

No Doubt About It - 1 John 5:13

Introduction: Let me ask you a question this morning. Don't answer out loud, but really think about your response. *"If you were to die today, and stand before God, and He were to ask you, 'Why should I let you into My heaven?' What would you say?"*

I've asked that question several times mostly to students, and I've gotten some different responses. Some say, *"Well, because I've been pretty good."* or *"Because I've not done anything really bad."* Some have said, *"Because I go to church."* or *"Because I've been baptized."* Some even said, *"God should let me in because He's all loving and good, He won't turn anyone away."*

But then some have said, *"I really don't know why He should let me in."* or *"I doubt if I would get in anyway."*

Would it surprise you if I told you that none of those answers are right? God will not let us into heaven based on our goodness, or our church attendance, or our preconceived ideas about Him.

But there is a right answer to the question. There is a way you can know for sure that you are going to heaven when you die. You can know that you know, and have no doubt about it.

This morning, I am talking to anyone who has ever struggled with this issue of salvation. If you don't understand what it is, I'm talking to you. If you are confused about it, I'm talking to you. If you've had doubts about your eternal security, this is for you. Even if you've never thought about it before, I want you to pay close attention this morning. The central truth of this message is that you can know for sure about your salvation. In fact, God wants you to know for sure. **1 John 5:13 (NIV)** says, *"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."*

You don't have to go through life wondering or guessing about it. You can know it. You don't have to have a "hope-so" religion. The writer of this book, a man named John understood that people sometimes have struggles and doubts about their faith, so he wrote to encourage us to be sure. And assurance of salvation is important. God made us so that a part of us – our spirit or our soul will last forever. And we will spend that forever in either heaven or hell, so we'd better be sure that we know where we will spend eternity.

This morning, I want to mention just a couple of things about this thing called salvation. First, let's talk about:

1. The Trust of Salvation (1 John 5:1 NIV)

1 John 5:1 says, *"Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God..."* Acts 16:31 (NIV) says the same thing: *"...Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."* The Christian faith is just that simple. We are saved by believing in the Lord Jesus.

Now the word *"believe"* doesn't mean just knowing about something. You know how it is when you believe something is true, but you're not willing to bet a million dollars on it.

Once there was a man named Blondin who was a funambulist. That means he was a tight rope walker. On June 30, 1859, Blondin became the first man ever to cross Niagara Falls on a tight rope. And he thrilled audiences with his feats and aerial antics at Niagara for several years.

When the Prince of Wales visited in 1860, Blondin carried his assistant across and performed antics on the way. The prince was left breathless believing Blondin was the greatest tight rope walker in the world. But when Blondin offered to carry him across on his back or in a wheelbarrow, he refused.

That is the way some people are about Jesus. They may know about Jesus and the fact that He was born in Bethlehem, and lived in Nazareth. They might believe that He grew up as the son of a carpenter, and that he was a good teacher. They may even believe that Jesus was crucified on a cross. Many people have no problem believing in the historical Jesus, but that's not what this word *"believe"* here means. The word *"believe"* means *"to have trust and commitment in something or someone."* And when it is applied properly here, it means to have trust in and commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

The problem for a lot of people is that they have trouble trusting in Jesus alone for their salvation. But **Eph. 2:8-9 (NIV)** makes it clear: *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast."*

That means we cannot ourselves. We cannot do enough good things to save ourselves. We can't earn enough brownie points to save ourselves. It is only by grace of God through our faith and trust in Christ that we

can obtain salvation.

A lot of people believe they have to do something to earn salvation, but that is trusting in the wrong thing. God isn't weighing our good works against our sins. No amount of good works will balance the scales because we aren't saved by works, but by God's grace combined with our faith.

Grace has been defined as God's unmerited favor. We don't earn God's grace. We don't deserve God's grace, but He gives it to us anyway. Grace is what makes God love us when we are unlovely. He doesn't love you for what you've done; He loves you because of who He is. Think of grace as the hand of God reaching down out of heaven. He says, *"I love you; I want to save you."* Think of faith as your hand reaching back up toward God, saying, *"I love You, Lord, and I accept Your love for me."* When you put your hand of faith in God's hand of grace, that's salvation.

But Satan wants you to think salvation depends on what you do. But that's a trap, because you will always be wondering if you've done enough. Salvation does not depend on what you do, but on what God has already done for you.

That means you will not go to heaven based on how much you read the Bible or pray, or how many times you attend church or by how much money you give to the church, but only because of God's grace. I'm not going to heaven because I'm a preacher, but only because of God's grace.

