was sailing, well, most of us, are not always sailing in the bright sea. And everything is, as it were, where we feel so persuaded and so strong and so assured and so persuaded.

If we did, I do not believe that the Lord would be over and over and over and over again, right through the Bible, giving us so many assurances and so many promises and so many encouragements.

I believe that the reason that the Bible is filled with these things is because the Lord knows that we're so prone to doubt, that we're so fickle, that we can become so uncertain, and so the Bible is full of these things.

[5 : 53] And so often, the Christian is thrown into doubt because of their own heart, because of who they are. If I'm a Christian, how can I be thinking in this way?

If I am a Christian, how can I be living in this way? And so often there are these kind of questions. And so it is, as we say, for this very reason that the Lord, we believe, is giving us spiritual truths to encourage us in the faith.

And this epistle, dotted right throughout, gives us what we may tear marks of grace, things that would encourage us to know. For instance, back in chapter 3, it says, we know, see again the assurance, we know that we've passed from death to life because we love the brethren.

In other words, we love other Christians. There's a mark. We term the marks of grace. that there is within your heart a drawing to other believers.

Because you are a believer, there is this drawing, there is this love for other believers. Now, it isn't necessarily, people often think that a love is a sort of a wishy-washy, gooey, nice-feeling, romantic, all that.

[7 : 09] We love the brethren. Remember that the love that we are required to exercise is a love that transcends how we may feel about somebody. love is active.

Love is demonstrative. Love does. When we look at the love of the Godhead, that's what love is all about. Love does. Love loves the unlovely.

And so we find that this is what is required. And when we find that our heart is working in this way, then that, we're told, is an evidence of our belonging to the Lord.

And so here we have in this verse, whoever has a son has life, whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. And in fact, the very next verse goes on to reiterate really what we've been saying.

John says, 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.

[8 : 11] That's just what we've been saying. John is writing this, that you may know. I don't want you to be in ignorance. I don't want you to go down the road day by day saying, am I a Christian or am I not?

I want you to know. I want you to have the comfort and the benefits of being persuaded and assured. And so that's what we find that John is saying, that you might know that you have eternal life.

Now in verse 10, John is telling us that the believer has a testimony of God regarding his Son, Jesus Christ, in his own heart. That's what we're told in verse 10.

Whoever believes in the Son of God has a testimony in himself. In other words, a believer may not understand everything.

A believer may have many things that they can't even explain to others. somebody may come to you and say, you're a Christian. Yeah? Right.

[9 : 13] Tell me, what's it all about? How does it all happen? What is it? Explain, explain A, B, C, D right through what it's all about. And you may be saying to Israel, well, I can't.

I can't really explain. So how do you know that you're a Christian? Well, I know. Tell me how you know. Well, sometimes it's quite hard to explain certain things.

I suppose to a certain extent. Remember the man that Jesus healed of blindness and they were saying to him, right, come on, tell us. What happened? I can't really tell you.

All I can tell you is that I was blind and now I see what all took place in that process. I can't give you the ABCs of it but I can assure you I know I was blind and now I know I can see.

And sometimes that's how it will be for the Lord's people. And in a sense that's what the Apostle is saying here is that there is an inner conviction in our own heart.

[10 : 27] An absolute persuasion that is brought about by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit convicts us and convinces us that we belong to God.

That Jesus Christ is our Lord. As I used to say, remember the old expression, better felt than told. Well that's, in a sense, that's what it's saying here. It is something that we cannot put into writing, we cannot verbalize, but it's our reality that we know, we experience, it's there, it's really there, that conviction is there.

We know that Jesus Christ is who he says he is. And it's very interesting, the very language that is used here in the Greek speaks of a, we could say, of a continued action, of a permanent, continued action.

And that's what's happening. There's this ongoing conviction. It's not, wouldn't it be awful if you were just given that when you were, when you came to faith and that was it only for a little.

That you came to this sense of faith in Jesus Christ and this conviction in your heart that Christ was saviour and then that kind of ebbed away and it was gone, never to return again.

[11 : 48] No, it is saying, it's this continuous, it's a permanent, it's a continuous action. The actual language in the Greek brings us out this continued action. It's an ongoing persuasion, an ongoing conviction that Jesus Christ is Lord.

And when it says believes in Christ, it means more than just purely giving mental assent to the fact that Christ is who he says he is.

When it, when the Bible speaks in this particular way of believing in or believing on, it means committing yourself totally and absolutely to him.

It's not just, as we say, a mental assent to certain facts, although that is part of this saving faith, that is part of believing, it is a committing. Being persuaded of who Christ is, we as a result commit ourselves, cast ourselves, lock, stock and barrel, totally, absolutely, upon who he is.

And as we do this, more and more, the conviction of who Jesus is becomes all the more powerful. And everything that you've heard about Jesus, you discover to be true.

