

# Doctrines of Grace - Part 6

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 07 December 2025

Preacher: Tyler Dueño

[ 0 : 00 ] All right, good morning, everybody. It's good to see everyone. It's nine o'clock. People will be rolling in as we go. As we embark on just a wonderful topic of God's love for us, Father in heaven, we thank you that you have an everlasting love for your children, that this is an inseparable love, a love that had no beginning and will have no end.

And, Father, as Jesus told his disciples, those whom he loves, he loves to the very end. And so we pray that this time we would glory in this love together and how you persevere with us in your grace. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Okay. Well, last week, if you recall, we discussed God's distinguishing love for us.

At the cross, he goes with your name on his very heart. Jesus loved his sheep with a special, unique, covenantal love, a distinguishing love.

And in this class, we'll consider the topic that those whom he loves, he loves to the very end. This everlasting love, this special love that we discussed last week, is the ground of our assurance.

[ 1 : 38 ] John Owen, who we used last week as a conversation partner, right before he died, he wrote one final letter to his friends. And these were some of his last words.

Owen wrote, So this everlasting love is a ground for your consolation as well, brother and sister. Before we begin, let me ask you a question. It's a rhetorical question. But have you ever started a race that you weren't sure that you could finish?

Have you ever started a race that you're not quite sure you could finish? Have you ever run a race where there were difficult hills?

Struggling? Weary? You're tired? You feel like you can't go any further? This is the Christian life, after all. Hebrews 12 depicts the race of faith in this way.

[ 2 : 45 ] Not as a leisurely jog, but an agonizing race. A struggle. Faith wanes and weakens. Hands drooping. Knees are weak. We stumble in many ways.

The devils accuse us. Inwardly, our flesh and pride drag us down. And in this race, we see others just limping along. Exhausted. We see fellow participants dropping out of this race.

Paul would write, For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me. And so, as you run this race, you carry the heartache of beloved companions who have deserted you.

And you run this race against the grain of the world. Because in this race, spectators aren't cheering us. No, they're jeering us. The wind is not at our back. Jesus said, Expect as much in John 15, verse 18 to 19.

If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you.

[ 3 : 56 ] And this hatred, for many, leads to the runners being persecuted, slander, beatings, even death.

The hour is coming, Jesus said, when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. Mocked, ridiculed, scorned by your family. Some even killed.

Of course, the apostles knew this firsthand. History tells us Paul was probably beheaded by Emperor Nero. Peter tortured for a long while, then crucified upside down.

In Rome, Circus Maximus. But whether it's physical death or not, there's always the death of the old man or woman in this race.

As Bonhoeffer said, when Christ calls you, he bids you come and die. In this race, there are dangers not only from outside, but inside, aren't there? Fellow participants can deceive us.

[ 4 : 57 ] Satan comes as an angel of light. They run alongside you. They talk about loving Jesus. They say, you know, you see the hill of difficulty? There's an easier way. Follow me. And then they

lead people astray to a dead end of destruction.

Jesus warned of these false teachers. They'll come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly, they're ravenous wolves. Have you ever run a race that you're not sure you could finish?

Are you confident that you will finish? Friends, this everlasting love that Owen speaks of is the ground of our comfort. A security that whom Christ has loved everlastingly, he will love to the very end.

And in this class, we'll say not only will Christians finish, God has made such a promise. Paul would write, I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

By the power of God, he will make sure his children are preserved until you reach the finish line. A helper will come alongside you in this race, brother and sister.

[ 6 : 11 ] Here's how our statement of faith puts it. It's a pretty good way of putting it. I like that.

So the first point is simply this, that we'll discuss today. All who are truly born anew by the Spirit will finish the race. In this race, the Apostle John writes, Everyone that is born of God overcomes the world.

1 John 5, verse 4. We limp, we stumble, we fall. But if you are born of God, you will overcome. You will keep limping along until you reach the finish line.

The Apostle John is so confident that this is the case, that he puts this overcoming in the past tense. Speaking to Christians on Satan's schemes in chapter 4, he says, Little children, you are from God and have overcome them.

Past tense. It's already happened. What's the ground of this confidence? Well, John tells us, he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. John's confidence is God's Spirit working powerfully and persistently in you.

[ 7 : 39 ] And like John in Paul's mind, this guarantee that is so sure that he can speak a future glorification in the past tense. Romans 8 is about the eternal security of the believer.

Romans 8, Paul would write this, God will lose none in the process.

