

CHRISTIANITY (*defined*)
A Study of 1 John
“Do You Have Blessed Assurance?”
1 John 5:5-13

Pastor David O. Dykes, Green Acres Church, May 23, 2021

INTRODUCTION: Through the years, someone will say to me, “Explain to me why God....” They want an explanation. God doesn’t owe us any explanations. If He did explain it, His thoughts are so far above our thoughts, we wouldn’t understand His explanations. It would be like Einstein explaining the theory of relativity to your dog. God doesn’t give us explanations. Instead He gives us something better. He gives us promises. One of His great promises is that you can know that you know that you know that you are born again. You can have blessed assurance.

One of the most prolific hymn writers in history was Fanny Crosby. She lived for 95 years and published over 9,000 poems and hymns. Her life spanned from the death of President John Adams, the second President through the birth of President Ronald Reagan who was the fortieth President. She was born with sight, but at six-weeks of age she developed a bad cold and a quack doctor placed mustard poultices on her eyes which left her blind for the rest of her life. However, she was never bitter about this mistake. In fact, she believed that being blind gave her a keen spiritual insight. At age 8 she wrote this short poem:
Oh, what a happy soul I am, although I cannot see! I am resolved that in this world / Contented I will be. How many blessings I enjoy / That other people don't, / To weep and sigh because I'm blind / I cannot, and I won't!

She was an outspoken proponent for the abolition of slavery. By the end of the 19th Century, she was a national celebrity. She read her poems to Congress and was invited to visit the White House many times.

She wrote these famous lyrics that I have sung all my life:

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine / Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine / Heir of salvation, purchase of God / Born of His spirit, washed in His blood. Perfect submission, all is at rest / I in my

Savior, am happy and blessed / Watching and waiting, looking above / Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

This is my story, this is my song / Praising my Savior all the day long / This is my story, this is my song / Praising my Savior all the day long.

That's what John is writing about in our text today. You can be saved, and you can know for certain that you have been born again. And when you come to that point it's not just assurance – it's blessed assurance.

Let's read about it in 1 John 5:5-13: **Who is the one who conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? Jesus Christ—he is the one who came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water and by blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and these three are in agreement. If we accept human testimony, God's testimony is greater, because it is God's testimony that he has given about his Son. The one who believes in the Son of God has this testimony within himself. The one who does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. The one who has the Son has life. The one who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.**

The word “testify” or testimony appears 8 times in this passage. It's the word that is often translated “witness.” We get our word martyr from it. In a court of law a witness gets on the stand and testifies to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. That's what the Holy Spirit does. He gives us three reasons why we can have blessed assurance.

1. The Holy Spirit testifies about Jesus. Before Jesus went to the cross, He promised us that He would send Someone to represent Him. He was speaking of the Holy Spirit. He said, “I have been WITH you, but He will be in you.” The Holy Spirit never calls attention to Himself. He always points us to Jesus. In John 15:26, **Jesus said, “When the**

Counselor comes, the one I will send to you from the Father —the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—he will testify about me.”

Now there are two witnesses in this passage of scripture that the Holy Spirit testifies about Jesus. One is the witness **of water**. The second is the witness **of blood**.

When you think of the water and blood, does it bring something to your mind? In John 19:34 we read that when Jesus was on the cross, they wanted to hasten the death of the criminals. So the Roman soldiers smashed the legs of the two thieves on either side of Jesus. Because they could no longer push themselves up to breathe, they soon suffocated. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that He was already dead. So the Roman soldier had to certify that He was dead. He took his spear and rammed it into the side of Jesus. And the Bible says that the blood and water flowed together.

This means the pericardial sac around the heart of Jesus was punctured, and water and blood flowed out together. So what do they represent? The water represents the cleansing power of God’s Word. Ephesians 5:26 says that Christ loved the church and sanctified it **“through the washing of water of the word.”** The water purifies us and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from the penalty of sin.

The old hymn Rock of Ages speaks of this. It says, **“Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee; Let the water and the blood, From Thy wounded side which flowed, Be of sin the DOUBLE CURE; Save from wrath and make me pure.”**

Jesus is the Rock of Ages. Do you know what the word “cleft” means? It means **“opened up.”** It means “cut.” We’re not talking about a cleft in the side of a mountain here. We’re talking about Jesus Christ who was **cut open**. And then what does it say? Let the water and the blood be of sin the double cure. Here’s the spiritual truth. It’s a double cure because the water and the blood represent two types of cleansing. Save from wrath – that’s what the blood of Jesus does. And make me pure – that’s what the washing of the water of the Word does for us. The blood deals with the **penalty** of sin; the water deals with the **pollution** of sin. Both

the symbols of blood and water represent two powerful witnesses for Jesus.

