

Blessed Assurance

1 John 5:6-13

Pastor John Miller

As I often do, I want to read the whole passage so you get the feel of the whole text. Begin with me following in verse six of 1 John five. John says, "In this is he, which came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood and it is the spirit that bears witness because the spirit is truth." So there are three that bear record, and I'm reading from the King James translation, and I'll explain why I pointed that out in a minute. But in verse seven, it says in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit in these three are one, and there are three, verse eight, that bear witness in the earth, the spirit, the water, and the blood. And these three agree in one. Verse nine, now if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater for the witness of God, which he testified of his son.

He that believes in the son, verse 10, have to witness in himself and he that believes not God have made him a liar because he believed not the record that God has given of his son. Now this is the record that God, verse 11, has given to us eternal life. This life is in his son. He that has the son has life. He that has not the son of God has not life. These things have I written unto you the believe on the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. The verse should stop right there. Her name was Francis Jane van Alstyne, and she is more commonly known as Fannie Crosby. She lived from 1820, born in New York State and she died in 1915, the state of, I think it was Ohio. Now she was a missionary. She was a poet, she was a lyricist.

She was a composer and she was one of the most prolific hymnists in history. She wrote over 8,000 gospel hymns and songs and over one million copies printed despite her being blind after her birth. Now, many of you are familiar with Fannie Crosby, the great hymn writer. One of the hymns that she wrote out of her 8,000 and my favorite is the title of my sermon today and the first stanza that hymn says, Blessed Assurance Jesus is Mine. Oh, what a foretaste of glory, divine air of salvation, purchase of God, born of His spirit, washed in his blood. This is my story. This is my song. Praising my Savior all the day long. You want to break into that chorus, don't you? It's just so awesome.

I'll resist. Blessed Assurance Jesus is Mine. Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine. What a beautiful song Fannie Crosby wrote and it's blessed so many for so many years. So I borrowed the title to that hymn for the title of my sermon, Blessed Assurance. Now, it's interesting that John, the same author of 1 John, in his gospel when he comes to the end of his gospel, he states the purpose for which he wrote John 20:31. He says, "But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through his name." Well, when he comes to the end of his epistle 5:13, he gives us the same kind of purpose statement but with a contrast. Verse 13, these things are written that you believe on the name of the Son of God, that believing you might know that you have eternal life.

You say, "I don't see it." Well number one in the gospel, he says, "I've written my gospel that you

may have eternal life," that you may have eternal life by believing on Jesus Christ. Then in the epistle he says, "I've written these things that you may know that you have eternal life." So the gospel was written that we may have eternal life. The epistle was written that we may know that we have eternal life. There's a big difference between having something and knowing you have it. Have you ever discovered that you had something and you didn't know it? Such as I'm not a tool guy. I'm not a tool guy. So whenever I have a project around the house, I have to borrow stuff from my neighbor. I'm one of those neighbors that the neighbors say, "Why doesn't he buy his own tools?"

Can I borrow shovel? Can I borrow rake? Can I borrow a screwdriver? Hey, do you have a pair of pliers? Somebody in the church going to buy me a tool set after the sermon probably, but I have occasionally bought a tool and brought it home and then I opened a drawer and what do I discover? I already had it. You ever have that happen? I've got a pretty extensive library in my office and it's kind of reached a saturation point now. When I go book shopping, I'll buy a book, I'll bring it back and what happens? I already have it on my shelf and the guys on staff love that because I give them away, but the thrill is gone. I've got everything in my shelf, but sometimes maybe you need money. This has happened to me. You need a little money going, "Man, I don't have any cash right now. A bummer." And then a few days later you pull open a sock drawer and there's some cash stashed under the sock drawer. I probably shouldn't tell you this, but you don't know where I live.

Or I preach somewhere, I get an honorarium check and I'll throw it in the drawer and they start to accumulate. I forget they're there. I go, "Wow, I have money. I didn't even know it. This is awesome." Now, sometimes we have something we don't know it. Sometimes we think we have something and we don't. Now, what I want to talk to you today is about knowing what you have and that is salvation. A Christian is saved. A Christian has eternal life, but one of the biggest tragedy of the Christian life is some people don't know they have it. They have eternal life and the reality doesn't break under their soul. They don't realize, "I'm going to heaven. I'm a child of God. My sins are forgiven. I have eternal life." And so I want you to know what you have, but I also want you to have eternal life.