So there's a golden chain that began in eternity past. He predestined. You were beloved before the foundation of the world. This love was expressed at his death.

This love was expressed in the Spirit's calling you. And this love continually is expressed in our lives each and every day. And this love will go into eternity future.

He glorifies. And Paul puts this future glorification in the past tense. And in his mind, it's as good as done. You've already been glorified in God's minds.

[ 8 : 42 ] No one can break the chain. Romans 8 is the Mount Everest of eternal security. Nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God.

So when the grace of God takes hold of you, it will never let you go. The chapter begins with no condemnation. It ends with no separation. And there's a perfection of God's love for us, isn't there? An inseparable love. For I'm convinced, Paul writes, that neither death nor life, nor angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. He says not anything else in all creation. That includes everything. That includes the sins that constantly tempt our hearts to be drawn away from Christ.

Pornography. It includes your own fallen human heart. What a triumphant note. Nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of Christ.

[ 9 : 53 ] Inseparable love. We said last week, if he gave us the most precious object, his son, will he not give us lesser things? If he was willing to expend his son's blood to gain you, will he now deny his power to keep you?

Of course not. No, he will keep you. He sent his son to die for you. Now, if you turn to John 6 with me, notice the certainty of Jesus' words in verse 38.

Jesus is speaking about his mission. Why he has come down from heaven. Verse 38. I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. Jesus will not look out at the countless multitudes of sheep and say, well, I'm glad that 85% made their way home.

No. Notice the certainty, the totality of verse 38. Jesus will lose none, no one, that the Father has given him.

[ 11 : 11 ] And if that's the belt, he adds suspenders and then a clasp connecting the two so nothing falls to the ground. It's not just the will of the Son. This is the will of the Father in verse 40.

For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life. And I will raise him up at the last day. In no uncertain terms, Jesus makes a promise here.

Everyone who believes in Christ has eternal life. They will never perish. That's the nature of eternal life. He will cause us to persevere through deep valleys and hard trials for his glory.

We walk with a limp, but we keep walking. Our safety, our security, is that each person of the Trinity loves us.

One author whom I love is Richard Sibbes. Richard Sibbes was a... Yeah, 16th century in Cambridge.

[ 12 : 19 ] And just a congenial man. People called him the sweet dropper. Because people who came with guilty consciences would just find that his words developed...

Give him a consolation about Christ's love. And it says that hardened sinners would have intentionally avoided going to that part of town. Because they didn't even want to have the chance that they might hear Sibbes and be converted.

So that was kind of his reputation in Cambridge. Richard Sibbes says this. We are far more safe in his comprehending of us than in our clasping and holding of him.

As we say of the mother and the child, both hold. But the safety of the child is that the mother holds him. See, Christ's love holds us up the way a mother holds up her child.

The mother loves the child. It will not let the child go. Remember Jude's doxology? We say it all the time at our benediction.

[ 13 : 21 ] Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling. And to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy. I love that verse. Maybe an underrated verse in the book of Jude is verse 1 of that chapter.

He writes, To those who are called, beloved in God the Father, kept for Jesus Christ. Called, beloved, kept, protected, preserved.

So brother, sister, you are secure because he keeps you. One more, Ephesians chapter 1 verse 13. Speaking of our complete assurance that when we put our faith in Christ, every Christian was sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

And Paul writes, That is a guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. Do you see the certainty of those words?

It's a guarantee. All who are truly born anew by the Spirit will finish the race. Not because of our personal fortitude, because God has an everlasting love for us as his children.

[ 14 : 31 ] Well, that's point number one. Point number two is only those who finish the race are truly born anew.

So many go astray at this point. They've heard everything that we've just said. And they wrongly think, Well, if you're secure, it doesn't matter what you do.

You know, someone says, You know, I have a son named Bill. When Bill was eight, he said a prayer at a Bible camp. And he walked the aisle. He was baptized. Well, today Bill is a Buddhist.

He denies the divinity of Jesus, but I believe he's secure, right? Well, no. That's not what the Scripture teaches. Only those who finish the race are truly born anew.

Hebrews 3, verse 14. Paul would write, Well, we don't know who the writer of Hebrews is, but maybe it's Paul. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

[ 15 : 34 ] You see, eternity hangs on a two-letter word there. If. It's an ongoing condition. If we hold our confidence until the end.

The point that the author of Hebrews makes is that remaining in the faith is one of the clear signs that someone truly is in the fold, that you've come to share in Christ.