2. The Holy Spirit testifies in a believer. The second reason I have blessed assurance is because of the Spirit testifying in us. When you placed your faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit came to take up residence in your heart. This is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Paul wrote in Romans 8: 14-16: **“For all those led by God’s Spirit are God’s sons. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father!’ The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God’s children.”**

Now, I tend to be skeptical of people who hear voices. And sometimes people tell me that God told them to tell me something, I usually ask, “Why didn’t God just tell me?” But it IS true that God the Holy Spirit does speak to our hearts. He will never contradict his written Word, but He speaks to our hearts. And I want you just to be still and quiet for just a moment. And I want to pause and pray. Let’s take a moment and ask God to confirm in our hearts that we are His child. Will you do that now? (Pause) Amen.

You say, “Pastor, I didn’t hear a voice. Does that mean I’m not a child of God?” No. I didn’t hear a voice, but when I just prayed, I said, “Father, confirm in my heart that I’m your child.” Did you call God “Father?” Or have you ever called God your Father? Well, this passage says that it is the Holy Spirit of God that gives us the Spirit of Adoption by which we cry out “Abba. Father.” Abba was the Aramaic word for “Papa” or “Daddy.” It’s like a baby saying, “Da Da.” It is the witness of the Holy Spirit that gives you the ability to consider God your Father. And that confirms you are His child.

You see, the problem we face is that people are sometimes looking for a feeling. They say, “I just don’t FEEL saved.” Well, feelings have nothing to do with it. Here’s the correct sequence for receiving truth. First there are the facts – the truth of the Word. Then those facts are accepted by our faith. Then there may or may not be feelings.

I had this illustrated to me years ago by the Campus Crusade booklet called *The Four Spiritual Laws*. They used the picture of an old steam-driven train to illustrate this. Facts are like the engine. They provide the power and give us direction. Faith is like the coal car that provides the fuel for the engine. Both are needed. Without facts, the train doesn't have an engine, but without faith to fuel it, the train doesn't move. Feelings are like the caboose. Most trains have a caboose, but you'll never see a caboose pulling the train. Or you'll never see a caboose going down the track by itself. You may or may not have feelings, so don't depend on them.

First of all, what are the facts? I'll tell you the facts. Jesus Christ was God. And he came in the flesh. He lived a perfect sinless life. He died on the cross for our sins. He was buried, resurrected, ascended, and He's coming back again. Those are the facts.

And what about the faith? The Bible says in Ephesians 2:8-9 that it is by grace you're saved through faith...and faith is the gift of God. Faith is the ability God gives us to receive the facts and to believe the facts. And when the grace of God is combined with our faith, the result is salvation. The Bible says it is "not of works, lest any man should boast."

Third, there are feelings. Amen. Anybody happy you're a Christian? I'm happy. Like the song says, "Oh Happy Day – when Jesus washed my sins away." I'll confess that I'm a happy Christian. I'm as happy as a baldheaded bumblebee in a hundred acres of red top clover sometimes. But I don't depend on feelings.

I learned early on in our marriage that Cindy isn't a morning person. I wake up refreshed saying, "Good morning, Lord." She wakes up slowly and says, "Good Lord, it's morning!" It takes her awhile to get going. She doesn't FEEL very redeemed until around noon every day. But every night she's up late reading her Bible. If we're saved by feelings, then it wouldn't be a good idea for her die some day before noon!

It is not feelings, facts, faith. It's the facts, faith, feelings. The Holy Spirit bears witness in our heart. He gives us the facts. He gives us the faith. And then as a consequence of that, there's the joy unspeakable, full of glory.

3. The Holy Spirit testifies through the scripture. You can have blessed assurance because of what the Spirit says about Jesus. You can have blessed assurance because of what the Spirit says in you. And you can have blessed assurance because of what the Spirit says through the Word of God. The Word of God has one central message from Genesis to Revelation. You can put it in two words. Are you ready for it? Jesus saves.

Three years ago this month, we started studying the Gospel According to John. John wrote his account of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus so that we may believe – and believing we might have life. John wrote this little letter not to tell us HOW to have eternal life. He wrote this epistle to tell us how we can KNOW we have eternal life.

