

Place: Lurgan Baptist: 26:11:2006

Reading: 1 John 5:6-13

BACK TO BASICS

17. DO YOU KNOW FOR SURE ?

There is a little town in Texas called “ *Uncertain*.” it evolved from fishing camps and resort operators around scenic Lake Caddo in Harrison Country. The site is near “ *Uncertain Landing*,” so named because steamboat captains in earlier days often had trouble mooring their vessels. It was the site of an old hunting, fishing, and boating society called “ *the Uncertain Club*,” which existed in the early 1900’s. The little town of “ *Uncertain*,” Texas is advertised as Texas best kept secret, and Lake Caddo has been dubbed “ *the best photo spot*,” in Texas. My are there not many people who live in the spiritual town of uncertain ? Their language is something like that of the little girl who was travelling in a lift from the beach to the top of the cliff. She was heard to say “ *I know we’ll get to the top all right, but I’m frightened that we won’t.*” Is this not the attitude of many of God’s people ? These folk love John Newton’s hymn,

*“ Tis a point I long to know
Oft it causes anxious thought
Do I love the Lord or no ?
Am I His, or am I not ?”*

My do you know for sure when you die you are going to heaven ? Now we are living in an age of uncertainty and there are a lot of things that are no longer very certain, and its impossible to be absolutely certain about everything. I heard about a woman who came out of a beauty salon and she was met by her neighbour, and her neighbours said, “ *Why Sally, what in the world have you done to your hair, it looks just like a wig ?*” She said, “ *It is a wig.*” The lady replied, “ *Well you could have fooled me.*” There are some things we cannot be sure of, but the Bible teaches that we can be sure of salvation. This is one of the reasons why John wrote this letter. Do you see what he says in (5:13) ? The word “ *know*,” should be circled in your Bible. It’s the key word in 1 John, for its used over thirty times. Some say, “ *well, you can’t really know you are going to heaven when you die.*” Yet John says, “ *you can.*”

I heard about a little fellow that was standing by the side of a road and a man came along who was lost. The man said to the little boy, “ *Hey sonny do you know how to get to town ?*” The little boy said, “ *No Sir, I don’t.*” The man said, “ *Well, where is route 20 ?*” The little boy said, “ *I don’t know.*” The man said, “ *Well, where does this road go ?*” The little boy said, “ *I don’t know.*” The man said, “ *Well, what is the name of this street ?*” The little boy said, “ *I don’t know.*” The man said with exasperation, “ *Boy you don’t know anything do you ?*” The little boy said, “ *I know I ain’t lost.*” Do you know for sure you are not lost ? My

we can know beyond the shadow of a doubt that we are the children of God. I want to give you three things this upon which we can all base the assurance of salvation !

(1) HIS WORK FOR ME MAKES ME SURE

You see, we are saved by Jesus Christ who we are told in (5:6) “ *came by water and blood.* ” Now what does that phrase mean ? Well, it is to be,

(a) UNDERSTOOD SACRIFICIALLY:

Now remember that John wrote this book against the background of a particular heresy. A group of people called the Cerinthians believed that Jesus Christ was a mere man. *They said that the Lord Jesus was a human being and that the divine Christ came upon Him at His baptism and departed at His crucifixion.* John wrote of course to refute such ideas and two of the witnesses that he brings forward are right here. Here are two witnesses to prove that Jesus Christ is God. John says that the Lord Jesus “ *came by water and blood,* ” an allusion to the commencement and the conclusion of our Lord’s ministry. The Lord Jesus “ *came by water,* ” that is He inaugurated His public ministry by a public baptism. The water refers to His baptism in Jordan, when the Father spoke from heaven and said, “ *this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* ” (Matt 3:13) At the same time the Spirit descended like a dove and rested on Him. This was the Father’s testimony of His Son at the beginning of His ministry. But John says the Lord Jesus came also “ *by blood.* ” Indeed John himself describes how that “ *one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.* ”

(Jn 19:34) For His was a sacrificial death. More over, the Father witnessed in miracle power when Christ was on the cross, the supernatural darkness, the earthquake, the rending of the veil. No wonder the centurion cried out, “ *Truly this was the Son of God.* ” (Matt 27:54) The cross witnessed to the deity of Christ. For when Christ was on the cross, He did not cease to be Christ, He did not cease to be the eternal Son of God. Jesus Christ was God in human flesh dying for you and me.