And the book of Hebrews sees two possibilities. The first possibility is we hold fast our confession. And the other possibility is that our hearts become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin and fall away from, with the heart of unbelief.

The writer of Hebrews gives warnings. And the primary function of those warnings is to test us. Do you have a true faith?

And that warning goes to the church because you see that the membership in a visible congregation does not automatically prove that you have membership in the invisible church. [16:42] The visible church, the member roles in a congregation, the visible church consists of those who are Christians and those who are not.

And Hebrews really is all about a book on how to persevere, calling each person to account, to test ourselves. And God who ordained the ends also ordains the means.

And those means are an obedience flowing from a renewed heart. The writer of Hebrews 3, verse 13, he says this, Now this verse has been massive in my own life.

When I don't feel like attending church, I'm like, not this week. I just don't feel like coming. I remember this verse. I remember that the writer of Hebrews is warning me that my heart is being hardened.

Sin is deceiving me. This week, out of all weeks, I need to be with the people of God. I need to be exhorted every day so that my heart might not be hearted.

[18:01] And friends, isn't that the same for you? When you come to church, you might not feel like you even belong here. But then God used your brothers and sisters to help you.

Think of all the one-anothering. To love one another, to meet with each other, to pray for one another, to partake of the Lord's Supper together, to exhort and admonish each other. Maybe it's after the first, second hymn where your icy heart begins to thaw and you begin to worship God as He deserves to be worshipped.

God will use those means of singing together for your brothers and sisters, for you to be around them to secure the ends that He has ordained.

Maybe like Florence made Chadwick. Florence made Chadwick, she was a swimmer, a long-distance swimmer in 1952. And she attempted to swim 23 miles across the English Channel in both directions.

Fifteen straight hours she spent swimming in the water. Emotionally and physically, she was exhausted. And toward the end, there was a thick fog that began to set in.

[19:16] And the fog clouded her vision. She couldn't see the end, which made the swimming much more difficult. All she could see was the fog. And she had a trainer who was there to look out for sharks.

And she begged him to pull her out of the water. Another hour passed and she called it quits. She said, I'm done. And she later discovered that the shore was only a half mile away.

A half mile away. If she would have kept going, she would have made it to the end. And the next day she said, afterward in an interview, she said, all I could see was the fog. I think if I could have seen the shore, I would have made it.

Doesn't the Bible repeatedly command us to do such a thing? In the fog of difficulties, set your sights on Jesus. Set your sights on the finish line. And the following year, Chadwick tried again. And the fog set in again, just like last time. But this time she had a mental image of the shoreline in her mind. And she pushed herself along. And this time she finished the race. And she did it in record time.

[20:22] She became the first woman to swim across the English Channel in both directions. So our actions do matter. Don't they? The message of the apostles is never, they never say, you know, since you are secure, your actions don't have any significance.

Paul tells the church in Corinth to stand firm. firm. Paul and Barnabas urged churches to continue in the grace of God. Continue in the faith. One of my favorite Christmas movies around this time of year is the movie Rocky.

Rocky Balboa, the boxer. Yeah, it's a Christmas movie. It's definitely a Christmas movie. Rocky, Die Hard, is a Christmas movie as well. Yes, it is.

So Rocky beats the Soviet Union's most dangerous boxer, Drago, a 15-round heavyweight contest on Christmas Day and ends the Cold War.

I mean, that's a Christmas movie if I've ever heard of one. And The Karate Kid, Easter movie, but we can talk about that another time. So Rocky's determination to go the distance, that resonates with me.

[21:36] The apostles' message to the churches is always go the distance. Fight it out. Finish the race. Not in our own strength. No, we rely upon God's grace.

And the paradox is that God, who is keeping us, is working that grace out in our hearts as we have perseverance and persistence.

You'll recall the preaching series we just went through in Revelation. What is the repeated refrain to the seven churches that we heard about? Jesus continually comes back to, He says, you must overcome to be a conqueror.

You must conquer. In Rome, all the citizens would be clothed in white as the general returns after a great victory. And white is a prominent color in Revelation.

White represents forgiveness, but it also represents conquering. Believers are said to be clothed in white garments. They overcome their conquerors after their earthly struggle.

[ 22 : 42 ] Jesus, speaking to the church of Thyatira, says, to the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations. So only those who are finished the race are truly born anew.

We must conquer. We must finish the race. And Hebrews and Revelation have many passages like this.