[13 : 10] But, verse 10 again, and we were digressing slightly here, has something very solemn at the end, because we were saying, it says, whoever believes in the Son of God has a testimony in himself.

Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son.

Sometimes people think by rejecting Jesus Christ as Savior, that, well, that's just, it's no big deal. it's the most serious, solemn thing a person can do.

And one of the things that we do when we reject Jesus, the Bible is telling us here, is that we make God a liar. Now, I would say one of the worst things that you can say to anybody or about anybody is that that person is a liar.

If a person got the name of being a liar, in other words, somebody that you could never believe what they were saying, there was somebody who were, a person who was noted for speaking untruths, that would be an awful label to have.

[14 : 26] You can never believe with what he is saying or she is saying, whether it is true or not. That would be an awful thing. To have, to call someone a liar is really an awful, an awful thing.

And that is what we're discovering here. that by rejecting Jesus, by not accepting Christ as Savior, we are in fact making God a liar because we are not accepting his testimony of his own son.

And that, that is one of the awful things that people will discover on the day of judgment. People who have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, they will find then and it will become clear to them how they've made God out to be a liar.

another. And God is truth. And God is jealous of the truth. And God is jealous of the fact that he is truth.

And to make him a liar is one of the great sins. And that is why the apostle is homing in on this and showing us the seriousness of rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

[15 : 41] But they were told whoever has a son has life. How do I know that I have life? What is it to have this life?

Well, I think possibly the best way to sum it up is in this way. The soul, I would say, that has a, has a felt and an abiding sense of his or her need of Christ.

The soul that has an abiding sense of his or her need of Christ. Now, you may say to yourself, does that not sound like somebody who is seeking the Lord?

Well, in a sense, the seeker and the Christian are very similar because the Christian remains a seeker all his or her days. The moment we come to faith in Jesus Christ, that doesn't mean that we stop then seeking the Lord.

You will find that the psalmist and even the psalmist at the, nearer the end of his days is writing about seeking the Lord with all his heart. Seeking the Lord becomes part and partial of your life.

[17 : 05] Indeed, it is a mark and evidence of your Christianity. Having discovered the Lord, you want more and more and more of him. You look at the Apostle Paul.

You would say, if any man had arrived, it was Paul. Does he say he's arrived? Not at all. That I might know. I want to know more and more and more of him. Having discovered him and discovered what it is to be in him, I want to discover more and more and more and more.

And that, my dear friends, indicates the life that is within the believer. that if you have life, you will be somebody who is always seeking the Lord.

That is an indication of the very life that is there. That that life wants more and more. The source of the life, Christ is the source of your life. Well, you want more of that.

We want to experience a greater sense of nearness. and the one who has Christ is never really satisfied unless this is what we have.

[18 : 19] If Christ hides himself, we are miserable. If Christ reveals himself, we are satisfied. You and I know it to be true.

There's nobody more miserable than the Christian who has no sense of Christ's nearness or presence. If you're here today as a believer, and you have gone through a period where your Christianity is formal, where it's in fits and starts, but you have no sense of the Lord's nearness or presence, you have no great delight, soul delight in him, then you're a miserable Christian.

And I'm not saying that in an insulting way. I'm saying it as a fact which you already know. the joy that you once knew is no longer there. You're going through the motions, the thrill, the dynamic, that was once part of your life isn't there anymore.

And you have to confess, it leaves you feeling miserable. And it always will until once again you're restored. just like David had to say, restore me thy salvation's joy.

That's what I want, that's what I want to know. So we see here is this life, this life, and as we see this life, this is at the very heart of the believer.

[19 : 54] believer. And the wonderful thing about this life is that it will reveal itself. You cannot hide it. You cannot hide spirit, your life, and the soul.

We know we talk about secret believers. In a sense there aren't. In one sense there's no such thing as a secret believer. And the reason we say that is that although the person may, they themselves may be living as a secret believer, and by that we mean has never come to publicly confess before people that Christ is their Lord and their Savior, the thing is that other people are seeing Christ in them.

And other people within the church are saying, you know, I believe he's a Christian. I believe she's a Christian. There is an evidence in their life. You see, you cannot disguise or hide that life.

Any more than a Christian may pretend to be dead, but yet there is still life. You can only pretend to be dead for a short time. When there is life, life naturally will reveal itself.

And so it is spiritually. You cannot conceal it. It is there. And that is why even when a Christian may drift, and people look, sometimes people may say, I wonder was that person a Christian or not?

[21 : 20] And then you'll say, ah, no, there's still life there. Still life there. And that's how it will always be. And the life that we have in Christ is a life that we really need to nourish.

it is a life that is worth nourishing. If you are to grow in grace, my dear friend, spend time in the presence of Christ.

You know, sometimes people complain about how flat they feel. And they say, ah, you know, it's not the way it was. Everything is so flat, it's so dry, it's like dust.

