

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, July 24, 2013 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

A SURE THING... ASSURANCE “A Blueprint for Assurance... The Finished Work of Christ” *1 John 5:13, 1 John 1:1-4, 5-6*

Many people lack assurance of their salvation either stated or unstated. Some may suffer on in silence never having the real peace of mind that their salvation is secure. Some may experience intermittent bouts of doubt and fear about their salvation. It is important for a genuine believer to have assurance of his or her salvation for a number of reasons, but primarily because they cannot grow in their faith and commitment Christ if they remain at the beginning point of salvation and are never sure themselves that they are saved. Nevertheless, there are many causes and reasons that could lay behind a lack of assurance, many of which are easily answered and addressed in Scripture.

5 Primary Reasons Why People Lack Assurance: We looked at these last week so just in the way of review the following are a few of the reasons that some lack assurance of their faith.

- 1. Commitment problem** - Doubting the reality of one's commitment to Christ. Some doubt the reality of their commitment to Christ. Sometimes when a person cannot see visible or tangible evidence of their commitment to Christ and Christian ideals/practices/behavior it causes them to doubt and lack assurance. They may question, “Did I really mean it when I prayed?” Maybe my heart wasn't sincere enough?”
- 2. Procedure problem** - Questioning the correctness of the salvation process. Some question the correctness of the procedure they went through when they were saved... can't pin-point a specific time and place, didn't say those “exact” words in the sinners prayer, didn't do it right the first time, wasn't at a church, wasn't with a minister, etc.
- 3. Doctrinal problem** - Lack of Biblical teaching and grounding. Often when one is struggling with doubts and a lack of assurance is may simply be a learning/grounding problem. A lack of Scriptural grounding and learning on the foundational and doctrinal understanding of “salvation” and particularly “the eternal security of the believer” Those who don't believe in eternal security will naturally lack assurance... how can they ever know. Those who attach works to salvation will naturally doubt. Why? Because a lack of grounding on the basic Biblical teaching on such things as salvation, and doctrines such as “the eternal security of the believer” cause us to just not “know” for sure. We've never studies it and been convinced of it.
- 4. Sin/Disobedience Problem** - Unconfessed or unrepentant sin. Sin in a believer-s life will always lead to doubt if it remains unconfessed and unrepented of. You can be sure that Satan, the enemy, will jump on our failings to point the finger and cause us to question the validity of our salvation.

- 5. Lostness problem** - Lack of salvation or lostness. For that one who is having doubts or lack of assurance of their salvation they should always check it out and be sure that they are indeed saved. Some have reason to doubt because they are lost. Sometimes it is not a lack of assurance or doubting your salvation, but the conviction of the Holy Spirit that they were never saved, and are in fact lost.

Listen as each of the following case studies are read and see if you can identify what may be the reason that each is experiences a lack of assurance.

CASE STUDY 1: I grew up in a Christian home and was raised in the church. I was saved when I was a teenager and was baptized. I have attended church regularly throughout my life, but recently I have been having some doubts that I was really saved when I was young. I can't remember the exact words that I said when I was saved and I can't remember the exact day very clearly anymore... although I used to remember. I keep hearing preachers say that you ought to be able to know the time and day you were saved, but I just can't remember all the details. I've never really doubted my salvation until recently, but I've been thinking a lot about it lately and I'm really starting to have doubts now. I don't know what is causing it all of sudden or maybe it's just that I'm really not saved.

CASE STUDY 2: I was raised in church. My grandfather was even a preacher. My dad is a deacon and my mom has been a Sunday School teacher ever since I was young, growing up. I know that I am saved... my whole family is. We are good people. We go to church regularly. We are pretty involved in every aspect of church life. I just believe that God loved me and has accepted me as His, but recently I've been struggling with doubts. I've never felt this way before... I just always thought I was okay. We are just such a religious family and I've always believed that we are all going to end up in the same place one day. I'm just not sure where these doubts and unsure feelings inside of me are coming from

CASE STUDY 3: I can remember the day and time I was saved like it was yesterday. I remember clearly asking Jesus to come into my heart and be "Lord and Savior" of my life. It's all so clear to me, but I never really bought into this whole "goody, goody" stuff at church. I go to church regularly and I do enjoy it when I'm there, but I don't really socialize with "Christians" very much. They just seem so "stuffy" and so judgmental of others so much of the time, and I can't go along with that... seems pretty hypocritical to me and so un-Christ-like. I, myself, probably do some things that a lot of "Church-people" would frown on. Recently at a home Bible-study I stated some things were said that got me to thinking and I started getting this feeling inside. I'm not sure what it was, but it sure made me uneasy. Ever since that Bible study that night I have been wondering if I'm really saved. I've never really doubted my salvation before, but now I'm not so sure.