And they also have warnings. They say, to those who do not conquer, God will not delight in you, but He will destroy you. There's stark warnings.

Hebrews 10, but the righteous one shall live by faith and he shrinks back. My soul has no pleasure in him. And those verses, those warnings are not put in there to frighten you, but to make sure we do not fall away.

It's a warning. It's like you're driving down a highway and you see a road sign that cautions drivers about the dangers ahead. The scriptures will warn us, be careful, do not turn back.

[ 23 : 50 ] You know, parents, we might do this with our children. You say, dear, you see that substance you're about to eat? Please don't eat that. Well, it has one of those hazardous toxic signs.

You probably shouldn't eat that. Well, we might not say it like that. We probably use much stronger language. Honey, if you eat it, you will die in no uncertain terms.

And that's why Hebrews and Revelation have such stark warnings for us. And God uses these warnings to accomplish his ends. His children cry out for strength, keep me safe, Lord.

Keep me safe. Okay, well, I think this question has been asked in previous weeks. What about those who fall away like Bill? What about us?

Could we think that we're Christians and not be like Bill? Well, that is a possibility. It's a very real possibility. Now, Bill is somewhat of an obvious example.

[ 24 : 49 ] Oftentimes, we don't know what is in someone's heart. You know, Judas appeared like a real disciple. He wasn't. Samson, on the other hand, with all his flaws and foibles, he did not commit apostasy.

He's in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11. You know, Peter denied Jesus, just like Judas, but Peter was restored. You know, one story that I think about in these terms about those who fall away and the warnings that Hebrews gives us is Thomas Cranmer.

So, Thomas Cranmer is one of the people that created the Book of Common Prayer. He was an Anglican. He's very similar to Peter. when Queen Mary came into power in England, Cranmer was stripped of his power as archbishop and he was imprisoned.

Queen Mary threatened to burn him at the stake unless he recanted his gospel teachings. Afraid of such a prospect, he recanted everything. He denied Jesus everything.

But, in Cranmer's life, that wasn't the last word. While in prison, the spirit began to work on him. He became deeply sorrowful over his denial of gospel teachings.

[ 26 : 14 ] And the authorities wanted to make an example of him, so they had him read his recantation publicly. But to their surprise, he withdrew it.

And in his final words, he offered to put his right hand, the hand that signed the document that Mary gave him, into the fire first. And that's exactly what he did. He was burned.

The issue is whether we definitively deny Jesus or not. We often don't know what's in someone's heart. When someone might be seeming like they're denying Jesus, God by his grace might bring them back.

So we don't know what's in their heart. But if there is continued unrepentance, it's a very good indication that their faith was never real or not. 1 John 2, verse 19, sums this idea well.

John writes, They went out from us, but they did not belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But their going shows that none of them belonged to us.

[ 27 : 24 ] Right? Jesus is very clear on this topic. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

On that day, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me. There's some scary words.

Notice the language here. It's, I never knew you. Remember last week? I never had that covenantal, intimate knowledge of you.

I never knew you in an intimate, loving way that I know my sheep. And those who fall away may give external signs of conversion. All right, remember Jesus' parable of the sower.

You recall that the seed was put on rocky soil and it sprung up in different places? And the seed grew for a time in the rocky soil and they received the word with joy. Can you imagine meeting somebody in the sanctuary?

[ 28 : 27 ] They received the word with joy about Jesus' death and resurrection? But Jesus says they have no root. They last only for a short time. The cares of the world choke out the faith.

So there is a real possibility that you begin the race but you don't finish the race. Well, if that's the case, can we actually truly have assurance in the race?

Can we actually be assured that we will finish it? You know, we know that God preserves His people, but how do we know that we are actually, in fact, one of God's own, that He will protect and preserve until the very end?

I think many good Christians have questions about this. There are a lot of good Christians who sincerely love the Lord and there's sometimes a black rope figure of doubt.

You know, a Dementor from Azkaban, one of those guys. They might follow you around, perhaps on a Sunday, sit right next to you on the pew, whispers in your ear that you're no child of God.

[ 29 : 35 ] Look at your life. many earnest Christians have experienced this. They doubt regarding the reality of God's forgiveness in their own life. Normally, it's an ongoing sin.

It's a grievous sin. Our conscience points the finger and accuses us. The clouds of doubt just seem to be hanging over our heads. In fact, we can actually see some of that in David's own life.