If you're here this morning and you don't have eternal life, I don't want anyone to leave the service without at least being given the opportunity to receive eternal life and to know that you have eternal life. Now, some say that's presumption. How can you know that you are saved? Well, I believe the Bible teaches that we can know that we have eternal life. And verse 13 is one of the greatest texts on that subject. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. We can know that we have eternal life and you can't enjoy what you don't know that you have. And assurance is conditioned for serving and usefulness in the Christian life. It's also clearly taught in the word of God. Now, there are three foundations for assurance that I want to give you from this text if you're taking notes.

Number one, it is the word of God the Father. Number two, it is the witness of God, the Holy Spirit. And number three, it is the work of God the Son. Now, don't sweat it if you didn't get all

that written down because we're going to go through those one at a time taking it out of this text. So the first foundation for the believer's assurance is the word of God the Father. God said it, I believe it. That settles it. Go back with me to verses six to nine. Now John says, "This is he." Now, he just referred to Jesus as the Son of God at the end of verse five, and he says, "This is he that is Jesus the Son of God, which came by water, which came by blood. Even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood. It is the spirit that bears witness because the spirit is true."

Now, what is John saying here? He's saying that Jesus came into the world and it was testified that he is God's son several ways. Number one, by his baptism, water and by blood, his crucifixion, his death on the cross. Now, why did John say this at this time? Real quick, a little background. John was writing because false teachers had entered into the church and those false teachers you remember, were known as Gnostics, and Gnostics basically denied the deity of Jesus Christ. Actually, they either denied his humanity or they denied his deity. There were two branches with Gnosticism. But the one branch that denied his deity was known as Cerinthusism. It was led by a man named Cerinthus and Cerinthus taught that Jesus was born just like any other human being. He was a man.

And listen carefully, Cerinthus taught that when Jesus was baptized, the man Jesus had the Christ come upon him, that the Christ is a different entity, came upon the man Jesus, and that he lived for three years with the Christ anointing upon him, the man Jesus, and that when he died on the cross, this is why you have the water and the blood, when he died on the cross and he cried, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Quoting from Psalm 22:1, that it was at that moment the false teacher Cerinthus taught that the Christ left the man Jesus. So John says, "Look, He is the Christ, the Son of God," not only in his baptism, water, but also in his death on the cross.

When you read in the Bible about the blood of Jesus, it's a phrase that's referring to his sacrificial atoning death. So Jesus came by water baptism and by the cross crucifixion, which is interesting, that's at the initiation of his public ministry and at the culmination of his public ministry. Now, when Jesus was baptized in the water, you remember what happened. You know the story, right? A dove descended from heaven and lit upon him the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and the father audibly spoke from heaven. Here we have the word of God the Father. What did the father say? "This is my beloved son," I don't know if he had to cup his hands or not.

I doubt God had to cup his hands to get his message across. But from heaven came an audible voice, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." So you have three things. You have the Father speaking audibly from heaven. You have the Holy Spirit manifested in the form of a dove, and you have God, the Son being baptized in the water. Father, Son and Holy Spirit, all witnessing, all testifying that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Father told John the Baptist, the one you see, the spirit descending upon and the dove, that's my son. So John says, "Behold or look the lamb of God, he's the one who will carry away the sins of all the world."

So that's what John is speaking about here in verse six, that Jesus is the Christ. Now, he's not a

man like any other man who had the Christ upon him and the Christ left him. Jesus is the second person of the Godhead, and he is divine. He is God, he has been, he is, and he always will be. And he's not got the Christ upon him. He is the Christ and he always will be the Christ. And when Jesus Christ comes back in his power and his glory to set up his kingdom, he's coming back King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Amen.

Amen.

Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Now, John goes on and he says in verse seven, "For there are three that bear record." Now in my King James Bible and in the New King James Bible, we read in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And then the first part of verse eight we read, and there are three that bear witness in the earth. Now I have to confess, little pastor to people, I hated to have to come to this verse in the Bible. You say, "Why would you hate to have to come to this verse in the Bible?"

And this is why, because that little phrase, and I want to read it to you again, if you have a new King James or King James Bible, in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one and these three are that bear witness in the earth, does not belong in this text. Now don't freak out. You go, "I can't believe John just said that." I did. In most of, the majority of, and actually all the oldest manuscripts, they do not appear. It was about the fifth century that a scribe evidently included them in a Latin translation. And why did he do that? Probably because he was trying to defend the Trinity and John had just mentioned by water where the father spoke, the spirit descended and the son was baptized. So he throws that in. If you have a Jehovah's Witness knock on your door and you say, "I believe in the Trinity," and you read them that verse, they will immediately point out that doesn't belong in the Bible and they are right, believe it or not.

