

22T13d Assurance

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me today for an @ the PUNLA coffee table.

I have an important question for you. Are you 100% confident you know what will happen when you die? What I mean are you sure you are going to heaven. Whether you are Christian or not, many have questions about this. My wife sees this a lot at her work in the hospital. Faced with death, most people desperately cling-on to this life as if they are scared or at least uncertain about what happens next. Is that you? It does not have to be. You can be sure.

During this series we have talked about the fact we are all going to die. There is a choice we have to make in this life, Jesus or not Jesus. Not making a choice is really choosing not Jesus. There are no other options. Following Jesus is great though. He is a good master, who helps us make better decisions, helps us to manage our burdens and worries. A better way of living. The best most satisfying life now. And He gives us Peace, Joy, Hope and Assurance.

So now let me ask you about your Assurance. What does that make you think? Assurance? Assurance simply means confidence or certainty. The type of assurance I want to talk about today is assurance of salvation. How can we be certain we are saved? How do we have or get that assurance.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father please guide our discussion today. Help me to stay out of the way, so you can use me. We trust you and we know you have promised the wisdom we need to understand your word in the Bible. Help us to let the Holy Spirit lead us and guide us. Bless our time together and I pray all these things in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

Okay, assurance means a lot more than salvation. God promises to answer prayer, forgive our sins, to give us guidance and more. Trusting God means trusting in all of these things, which is really the meaning of having God's assurance. So, how?

I know the most common response is John 3:16 (NKJV), *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

That is what Jesus said. Absolute assurance comes from absolute trust in God. It sounds simple doesn't it, then why do so many professing Christians doubt? Why when confronted with life's troubles, do so many doubt? For most of my life I was this way. I said I was a Christian, I went to church sometimes, I gave money to charities sometimes, but I had no confidence, and I was definitely not certain. And before I proceed, most everyone is in that place or has been. But there are some that pass from uncertainty to complete confidence and certainty. I can't speak for everyone, but I believe those life troubles are how we can move from no confidence to absolute certainty.

Now for me, I trust the Bible, I love and trust Jesus. I know God and trust God. But for many years, I wondered if I was faced with trouble would I have that confidence that I thought I had. And over time I have found proof of my confidence in God. Money and Job troubles, check. I was still confident in God. Family and marriage troubles, check. I was still confident in God. Health problems in the form of COVID-19 and kidney stones. Check I was still certain. I was certain I was dying from COVID, and when I was at the point, I thought the end was near. I felt calm assurance, I trusted Jesus with everything. I trusted Jesus with my family, and I was ready to go to God. Then I survived and I knew for certain that my trust in God was truly certain. Then I had kidney stones big ones, and I wanted to die, but even in the pain, I trusted God. I did not understand why I was in that situation, pushed way beyond what I thought was my limits. But my trust in God did not waiver. How did I know? Well, I never prayed from myself. I knew beyond any doubt no matter what happened to me, I was fine. Rejoicing to be with the Lord or rejoicing to be with my family. Rejoicing in the pain and even when I could not breath. Just rejoicing because I trusted God.

Now I'm not special, the pain made me cry like a baby. I struggled to breath. I was not comfortable with what was happening to me. I wished it was not to be happening to me. But my strength and calmness had nothing to do with me. I trusted God and I received assurance.

So, some time before my near death experiences, I had acquired this assurance. The question was how can I help others to get it. This amazing gift from God which is assurance.

So, why do so many doubt? For many, John 3:16 does not resolve all the questions. Let me share some of my journey with you in hopes, you can find this amazing gift from God like I did.

The only way you can ever have absolute assurance is to trust God. Trust God no matter what. This is the kind of trust we see in the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel Chapter 3. Faced with death in the fiery furnace they said, *If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.* (Daniel 3:17-18 ESV)

Now that is assurance. Absolute confidence and trust in God. Even if God does not save me, I'm still going to trust God and do what God wants me to do.