One of my favorite psalms, Psalm 3, verse 2 of that psalm, David wrote this, many are saying of my soul, there is no salvation for him and God.

They're saying, you know, God can save others, but there's no salvation for you. You had your chances. God has forsaken you. You are irredeemable.

You know, we know the Lord loved David, but David is hearing loud voices of condemnation.

Maybe you can relate to those loud voices of condemnation in your own conscience.

[ 30 : 38 ] You know, in fact, in 2 Samuel 16, we read that there's a guy, Shimei, who's actually following him around and yelling and screaming at him, David, you are a man of blood. You are a worthless man.

So those loud voices of condemnation were not just coming from his own mind. They're actually from people who are following him around. And certainly, David had his flaws, but he was not a worthless man.

But the, I think what one of the complexities of this is that David's own conscience knew that the enemy had grounds for these accusations. David is fleeing from Absalom in Psalm 3.

And those events were set in motion how? Well, it's his own grievous sin against Bathsheba. His murder of Uriah and his subsequent adultery. Right?

So, Satan's accusations often are not just falsities. Like, there's bits of truth in them. You have done wrong, haven't you? In Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, one of my favorite books, which I'm rereading now, which is an allegory of the Christian life, there's a character, his name is Mr. Littlefaith.

[ 31 : 50 ] Mr. Littlefaith was assaulted and robbed by faintheart, mistrust, and guilt. Three robbers. And he was wounded and left for dead by guilt, mistrust, and faintheart.

Mistrust picked his pockets and then guilt beat him over the head. And the robber stole all the coins out of his pockets. And so, Mr. Littlefaith was left to beg on the streets mostly for the rest of his life.

And being hungry, Mr. Littlefaith's heart was filled with grief and bitterness over this, his current condition. But then Bunyan points out, while Mr. Littlefaith had a weak faith, it was still a sincere one.

These robbers couldn't reach or steal the jewels that he carried with them. And those jewels represented Mr. Littlefaith's inheritance in Christ's kingdom. And he had the opportunity to sell them, just like Esau sold his birthright, to relieve some of the hardships, but Mr. Littlefaith refused to do that.

He would not, he could not ever part with the jewels that God had given him. And so Bunyan is saying, there's a difference between the jewels and the coin purse. The coin purse is our assurance and peace of mind.

[ 33 : 05 ] It can be plundered when we fall prey to doubt, shame, and guilt, but our jewels are secure. Those are always safe. The value of those jewels are immeasurable. And who can overcome these robbers?

Well, Bunyan writes, only Mr. Great Grace could overcome the robbers. It was the great grace of our Lord Jesus who restored Peter. And he could restore you too.

But I think rather than going to Mr. Great Grace, the Lord Jesus Christ, we tend in those moments when we feel those feelings of guilt, we tend in those moments to constantly and obsessively look at ourselves.

We say to ourselves, if I can just act better, be better, maybe I'll feel more like a Christian. I'll feel like a child of God. And so maybe when you're feeling guilty, we start to white-knuckle obedience for a little while, but then we fall and we're sitting right next to that black-robed Dementor, that figure of doubt.

He visits us again. And so what happens is we're on a performance hamster wheel. We're all inwardly legalists. We stumble and we're right back where we started. Our friend, the black-robed figure of doubt.

[ 34 : 20 ] But I think it's instructive what David did in Psalm 3. What David did is at the end, well, he doesn't look inside himself.

David looks outside of him. Psalm 3 ends with this statement, salvation belongs to the Lord. David writes, look, I'm in a small tent, I'm going to be killed, but God is still on his holy hill.

God is still God and he gets the last word. 1 John 3, verse 20 makes the same point. For whenever our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts.

So John and David, they both know our hearts condemn us. There will be moments where we do feel condemnation for those grievous sins in our lives. But see, God is greater than your hearts.

See, he holds the gavel and his verdict over your life is what really matters. So take what your conscience tells you seriously, brother and sister, but don't let your conscience have the final word.

[ 35 : 23 ] Don't let it have the last word. And there are a few sources of assurance. So if this is you, let me just encourage you. There are a few sources of assurance that the scripture gives us here that we can hold on to.

And the first one, which is what we just kind of talked about, is the truth of the gospel. The first foundation of assurance are the truths of the gospel. The believer, when struggling with their own sin, must flee for refuge to Christ crucified.

Paul asks, who will bring any charge against God's elect? The answer to that is nobody. Is it because we never fail, we never stumble, we never fall? No, it's because we believe in a message of grace.