My on both occasions at His baptism, and on the Cross the Father testified to the deity of His Son. But I think that John also had another meaning when he used this phrase “ *by water and blood,* ” for this can be,

(b) UNDERSTOOD SYMBOLICALLY:

For I believe the blood refers to our salvation, while the water refers to our sanctification. *The blood refers to our initial conversion, while the water refers to our continuous cleansing. The blood testifies to our judicial cleansing while the water speaks of our practical cleansing.* When you walked into the Old Testament Tabernacle the first piece of furniture that you come to would be the brazen altar. This was the altar at which the sacrifice of the animal was made, pouring out his

blood to symbolise that we could not enter into the presence of God except through the shedding of blood. Then as you continued on into the Tabernacle the next piece of furniture you come to would be the brazen laver. (Exo 30:18) At the Brazen Altar blood was poured out, at the Brazen Laver water was poured out. The Altar points to the Cross, the Laver points to the Cleansing. The Blood of Jesus Christ saves me, but the water of the Word sanctifies me. The Altar was for offering, the Laver was for washing. The Altar indicates to us our Justification through the blood, the Laver indicates to us our Sanctification through the Word.

So to us today, the Laver speaks of Cleansing through the Scriptures by the Spirit. Do you recall what the psalmist said ? “ *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way ? By taking thereto according to thy Word.* ” (Ps 119:9) Do you recall how Christ prayed in the Upper Room ? “ *Sanctify them through Thy truth, thy Word is truth.* ” (Jn 17:17) My have you been defiled by sin throughout this past week ? Have your thoughts, words, deeds grieved the Spirit of God ? Has your daily fellowship with the Lord been affected ? Have you come to worship this with defiled hands and divided hearts ? Is it not time you got to the Laver, where fellowship is restored ? John tells us that Jesus Christ came “ *by water and blood,* ” and (1)

(2) HIS WITNESS IN ME MAKES ME SURE

The Holy Spirit’s witness is extremely important to John. In fact, the word witness is used 9 times in this passage we are studying. The root word means, “ *one who remembers or who has knowledge of something by personal experience.* ” One feature about witnesses in the Bible is that one witness isn’t sufficient. The one witness might be truthful, but to convince men of the truth, the Bible prescribes at least two or three witnesses. (Deut 19:15 2 Cor 13:1) Now the witness of the Holy Spirit does not supplement the work of the Saviour. My when Jesus Christ died on the cross and poured out His precious blood, He did all that was needed to save us from sin. God sent Christ to accomplish our salvation, but He sent the Holy Spirit that we might appropriate that salvation. And the witness of the Holy Spirit is indispensable if we are going to be saved and know it.

Now John speaks here about,

(a) *THE RELIABILITY OF THIS WITNESS:*

Look at (5:8) if you will ! Now we have spoken of the witness of the water and the blood, *but the Lord adds still another witness, the witness of the Holy Spirit.* Now a witness is absolutely useless unless he is reliable, unless he can be trusted. Lawyers have a rule of thumb that they go by. *If you have the law on your side, you argue the law, if you have the truth on your side you argue the truth, but if you have neither the law or truth on your side you attack your opponent.* That is why so often the tactics of a lawyer is to try to attack and to destroy the credibility of a witness that is being used, because a witness is no better than his word. My it does not matter what a man says he has seen or heard if you cannot believe him. That is why John tells us in (5:6) that “ *the Spirit is truth.* ” You see, the ultimate issues at stake between the

Christian faith and all other world religions is truth. It does not matter who Mohammed said he was, or who Joseph Smith he was, what matters is who is telling the truth ? Now is there a witness that can confirm and affirm the reliability of what the Lord Jesus said ?

There He is. He is the Holy Spirit. We were not present at the baptism of Christ or at His death, but the Spirit of God was present. And the Holy Spirit witnesses to the blood, to the water, to the cross, and to the Lord Jesus. *He witnesses to us that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He is the Saviour of the world. His testimony is truth because He is truth.* Do you recall what the Saviour said in His Upper Room ministry about the Holy Spirit ? He said, “ *when He the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.* ” (Jn 16:13) My you can never know spiritual, eternal, final truth apart from the Holy Spirit, “ *for no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.* ” (1 Cor 12:3) (a)

(b) THE REVELATION BY THIS WITNESS:

Look if you will at (5:9) The witness of the Holy Spirit is not a witness of reason, or of rationalization, but it's a witness of revelation. You see, no-one is ever saved by just sitting down and figuring it out. If a person is ever saved he is saved by the revealing witness of the Holy Spirit. When Christ asked the disciples who He was, Peter said, “ *Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God.* ” Then Christ said to Peter “ *Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.* ” (Matt 16:16-17) Now the witness of the Holy Spirit is,

1. An ETERNAL Witness:

That is, it is not a witness of men on earth, but of God in heaven. That means that is a witness that can only be accepted by faith. Now that becomes a stumbling block to many people. They say, “ *Oh, we cannot accept anything just on faith.* ” Can you not ? Sure, you accept the witness of men by faith every day. That's why John says in (5:9) “ *Since we receive the witness of men,* ” You know, when your wife prepares dinner for you, you do not say to her, “ *You taste it first because you may have poisoned me.* ” You just accept by faith that she has prepared a good dinner. Do you see when you get on that plane ? Do you demand to see the pilot and examine his credentials ? My if we accept the witness of men, how much more should we accept the witness of God for the witness of God is greater than men. 1.