So I think it's important for you to understand it. So if you have NIV or a New Modern Translation, it omits that section of the Bible. You say, "Well, how can we trust the Bible? How can we really trust the Bible that it's the word of God?" Let me tell you something. Number one, what it does say is not un-biblical. What it says is consistent with all the teaching in the Bible, but we have manuscripts and we know what belongs in the Bible. It is very clear to us, and we don't need this one little verse or a portion of verse seven, the first part of verse eight, to defend the doctrine of the trinity or the triune nature of God. There's an abundance of scriptures to support that biblical doctrine. So you don't need to be worried, you don't need to be upset. And the multitude of manuscripts and new translations do omit it.

So maybe in your Bible it would read like this, verse seven and eight, for there are three that bear record. Then you jump down to verse eight, the spirit, the water, the blood, these three are one. That's the way it should read and everything in between, there was something that a scribe put in at a later date, and we know that it is not part of scripture, but what it teaches and what it says is biblical, is scriptural. So there it is. I said it. I could go into a long laborious history of how it appeared in our King James Bible based on the Texas Receptus and the manuscript evidence, but we know it's in the Bible and this little section should be omitted. But there are

three witnesses, the spirit, verse eight, the water and the blood. The spirit, the water, and the blood.

In the Old Testament, God said that a thing has to be confirmed by two or what? Three witnesses. So Jesus was confirmed in his baptism. Jesus was confirmed in his crucifixion and God spoke and the spirit is the spirit of truth. So we have the word of God. Now, John argues verse nine. He says, "Since we receive a witness from men," and we do, we believe what people say, "The witness of God is greater." If we believe human beings, why wouldn't we believe God when God said, "This is my son in whom I'm well pleased." For this is the witness of God which has testified of his son, verse nine. When somebody tells you something, you basically believe it. What if every time everybody told you anything, you go, "You're lying."

Your wife says breakfast is ready, "You're lying." How would you function? How can anyone function if everybody lied all the time about everything, what would happen to this world? It would just go wacko. We believe each other. I take my suit to the cleaner and he says it'll be ready on Tuesday, "You're lying, dude." He'd probably kick me out of a shop. We basically believe, ladies, if your husband says, "Let's go buy you a dress," you might say, "You're lying," to that. Maybe he's not really telling you the truth, but you believe him, "Oh, thank you. Let's go buy me a new dress. Let's go out to dinner. Oh yeah, I want to go out to dinner." You tell the kids we're going to Disneyland, well, you're going to Disneyland. You believe people communicate based on trust. Why is it that we have such a hard time believing God? God says something, I go, "I don't really know. I don't know about that."

You believe people, but you won't believe God? God's saying, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." So the question is, Jesus Christ, the Son of God is a solid foundation upon which to rest your faith. So John calls these witnesses, the water, the blood and the spirit, and these three agree into one and the Father, verse nine, is a greater witness. It's weightier, it's more authoritative, it's more trustworthy. I'd rather believe God and take him at his word. Now it's simple, but it's simply profound. How do I know I am saved? How do I know I'm going to heaven? Little hint. What am I holding in my hand? The Bible. God's word, the B-I-B-L-E. How do I know I'm safe? Because God said so in his word. God said it. I believe it. That settles it. It's as easy as John 3:16. For God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him will never perish, but have what?

Eternal life.

You either believe that or you don't believe that. You either believe in Jesus and you have everlasting life or you don't believe in Jesus and you don't have everlasting life. He is the God of truth and he cannot lie. Assurance of salvation comes for us when we, by faith, take God at his word. In Romans chapter 4:20, it says Abraham staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief. He did not waver at the promises of God, but he believed God's promises and God's word. Martin Luther, the great Protestant reformer said, "Though all my heart should feel condemned for one of some sweet token, there is one greater than my heart whose word cannot be broken. For feelings come and feelings go and feelings are deceiving. My warrant is

the word of God. Nothing else is worth believing." I say amen to that.

Amen.

So when all around my soul gives way, he still is all my hope and stay, on Christ the solid rock I stand, all of the ground is sinking sand. Amen.