Christ has accomplished it for us. Paul continues, it is God who justifies. So the verdict over your life is from the court of the highest jurisdiction and that already has been handed down.

It's the message that when you are resting on Christ, God declares that you are in the right and His righteousness imputed to you. So that exists whether you feel like a Christian or not.

[ 36 : 33 ] And no one can reverse it. Robert Murray McShane, an old Scottish minister, says, for every look itself, take ten looks at Christ. I've always thought about this verse because, you know, when you're driving, right, and you notice the windshield is dirty.

It's all these stains and smudges on them. You don't constantly look at how dirty your windshield is. You're going to crash the car. No, you look through the windshield at the object. So when we look inside ourselves, we will see our faith often is like a dirty windshield.

But we look at the object of our faith. You must look to the promises of God in all their bright array. Even if you believe you are ungodly, sinful, utterly hopeless, the worst of the worst, friend, the cross beckons you to look to the cross, to Jesus.

There is simply no condemnation for those who belong in Christ Jesus. There is nothing that can separate you from the love of Christ. God chose to set his love on you. He didn't have any help from you to accomplish that salvation.

So you put your trust in the cross. So the truth of the gospel are the first main source of assurance that we have. The second source is the subjective witness of the Holy Spirit.

[ 37 : 52 ] The subjective witness of the Holy Spirit. Now this is a supernatural source of assurance, especially in suffering. Will you cry out with Fanny Crosby, blessed assurance, Jesus is mine.

Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine. Now we don't have much time to talk about this supernatural form of assurance, but read Romans chapter 5, read 1 Peter 1. There is a subjective witness of the Spirit where the love of God is poured into your heart.

and they begin to pray, God, begin to pray for that witness of the Spirit in your life. And finally, and this is the most complicated one, the last source of assurance are the fruits of obedience in your life.

Ah, there's the, I don't know if I can, I don't know if that's going to help my cause. but Jesus says you will know them by their fruits, right?

You can look at the fruit in your life, and that should give you a sense of whether you actually are in Christ or not. Of course, this causes all kinds of questions, and I will say you might not be the best person to assess this in your own life, and that's why you become a member of a church, right?

[ 39 : 12 ] We look at each other's lives, and we can say as best I can tell, I think the Lord is working in you, brother and sister. You know, C.S. Lewis, he once counseled not to compare yourself with others in this respect.

He says, suppose there's an advertisement for toothpaste to make your teeth whiter, cleaner, and suppose someone inherited greater teeth and another bad teeth.

A person with bad teeth is genuinely using the toothpaste to brush their teeth every morning, but their teeth don't look as nice as someone born with just naturally good teeth.

Mrs. White's smile, he says, who never once uses toothpaste, but she was born with great teeth. Does that mean the toothpaste doesn't work? No, of course not. In the same way, Lewis writes, some people, you know, they can be naturally very angry, but God, by his grace, you are making improvements in that area of your life, despite the fact that you might be more angry than other people.

Right? Your temperament, you're born with it, but it's under new management. And so, don't compare yourself with other people. Right? Be encouraged that God is, he is, he's working your life, and even small improvements are ways that we can be encouraged of the fruits of obedience in our lives.

[ 40 : 29 ] But now, the fruits of obedience do not drive our assurance. They confirm and corroborate that we, in fact, are children of God. If you see fruit, you should improve your confidence that you are a new creation, that the old is gone, the new has come.

But if the cupboard is barren, scripture would have us to be warned. So, if you're not sure of whether, how to view this in your own life, you know, let me encourage you to read Galatians chapter five this week and ask yourself, is my life characterized by the fruit of the spirit or the fruit of the flesh, and then pray that God would reveal that to you.

But if you're not quite sure, you know, maybe, I just feel like I'm more characterized by the fruit of the flesh than I'd like to be. We don't approach the problem of fixing that by trying to yield more fruit, right?

Let me give you an illustration. When driving a car, you know, our works are kind of like a speedometer, right? If the speedometer is at zero, how would you try to fix that?

Well, would you try to reach out to the speedometer and then move it from zero to 60? Then you kind of get more works. And so everything's all solved.

[ 41 : 52 ] The speedometer says it's 60. No, you don't do that. What you would do if the speedometer is not working is you would lean your weight on the accelerator. You lean your weight on the promises of the gospel and God's character.