2. An INTERNAL Witness:

Look if you will at (5:10) How do I know that Jesus is Lord ? How do I know that Jesus Christ is my Lord ? By the internal witness of the Holy Spirit to my human spirit. My the moment we believe on the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit enters our hearts to abide there for ever and “ *the Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.* ” (Rom 8:16 Gal 4:6) I know I am saved because of the inward assurance given to me by the Holy Spirit.

***“ If one should ask of me, how can I tell
Glory to Jesus, I know very well
God’s Holy Spirit with mine doth agree
Constantly witnessing Jesus loves me.”***

(c) *THE ROLE OF THIS WITNESS:*

For the role of the Holy Spirit is always to point us to Christ. (Jn 16:14) That’s why John says in (5:11)

“And this is the record,” or testimony ! Do you what the witness or testimony of the Holy Spirit is ? Eternal life is found in the eternal Lord ! *“ He hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”* (5:12) Suppose I take this Bible and put a pen inside it. Then I say to you, *“ I am going to gave you this book.”* When I give you this book, you also get the pen. This is what John is telling us here. *“ He that hath the Son hath life.”* When you get the book, Christ, you get the pen, life. When you receive Christ, you have eternal life. My what about you ? Have you got Christ, and therefore got life eternal and abundant ? Have you the assurance of salvation this ? (1) (2)

(3) HIS WORD TO ME MAKES ME SURE

The key verse in this entire book is (5:13) It is our affidavit of assurance. In fact the only thing more important than the assurance of salvation is salvation itself. Because if you can be saved and not know it, then you can lose it and not miss it. John speaks here about,

(a) *THE BASIS OF ASSURANCE:*

And the basis of assurance is the Word of God ! *“ These things have I written unto you,”* refers to the Scripture, it refers to the Word of God. You see, John wrote his gospel that we might be saved, but John wrote his epistle that we might be sure. John wrote his gospel that we might know how to be saved. He says, *“ but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name.”* (Jn 20:31) But John wrote his epistle that you might know that you are saved. *“ These things have I written unto you that ye may be know that ye have eternal life,”* (5:13) There is only one sure way that anyone can know they are going to heaven and that is the Word of God. Now I believe you ought to be able to point to a time when you did definitively receive the Lord Jesus, but don’t worry if you don’t have the exact day and date ! Charles Spurgeon well said, ***“ a man can know he is alive even if he cannot remember his birthday.”*** Suppose a man gets saved and some years later is involved in a car accident and loses his memory.

He can no longer remember who he is, much less when he got saved. Does that mean he is not saved ? Absolutely not. I mean there are lots of people who are forgetful about days and dates.

I heard about a fellow who went in to see his Doctor and he said, *“ Doctor,*

there's something wrong with me. I cannot remember anything." The Doctor said, *" Well, sit down here and tell me all about it."* The man said, *" tell you about what ?"* **Remembrance** is not the basis of your assurance ! **Feelings** also cannot be the basis of your assurance ! If you base your salvation on just how you feel you will ride a spiritual roller coaster all of your life. You will be saved when you feel good and lost when you feel bad. The thing to remember is that salvation is not a matter of feelings, it is a matter of faith and a matter of fact.

***"For feelings come and feelings go
And feelings are deceiving
My warrant is the Word of God
Naught else is worth believing***

***Though all my soul should feel condemned
For want of some sweet token
There is One greater than my heart
Whose Word cannot be broken***

***I'll stand on His unchanging Word
Til soul and body sever
Though all things should pass away
His Word shall stand forever."***

My the only true basis of assurance is God's infallible Word. (a)

(b) THE BLESSING OF ASSURANCE:

What is the blessing of assurance ?

1.The Joy of SALVATION:

The first blessing of being saved is knowing it. Knowing that I am as sure as heaven as if I were already there. My the first joy of being saved is knowing that you are saved, and you can know that you are saved because God cannot lie. He has given His Word. But assurance not only brings the joy of salvation, it gives us,

2. The Joy of SERVICE:

Dwight L. Moody said, *" I have never know a Christian who was any good in the work of Christ who did not have assurance of salvation."* When they first started to build the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco no safety devices were used, and 23 men fell to their death. During the construction of the last part of that bridge a safety net was constructed at the cost of 100,000 dollars, but it saved the lives of 10 men. When they completed the bridge they discovered through an exhaustive study, that *25% more work was accomplished in the same period of time when the men were totally sure they were safe.* There is nothing that dams up the rivers of joy in the heart of a Christian like doubt. There is nothing that short circuit's the

power of prayer like doubt. There is nothing that robs us of the joy of service like doubt. But this book (1 John) was written that you might know that you have eternal life. Do you know for sure ?

(1) (2) (3) Sir James Simpson, the discoverer of chloroform, was dying. A friend came to him and said, “ *Sir James, what are your speculations ?* ” He replied, “ *Speculations ? I do not have any speculations. I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.* ” My ***do you know ? Do you know for sure ?***