

THE SERMON NOTEBOOK

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Saved, Sure, And Secure

First John 5:18-21

by

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SUBJECT: CHARACTER OF THE KINGDOM

TITLE: SAVED, SURE, AND SECURE

TEXT: FIRST JOHN 5:18-21

INTRODUCTION. This is the final message in a series from the First Epistle of John, an epistle of hope, joy, assurance, wisdom, and righteousness. The Gospel of John was written to convince people that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and to persuade them to trust Him for their salvation. The First Epistle of John was written to Christians - Athat we might know that we know Him.@ The Lord loves you enough that He gave His only begotten Son to die on a cruel cross for our salvation. He wants you to know Him and He wants you to know that you know Him. Doubt is spiritually crippling, it robs us of spiritual vitality, spiritual vision, and the power the Holy Spirit seeks to release in our lives. With faith there is assurance, hope, and rest in the Lord. To refuse His assurance is sin, and when we are guilty of sin we must confess it to Him and repent.

Instead of saying, ALord, prove yourself to me@, we should say ALord, forgive me for not seeing the proof you have made abundantly clear to all who will receive it. This little epistle is a great place to start. John has written, AThese things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life@ (5:13).

I. GOD WANTS YOU TO KNOW THAT YOU KNOW HIM, 2:3.

A. First John Is an Epistle of Hope and Assurance.

Let me review with you some of the verses from 1 John that tell us we can be sure of our salvation. You know you are saved when:

- 1 You walk in the light, 1:6.
2. You have fellowship with God=s children, John 1:7
3. You have a keen sense of your own sinfulness, 1:8.

4. You live in willful obedience to God=s Word, 2:3.
5. You are no longer are enamored with the world, 2:15.
6. You eagerly anticipate the return of the Lord, 3:1.
7. Hope of His return leads one to purify himself, 3:3.
8. You have a growing freedom from sinful behavior, 3:6.
9. You have a genuine love for other believers, 3:14.
10. You demonstrate your love in word and deed, 3:18.

B. This Assurance Is Given Only to Born-Again Believers.

AThese things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life@ (5:13).

God forbid that we should ever try to convince any lost person that he or she is a Christian. The devil may try to convince him, but God will not, and neither should we. This assurance is given to believers because a loving Father wants his children to know they belong to Him and that He loves them.

II. NO ONE WHO IS BORN OF GOD CONTINUES IN SIN, 5:18-20.

AWe know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.@

A. You Have Been Justified By Faith.

In the doctrinal section of Romans, Paul was inspired to write the definitive work on three great doctrines: The Doctrine of Sin, the Doctrine of Justification, and the Doctrine of Sanctification. He has a lengthy discussion of Justification in Romans 3:21-5:21. Justification is a metaphor of the courtroom, as the judge raps the gavel and declares the accused person, ANot guilty.@ We have received a judicial pardon for our sins. That does not mean that we have never sinned - it does not even mean that we will not sin in the future. It means that we have come under the blood of the

Lamb of God, the blood shed by our eternal High Priest, Who offered Himself - the perfect, once for all sacrifice for our sins. He took our sins upon Himself and when we believe in Him we receive a judicial pardon. After that when we sin He will deal with us as our Heavenly Father, not simply as a judge. Sin is serious and His discipline will be serious, but we are still His children.

B. You Are Being Sanctified By Faith.

Paul, in the same doctrinal section of Romans, was inspired to set down the doctrine of Sanctification (Romans 6:1-8:39). If I were asked to put what Paul says about Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification, I would simply say that:

- 1) In Justification we are delivered from the guilt of sin.
- 2) In Sanctification we are being delivered from the power of sin.
- 3) In Glorification we will be delivered from the presence of sin.

Justification is once for all, as the original language demands in Romans 5:1. Sanctification begins at the moment of salvation and continues until we are glorified - at least, it should! But wait a minute, does not sanctification mean that we have to speak in tongues, be slain in the spirit, fall out onto the floor, jump pews? Do you not have to pray through to receive the Holy Spirit?

Let me give you a brief scriptural view of Sanctification. Paul wrote to the Philippians, *Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus* (Phil. 2:5). In Romans 8:29-30, he wrote, *For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son*, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, **He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.** Every person who is justified is predestined to be glorified! He is not going to lose anyone He saves. But our concern right now is what happens between Justification and Glorification. That is the time when the Holy Spirit is seeking to conform us to the image of God's Son.

