

Peace of Mind for the Undramatically Converted, Part II

Many Christians, particularly those reared up in church and converted in their youth, struggle with how they know for sure they are saved. In I John 5:13, John makes a bold statement that should be comfort to any one wrangling with assurance: *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”* We see in this epistle five reasons we know that we are saved. Last week we discussed two of these reasons; first, we know we are Christians because, we practice obedience. Secondly, we know we are Christians because the Word of God is our governing compass. There are three more biblical reasons we should know we have eternal life:

3. We love God’s people.

My dad was saved at the age of thirteen beneath a tree at the Liberty Baptist Church in Hawkins, Texas. The man who was instrumental in winning my father to the Lord was his old Sunday School teacher. Dad lived a fairly sheltered life out in the country and was under the constant watchcare of his mama, an old fashioned Baptist preacher’s daughter - that is until he joined up with FDR’s New Deal program, the Civilian Conservation Corps. It was very similar to an “in-the-States” military program. While Dad learned some valuable skills that lasted him for lifetime, he was also introduced to the world like he had never seen before. He became backslidden, so much so that he doubted his salvation. Under great conviction, Dad came home from CCC Camp and approached his old Sunday School teacher and asked him, “I have been involved with things I should never have been involved with; I just don’t know for sure if I am really saved.” The Sunday School teacher said, “Julian, when you were out at those bars in the world, did you feel “at home” or son, would you have really rather been here at church with God’s people? Where do you feel at home, Julian?” Quickly Dad responded, “Oh, I would rather be with God’s people and in fellowship with them than the people of the world.” The old man grasped Daddy’s hand and said, “Congratulations, Julian you are a Christian!” Then he quoted, I John 3:14, *“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”*

It doesn’t sound too dramatic, but the truth of this verse is both timeless and full of inestimable value. Birds of a feather flock together. If a reason you are doubting is because of the crowd you hang with, please associate again with godly people, and see if your don’t feel at home with them. *“But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him”* (Psalm 4:3).

4. We have the witness of the Spirit.

The Bible says, *“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us”* (I John 3:24). Then again, *“Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit”* (I John 4:13). Paul also said, *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God”* (Romans 8:16). What a joy to know that God has literally moved into our hearts and life by the presence of His Holy Spirit!

Imagine this: a certain John and Mary Smith move into our house. Whenever I go to the hospital for a visit, travel to preach, come to our church, John is with me. Whenever my wife goes to church or goes to the store, Mary is with her. Anytime we do anything or go anywhere together, the Smiths are with us, yea, even to the end of the world! Imagine after three weeks of this, my wife and I sit down for a cup of tea in the early morning (while John and Mary are sleeping in our house) and I ask Barbara, “Hey, do you believe the Smiths are really with us?” I can imagine my wife saying, “What do you mean are they

really with us? I can't walk out the door with out her being with me. If I turn around I bump into her; of course they are really here!" By the same token, the promise given to us is, "...for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). You know if God has moved into your life by His obvious presence!

One day Will Rogers was getting ready to cross the Atlantic for Europe, when the person at the customs desk requested his birth certificate. He told them he didn't have one. The person said he had to have one. Rogers curiously asked, "Why do you have to have my birth certificate? The reply was, "We've got to know you were born." With that answer he quickly backed up and with outstretched hands said, "Well, I'm here ain't I?" The truth is, were know we are Christians because He is in our life bearing witness that He is there."

5. The best we knew how, we received Christ.

The Bible says, "*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*" (John 1:12).

The command of God for salvation is: "*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved*" (Romans 10:9). We believe in our heart and we naturally follow up with confession. If we sincerely call upon the Lord, He promised to save us. I remember doubting when I was younger and I was wrestling with the fact that I could not remember the details of my prayer to the Lord. I can remember thinking of the cross and the truth that I was a sinner. As John Newton, who was suffering from memory loss, said in his dying words: "My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things — that I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Saviour." As I was in the throes of doubt, I remember crying out to God, "Lord, I can't remember what I said; I just remember calling on You to save me." The greatest comfort came to my soul at that moment as I heard the voice of the Lord sweetly say to me, "That's all I asked you to do." And then Romans 10:13 came to me: "*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*" (Romans 10:13). It is not my prayer that saves me; it is Christ! It is not my memory that saves me; it is Christ! It is nothing I do to save myself; it is Christ and Christ alone! I called from my heart and He answered my child-like prayer. John tells us, "*And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him*" (I John 5:15). Is it the will of God to save lost souls? Let Scriptures supply your answer: "*The Lord is not...willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*" (II Peter 3:9). Furthermore, Jesus said, "*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*" (John 6:37). If one person comes sincerely to Christ and they are refused, then God lied! And the Bible says, "*In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began*" (Titus 1:2). We have a know-so promise because God cannot and will not lie! So have peace in this statement: "*Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God*" (I John 4:2).

-Pastor Pope-

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