

The Assurance Of An Uncondemned Heart

1 John 3:19-24

Pastor John Miller

I want to read this entire passage before we come back and look at it verse by verse, beginning in verse 19 of 1 John 3. And John says, "This is how we know..." My King James says, "And hereby we know, or this is how we know, that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before Him." There's our theme of the assurance of a condemned heart. "For if our hearts," verse 20, "condemn us, God is greater than our heart and He knows all things. Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then we have confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask," verse 22, "we receive of Him because we keep His commandments and we do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is the commandment, that we should believe on the name of His son, Jesus Christ, and we should love one another as He gave us commandment. And he that keeps His commandments and dwells in Him, and he in Him, and hereby we know that He abides in us, by the spirit which He has given to us."

As we go through 1 John on Sunday morning, we're discovering the birth marks of the true believer. What does a Christian look like? What are the birth marks of a genuine child of God, or a person for that manner, that has the life that is real? I want to remind you, there are three of them. The first is that they believe in the Son of God. It's the doctrinal test. Do you believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior? Do you understand who He is? Do you have a doctrinal view of Jesus Christ? Belief in the Son of God. The second birth mark of a true Christian is obedience to the word of God. You got that? So there's belief in the Son of God, and we'll talk about what that means in a moment, and there is obedience to the word of God. But there's a third birthmark for the true child of God. That birthmark is, you love the children of God. There you have it.

In the whole book of 1 John summarize the birthmark of the Christian, believe in the Son of God, obey the word of God, and love the people of God. We know that we've passed from death into life because we, what? We love the brethren, right? I would assume most of you are here today because you want to be, no one dragged you in. And that you're here because you love God and you love God's people. You love God's word and you want to be built up in your walk with God. Amen. That's what Christian fellowship is all about.

But here's the problem. We don't always love as we should. So what does our love look like? Backing up to verse 16, our love should be sacrificial because God loved us and laid down His life for us. We ought to lay down our life, verse 16, for the brethren. Our love should be simple, verse 17. If we have the world's goods and we see a brother or sister have need, how can we harden our heart and not help them in their time of need? How can the love of God dwell in that person? And then verse 18, our love should be sincere. So verse 16, sacrificial, verse 17, simple, and verse 18, sincere. Look at it with me. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but how in in deed and in, what?

Truth. Notice that word truth. It introduces us to our theme in verse 19 to 24. So how are we to

love? Sacrificially, simply or practically, and sincerely. Not with our words. Anyone can say, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you. But to show it is a different thing. For service, all the wife said. Amen, amen, amen. Because I know, husbands a lot of times, it's easy for us. I love you, I love you. Now, when's dinner going to be ready? I love you, I love you, I love you. And will you iron the shirt for me? Kind of a thing. It's easy to say I love you, but do we show it with our lives? Love is a verb. It's an action word. Are you showing others that you love them? Do you love the believers in the body of Christ? But it should be sincere. It shouldn't be just words. It should be in deed and in truth.

Now, I want you to notice the problem is that we have a condemning heart. Notice in verse 20. He says, "But if our hearts condemn us." And then notice verse 21, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not." So either we have a condemning heart, or we have a non-condemning heart, an uncondemning heart, a heart that is resting assured, I am a child of God. I'm in fellowship with God. I can talk to God. I am walking with God. So the problem or the danger for the Christian is a condemning heart. John goes on a digression to talk about the assurance of a condemning heart, that we can have a sure heart rather than a condemning heart. This is one of the problems that we often have. Our hearts condemn us.

Now before I forget, when he uses the word heart, he's not talking about the physical organ. He's talking about your inner being, your mind, your emotions, and your will, the real you. When the Bible used the phrase the heart, it's talking about the inner personal or the total person. And what happens often is our hearts are sinful and desperately wicked, and they condemn us. I don't love the way I should. Maybe this morning, you were condemned before you came to... You're going to church? You think you are a Christian? You think you're good enough to go over there? Look what you said this week. Look what you thought this week. Look what you did this week. And the heart begins to condemn you. Yes, that's true. I'm a real louse, so I shouldn't go to church. You ever have your heart condemn you? Because you know what? Nobody knows me better than me. And there are times I don't like me. There's times my heart condemns me. But we're going to see that God is greater than our hearts and He knows all things.