Right? And if it's not moving, maybe the engine needs to be something in the engine. Maybe your faith, you need to go back to the truth of the gospel and ask yourself, am I really trusting in these? Am I relying upon them? If you see a tree with mushy brown fruit, right, you don't like go to the tree and like take one out and start painting it red or green, right?

You have to attend to the root of the tree. So don't ignore the root and just start, you know, painting fruits to make it look like, you know, maybe that will solve the problem.

And this is how Romans chapter 4 describes how Abraham grew in his faith. He grew in faith and so he grew in holiness. Abraham convinced of God's promises, Romans 4 20 says this, no unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

[ 43 : 07 ] You see that he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God. So maybe one of the best things you can do to help you grow in your fruit bearing is to really consider and meditate on these doctrines of grace we've been talking about.

If you give God more glory, you grow more strong in your faith, that is what grows your holiness. Okay. All right.

Well, one final piece of advice that if you say, look, I'm doing that, I'm still struggling. You might say, look, I don't love the things I ought to love and I don't hate the things I ought to hate.

Well, one piece of advice I give you, which has been such an encouragement to me and many other people, is that struggling against indwelling sin is in fact evidence of grace in your own life. John Owen writes, the spirit's operation is known by the flesh's opposition. We find a man's strength by the burden he carries, not the pace that he goes. He says, oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?

[ 44 : 17 ] Owen writes, that's a better evidence of grace than saying, God, I thank you, I'm not as these other men. So if you can say, oh, wretched man that I am, I don't do the things I want to do, that's actually a very strong indicator the spirit is working in your life.

And God mercifully receives even the imperfect obedience of all who are accepted in his son. John Owen continues, know that God despises not small things. He takes notice of the least breathings of our hearts after him when we ourselves can see nor perceive no such thing.

He's saying, look, you might think your faith, it's kind of like a smoldering flax. There's not much, it's just a small little flame.

It feels like it's about to go out. It doesn't feel like a roaring flame. Owen writes, look, you might just see lead or clay, but he sees the gold.

Even when we continue in sin, your struggle against sin pleases God more than your actions.

Everything that is of him is noted in his book, though not in ours.

[ 45 : 30 ] Here's what I love about what he says. Here's a wonderful verse, a wonderful piece of advice that Owen gives. He remembers the duties which we forget, and forgets the sins which we remember.

There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us. So the very things that you constantly remember in your mind, if you're in Christ, God has forgotten about those things. And the things that you've forgotten, those true works of faith that you've actually done in the name of the Lord Jesus, he still remembers those things.

And he's a God of grace. All right, let me conclude. We begin reflecting on the everlasting love of God by Owen. Let me conclude with Amy Carmichael who found this same love as an everlasting consolation for her.

Amy Carmichael has great poetry. If you've never read her stuff, you ought to. She has one poem which I've carried with me for the last few years, and it's called Before I Was.

Amy writes this, speaking to God, You love me because you love me.

[ 46 : 48 ] No other reason can I find, no other reason can there be. No human love, were it not blind, could ever care for me. But thy pure eyes do read me through.

My soul is naked unto thee, and yet, oh, wonder ever knew, my Lord, thou lovest me. And thou wilt love, if good of mine had caused thy glorious love to be, then surely would thy love decline and weary Lord of me.

I may not fear, for to the end thou loves, oh, Lord, oh, who but thee, the sinner's savior and his friend, would set his love on me. And on thee now my heart is set, thy name is music unto me.

Oh, help me never to forget that I am loved by thee. Amen. All right. It's a wonderful poem about God's love for her, and that if he loved her, that's an everlasting love.

Okay, well, let's open it up for a few minutes of questions or comments, clarifications. We've got about five minutes. faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

[ 48 : 05 ] I've contemplated on that. Faith is a gift. It's given to me. I don't work my way up, but that's the assurance that I have. If I have faith, that assures me that I'm a Christian.

And Romans 8, 16, it says, the Spirit of God bears with us that we are his children. I can't prove that empirically. I know. Yeah.

That's supernatural assurance. difficult, simple thing I've ever had to do in my life. Yes. Thank you. Well, that's Elizabeth. Yeah. So, talk a little more about the coin purse and the jewels. What is that? Yeah, the coin purse is when faith, when Mr.

Little Faith was beaten over the head by guilt, mistrust, and faint heart. That's an allegory of a Christian who is experiencing loud voices of condemnation, of their guilt, and those robbers stole all of his coins, and he had to beg for the rest of his life.