When you begin to think like Jesus (*Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus*), you will begin to act like the Lord Jesus. Sanctification is, in Paul's words, being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. That is what the Holy Spirit seeks to do with every one of us. He indwells us for that specific purpose. To give it any other definition falls far short of the sanctification revealed in the Bible - and what a cost we pay if we do that! Peter offers more insight: *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* (2 Peter 3:18a). That is sanctification in progress - growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Paul demonstrated his sanctification when he penned those unforgettable words in his epistle to the Philippians, *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain* (Phil 1:21).

C. No One Who Is Born of God Sins (v. 18).

Now that takes some study. Has not Paul written that **All** have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23)? He did, indeed. We have sinned (past tense) and we come short of the glory of God (present tense). Then is there a contradiction here. Absolutely not! Let me remind you of what John has written in this epistle.

1) In 1:8, John wrote, **If** we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. **If** we say we have no sin at all we are deceiving ourselves.

2) In 1:10, he wrote, **If** we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. **If** we say that we have not sinned at all we make God a liar.

3) In 2:1, he wrote, **My** little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. **It** is His desire that we do not commit any acts of sin, but when we do (and we will), He is our Advocate with the Father.

What do we do when we sin? He has the answer for that: **If** we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1:9).

4) In 3:6-9, John wrote, **No one who abides in Him sins**; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. Little children, make sure no one deceives you; **the one who practices righteousness is righteous**, just as He is righteous; **the one who practices sin is of the devil**; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. **No one who is born of God practices sin**, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Now let us summarize what he has said. We commit acts of sin. All of us fall short of the glory of God, and that is sin. We must confess that sin and when we do He will forgive us of that sin and **cleanse** us of all unrighteousness (1:9). Is there not a contradiction in 3:6-9? Absolutely not!

If we say we commit no acts of sin we are deceiving ourselves. However, the born again child of God cannot continue in sin so as to make it his lifestyle. In the NASB we see the emphasis is on what one practices - his ongoing practice (**the one who practices righteousness is righteous**); whereas the one who continues in sins does not know God (**the one who practices sin is of the devil**). The construction in the original makes this clear - the child of God cannot continue in sins, or keep on sinning. Continuing in sin is proof that one does not know Jesus Christ.

What does that say about a lot of church members who continue in sin for years? It says that we had better pray for them and share the Word of God with them, because there is a strong possibility that they have never been born again.

D. John Tells Us What We Can Know for Sure, 18-20.

1) John says, **We** know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps

him, and the evil one does not touch him.@ The one who makes sin a lifestyle does not know Jesus Christ. Salvation is manifested in a changed life.

2) AWe know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one@ (v. 19) The children of God can draw a clear distinction between the kingdom of God and the world that under the power of the devil. Where does that leave all those people who do not believe there is a devil? They obviously cannot make this distinction, can they? If Jesus recognized him and if the Holy Spirit inspired Paul and John to warn us we had better take him seriously.

3) AAnd we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life@ (v. 20).

We know Jesus has come. We know that He is true (He is the truth, John 14:6). We also know that we are in Him who is true (or else we could know that He is true). Jesus is the Atrue God and eternal life.@ He is life and to know Him is eternal life.

ILLUSTRATION. I had seen the young couple a few times before but I had never met them. Then I found myself talking with them. He was a large man and she was a rather small young lady. She was doing most of the talking and he was looking at her and nodding, reaffirming his support for what she wanted to do. She wanted to get established in a new area but she did not want to trade on her mother=s name. She didn=t even want to tell me her mother=s name - but when she did I did not recognize it. They are both artists.

When I had an opening, I asked them if they were Christians - they were hard to figure. Their response would have made a documentary for New Age religions. AWell, we are not a part of organized religion. We are just spiritual. Like, we don=t worship with groups, we just kind of get in touch with someone up there, you know the Creator. We are spiritual.@ She said, AI am Jewish,@ He added, AMy parents are Gospel singers and they have toured for years. They took me with them when I was young and now they own a horse ranch in Texas and still sing Gospel music.

The young wife said, AThey forced it on him.@ To which, he said, AYeah, it was forced on me. We don=t like public worship. We just like to get by ourselves and try to get our spirits in touch with ...@ I never did understand what it was with which he was trying to get into touch. But when he mentioned the Creator I asked him, ADo you know Who that is?@ He seemed puzzled, so I asked, ADo you know who takes credit for creation?@

He remembered and said so. The wife had said she was Jewish and I said, AJesus was Jewish, and so were Paul and John.@ I talked with her about the relationship between Christians and Jews, expressing my appreciation for the contribution Jewish people have made to me. Then we talked for a few minutes about the Jews for Yeshua organization. I had visited with some of their members in a WalMart parking lot and I have received a lot of their materials over the years.