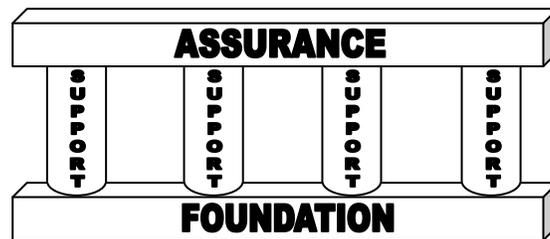
What do you think about the following by quote? What do you think Os Guinness is saying about faith in general, about assurance? Share your thoughts

"Faith does not feed on thin air but on facts."

-Os Guinness

* **Os Guinness** is a Christian apologist and social analyst who lives in McLean, Virginia. Born in China during World War II, he remained there until 1951 when the Communists forced most foreigners to leave. Educated in England, he did undergraduate studies at the University of London and postgraduate studies at University of Oxford, where he graduated with a D.Phil in the social sciences from Oriel College. He has written or edited more than twenty books, including *The American Hour* (Free Press, 1993), *The Call* (Word 1998), *Time for Truth* (Baker 2000), *Long Journey Home* (Doubleday 2001), and *Unspeakable: Facing Up to Evil in an Age of Genocide and Terror* (HarperCollins, 2005). Guinness is the creative force behind *The Trinity Forum*, a Christian think tank that came about as the result of a remark by one of Guinness's mentors. "Peter Berger, one of my mentors in sociology, remarked that the United States is a nation of Indians ruled by Swedes," Guinness notes. "By that he meant that the American people are as religious as the people of India-the most religious country in the world-but that American leadership is often as secular as Sweden, the most secular country in the world. And the tone deafness between these two groups causes a lot of national friction. The Trinity Forum was built upon Berger's remark-as well as upon the historical precedents set by William Wilberforce."

Remember Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence (facts) of things not seen." (NKJV) And in one of our key text John tells us in 1 John 5:13, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know (factually) that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God." (NKJV) So, faith truly does not feed on "thin air" but on fact! We can know, and be assured. We don't have to flounder in our faith and waver with doubts! We can experience and know assurance, but how. We began our study last week of this "Blueprint for Assurance." It looked something like this:



1. **A strong foundation** = the foundation upon which we build our assurance is the Word of God, or what we called the Authority of God's Word
2. **Supporting columns** = those things that support assurance... the diagram above show the four support columns for our assurance they are 1) the finished work of Christ... in other words, we are not saved by what we do, but rather by what Christ has already done on our behalf on the cross, 2) our faith Christ... trusting Him and fully relying on what He has done for us, 3) our obedience to Christ... in other words, living out our faith (many people who aren't living like a Christian ought to live will have doubts, 4) our love for other Christians, other believers... this give strong structural support to our faith
3. **Supported structure** = having a sense of assurance, our assurance, the Holy Spirit confirms this in our and gives us a sense of assurance.

Again this study, based on the Apostle John's letter of 1 John, will study these six elements that make up this blue print for assurance. Last week we started with the strong foundation on the Word of God. This week we want to take a look at the first supporting column that we are calling "Finished Work of Christ."

Think of it like this: If you were unemployed and owed \$100,000 to a bank, you would probably feel that the situation was hopeless. But what if a billionaire told you that he would

cover your debt and deposit \$1 million into your bank account? What more could you do to clear up your debt? Nothing more than accept the gift and draw funds from the now healthy bank account.

What about our spiritual account with God? Jesus has done all that is necessary to provide complete salvation for every person who has ever lived or ever will live. The huge debt of sin has been paid already at the cross. And that include you, no matter how deeply or often you have sinned.

CHRIST'S FINISHED WORK SATISFIES GOD'S DEMANDS

What God can't tolerate? (1 John 1:5) – 1 John 1:5 says, *"⁵This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all."* The message that John and other apostles preached came from God (God's Word), not from Men (Galatians 1:12, *"¹²I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ."*) What does he mean when he says, *"God is light; in him there is no darkness at all"?* In Scripture, light and darkness are very familiar symbols that can carry much meaning.

