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THE BEREANS


ACTS 17:11

1 John 3:18-24
Lesson #14
Assurance of Faith
04/3/2022

The Gospel






What God has done
FOR us
Redemption



What God seeks to do
IN us and **THROUGH** us
Regeneration **Reformation**

1

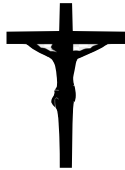


“The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.”

Eternal life.	Walk in the Spirit.	Social reform.
Christ FOR us	Christ IN us	Christ THROUGH us
		

What is the “main thing”?

2

“The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.”

Eternal life.	Walk in the Spirit.	Social reform.
Christ FOR us	Christ IN us	Christ THROUGH us
		

We are called to be the Body of Christ.

3

The faith / agape relationship

- 1 John 3:1-9 shows us the inseparable connection between the two. (Ephesians 4)
- 1 John 3:10-17 shows us the practical value of that connection. (James 2)
- 1 john 3:18-24 shows us the path to building that connection. (2 Peter 1)

4

1 John 3

“18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. 19 We shall know by this that we are of the truth, and shall **assure our heart before Him**, 20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, **because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.**”

Christianity starts with the heart -

5

- but doesn't stop with the **heart**.

"23 And this is His commandment, that we **believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another**, just as He commanded us. 24 And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the **Spirit** whom He has given us."

Saving faith has three pillars:

1. **Our confession.**
2. **Our conduct.**
3. **Our conscience.**

6

1 John 3:18-24

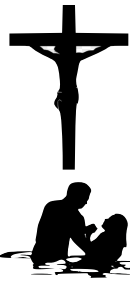
(interpretive paraphrase)

"Assurance and confidence in our relationship with God is a function of His indwelling Spirit's witness to our spirit; convicting or confirming our conscience as we 1) believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and 2) as we love those that he loves, which becomes clearer as we walk with him in an abiding relationship."

7

Assurance / Confidence comes through a clear conscience

Faith
in Jesus Christ
The Word of the Cross
this secures our acceptance



Love
for one another
The Way of the Cross
this stamps our assurance

The Spirit will guide our conscience in affirming our faith ~



~ when we give the Spirit something to work with.

8

From "Abiding Faith" to "Agape Love"

2 Peter 1

"5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your **FAITH** supply **moral excellence**, and in *your* moral excellence, **knowledge**, 6 and in *your* knowledge, **self-control**, and in *your* self-control, **perseverance**, and in *your* perseverance, **godliness**, 7 and in *your* godliness, **brotherly kindness**, and in *your* brotherly kindness, **LOVE**."

Give the Spirit something to work with.

9

" 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither **useless** nor **unfruitful** in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For the one who lacks these *qualities* is blind or short-sighted, having **forgotten his purification** from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to **make certain** about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will **never stumble**; 11 for in this way the **entrance into the eternal kingdom** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be **abundantly supplied** to you."

The Word of the Cross is authenticated by the Way of the Cross.

10

2 Peter 1

"5 Now for this very reason (**promised freedom from worldliness**) also, applying all diligence (**zeal**), in your **FAITH** (the foundation) supply:

moral excellence (virtue),
knowledge (discernment),
self-control (discipline),
perseverance (endurance),
godliness (image bearer),
kindness (friendship),

Sharpening the vision

Spurning the resistance

Showing the values

agape LOVE."

11

1. Sharpening the vision

- Jesus modeled a clear missional goal that is **as broad as the KINGDOM OF GOD.**

John 10:10

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; **I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.**”

Ephesians 1:18

“¹⁸ I pray that the **eyes of your heart may be enlightened**, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.”

12

1. Sharpening the vision

The thief at work:

The temptations of Christ (Matt.4:1-7)

- **Feed the body, starve the soul**
- **Entitlement to the realization of OUR wishes**
- **Let the ends justify any means**

The temptations of Christendom

- **Bibliolatry** - “proof text” worship
- **Materialism** - this world worship
- **Autonomy** - narcissistic self worship
- **Optics** - superficial image worship
- **Nationalism** - American dream worship

13

1. Sharpening the vision

- There is little merit in running well **if it is in the wrong direction.**
- There is little hope in staying on the path **if the goal is unclear.**
- There is little value in following rules **if the heart is not engaged.**
- There is little virtue in loving **if it is limited to those who benefit us.**

Give the Spirit something to work with.