But you know, sometimes we are looking to, we're looking as it were, to get something from somebody else. We're looking for the communion season and we think, ah, maybe we'll get a shot as it were, we'll get a wee blast here, we'll get something to lift us up.

And by all means, yes, the Lord does give us these things, don't get me wrong, let us treasure them and appreciate them, and when the Lord gives us these things, may we rejoice in it. These are the feasts.

[22 : 34] But, we aren't to live just for the feast. That is not the way the Lord expects us to live our life. He expects us to live our life seeking him, not dependent upon what we may derive from going into our company and the atmosphere there, which is really good.

And again, don't get me wrong, these things are wonderful. But we've got to deal with this on our own. This is what I'm saying. We've got to deal with this on our own.

If I am flat, if I am dry, if I am barren, right, I've got to deal with it. I've not got to just simply say, well, I'm going to wait until the next communion season and see if I get a wee uplift from gathering with God's people.

By all means, yes, do that, but these are the, as we would say, the high points, the extras, these wonderful periods that the Lord gives us.

Let's deal with the issue of God. If I'm dry, if you're dry, if I feel my life is just going so flat and so low, then it's up to me to deal with it. And there's no use thinking about it, and no use even just talking about it.

[23 : 49] It's getting down to the nitty-gritty. And it means spending time with the Lord. It means getting back to the basics, getting back to serious devotional time with the Lord, a bit of communicating.

We're talking about that with the mobile phones. Let's get into the habit of talking to the Lord. Daily, hourly, get the communication lines open between heaven and earth.

It's not easy. And you know, sometimes the Christian will say to themselves when they've drifted, I don't have the heart for it, because you know that it won't happen like that.

You know that, there's going to be effort to get back to where you were. You know that there's a mountain to climb, because sometimes that's the way it is.

But it's worth the effort. It's worth it. And you and I will both say, or all of us will say, if this is what we do and we seek this life to know more and more of it, assuredly we will say, it is worth the effort.

[25 : 02] Whoever has a son has life. Now, of course, this life that is here is eternal life. The life that the Lord brings into the soul is the life that we will ultimately enjoy in his presence forever.

There aren't two different lives, any more than the life of a newborn baby. That life that the newborn baby, when you see a little baby born into this world, it doesn't have a different life when it becomes an adult.

Its life isn't sort of taken out of it and then another life put in when it becomes grown up. The life is the same life. And so it is with the soul that is born again.

Now, of course, in this world, we are bound by the physical, we are bound by sin, we are bound by our own finite ways.

There is so much to hamper and to hinder and to spoil. But we are told that at death something wonderful will take place. Because the souls of believers will be made perfect in holiness and immediately pass into glory.

[26 : 17] But it won't be a different life. It's not that the Lord at death will take the spirit, your life that you had in this world out of you and then put something else in. It will be a continuation.

Your soul does not die, the life does not change, but the life, it's as if it explodes into an even greater life. Because all sin is removed, every stain, and you're brought into an environment that is completely free from all defilement and sin.

And the soul is now enjoying in a way and in a manner and with a capacity that it couldn't in this world, is now enjoying what that life really means.

But it's all, as we say, the one life. And that's the life the Lord gives us when we're born again. My friend, do you have this life?

Whoever has the Son, has life. If today you have Christ as your Savior, you have this life. However much you may be enjoying it, or even how little you may be enjoying it, if you have the Son, you have the life.

[27 : 34] That's it. If you have the Son, you have life. Even if, like Peter, you're following the Lord afar off, you have life.

That's it. If you don't have the Son, you don't have life. Irrespective of how devoted you may be to the things of God, how diligent you may be in attending church and reading the Bible, and these are good, valuable things, a means of grace, let us thank the Lord that you are involved in that and that you do this, because this is a means to this life.

But the bottom line is this, if you don't have the Son, you don't have life. You make sure, my dear friend, as you are here, in the means of grace, involved in this is a way of life, that while you are here, even now, that you will seek this life now, now.

Satan's whispering in your ear, I'll wait till you get home. Ah, hold on. not yet. If I get the Son today, it's really going to mess up this week on me.

No, my friend, it won't. The Son will never mess up your life. It's a fearful thing, as we said earlier, as the Apostle said, rejecting the Son is making God a liar.

[29 : 09] Don't have that said over you. accept him as your Lord and Savior, so that this life will become your life now and forever.

Let us pray. Lord, our God, we ask thee to uphold us and keep us. We pray for grace. We pray for an abundant sense of thy presence and nearness.

Lord, we recognize our own frailty. We recognize, Lord, that we are in so many different ways weak. We would love to be stronger, but we pray that in our weakness we may discover God's strength more and more and more.

Lord, help us every single day. May we know this life. May we seek this life. And may we seek Christ more and more. Bless us, we pray.

Take us all to our home safely. Guide us and keep us and take away from us all our sin. In Jesus' name we ask God. Amen.