2 Ways Light and Darkness are Pictured in Scripture:

1. Intellectually - Intellectually "light" refers to biblical truth, while "darkness" refers to error or falsehood.

Scriptural Examples:

Psalms 119:105 – *"¹⁰⁵Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."*

Proverbs 6:23 – *"²³For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life..."*

John 1:4 – *"⁴In him (Jesus) was life, and that life was the light of all mankind."*

John 8:12 – *"¹²When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'"*

2. Morally – Morally "light" refers to holiness and purity, while "darkness" refers to sin or wrongdoing.

Scriptural Examples:

Romans 13:11-14 – *"¹¹And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. ¹⁴Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh."*

Ephesians 5:8-12 – *"⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹²It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret."*

1 Thessalonians 5:4-7 – *"⁴But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵You are all children of the light and children of the day. We*

do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.”

So what does this tell us about what God can't tolerate? *The short answer is that God can't tolerate "darkness," but that is not at all talking about physical darkness as in night time. Scripturally it is a picture of something quite different.*

2 Things God Can't Tolerate:

1. God can't tolerate error, untruth, falsehood

Scriptural Examples:

Ephesians 4:18 - "They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts."

Ephesians 2:1-3 - "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath."

2. God can't tolerate sin, iniquity, transgression

Scriptural Examples:

Isaiah 59:2 - "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."

Romans 3:23- "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 6:23 - "For the wages of sin is death (separation from God), but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

A Biblical Example of What God Can't Tolerate: (Isaiah 6:1-7) What can't God tolerate according to Isaiah's encounter with God in the temple? "^dIn the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.' ⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. ⁵ 'Woe to me!' I cried. 'I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.' ⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.' – Isaiah 6:1-7

- 1. God can't tolerate falsehood/error** – (v.5) Unclean lips
- 2. God can't tolerate sin/iniquity** – (v.7) Iniquity and sin is purged (see also Isaiah 59:2)
- 3. God can't tolerate unrighteousness or lack of holiness/purity** – (vv.2, 5) Covered his face and eyes, can't look on God's holiness because of his unholiness (see also 1 Peter 1:16)
- 4. God can't tolerate darkness** – (vv.3-6) "glory" meaning the weighty importance and shining majesty which accompanies God's presence, the smoke from a bright glowing fire light, live coals all picture a purifying God driving darkness away (see Isaiah 9:2)

What we were (or were) before Christ?

1. **Sinners/sinful – Romans 3:23**
2. **Unrighteous – Romans 3:10**
3. **Dead in trespasses and sins – Ephesians 2:1-5**
4. **Darkness – Ephesians 5:8**
5. **Separated from God – Isaiah 59:2, Romans 6:23**

What satisfies God demands? (1 John 2:2, John 19:30)

The Apostle John wrote that Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient to meet God's holy demands for justice. Because God is perfect, He cannot tolerate sin (1 John 1:5-6). But there is hope for sinful man.

1. **God's just nature demanded action (appeasement) against sin (1 John 2:2)** – John stated in 1 John 2:2, *“² And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”* (NKJV)
 - The word “propitiation” carries the meaning of satisfying God's justice, literally the word means “appeasement” or “satisfaction.”
 - God's nature demanded that He do something about our sin.
 - Yet what He did was to show us mercy instead of judgment we deserved.
 - The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross satisfied the demands of God's holiness for the punishment of sin.
 - God sent His only Son to take our sin upon Himself and become the object of God's wrath against our sin.
 - If we have received Christ's offer of forgiveness, then we are forgiven and no longer have to fear eternal punishment of sin.
 - In the Old Testament, God said, “... it is the blood that made atonement for the soul” (Lev. 17:11)
 - The blood of animals could never provide the all-sufficient sacrifice.
 - The Old Testament sacrifices pointed forward to the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.
2. **God merciful nature satisfied (appeased) what is required against sin (John 19:28-30)** – *“²⁸ After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I thirst!” ²⁹ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. ³⁰ So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.”* – John 19:28-30 The great truth of 1 John concerning the all-sufficient work of Jesus Christ is emphasized throughout the New Testament. On the cross Jesus said, “It is finished” (Jn 19:30). He knew that He had emptied the cup of God's wrath. His work was done. It is so complete that God requires nothing more from us to be added to the sacrifice... no personal merit, no religious ritual, no exhausting work. As we need to do is trust ourselves to Him.