So John is teaching, in verses 19 to 24, the believer's sacrificial, simple, sincere love life brings assurance that they possess the life that is real. The link between verses 11 to 18 in our text is the word truth. Notice it in verse 18, and then again in verse 19, "This is how we know we are of the truth." So John wants us to know something. He wants us to know the truth. So he uses a little phrase, they're bookends to our text today. In verse 19, "This is how we know." And then again in verse 24, "This is how we know." And John shares with us three blessed assurances that are the fruit of the believers love life. If I am walking in love, if I am walking in obedience to God's word, if I am believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, I can have a heart of assurance.

Now, there are three of them in this text, and if you're taking notes, I want you to write them down. The first assurance is in verses 19 and 20. It's the assurance of a confident heart, not a condemning heart, but God wants you to have a confident heart. So He says, "This is how we know that we are of the truth, and we shall assure our hearts before Him, for if our heart condemns us," verse 20, "God is greater than our heart and He knows all things."

Now notice in verse 19, the possibility of assurance. This is how we can know that we are of the truth. The presence of genuine love in our lives makes possible two wonderful experiences, verse 19. First of all, we know that we are of the truth. What does that mean? It means that I know I'm saved. It means that I know I'm a child of God. It means that I know that I'm going to go to heaven when I die. That little phrase of the truth means that we are the children of God. God is a God of, what? Truth, right?

And therefore, His people walk in truth, live in truth. We are to be truthing it in all of our lives. It is completely inconsistent to say, "I am a child of God," and then you are practicing untruthfulness. You're practicing hypocrisy. You're practicing duplicity. The Bible says that we're to be truthing it in love. Everything we are to do is to be the truth of God. We're not to allow lies or dishonesty to come into our life because He is a God of truth and we are His children. But I can know something, verse 19, I can know that I am of the truth. I believe that Christians can know they are Christians and know they are saved and know they're going to heaven. I believe in what is called the doctrine of assurance.

Now, I never want to give false assurance to a non-believer. But I certainly want a true believer, underline the word true, person has the life that is real. I certainly want them to go through their Christian life with assurance. What kind of a Christian life would it be if we didn't know we were saved, or we didn't know if we were going to go to heaven, or we didn't know that we were God's children? I think I am. I hope I am. I pray that I am. Oh, maybe that I am. How effective could you be in witnessing if you didn't know you were saved? Hi, you need Jesus. I don't know if I have Him, but you can have Him. He'll forgive your sins. I don't know if He forgave mine, but He'll forgive yours, because you dress real nice. When you die, you go to heaven. I don't know if I'll go to heaven, but you'll go to heaven. Oh, that's an effective witness.

I believe that you can know, beyond any doubt, you are God's child, and that your sins have been forgiven. And that when you do die, you will go to heaven to be with God forever. Amen?

Amen.

That's the assurance God wants you to have.

It's not based on your intelligence. It's not based on your conduct per se. You don't earn it or deserve it. But your conduct is an evidence that you possess a life that is real. We're not saved by works, but there are a good indication we are saved. But the danger, I agree, the danger sometimes, people can manufacture fake fruit. Ever seen fake fruit?

My wife has these wooden apples. They are the most awesome looking apples I've ever seen. A few months ago, I forgot they were wooden, and I was like, whoa, nice looking apples. And I reached out to get it. Before I got I go, oh, those are those wooden apples. What a disappointment.

But there's a lot of Christians, oh, nice looking Christian. Oh, that's that fake Christian. They look like an apple. They're painted like an apple, but they're not a real apple. They're fake.

There's always tares among the wheat. So the question in John that's asked is, are you real? Do you have the life that is real? So we can know that we're of the truth, verse 19. And here's the second blessing under this point, is that we can have assurance, verse 19, of a heart before God. Notice that. Go back with me to verse 19. We know that we're of the truth and we can assure our hearts beforehand. That's the doctrine of assurance. You can know that you are safe.

But here's the problem. As I mentioned earlier, true believers at times are stricken with uncertainty, insecurity, and self-condemnation. Every Christian that I know, myself included, have had those pine times in the past when you go, gee, am I really saved? Gee, am I really a child of God? Gee, have I really been converted? Do I really belong to Him? And we have hearts that condemn us. Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful and above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" Good question. People are always talking about, God knows my heart. Yeah, He does. He knows it's deceitful and desperately wicked, and no one can know it. Now, what do we do with a condemning heart? Verse 20 is the answer.

