

Those Who Serve

- November 15**
- Opening Prayer** Charles Hall
- Song Leader** Kwesi Garvin
- Communion** John Story
- Assist** Joe Holloway
- Assist** Olan Bacon
- Dismiss Services** Kwesi Garvin



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Speaking Where The Bible Speaks; Silent Where The Bible Is Silent

November 15, 2009

EVIDENCE OF PARDON - HOW CAN I KNOW I AM SAVED?

by Heath Rogers

Christianity is a system of faith, but it is not a leap of faith. Our faith in God is founded firmly upon the evidence of His existence found in His creation. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). "Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:19-20). Our belief in the resurrection of Christ is founded upon the testimony of eyewitnesses: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life" (1 John 1:1; see also 1 Cor. 15:3-8). The assurance of these things gives us confidence, which is important. Without confidence we can begin to waver and lose our faith.

The most important thing to man is the salvation of his soul. Jesus asks, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26). We need reliable evidence of our salvation. Without it, we can begin to doubt. And when we begin to doubt is when we become most vulnerable to the devil.

The importance of this confidence, this assurance of salvation, is shown in a piece of the armor of God - the Helmet of Salvation (Eph. 6:17). In battle, the helmet allows one to have confidence to boldly stand and fight. Assurance of our salvation does away with all doubt and gives us the ability to stand for the truth, defend our faith and resist Satan's attacks. We need this confidence.

The Bible tells us that we can be assured of our salvation. "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" (1 John 5:13). God wants us to know that we are saved, not think we are or wonder if we are. We can know it!

But the real question is, "How?" How can we have this assurance? How can we know that we are saved? What is our evidence of pardon?

Our Own Feelings?

Same people say that they feel they are saved. They had an emotional experience, a strong feeling came over them, and that's when they knew they were saved.

Are personal feelings really proof? Even strong feelings? No. The only thing that feelings prove is that we feel a certain way. I'm sure there are a lot of prisoners who feel like they should be set free, but they are still behind bars.

The Bible warns us about our feelings. Our hearts can deceive us: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer. 17:10). The conscience alone is not a safe guide. The apostle Paul believed he was doing the Lord's will when he was persecuting the church (Acts 23:1, 26-9).

Some believe they are saved because they had an experience with the Holy Spirit. They would rather give a testimony than study the Bible. Some churches and people thrive on this kind of emotionalism, but it is not reliable. The fact is that our hearts can deceive us. We can't trust our feelings alone. They may be right, but what if they are wrong?!

The Words Of Others?

Some believe they are saved because a loved one, friend or preacher told them they were. I am glad that people have friends and loved ones that they feel they can trust. But the Bible tells us that our soul's salvation is too important to take anyone's word for. Paul told Christians to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). The apostle John warned, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit; but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

We are not to believe someone just because they claim to be speaking the truth. We are to test their message and prove it to be true to the word of God. The Bereans are noted for this very thing: "...they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed," (Acts 17:11-12a). They were not willing to accept Paul's message as truth until they had first examined it in light of what the Scriptures said.

The Word Of God!

God's word is adequate evidence of our salvation. The Bible is inspired by God. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). What His word says is the truth. It is our evidence of pardon. But how?

Paul wrote, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Rom. 8:16-17). We don't have to trust our feelings, or take another's word for it. The Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we are saved. These two testify together.

If our salvation were on trial, the Holy Spirit and our own spirit would testify to the fact that we are saved. The testimony of the Holy Spirit is the word of God.

The testimony of our spirit is what we have done in response to the word of God. For example, the Spirit says, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16). If our spirit can honestly say, "I've done that. I believe and have been baptized," then we can know we are saved.

Again, the Spirit says, "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). If my spirit can honestly say, "I've done that. I have turned away from my sins and have been baptized," then we can know that we are saved.

Compliance with God's word is our evidence of pardon. As long as we know we have done what the Bible tells us to do, then we know we are saved.

Conclusion

Assurance of our salvation is not meant to make us comfortable or negligent, nor should it make us arrogant or haughty. It is meant to give us the confidence we need to "continue to believe in the name of the Son of God." There are many inconsistent, unpredictable things in their world that can cause us doubt and fear. Assurance of our salvation isn't one of them.

Reproduced from

The Margaret Street Church of Christ

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Save –Labels, Food Pantry Items, Change Jar, Cans, Medicine Bottles

Raintree Village-the truck will be here December 7 or 8. Please see the list of needs

Calendar-The same mistake is made every year by me. Ignore the Social on November 29. I will probably make it again next year –JH

Thanksgiving Appeal – November 22, next week. Envelopes are on the back pew.

This coming Sunday, November 22nd, is the Thanksgiving Appeal day for Georgia AGAPE.

Every family is encouraged to come prepared to participate in the special collection to support the work of this ministry to provide homes for children and to strengthen families. AGAPE depends upon us for a great response. This year will be one of the most challenging given the stressful economic conditions we are facing. Please come prepared to give generously in the Thanksgiving Appeal and help AGAPE reach its goal of raising over \$320,000! If you will not be present this coming Sunday, you are encouraged to still participate by giving your contribution to one of the elders, the church office or by mailing it directly to AGAPE.