



First Baptist Church At The Villages

COMPANION STUDY TO MESSAGE: CONFIDENCE THROUGH FULL RESTORATION (6/28) •
STUDY TITLE: ASSURANCE OF SALVATION • 2 CORINTHIANS 13:5-10 •
FOR USE 6/28/ THROUGH 7/4/2020

MAIN POINT

We are not saved by the strength of our faith; we are saved by the sufficiency of our Savior.

INTRODUCTION

As your study time begins, use this section to focus your heart and mind on the topic of the lesson.

Consider how and when you became a Christian. Write your story down and share with someone.

Have you ever wished you came to know Jesus in a different way? For example, have you ever wished your testimony was more or less dramatic than it is? Why?

How do you think the way in which people become Christians helps or hurts their future assurance?

At some point, most Christians ask the simple question: “Am I really saved?” This is a question the Bible encourages us to ask, but also to have answered. The Lord wants us to be assured that we are truly His; in fact, our spiritual growth is impeded until we are able to answer that fundamental question.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| READ 2 CORINTHIANS 13:5-10.

What do you think Paul meant when he told the Corinthians to “test themselves” (v. 5)?

In the original language, the verb in this verse is present tense. Paul was not telling the Corinthians to test themselves once, but to keep on testing and keep on examining.

Why might believers need to examine themselves time and time again?

What good might come from this kind of examination?

Is it possible that this kind of examination be taken too far? Why or why not?

We can trust the Lord to tell us the truth, just as the Corinthians could. As we examine ourselves, we are opening up our lives for the correction of God to be freely given. We are asking Him to show us areas of our lives in which we are unfaithful or in which we are deceiving ourselves. This self-examination is part of growing into maturity (v. 9).

However, the Lord also wants us to live with a sense of confidence and assurance each time we examine ourselves. In fact, this sense of assurance is one of the reasons God gives us His Holy Spirit.

| READ ROMANS 8:12-17.

Compare this passage with 2 Corinthians 13. Why does God want us to test or examine ourselves? Why might He want us to live with a tested security?

How might the spiritual growth of a Christian be impeded if they have never tested themselves and been assured?

Why might knowing that we are truly the children of God bring freedom to our lives?

How have you experienced the Holy Spirit in your own life testifying that you are the child of God?

The Holy Spirit tells us the truth. He will remind us, during the shadows of doubt, that we truly are the children of God. When He does, we are freed from the burden of anxiety and fear and are emboldened to live fully for Jesus.

| READ HEBREWS 10:19-25.

Why, according to this passage, are we able to have assurance?

Why is focusing on the sacrifice of Jesus more important than focusing on the strength of your own faith?

How does doing each reveal the object of your trust?

Ultimately, we are not saved because of the strength of our faith. We are saved because of the sacrifice of Jesus. When we doubt, the right question to ask is not, then, about how strongly we believe. It is rather about where, right now, we are placing our trust.

CONTEMPLATION & APPLICATION

Identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to your life.

Based on the discussion today, how would you respond to someone who is having doubts about his or her own salvation?

When and how are you going to examine yourself this week?

What will change in your life as a result of that testing and examination?

PRAYER

Pray, as honestly as you can today, asking the Lord to help you see the condition of your heart. If you find that you are not trusting Jesus right now, then turn from your sin and place your faith and trust in Christ right now...then share that great news with someone. If you 'know that you know' you are indeed born again, saved and redeemed... praise God through showing and telling everyone who will listen just how much Jesus loves you, and that He loves them too!

"I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ." - Philemon, verse 6

COMMENTARY

| 2 CORINTHIANS 13:5-10

13:5. Paul wanted the Corinthians to take his third visit so seriously that he challenged them to examine and test themselves to see whether they were in the faith. To encourage them further toward self-examination, Paul asked if they did not realize that Christ Jesus was in them. Christ's Spirit at work in the believer has certain effects of sanctification and faithfulness. If the Corinthians' claims to faith were true, they were united to Christ, and the Holy Spirit was making

the truth of their claims evident in their lives. But if the life of any believer showed no signs of the Spirit's activity, then the Spirit was not working in him and Christ was not indwelling him. Paul had already mentioned that the Corinthians were being tested. Their response to his instructions would prove whether their faith was genuine.

13:6. Anticipating his opponents' objection, Paul assured the Corinthians that they would discover that Paul and his company had not failed the test. Paul evidently expected some people within the church to question his own Christian living. In response, he admitted that even he needed to continue demonstrating saving faith in Christ, just as the Old Testament patriarchs had to demonstrate their faith through testing.

13:7-8. The apostle's primary desire was not that the Corinthians would vindicate his reputation, but that they would do what was right even though in the eyes of his opponents he might seem to have failed. From the perspective of human wisdom so deeply cherished by many Corinthians, Paul was not very impressive, and perhaps would appear to have failed. He exhorted the church to conform to his instructions, despite what others said about him, so they might do what was right and pleasing to God. Paul stated that he and his company could not do anything against the truth. He was confident that he and his company were true believers, and therefore that they could not actually fail the test, despite what others might conclude.

13:9. Paul's ministry to the Corinthian church proved that he was not interested in preserving his reputation for his own sake. His company was likewise not interested in their own reputations. Rather, they were all glad when they appeared weak and the Corinthians strong. Their central prayer for the church at Corinth was that God would bring them to perfection or completion. Paul's desire was that the Corinthians would come to maturity in their service to Christ.