14

1. Sharpening the vision

**moral excellence (virtue),
knowledge (discernment),**

- **Learn the Way of the Cross** by looking at the Way of Jesus and the Apostles.
- **Focus on molding character** rather than manipulating circumstances.
- **Seek wisdom** - major on majors, minor on minors and know the difference.

Give the Spirit something to work with.

15

1. Sharpening the vision

2. Spurning the resistance

- Jesus exemplified a life lived **against a strong headwind.**

John 17

“¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. ¹⁸ **As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.** . . . ²⁰ I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;”

Give the Spirit something to work with.

16

1. Sharpening the vision

2. Spurning the resistance

Ephesians 6

“¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to **stand firm** against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our **struggle** is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to **resist** in the evil day, and having done everything, to **stand firm.**”

Give the Spirit something to work with.

17

1. Sharpening the vision
2. Spurning the resistance

**self-control (discipline),
perseverance (endurance),**

- **One of the strongest argument for Christianity is - consider the alternatives!**
- **America is not God's embassy on earth. Christians aliens aren't America's ambassadors.**
- **Aliens need to buck the winds of this world. What do we say "NO" to and "WHY"?**

Give the Spirit something to work with.

18

If you could be assured of deep personal peace, and courageous love for the rest of your life

would you be willing to lose your reputation, friends, and material comforts

LIKE JESUS?

19

1 Cor.13:4-7

Love is a response and contrast to

patient	trials	(depression)
kind	insults	(retaliation)
not jealous	of others	(envy)
does not brag		(pride)
is not arrogant		(arrogance)
is not unbecomingly		(moral laxness)
not self-seeking		(selfishness)
is not easily provoked		(combativeness)
holds no record of wrongs		(cruelty)
does not rejoice in the triumph of others		(punitiveness)
rejoices in the truth	gossip & slander	(insensitivity)
bears all things	losses	(dispair)
hopes all things	bad news	(pessimism)
endures all things	delayed hopes	(giving up)

Give the Spirit something to work with.

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1. Sharpening the vision
2. Spurning the resistance
3. Showing the values

- **Jesus prayed for a united community of believers who bore the image of God in diverse but complementary ways.**

John 17

“22 And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; **that they may be one, just as We are one**; 23 I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me.”

Give the Spirit something to work with.

21

1. Sharpening the vision
2. Spurning the resistance
3. Showing the values

- **Unity in complementary diversity is God's design for His church.**

Ephesians 4

15 but **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the **building up of itself in love.**”

Give the Spirit something to work with.

22

1. Sharpening the vision
2. Spurning the resistance
3. Showing the values

- **We bear the image of God but we are just one part of the diverse Body of Christ.**
- **We are to put our best foot forward without losing our balance or kicking our neighbor.**
- **We must see empathy as one of the first signs of community.**

Give the Spirit something to work with.

23

Lessons

- Receiving Christ by faith is not the end, but **the beginning of a process.**
- Bearing “God’s Image” involves **commitment, character, and community.**
- Discipleship will **demand our sacrifice, test our stamina, and stretch our faith.**
- The emphasis of **Apostolic teaching in Scripture** is key to hear God’s Spirit.

Give the Spirit something to work with.

24

Matthew 6:21

“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

We build assurance of saving faith when we -

- **take our baptism seriously -**
- **keep our eye on the right goals -**
- **renew our mind & resist this world -**
- **listen to our enlightened conscience -**
- **invest our lives in loving others -**

~ give the Spirit something to work with.

25

Discipleship is the Word of the Cross spoken through the Way of the Cross.

“It is only because he became like us that we can become like him.”

“Salvation is free, but discipleship will cost you your life.”

“Your life as a Christian should make non believers question their disbelief in God.”



Give the Spirit something to work with.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

26

When you leave this class, respond to the circumstances of life, speak to and about one another, and invest your time & resources -

Show your ID and give the Spirit something to work with.

27

1 John

Next week
4:1-6

Holy and worldly diversity

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APTOTEACH
A bishop then must be ... apt to teach 1 Timothy 3:2

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