When you put your trust in Jesus Christ alone, and confess your sins and admit that you cannot save yourself, you are relying on the grace of God alone to save you. That is how you are saved. Second, I want to share with you:

2. The Testimony of Salvation.

John said he wrote this book to give Christians assurance of salvation. He used the word "*know*" almost forty times in the book, because he wanted people to know for certain they had been saved. Basically, he gives three tests that each person should take to make sure they're born again. First, there's:

A. The Lordship Test. (1 John 2:3 NIV).

Is Jesus Lord of your life? The title "*Lord*" means "*the boss or master.*" John says in 2:3 "*We know that*

we have come to know him if we obey his commands.” Now it doesn't say we are saved **by** keeping the commandments, but that we can be sure we know the Lord **if** we keep His commandments. 1 John 2:4 (NIV) says, *“The man who says, ‘I know him,’ but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”* That’s pretty straightforward isn’t it? John simply says that if you say that you are saved, but you don't do what God says, you are a liar. Does that mean we’re supposed to be perfect? No! We’re all sinners, and John talks of that in an earlier verse when he says, *“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us”* (1:10). Everybody sins. If we didn't sin, we wouldn't need salvation. Yet *“we know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands.”*

The word “*obey*” is also translated “*keep*.” “*Keep*” is a nautical term used by sailors who used to sail by the stars. They would *keep* the boat going in the right direction by *“keeping to the stars.”* To *keep* God’s commandments means to *keep* your life on course by His Word. That's the goal of the Christian life. A sailor might get distracted and get off course, but when he realizes his problem, he goes right back on course. That's the way it is with the child of God. We sometimes take our eyes off Him and fail, but the desire of our hearts is to keep His commandments. You aren't saved by keeping them, but one of the marks of a Christian is that you want to live according to those commandments. You want Christ to be Lord of your life. Another test of salvation is:

B. The Fellowship Test. (1 John 3:14 NIV)

John says, *“We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.”* When you love God, you are supposed to love the rest of His children as well. Why, because they are your brothers and sisters in Christ. It's one of the traits of those who have been born again. **1 John 4:20-21 (NIV)** says, *“If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ yet hates his brother, he is a liar....And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.”*

Now, according to this verse, can you claim to love God and not be in fellowship with your brother? No! God instructs us to love each other, and to keep on assembling together as His family.

Here’s the deal. When you become a Christian, you receive the nature of God, which is love. Now, if God's

nature is in you, you're going to love others the way God loves others.

You aren't saved by loving others, but you love others because you are saved. **1 John 4:7-8 (NIV)** says, *“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”* If you're really saved, God's love will show through you. Another test is:

C. The Relationship Test. (1 John 5:11-13).

Is there anyone here who is in a relationship right now? How strong would that relationship be if you were just introduced to that person, but you never spent time with them? Guys, if you just knew that girl's name and phone number, and a few facts about her, would you call that a real relationship? No! Because you know that being in a relationship with someone means spending time with them, getting to know them, sharing feelings with each other, confiding in each other.

It's the same with salvation. More than anything else, salvation is having an on-going relationship with Jesus. **1 John 5:11-12 (NIV)** says, *“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”*

This goes back to what I was saying earlier – do you just know about Christ, or do you really know Christ as your Savior and Lord? Do you have a relationship with Christ, or do you simply have an experience with Christ? Is Jesus somebody you were introduced to once but never bothered to get to know? How is your relationship with the Lord right now? Is He your Savior and Lord right now?

If you're really saved, Jesus will be the Lord of your life. You will be in fellowship with Him and other believers, and you will have an ongoing and ever-growing relationship with Him.

Conclusion: I was saved when I was 10. But, as time went on, my faith was like a roller coaster, up and down all the time. One day I was sure I was saved, the next day I'd say a cuss word, or do something else wrong, and I'd begin to doubt my salvation. I thought to myself, *“I must not really be saved if I do those things.”* This went on for quite a while until night I was so torn up with doubt and guilt, I couldn't sleep. So I got up and went to my parent's room, and woke them up. I told them that I wasn't sure I was saved, and that I was scared

that if I died, I'd go to hell because I had sinned, so I wanted to make sure. We talked about some of the things I had done, and I 'fessed up. My Dad said, "*Son, all I know to do is, if you're not sure, let's make sure.*" And right there, my Dad led me in a prayer. I don't remember that prayer word-for-word, but I do remember asking God to forgive my sins again, and if He wasn't there already, to come into my heart. Right there, I renewed my faith and trust in God.

After that experience, I realized that I had been saved before, but at that point, I just needed some assurance. And the best way to have assurance for me was to nail it down. I went back to bed and wrote it down in my Bible the date and time I was saved, Aug. 14, 1964; and whenever a doubt would creep in, I'd go back to that time, and say, "*I know I'm saved, because on that date I asked the Lord to forgive me and come into my life and make me a Christian.*" And if doubt crept in again, I'd go back to the other experience and say, "*That's when I made sure of my salvation. And I'm still trusting Jesus to keep me safe, because it's all in His hands.*" And listen, being in the hand of Jesus is the safest place you can be. **John 10:27-29 (NIV)** says, "*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.*"

If you aren't sure of your salvation, you need to get in the hand of Jesus. It's the safest place you can be.