He says, "If our hearts condemn us," this is the answer, "God is greater than our heart. And God knows all things." What does he mean by that? He means that God knows your heart. Now, people only look at your actions. They don't really know your heart, but God knows your heart. And if you are a true Christian, a true child of God, you can rest in assurance and you can have comfort that assured heart is a soothed heart. It's a comforted heart. That's what the word assurance means. It means to soothe. You can have a calm heart, knowing that you are right with God. I stumble. I fall. But God knows my heart. I love Him. I want to live for Him. I'm sorry that I've stumbled and fallen, but God, you know you see my heart.

Let me give you an illustration in the Gospel of John, when Jesus met with Peter, John 21, after he three times, remember three times, denied knowing Jesus Christ. If anything will condemn your heart, it's denying Christ. Did Peter love Jesus? Yes. Was Peter a true disciple? Yes. But he said, "I don't know him. I don't know him." Three times, in the weakness of a moment. And then Jesus is crucified. And he's buried. And Peter's weeping and sobbing, and he's broken-hearted, and his heart condemns him, and he thinks, oh, I've lost it. I'm gone. I'm finished. And then he hears the news that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. And the women ran back after encountering the risen Lord, and they said, "Peter, Jesus has risen and He wants to talk to you." Now you can imagine Peter thinking, oh no. That's like when you know you've done something wrong and the principal calls you into his office. Remember that feeling? You're busted. And Peter's thinking, oh no. Jesus wants to talk to me.

And so he sees the Lord and the Lord says, "Peter, do you love me?" And when He said love me there, He said, do you agape me? He used a very strong Greek word for love. Do you agape me, fervently, sacrificially? Do you really love me? And Peter was so condemned. I don't think he could even look up. And he said, Lord, yeah, I like you. He used a word phileo, which is brotherly love. Yeah, I'm fond of you. Jesus said a second time, do you agape me? Peter thought, Lord, yeah. I said I like you. I phileo you. And then Jesus switched His word, and Jesus said, Peter, do you even phileo me? And I'm sure that at that point, Peter thought, oh Lord. And he said, Lord, you know all things. And then he said it like this, you know that I love you. You

know my heart. And then Jesus very tenderly and very lovingly said, okay, then Peter feed my sheep. And he put him back into the ministry. He put him back into the ministry.

And the point I want to make is that Peter said, "Lord, you know all things. You know my heart. You know that I love you." There's times that I'm so thankful that God looks past my actions and He looks at my heart. John Miller's a flauge. John Miller fails. John Miller stumbles and falls. But oh God, you know my heart. You know that I love you. And what a blessing to know that God knows all things and He knows our heart, and that we can rest assured in that. I love that concept. God's omniscience should relieve, not terrify, the child of God. John Stott said, "This is stronger than any chemical tranquilizer is trust in our all knowing God." I love that. Just knowing that God knows and resting in that God knows all things and He knows our hearts and we can rest assured.

So the practice of love brings assurance that I am a God's child. And for that kind of love, the Holy Spirit is the one who gives me that love. So an indication, I'm his child. Warren Wiersbe said this. He said, "No Christian should treat sin lightly, but no Christian should be harder on himself than God is. There is a morbid kind of self-examination and self-condemnation that is not spiritual. If you are practicing genuine love for the brethren, your heart must be right before God, for the Holy Spirit would not shed abroad His love in you if there were habitual sin in your heart. When you grieve the Holy Spirit, you turn off the supply of God's love. So the fact that God has given you love for the brethren is an indication that His spirit," we're going to see a little later in a couple of verses, "His spirit is dwelling in you, and that you belong to Him, and that God knows all things, so you have the assurance of a confident heart. Do not let your heart condemn you."

Now, condemnation drives you away from God. Conviction of the Holy Spirit drives you to God. So if you hear a voice saying, you're a lousy Christian. You're not really a Christian. You don't deserve to go to church, stay home today. Don't pray, don't read your Bible. Where's that coming from? It's coming from your heart, and it's also coming from the devil. So don't listen to it. So if we were in a courtroom, we're the accused, our heart is the accuser and God is the judge. Let God be the judge. This is what John is saying, and I'll move to my next point, God's saying, it's not important what people think about you. It's not important what you think about you. What is important is what God thinks about you, right? And God sees your heart and God knows your heart. Just make sure that there's no sin in your life, or duplicity or hypocrisy that we're walking in the light as He is in the light.

You ever get dressed in the morning and maybe your shirt or your pants or your blouse or your dress or skirt or pants, it doesn't really match. Try to wear all the same color and it all clashes instead of contrasting. And so you go in and ask your wife, how does this look? Wife asks you, how does that look? That's a dangerous thing. What does a husband do when his wife says, "How does this look?" Please don't ask me that. Please don't ask me that. I don't want to be in that position. But sometimes, when you're getting dressed, there's things that just shouldn't go together, right? Well, there's something that should never go together in a Christian's life, and that's sin. Sin should never be found in a Christian's life. But when it is and your heart starts to

condemn you, know that God knows all things.