1 John 5:13 is the key to entire book. He wrote **“I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may KNOW that you have eternal life.”**

It says in verse 10 that the one who doesn't believe God's record calls Him a liar. What if you asked me to give you directions to Christus Mother Frances Hospital? And I said, “You turn left out of our property and head north on Beckham and Christus Mother Frances is on the right in about two miles. And what if you got in your car and headed south. You'd be calling me a liar. God has given us specific directions in this book on how to get to Heaven. It's through Jesus. If you don't believe this record John says you're calling God a liar. And that's a serious charge.

And here's the written testimony in 1 John 5:11-12: **“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. The one who has the Son has life. The one who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”**

The Bible gives us two facts about eternal life. First, Jesus is the source of eternal life. We just read that **“eternal life is in His Son.”** The Bible says, **“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is IN Jesus Christ.”** Eternal life is not a quantity of life. It's a *quality* of life. Eternal life doesn't begin when you die. It begins when you're born again. The Bible says eternal life is in Jesus Christ. And if I put this pen in the Bible and

let's say that this Bible represents Jesus Christ, the only way you can receive eternal life is to receive Jesus Christ. Just like the only way you could receive the pen is to receive the Bible. And that's the good news. When you receive Jesus Christ, you receive eternal life. Because Jesus said in John 10:10, **"I've come that you might have life and have it more abundantly."**

Not only is Jesus the source of eternal life, He gives us the certainty of eternal life. I really believe that the more you read this book, the more assured of your salvation you'll become. You're not perfect. You're still under construction, but the more you read the word, the more you'll know you're saved. Because it's the written record that counts. It's like being married.

47 years ago, this June 1, Cindy and I stood in front of Dr. Louis Armstrong and he asked me, "Wilt thou?" And I wilted. We had written our own vows, and we both cried. After a few years of living with me, Cindy knows why she cried at our wedding.

Now suppose one year the IRS said to me, "You filed a joint return with Cindy, can you prove that you are married?" I could say, "Well, I remember that night on June 1, 1974, the church was decorated and lots of our friends were there, and we both cried." Describing that experience wouldn't be enough. They would want legal proof. So I could write to the Montgomery County courthouse and get a written record called a marriage license.

When you stand before God and He asked you why should I let you into Heaven, don't say, "Because I had an emotional experience when I was a child or a teenager." Instead you can say, "Father, you say in your Word that anyone who has your Son has eternal life. Jesus is my Lord and He died for my sins." It's not by feelings, it's the facts of the Word of God combined with the faith that God gives you as a grace gift. You can stop worrying and fretting. You can rest in the finished work of Christ and have blessed assurance.

CONCLUSION: I grew up hearing a lot of Bear Bryant stories – and some of them were probably true. There's one story that he used to tell about being ahead by five points toward the end of a game. They had the ball on the five-yard line and just needed to run out the clock. His first-

string Quarterback was hurt, so he put in the second-string quarterback, who was one of the slowest players on the team. Bear Bryant told him. “Son, just hand the ball to the running back up the middle and run out the clock. Whatever you do, DON’T throw a pass. So on first down he handed to the running back and he was tackled, and a few seconds passed on the clock. Same thing on second down. ON third down, the game was almost over. The quarterback got the ball and saw the big old tight end standing all alone in the end zone and he thought, “This is my one chance for glory, so he passed the ball.” The other team had an All-American safety who stepped in front of the tight end and intercepted the pass and he streaked down the sidelines toward the other goal line. The only player who had a chance to tackle him was the second-string quarterback. The safety ran to the thirty, the twenty, the ten. And to everyone’s surprise the quarterback tackled him and the game was over. Bama won by five. When Bear met the other team’s coach at mid-field, the coach said, “Bear, my safety is one of the fastest guys in the conference. Our scouting reports said that your quarterback was one of the slowest players on your team. I don’t understand how he caught him and tackled him.” Bear said, “Well, it’s like this, coach. Your player was running for a touchdown. My player was running for his life.” For some of you, you’re still running hard for your life. Still working hard trying to be saved. But you can rest in Jesus and find assurance of your salvation. Are you tired of having a hope-so salvation? Are you tired of having a think-so salvation? Listen to the witness of the Spirit as He testifies about Jesus; as He testifies in You, and as He testifies through the scripture. You can nail down a stake today, May 23, 2021. You can say, “I know that I know that I know that I have eternal life, and I will never again allow the devil to make me doubt my salvation.” I know whom I have believed, and I believe He is able to keep that which I’ve committed to Him against that day. You can say, **“Blessed assurance – Jesus is mine. Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine. I’m an heir of salvation; I’ve been purchased by God. I’m born of His Spirit and washed in His blood.”**