The husband told me he did not like to go to church and listen to some preacher tell people what they ought to do. They understood when I said that God did not call me to traumatize people, entertain them, or psychoanalyze them; He called me to feed them. They were receptive, so I said, ABy the way, since you are Jewish I am sure you are familiar with the three basic names for God in the Hebrew? They listened and I was able to share a brief Bible lesson which I am praying the Lord will use to motivate them to go to the Bible. I also pray for another opportunity to witness to them, but I am sure that they are never going to be persuaded by a brief conversation.

As I left I could not help being amazed that this young couple thought of their position and their reasons for adopting this position as a virtue. They did not see the colossal ego behind one=s inventing a god or a religion for himself. AProfessing themselves to wives, they have become as fools.@

I don=t know how people get like that, but I do know that our culture has changed and is changing more all the time. Unless we reach the children and younger youth, it is going to be hard to reach them as they grow older. This has always been a problem because of pride and other factors - but let me stress right now that we are living in a different world and we had better be prepared to invest time, prayer, and serious Bible study in our effort to be witnesses for Jesus Christ.

D. We Are Saved, Sure, and Secure.

Our emphasis throughout this series of messages from First John has been on assurance of salvation. The Gospel of John was written that we might know Him, and the First Epistle of John was written that we might know that we know him. One doctrine I have not stressed is Security of Believers (Perseverance of Saints). It has been in my mind all the time, but I am convinced that the same verses that stress assurance of salvation affirm Security of Believers. Briefly, let me point out a few key verses that teach the Justification is a once for all experience.

AAnd I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one@ (John 10:28-30).

ABlessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time@ (1 Peter 1:3-5).

AFor I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day@ (2 Tim. 1:12b).

The construction in the original in some passages stress that for those of who are saved, our justification was completed action in the past from which we receive continual, eternal benefits. If you are saved, God wants you to be sure and He wants you know you are secure in Him. You are secure, not because of you are able to hold onto God but because He is able to hold onto you.

CONCLUSION: A little children, guard yourselves from idols. @ Jeremiah painted a word picture of America as he described ancient Judah:

A Has a nation changed its gods, Which are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory For what does not profit. Be astonished, O heavens, at this, And be horribly afraid; Be very desolate, = says the LORD. For **My people have committed two evils:** They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns; broken cisterns that can hold no water @ (Jer. 2:11-13).

What were the two sins they had committed?

1) They had forsaken Yahweh, A the fountain of living waters. They did slip up, they rejected Him. Their sin was not ignorance but iniquity.

2) They had A hewn for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. @ That is idolatry!

They had chosen to forsake the Lord and they has chosen to adopt false gods who were meaningless and powerless - gods A which are not gods. @

America is in the process of rejecting the A fountain of living waters @ today as people embrace abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality - and now same sex marriage. Those who advocate same sex marriage applaud the decision by the Massachusetts supreme court to declare same sex unions legal. They have redefined marriage! But their definition is not found in the Bible. Their relationships are condemned by God, but they continue to reject the fountain of living waters in favor of that which leads to destruction and misery. America has been carrying on an idolatrous relationship with pleasure and immorality for decades and it is getting worse. We had better heed the warning with which John concludes this book.

A little children, guard yourselves from idols. @ What a way to conclude a book. But why not? This little epistle, inspired by the Holy Spirit and set down by the one surviving apostle, has given us all the information we need to live in confidence before the Lord. It spells out the character of the citizen of the Kingdom of God - we practice righteousness, not sin. It offers assurance of salvation - we may know that we know Him. It offers confidence in Prayer. It warns us against sin. It concludes with a warning against idolatry, and this warning will apply to the actual practice of bowing before idols, or the sin of putting anything in the place of Jesus Christ in your life - of substituting anything for Him or letting anything get between you and the Savior.

We must trust in the Lord and we must be forever vigilant - Aguard yourself from idols.@ Guard yourself against anything that will hinder your growth in the Lord or your fellowship with Him. Those things may be small or large, but if they get between you and your Lord you are suffering whether you recognize it or not. It is shocking to think how some of you may be suffering right now because you are letting something get between you and Jesus Christ. I know it is happening every Sunday evening when I see how many people who were in church on Sunday morning do not come back on Sunday night. And I really see it on Wednesday evenings! We see it when people are inconsistent in Sunday School attendance. We see it when God=s people take God=s money and spend it on the things of the world.

Let me challenge you right now to go back to First John and read it over and over until you have the full assurance of your salvation. Then read it until the Holy Spirit makes it come alive in your life and you discover what Kingdom living really means. Read it, pray about it, and apply it until you are conformed more and more to the image of the Son of God.