Now, let me give you the second assurance and we'll move on. The second assurance is the assurance of answered prayer. Verse 21 and 22, the assurance of answered prayer. Notice verse 21, "Beloved," he uses this endearing term for the believers. "If our heart condemn us, then we have confidence..." Or "Our heart condemn us not," excuse me, "If our heart condemns us not, then we have confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask," verse 22, "we receive of Him because we keep His commandments, and we do those things that are pleasing in His sight." So there's the keeping of His commandments and there's doing the things that are pleasing in His sight.

John now turns from the condemning heart to the reassure it the blessings of the blessing heart that God does not condemn. Love banishes self-condemning insecurity, and in its place leaves confidence toward God. The loving believer not only has a heart that is at peace and untroubled, but as a result, has two other blessings. I want you to see them there in verse 21 and 22. First of all, we have confidence before God. Look at it in verse 21. Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, so this is an uncondemned heart, then what do we have? We have confidence toward God. Number one, stop right there.

If your heart does not condemn you, why? Because you are practicing love. And when you're practicing love and you have an uncondemned heart, guess what else you have? You have boldness and access to come right before God and to talk to Him freely. In verse 21, when it uses there that phrase, we have confidence toward God, that word literally means bold fazeness or plainness of speech. You ever approach somebody that's really important? And you get real nervous and you don't know what to say? And you're kind of shy and you think, oh, I don't know. They're really rich or famous, or they're really smart and I don't want to say the wrong thing? And you feel kind of intimidated and you go up [inaudible 00:23:56] and you say the wrong thing? People are hard to approach. They're intimidating. Think about this. You as a Christian, you can come with plainness of speech, bold fazeness, confidence, right into the very presence of God and talk to Him as your Father in heaven. Amazing.

You can come with confidence and boldness and plainness of speech. I was thinking about this, and forgive me for talking about my grandkids, but one of the things that really rejoices my heart is when the grandkids come over. Matter of fact, if I knew how much fun the grandkids were, I would've had them first. I just love when they come running into my study and call out Papa, Papa, Papa. Papa, we're here, and they come running to see me. Now, when I was a young dad and I had kids all in the home, I used to chain the door and lock the door and bolt the door and say, stay out, you brats. And now, man, I'm looking for the grandkids. I ain't [inaudible 00:25:06]. I want them to come over. Hey, we can hang out. We can get donuts. We can get ice cream. We can do whatever you want. The minute I hear that word papa, my heart melts. It just ahh.

The other day, my five-year-old granddaughter Madison came running into my study, Papa, Papa. And it's like, whatever you want, sweetheart. This is your day. I'm here. I'm available. I'm all ears. Let's do whatever you want to do. You want donuts, you got it. And you know what?

That's the same way it is when we come running before God. Abba, Abba. Papa, papa. You think God's too busy to hear your hearts cry? You think God's too busy to spend time with you? You think God doesn't want to hear from you? Nothing could be further from the truth. He loves to hear from you. He loves for you to come into His presence. Father, Father, Abba. And you can come running to Him with open arms. And you can have that confidence. You're not to say, well, I'm not worthy, or I thought a bad thought, or I'm a sinner. I'm not worthy. I'm a child of God. I belong to Him. He's my father in heaven. And you can run into His presence. And then the second blessing, verse 22, is answers from God.

So confidence before God. Answers from God. Notice verse 22, whatever we ask, it's referring to prayer, we receive of Him because we keep His commandments, and we do those things that are pleasing in His sight. Now, is this verse teaching that prayer is just a car blanche, a blank check, and we can ask for anything we want and we can expect to get it from God? No. That's not what this verse is teaching. You'll always want to compare scripture with scripture. The Bible says, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know He hears us, then we have the petitions that we desire of Him.

And notice in the very verse there too, it says that we keep His commandments, and we do that which is pleasing in His sight. When I am walking in obedience to God's word, I am in harmony with God's will. And I am living a life that is pleasing to God. And when I do, listen very carefully, my will merges into the will of God. And the two become one. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. I find that I want His will for my life, His purposes for my life, His plan for my life. When I'm walking in obedience and pleasing Him, my will merges into God's will. And when I am walking in that kind of intimacy with God, then I can ask for whatever I will, and it will be in harmony with His will, and I will have the petitions that I desire of Him. God will never give you anything that is harmful.