Amen.

And so I stand on the solid rock of scripture. How do we know we're going to heaven? Because God promised it in his word, and I believe his promise. Let me give you the second foundation. It is the witness, or you might say inner witness or experiential witness of God, the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts that we are God's people. This is in verse 10, John says, "For he that believes on the son of God has the witness," where? "In himself." So these other witnesses were exterior, the voice of God the Father, the Spirit speaking, the son baptized, hanging on the cross, all of it confirming. And then in verse 10, but he has a witness within himself that we believe, but he that believes not, verse 10, that God has made him a liar because he believes not the record that God has given to us of his son.

So if you believe in God, this is the record that you have eternal life. He that believes not in the sons, we're going to read, has not life, but the witness is in our self. So you have the external witness, the voice of the Father, the dissent of the spirit, the dove and the blood, but that believeth on the Son is in the present tense. It means that you're believing, you're trusting, you're relying on the Son. And then notice verse 10, has the witness where? In himself, literally this is the one believing on the Son of God, keeps on having the witness in himself. Now, at the time of your conversion or your salvation, what happened? God, the Holy Spirit, came and took up residence inside of you. Every Christian has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. If you don't have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, then you are not a Christian.

You may confess to be a Christian, you may go to church, you may be even baptized. But the only way that you are a Christian is if the life of God is dwelling inside of you. So you have the indwelling of the Spirit, you have a down payment of the spirit. It's called the earnest. You have the seal of the Holy Spirit and you have the witness of the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:16, the spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. I heard the story of a farmer who had a big sack of potatoes on his back and he's walking down a road leaving his farm, and he ran into another farmer that was a skeptic, didn't believe in God or Christianity, and they encountered each other. And the skeptic said to his Christian Farmer friend holding the sack of potatoes, he goes, "How do you really know you're saved?"

As they were dialoguing about God, he said, "How do you really know that you're saved?" Well, this farmer did a cool thing. He dropped the sack of potatoes off his shoulders behind him, and he's asked the skeptic, he goes, "How do I know that I just dropped those sack of potatoes? If I don't look back and see it, how do I know that I've just dropped this sack of potatoes?" And the skeptic said, "Well, you're going to feel a little lighter. The weight's going to be taken off. You

won't feel the weight anymore." And this Christian Farmer said, "Exactly. When I accepted Jesus Christ as my savior, my sin, my guilt, my shame were all taken away by Jesus Christ. And I felt a weight lift off my soul." I can say amen to that. When I accepted Jesus Christ, I felt a weight lift off me.

I felt like a thousand pounds had been lifted off my shoulders. I literally felt clean inside. God has forgiven me and he's taken away my sin, my shame and my guilt. I love what Charles Haddon Spurgeon said about this. He said, "The witness in himself involves the wondrous sense of change, which comes over the believer, the wondrous power, which goes with the word of God and the deep feeling of peace, which comes to us through believing in Jesus Christ." Have you had that experience?

Amen.

Do you know what it's like to have that weight lifted off your shoulder? Do you know what it's like to feel clean inside, to know that you know that you have eternal life? And if you don't know that you have eternal life today, make a commitment of your life to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit will come to dwell in you and you can have that inner witness of his spirit bearing witness with your spirit.

But notice in verse 10 as well, he that believes not God makes God a liar. You don't want to do that. You're making God a liar by not believing in his son or the witness of the testimony that God has testified because he believes not that God has given to us of his own son. Now, let me explain something again, it struck me this week. People will often ask, "Pastor Miller, will you go to hell if you lie or will stealing send you to hell? Or will drunkenness send you to hell or will sexual immorality send you to hell?" Technically, the answer to that is no. What sends a person to hell is unbelief.

Your individual sins aren't going to send you because the absence of those sins in your life don't send you to heaven. If I don't smoke and I don't chew and I don't hang out with those that do well, I get to go to heaven. And I don't go to picture shows and I don't dance. People are always asking, "Can Christians dance?" I say, "Some can, some can't." The ones I see dance should not be dancing. God have mercy. Those aren't the things that get you to heaven. You know what gets you to heaven? Believing in Jesus Christ.

Amen, amen.

That's what gets you to heaven.

Woo.

And Paul wrote to the Corinthians, some of you were drunkard, some of you were sexually immoral, some of you were thieves, some of you were liars. But you have been washed, you have been forgiven, you have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. And the same thing is true of this congregation here this morning, sinners saved by grace. Amen.