[ 49 : 09 ] And so, the coins are assurance. The coins are our comfort in the faith. But the jewels, they couldn't steal the jewels from him. No amount of guilt or our own voice of condemnation will ever take those away from us.

That represents our inheritance in Christ's kingdom. That represents the, that represents pretty much this whole first point. That he keeps us, he loves us, it's an everlasting love, and we will never lose those.

So, it kind of shows that you could be a Christian and not experience a lot of assurance of faith in your own life. And you could struggle with that. But that doesn't mean that you're not actually... What are the coins? The coins are... What coins are your worldly goods? Not necessarily. How we feel about it.

salvation. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That's right. So Bunyan's drawing a distinction between our salvation and our assurance of our salvation. Those are two different things. Yes. We have peace with God through Christ Jesus our Lord.

[ 50 : 14 ] We might not always feel that peace. That's what the distinction Bunyan's drawing. Susan. So I'm Bill Bright's famous for a spiritual walk. The last page you find is the train, right?

And he says the locomotion, the energy of that train is Christ and he's accomplished work for our salvation. Our emotions are the truth.

So, you know, if we base our assurance on how we feel from the other day, it's going to be a hard slog. When you talk about Bill, right?

So, Bill, for anybody who's a parent's Bill, the fact that Bill knew Christ, right? And then kind of was exposed to other things like the general function.

We can have so much time if they're a product and they have Christ that we will hold on because nothing can take us away from that, right?

[ 51 : 15 ] So, if they have that, that, right? So, we can have some assurance of a parent of Bill or a grandparent of Bill, right?

I know what you mean. I don't think you can have assurance of his salvation, but you can certainly know that your efforts to raise Bill and teach him the scriptures are not in vain and we can pray that God can use that to bring Bill, you know, like a prodigal son.

I know my father is generous. My mother taught me the scripture and so maybe God will work that out in Bill's life and we can pray for that and hope for that. One of my favorite examples in history is Monica who prayed for Augustine.

Augustine was a Bill. Augustine was a billion miles away from God and Monica taught him the scriptures, continued to pray for him and God used that mightily in his life.

But I don't think we can use any sort of previous experience as a present assurance that Bill is in fact a Christian. I don't think we can do that.

[ 52 : 23 ] Yeah? I think two scriptures that are encouraging I think particularly to parents is, well, one, looking at God's love that he wishes not to parents, but another one is that it's faith like a mustard seed.

And then the other one is train up a child in the way they should go and when they're old they won't depart from it. I think these sorts of small planted seeds and God's character combined that's like the type of that love of the father I think gives parents the ability to like open their hands to their children and surrender them to the Lord.

I think those are... They're exposed so much to others telling them how can you believe in it and not do it around this awful thing and all of that.

Yeah. And a reason for God to talk about that. Yeah. And if they're still open to prayer, they're not going to pray with you and they want to pray with you and they want to pray with you and they want to pray with you and they want to pray with you and none of those labors, all of them are kept in God's book.

He knows each one of them. Elizabeth. So, God loves them more. Talk a little bit more about the black robe, whatever that is.

[ 53 : 45 ] Oh, yeah. This is the last question. That's the black robe figure of doubt who whispers in your ear, you're no child of God. I think that could be the enemy, whispering in our ears, accusing us.

It could be your conscience. Yeah, it could be any of those. But I think like David, when you're beloved of God, your salvation is secure, he loves you until the very ends.

There's still sometimes those black robe figures of doubt who come to us. and want to call into question our identity as a son or daughter of God. And it could be spiritual warfare, it could be our consciences, but at the end of the day, it's just a metaphor.

I just wanted to highlight when you talked about the symbolism of white and wearing the white robe as both forgiveness and conquering victory, I mean, that's like a totally profound unity of thought in terms of like, when you look and live your life as a race, it really is the ministry of reconciliation and it really is the call of forgiveness on the followers of Jesus to bring the love of Christ to the world because it really is this like challenge, like the great mountain of forgiveness and reconciliation, that is the transformative thing in the world.

Amen. And so that is the victory, right? And like the reality is as Christians, we acknowledge we cannot what Christ did. So I think that was a really profound moment when you put those two adjacent to each other.

[ 55 : 38 ] Great way to end the class. Forgiveness, conquering, they're together. Amen. Thank you, Beth. All right. Well, friends, we have one more class next week, Lord willing.

John will come and conclude our journey together.