Now, I may give donuts to my granddaughter, but they're healthy donuts. I make her eat a bowl of granola first, with bananas on it. Madison, before we go get a donut, we need to eat cereal first or your mommy will be mad at me. I make sure we do it right. God's not going to give you anything that's going to harm you or hurt you, but it has to be in line with his purpose and plan for your life. But the blessing of having a love life is that I have a heart of assurance, and I have access to God, and I have answers to my prayers. What a blessed life is the Christian life, walking in fellowship and obedience with God.

Now, I think this is an amazing promise. God will answer my prayers. God will hear me when I cry. The Bible says, "Be sure that your sins have separated you from God." You want to make sure there's nothing between your soul and the Savior so that His blessed face you can see, so that you can have an assurance of heart, and you can have confidence in prayer. But here's the third and last assurance that we have. It's called the assurance of abiding, that I am in Christ, and Christ is in me.

Notice verse 23 and verse 24 in your Bible, "And this is the commandment." Now he goes from commandments that we are to keep in verse 22, to commandment, singular. So he rolls them

into one, "That we should hear," first of all, believe on the name of the Son, Jesus Christ, His Son, Jesus Christ. So what are His commandments? Believe on His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as He gave us commandment. Single commandment. I want you to know a very, very important principle. Here's the Christian life, faith toward God and love toward others. Loving God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind, and loving your, I'm going to say it, it's not easy, but here it goes, your neighbor. The one that plays music real loud late at night.

There's a guy a little bit distance from us that starts a real loud car. Thing's got to be illegal. If you're here this morning, don't do that anymore. Your pastor is listening. He starts this muscle car and the windows shake and stuff falls off the counter. It's like, whoa. And it's in the garage. Radical. Pull out in the street and they'll throw you in prison driving that thing. I'm thinking, Lord, I just pray for my neighbor right now. It's like, why would anyone have a car that loud? Doesn't he realize other people live in the neighborhood? So Jesus, did you have to say that? Oh God, I love God. I can do that. God's lovable. I love you, God. That dude across the street though, man, I don't know. Love your neighbor as yourself. So faith toward God and love toward your brother.

Now notice, faith in Jesus Christ, verse 23. We're going to get into this beginning in chapter four. This is one of the doctrinal tests in 1 John. Remember this morning, I gave you the three birth marks when I opened up the sermon, belief in Jesus Christ, obedience to God's commandments, and love for the brother. These are the repeated themes. So he's going to come back and just deal with this. Who is Jesus Christ? And when it says that you have belief in His Son Jesus Christ, this isn't talking about just believing with your head. I believe that Jesus was a real person. It's believing what the Bible teaches about Jesus Christ. And let me summarize it real quickly for you. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the eternal second person of the triune Godhead, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. One God, three persons, co-equal in essence from all eternity past.

Jesus Christ is God the Eternal Son. And He came from heaven down to earth, and through the womb of the Virgin Mary by the agency of the Holy Spirit, He took on full humanity, not at any moment giving up full deity. So what does the Bible teach about Jesus Christ, fully God, fully man, and one person. Theologians call it the hypostatic union. Two natures, one person, human and divine. That's what you believe about Jesus Christ. If you don't believe that about Jesus Christ, then you're not thinking biblically. That's not Christian doctrine.

And then we believe that Jesus went to the cross voluntarily. And He died on the cross as a substitution, or vicariously. And that your sin and my sin were placed upon Jesus at the cross. And He paid for the sins of the whole world, the sinless lamb of God. He was buried, and three days later, up from the grave, He arose. We believe in the physical bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. And then we believe in the ascension of Jesus Christ, that He visibly bodily rose back into heaven. We believe in the exaltation of Jesus Christ, that He's seated at the right hand of the Father, exalted on high. So I believe in His eternality and His deity, His incarnation, His crucifixion, His resurrection, His ascension and His exaltation, and that Christ is coming again. That's what the Bible teaches about Jesus.

And if you are a real Christian, that's what you believe about Jesus. Because if you deny those essential truths taught in the Bible about Jesus, then you're denying the Jesus Christ who is our Savior. Then notice, verse 23, and that you love one another. So faith in Jesus Christ and love for one another. The Christian life, faith toward God, love toward man. Remember when the scribe came to Jesus? And Jesus told him what the greatest commandment was? What's the greatest commandment? He said, and Jesus said, "Love God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind. Love your neighbor as yourself."