13:10. Paul summarized his motivations in yet another way. He wrote these things when he was absent so that when he arrived he might not have to be harsh. His harshness was intended to render unnecessary any harsh use of authority when he visited. Paul had the power and authority, given to him by the Lord, to inflict much trouble on the church in discipline. But he knew that discipline was not the central purpose of his authority. The Lord had given Paul this authority for building ... up, not for tearing ... down. Insofar as discipline served to build up the church, Paul was willing to inflict it when necessary. His primary desire, however, was to build up the church through positive means. He felt the best way to build up the church was to exhort them to repent and to discipline them only if his words failed to bring about change. Paul preferred a gentle touch, but he was ready to do whatever was necessary to rescue them from sin.

| ROMANS 8:12-17

8:12-14. Because of the Holy Spirit, we are assured of being made and kept as children of God. The believer is indwelt by the Spirit; the believer's spirit has been regenerated by the Spirit; and the believer's body will be resurrected from the dead by the Spirit. That puts the believer under an obligation to put to death the misdeeds of the body. This is not a "lose-your-salvation" passage—put to death the deeds of the flesh and you will live, indulge the deeds of the flesh and you will die. Rather, it is a "big-picture" passage, indicating what should be the natural outcome in the life of one who has the presence of the Spirit: an obligation to be holy, to manifest one's sanctification in righteous behavior. The most compelling reason of all to live lives of holiness is because we have been adopted into a holy household. When one begins to enjoy the role of heir, the insecurities which fed much of our fleshly disposition begin to disappear, and the misdeeds of the body with them.

8:15-17. What is the fear that Paul says has been removed by the presence of the Spirit of God? Essentially and psychologically, it probably comes closest in our modern era to the codependent person or the addict getting well. Oftentimes people fear losing what has provided their identity for a significant period of time. Just as a former smoker has to learn what to do with his or her hands when nervous or in a social setting, so the new believer fears a new relationship as a child of God. The void left by the absence of sin will be filled by the Spirit and works of righteousness in time, but there is an initial fear. But there is a "catch." Coheirs will share in glory only in the same manner in which the heir achieves glory. In the case of Christ, it was through suffering. If the son learned obedience through suffering, so will the adopted sons. It is frequently in such suffering that the shadow of doubt is most prominent.

| HEBREWS 10:19-25

10:19. We experience Christ's power by drawing near to God, maintaining our faith, and loving other believers. Therefore emphasizes that in view of what Jesus has done, believers can approach God with confidence. Confidence describes a boldness believers have because of our new relationship to God. The Most Holy Place was that part of the sanctuary which symbolized the presence of God. This verse uses the term not for the tabernacle but for the presence of God. All believers can come to God's presence. This privilege is no longer limited to the priesthood. Believers can approach God because of the blood of Jesus. Not animal sacrifice but Jesus' sacrifice of Himself has opened the door. All who have found a new relationship to God through Jesus can experience this privilege.

10:20-21 We have the boldness to enter into the holiest place because Jesus has opened for us a new and living way. He serves as our great priest to encourage us to enter God's presence. Christ's way to the Father is new because he opened it by his death. The resurrection of the sacrificed One has made the way living, or effective and enduring. Curtain refers to the veil that stood between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. In Hebrews it becomes a symbol of Jesus' human life. As a human being, Jesus opened up a new way to God. Jesus presented his human life to God to bring us to him. Jesus' human life and sacrificial death have made the Most Holy Place wide open so believers can enter directly into God's presence. This was part of Jesus' high priestly service.

10:22. We can now approach God and have the mercy and grace of our High Priest standing over us. How? First, we are to come with a sincere heart. This calls for genuine devotion rather than hypocrisy. Second, we are to come in full assurance of faith. This demands a bold confidence that God has provided full access to his presence through Christ alone. Third, we are to have our hearts sprinkled from a guilty conscience. This demands constant confession of our sins and openness to God. Finally we are to have our bodies washed with pure water. This may be a reference to baptism as an outward commitment to Christ, or it might be symbolic as is the previous reference to hearts sprinkled with blood. If it is symbolic, the hearts sprinkled from a guilty conscience would picture our salvation, and our bodies washed would symbolize a righteous lifestyle. In this new state of purity made possible by Jesus, believers can come boldly to God and claim his grace and mercy.

10:23. This exhortation appeals to us to maintain spiritual consistency. We are urged to hold firmly to the hope we profess. This hope offers glory which beamed more brightly than the glories of the old order. Unswervingly denotes an object which stands absolutely straight, not departing from the perpendicular. We are to lay hold of Christ and never let go, even in the slightest. No persecution, real or feared, was to lessen the ardor of these believers for Christ.

10:24-25. This exhortation calls us to responsibility to one another. The appeal to consider demands concentrated attention. The goal of this attention was to spur one another on toward love and good deeds. As Christians we have a corporate responsibility. We must help others who stumble and falter. We must concentrate on the needs of others and not on our individual salvation only. To spur other believers forward in the Christian life, followers of Christ must meet together. Some of the readers of Hebrews were neglecting to meet together for worship, and this limited their ability to give and receive encouragement toward good works. Christians who meet together with the aim of promoting godliness and love for one another can be remarkably successful in their ventures.