This is definitely what it looks like to have assurance but how do you get it. One thing that helped me was studying Christian heroes like, Tyndale, Huss, Wycliffe, Polycarp, Mueller, Wurmbrand many others. Learning about these Christian heroes has shown me what it looks like to trust God no matter your situation. They have shown me example after example of why we should trust God. You also see their failures and

doubts and how they worked through them to become certain. Complete surrender to God. Assurance in God. This helped me greatly because I learned what it looked like and the effort it took to be certain.

I also studied my bible more and more intensely. I look at the Bible greats like, Abraham, Job, Joseph, David and others and saw their flaws and failures, yet they found a way to trust God and to become completely confident in God. True assurance.

Then I began to search for the reasons why I can have assurance. First, I challenged if I could trust my Bible. I dug and researched and studied. What I found was truly amazing. The Bible is full of prophecies which have already come true. Predictions hundreds of years before things happened that have been fulfilled in history. What about science? Science actually supports the Bible, unlike what we typically hear from the atheists. The more science learns, the more science aligns with the Bible. What about archeology? The more things that are discovered, the more evidence there is for the accounts in the Bible. What about all the errors and mistakes in the Bible? Well, it is true that the oldest original language manuscripts do not agree word for word. But what is truly amazing is none of these differences affect any of the core tenants of Christianity. Think about it, despite all the errors and mistakes made by scribes transcribing by hand over the centuries, every concept is still there, all core tenants are conveyed by everyone of these manuscripts. So, yes you can trust your Bible. Cover to cover, message by message. The Bible and what it teaches can be trusted.

Now how can I use this amazing book the Bible to find that Assurance from God. I have to be honest; I don't know but I do know it's in the Bible. What speaks to you and finally gives you assurance will probably be different than me. But I'll share some that I rely on to settle my fears and anxiety, those that give me that certainty and assurance.

Psalm 23 (KJV) *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.*

Sorry I had to read it the King James version. I love the poetic language. I find this psalm very comforting. And as I look back over my life, I can see how the words of this Psalm fit the events in my life. I can see how God has been there, beside me despite my troubles. I can see that God has been there with me and helping me every step of the way.

1 John 3:16-23 (NKJV) *By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the*

love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

I think we can summarize this scripture as practice what you preach. Jesus told us to love people the way He loves them. That means serving, sharing, sacrificing for others. You can have assurance through serving others and loving others in Jesus' name. That's how we abide in Jesus, by doing the things He has told us to do. Living God's bigger, better plan for our life.

Let me read a couple excerpts from Hebrews, Hebrews 6:9-12 (NKJV) *But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

Hebrews 10:19-25 (NKJV) *Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

The author of Hebrews, says we can have full assurance in our faith when we surrender to God and do the things Jesus has told us to do. We don't get salvation by doing things. We get assurance by actively following King Jesus.

Finally let me read a couple excerpts from Romans. Romans 8:1-2 (NKJV) *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*

Romans 5:1-5 (NKJV) *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and*

perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Paul tells us we can be absolutely confident in God. As Christ followers, we are forgiven of our sins. But this is for those that do not live according to the flesh. Or put another way, this assurance is for those who do what God wants, not what our broken nature wants. We are justified by faith. But we are going to still face problems and troubles in this life, but this is actually good because how we deal with these life events grow us closer to Jesus and help others to find Jesus. Hope does not disappoint because God is with us. We can absolutely count on God's character. And because of this we can have absolute peace. True assurance.

Father God, thank you for giving us your peace and assurance. May we trust you with everything we have. I pray these things in your name Lord Jesus, Amen

One last thing before I let you go today. God is trustworthy, we can trust God. We can trust His bible; we can trust His words in the Bible. We can trust God. So, read His words, meditate on His words. Let His words fill our hearts and minds. Then when we doubt, we have His words to reassure us. He is right there in the room with you, trust Jesus. No matter what you are going through, no matter what happens to you. You can trust God. You can trust that God loves you. You can't control your situation, you can't control your life, so stop trying. Acknowledge that God is in control, then let that peace that surpasses all understanding wash over you. Peace, Joy, Hope and Assurance are all yours, you just have to accept the gift.

Thank you for joining me @ the PUNLA Coffee Table today, I hope you have enjoyed this series about assurance.

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