By the way, did you ever notice that if you do those two things, it takes care of all 10 commandments. There are 10 commandments, right? First five deal with your relationship to God. And if you love God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind, it's not a problem. And the last five commandments deal with your relationship to people. Don't covet. Don't murder. Don't lie. Don't steal. Don't commit adultery. If you love your neighbor as yourself, you're not going to do those things. So all the commandments, hang on one, and they're really not two, they're one, loving God and loving man. Loving God and loving man. If you do nothing other than being a Christian, love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and you love your neighbor as yourself, you got it down. That's all you got to do.

You're going, wow, no sweat, I'll just go home and do that right now. I realize it's challenging, but God, we're going to see, has given us His Holy Spirit, enabling us to do just that. Notice verse 24. "And he that keeps His commandments dwells in Him." So the keeping of commandments is an indication that we're dwelling in God, and dwelling in God is an indication that we're keeping His commandments. And this is how we know, here's the closing bookend, this is how we know that He abides in us, by the spirit which He has given unto us. Now, I want you to notice. We dwell in Him and He dwells in us. And how do we know He dwells in us? He's given us the Holy Spirit. This is what we call mutual abiding, by the way, and I love this. I am in Christ, and Christ is in me.

Now listen very carefully, because I'm in Christ, I am justified. I'm declared righteous. Because Christ is in me, I am sanctified, made righteous. You grasp that, you understand that, it'll transform your whole Christian life. I am in Christ, declared righteous. Romans chapter 8, verse 1, "There's now therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Christ is in me, sanctification, to make me right. So one is justified, the other one is sanctified.

I am in Christ positionally, righteous. Christ is in me, practically righteous. One's my position, one's my practice. And people don't distinguish between the two and they get it all confused. They're in Christ. But because they're not living over here, Christ through them the way they think they should, they think that they're no longer in Christ. Now again, I would never ever want to give a false believer assurance that they're saved.

But one of the great travesties that I've seen in the church over my short years of existence has been Christians who lack assurance. If Satan can rob you of assurance, he can ruin your Christian life. You are over here, you're in Christ, you're on your way to heaven. So we know he can't do anything about that. But what he's going to do, he's going to work on you living a

sanctified life, a victorious life, and having a heart that doesn't condemn you. Because he doesn't want you to walk in assurance. He doesn't want you to walk in confidence. He wants you to think that you're not really saved, you're not really going to heaven.

Now, you may not be. You may be here this morning and the spirit of God doesn't really dwell in you. So what do you need to do? You need to get saved. You need to receive Christ. You need to believe in God, be filled with the Holy Spirit, and then He will give you that love for others. And when you start having that love, then you'll start realizing, Hey, I'm a Christian. I love people now. Hey, I'm a Christian. I love God's word. I love God's word. I actually like going to church and being with Christians. They used to freak me out. Now I am one. It's amazing. That devil's what overwhelmed me. When I got saved, I thought, I'm going to church. What happened to me? I'm reading my Bible. What's going on here? I actually like Christians. I know I've been saved.

Now, you don't do those things to be saved. You do those things because you're saved. But if those things aren't evident in your life, then maybe you need to ask yourself. Maybe His spirit does not dwell in me. If I were to have a bucket up here of water and a sponge, and I took this dry sponge and I put it in the bucket of water, what happened? The sponge is in the water. But if I lift that sponge out of the water, now what do I have? Water in the sponge. If I were to squeeze the sponge, the water would run out. So I'm like that sponge. I am in Christ, and Christ is in me. That's an awesome security for the believer. I am in Christ and Christ is in me, and Christ is my hope of glory. Amen? Not my righteousness, not my goodness, not my righteous works.

But if I'm a child of God, I will have three birthmarks. I will believe in the Son of God. I will obey the word of God. And I will love the people of God. Now, maybe you're here this morning and you say, I don't know if I'm even saved. Then get saved. Open your heart today to Jesus Christ. The Bible says your sins have separated you from God, but Jesus died on that cross to bridge that gap and to bring you back to God. And if you're here today and there's the slightest doubt that you are not truly a child of God, then make sure today that you trust in Jesus Christ, that you take that first step in believing in His Son Jesus Christ. For God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten son, that anyone who did, what? Believes in Him will never perish but, what? Have, present possession, everlasting life.

So before we leave this morning, I want to give you an opportunity to invite Jesus Christ to come into your heart and to forgive your sins. Let's have every head bowed, every eye closed, and let's pray.