What Was Finished at the Cross?:

1. **The prophecies of Scripture were finished** – There are over 300 prophecies about Jesus coming into this world the first time, every prophecy that was made was finished...

complete or accomplished, every detail about his coming and his reason and purpose for coming was finished at the cross.

2. **The passion of His suffering was finished** – No longer would Jesus have to suffer. All of Jesus' earthly life he knew that one day he would have to suffer... that one day he would have to go to the cross and suffer that agonizing death. When Jesus died on the cross He died once for all and it was enough... he doesn't have to ever suffer and die again because his sacrifice satisfied God's requirement
3. **The promise of salvation were finished** – The writer of Hebrews says in **Hebrews 9:26-28**, *“²⁶ Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.”* The work of salvation is finished “period.” Nothing else is needed to be done for man to be saved. Now we can say it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9)
4. **The power of Satan is finished** – The power of Satan is finished because on the cross of Calvary, He spoiled principalities and powers making a show of them openly as Scripture says in **Colossians 2:15**, *“Having disarmed **principalities and powers**, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”* Satan, throughout the life of Jesus tried to keep him from going to the cross, but Jesus stayed on the cross because he knew that if He came down from the cross He would have to condemn you and I and God's requirement would not be satisfied. It is finished and Satan cannot condemn you. Jesus stands as your representative before a Holy God saying I paid what was required for him or her.

GOD OFFERS TO US CHRIST'S FINISHED WORK

What God offers to us in Christ finished work:

1. **God offers new spiritual life through the finished work of Christ** – John tell us in **1 John 5:12-13**, *“¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”* Jesus offers new spiritual life to all who will believe in Him.
2. **God offers a restored relationship through the finished work of Christ** – Because Christ has defeated sin and death through His atoning sacrifice and His victorious resurrection, we can be restored to God. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ covers all our sin, give us acceptance with God, releases us from bondage, delivers us from wrath, and enables us to stand unblemished in God's presence.
3. **God offers us assurance and rest through the finished work of Christ** – God wants you to rest on the finished work of Christ. His sacrifice has infinite value. Salvation is available to all who will accept the gift. The Apostle Paul wrote in **Ephesians 2:8-9**, *“⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.”* If we accept Christ's offer, we can exclaim with the apostle Paul, *“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”* (2 Corinthians 9:15)
4. **God offer us “grace” through the finished work of Christ -**

What is grace? –

1. Write your own definition of grace – Grace is the free, underserved and unearned “just because I love you” gift of God
2. Listen as the following verses of Scripture are read and answer the corresponding question –

- **Ephesians 2:8-9** – *“For by grace you are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast.”*
 -Who is grace from? God
 -What is grace? A free gift (Greek word for grace is “charis” or “karis” and can be translated either as the word “grace” or “gift.”
- **Romans 6:23** – *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*
 -What is the free gift of God or the grace of God? Eternal life (grace = eternal life/salvation)

Understanding grace – Some good definition of grace for our own understanding.

- **Webster’s Dictionary** – *“Unmerited divine assistance given man for his regeneration and sanctification.”*
- **Dr. John MacArthur** – *“Grace is God’s unmerited favor by which he saves us and makes us righteous. It is based solely on His sovereign love, which is manifested in the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sin. It is not the result of any worthiness on our part. Once we are saved we stand in grace.”*
- **Grace Acrostic** – Each letter of the word “GRACE” stands for a part of the definition and understanding of what grace is.

G - God’s
R - Righteousness
A - At
C - Christ’s
E - Expense

Why grace? Why is grace necessary at all? – A very apparent answer to that question would be that apart from grace man could not be saved, but a thorough investigation of the question (Why grace?) reveals an even deeper understanding of grace itself and a believers eternal security.

Why Grace? The 2 Part Short Answer:

1. **Our total inaccessibility of God** –
2. **Our sole source of accessibility to God** - Our sole source of accessibility to God is only through Christ, who is His grace gift to us (*see John 3:16*). We are totally helpless and

hopeless on our own. God is not accessible to you except through Christ! You can't approach Him!

THINKING IT OVER

- 1. What have you been trusting to make yourself acceptable to God and to help you gain entrance into heaven?**
- 2. Could you pay the price for your sin by being good enough?**
- 3. Thank God for all He has done for you to make your salvation possible and accept the finished work on Christ on the cross for your assurance.**