Amen.

You don't get to heaven because you're good and you don't go to hell because you're bad. You go to hell because you reject God's son, God's hope, God's salvation. It's like drowning in the ocean and someone throws you a lifesaver and you reject it. It's your only hope. Take the lifeline. The Bible says that we are all sinners and that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. God has offered you a lifeline.

God sent not his son to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. The world is already condemned and God loves you and he sent his son to save you from your sin. But let me give you the third and last foundation for your assurance. Number one, it's the word of God. Number two, it's the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. He speaks to our hearts that we are his children. And then number three, last but not least, it's the work of God the Son. We know we are saved because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. Look at verses 11 to 13. This is the record that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He hath not the Son hath not life, or he hath not the Son hath not life.

In verse 12, verse 13, these things have I written unto you the belief on the name of the Son of God that you may know, there it is, that you have eternal life, and the verse stops there. Now this is the record. So John gives us the content of his witness and it's twofold. Look at verse 11. God has given to us eternal life. I want to break that down more in just a moment, but I want you to notice that that's the essence of the message. God gave us eternal life. Eternal life starts the moment you are born again. The moment you believe in Jesus, we get this idea that eternal life is when you die, you get to go to heaven. That's not eternal life. Eternal life is the present possession of every Christian. If you are a child of God here right now in this sanctuary, guess what?

You have eternal life.

Eternal life. You might not have a lot of money. You might not have a hot car. You might not have a bad bod. You may not have a beautiful house, but you have something money can't buy.

Amen.

You have eternal life and you have it right now. It's not something you're going to have pie in the sky and the sweet buy and buy. It's a real drag being a Christian, it's a bummer. We just read our bibles and pray and go to church and sit in the pew. The heathen, they get to have all the fun. They get to dance. We don't. They get to do all the fun stuff. But when we die, oh, when we die, we get to go to heaven. That's what we're looking for. And a lot of Christians walk around look like they've been baptized in lemon juice. They're just, "Man, it's pretty bad now, but I'm just looking forward to heaven. Hallelujah." It's like you're in hell right now, but you're going to heaven someday. DL Moody once said, he said, "A little faith will take your soul to heaven. A lot of faith will bring heaven to your soul."

Amen. Amen. Amen.

See, a lot of Christians have a little faith, so they're going to heaven someday. But did you know that right now, right here, you can have heaven on earth? Amen. You can have assurance that you are a child of God. Now, I would never want a unsaved person or non-Christian to think they're going to heaven when they're not. But equally, I would never want a saved person that's going to heaven and doesn't know they're going to heaven. So if you are saved, you need assurance. If you're not saved, you need salvation. It's that simple. And we rest on God's word. We have the witness of God's spirit and we rely and believe on the work that God did. Now, John draws a conclusion for us in verse 12, and that conclusion is that he has the son has what?

Eternal life.

And he that has not the son of God has what? No life. Is that black and white or what? It needs no commentary, right? I don't need any exposition on that. It's very clear. You either have the son and have life, or you have not the Son of God and you did not have life. Now, I want to give you five facts, somewhat rapid fire, so write them down, about eternal life based on verse 11 to 13. Five facts about eternal life. Number one, eternal life is a gift. Notice what it says in verse 11.

God has what? Given. God gave it to us. It's a gift. You can't earn it. You can't deserve it. You can't merit it. You can't work for it. Eternal life is a gift from God and nothing you can do can merit, earn, or deserve eternal life. Ephesians 2: 8-9, by grace, you have been saved through faith and that not of yourself, it is a gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. Second fact about eternal life in verse 11 and 12, his eternal life is a present possession. I love this. Three times in two verses, King Jimmy, he uses the word hath. Now that's an old English word. We don't say hath. You don't get up in the morning, says, "Hath thou coffee? Hath thou eaten thy breakfast?" We use the word have, has, have. Do you have eternal life?

So John is saying that it is a present possession. You have eternal life. It's the life of God in the soul of man. It's the life that is real. It's not just quantity, it's quality of life. Third fact about eternal life, eternal life is only found in Jesus. Again, verse 11 and 12, it's very clear, eternal life is only found in Jesus. Now, this is where people get real upset. That's too narrow, that's too exclusive. Well, it's true. I don't know what else to tell you. It happens to be truth. When you're working on a mathematical equation, I'm writing on a chalkboard. I still have fears. I'm back in junior high doing math, and that was my most worst subject. You're working on a chalkboard. You're doing the math. There's a right answer. There's a wrong answer, right? Does the teacher say, "You kind of got it right."

No, it's either right or wrong. That's why I don't like math. Because I always got it wrong. So there is a right and there is a wrong. And God says, "If you don't have my son, you don't have life." Jesus himself said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father," he said, "Except through me." He wanted to emphasize and make it clear. No one gets to God the father, no one goes to heaven except through me. If you want to get to heaven, you can't go around the cross. If you want to get to heaven, you only get there by taking to hand of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

And that's what this verse is making very, very clear that eternal life is found only in his son, Jesus Christ. John 1:4, in him was life and the life was the light of men. Let me give you fourth fact about eternal life. Without the son, it means you are lost. You have no life. With the son, you have life. And then fact number five is in verse 13. It speaks of the certainty of eternal life. Eternal life can be known. Some people say, "You can't know that you're going to heaven when you die. You got to wait until you find out which way you go." That's too late to find out you're not going to heaven. I don't want to wait until I die to find out. I'm not going to heaven. Someone said, "You're not ready to live until you're ready to die, and you're not ready to die until you know have eternal life."

Amen.

Do you know you have eternal life? So in verse 13, John makes it very clear, "I wrote these things. I wrote this epistle. I wrote these words for you to believe on the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life." What a marvelous truth that is. Now, some don't know they have eternal life because they don't know that day they were saved. And that's not essential for salvation. Some don't know they have eternal life because they say, "Well, I didn't cry. I didn't repent, and I wasn't a real wicked person." But we forget, all of us have sinned, all of us have fallen short.

Or, "I didn't walk forward at a formal invitation." Or maybe you stumble and you fall and you still sin occasionally. So you think, "Well, I don't know that I'm saved. I think God kicked me out of his family." I believe that you can have two things, that you can have assurance that you are secure. I believe that you can have assurance that you are secure. Now, I'd never want to give assurance to somebody who's not saved. So if you're not sure you're saved today, I'm going to give you an invitation and an opportunity to receive Jesus Christ and be forgiven and be saved. But if you've trusted him, and let me summarize the book of John since we're coming to its conclusion, if you're walking in the light, if you are confessing your sins, if you're obeying Christ's commands, if you're loving fellow believers, if you believe in Jesus Christ as God's incarnate son, and if you're practicing righteousness, there's a good chance that you're a child of God.

Those are all birthmarks, six of them birthmarks of the true Christian. But if you're not a child of God today, then your great need is to get right with God and to know that you are forgiven. Someone said that he took our feet out of the Maori clay and he set us upon a rock. Don't you love that image? And then this person said, and I quote, "I may tremble on that rock, but the rock never trembles under me." I like that. He's taken me from a horrible pit and he set my feet upon a rock. Sometimes on the rock, I'm like, "[inaudible 00:39:45]." I'm trembling. But guess what? Thank God the rock never trembles under me. And who is that rock?

Jesus.

Jesus Christ.

Amen.

My salvation isn't dependent on me. He saved me by his grace. He keeps me by his grace and by grace I will end in glory. What begins with grace ends in glory. And you know what Heaven is? Heaven is beginning right now. You actually already start heaven the moment you are saved. Believe it or not, that's what heaven starts for you. It's a done deal. You're going to heaven. Now, to me, this is a marvelous truth. It frees me to love God and to serve God and to live for God. When they were building the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, initially they started construction and men were falling to their death. You know what happened? The speed of construction slowed down to almost a standstill.

But when they put in that safety net, they put in that net underneath that bridge, men knew that if they fell, they would be safe. They started working harder and the work progressed and the work went twice as fast as it had before. So you that are saved today and you know that you're secure in Christ and you have assurance of your salvation, go out and live for him. Go out and love him and serve him and walk with him and obey him and live your life for Jesus Christ. But if you're here today and you're saying, "I'm not sure I'm saved," then let's make sure. I'm going to give you an opportunity. I'm going to give you an opportunity to receive Jesus Christ as your savior.

The Bible says whoever comes to him, he will no way cast out. The Bible says today, if you hear his voice, don't harden your heart. Jesus said, "I stand at the door and I knock. And if you hear my voice and you open the door, I will come into you." So let's bow our heads in a word of prayer.