

[Assurance of Salvation]

2 Timothy 1:12 and 1 John Chapter 4 and 5

Good Morning.

PP 2 Let me start today by asking two simple questions. -

1. Why are we convinced that tomorrow morning the sun will rise in the sky, and a new day will start?

Maybe some answers to that question are: 'It has happened before since the world was created'. 'Past experience tells us it will happen.'

'The laws of nature and the rotation of the earth are set that it has to occur.'

2. The second question is:

'Is it because we know the sun will rise, that we have plans for tomorrow?'

We plan our lives and our work because we are confident that the sun will rise and tomorrow will be a new day.

In today's world there are many things we **can be confident about** but sadly there are also many things that we **cannot be confident about** such as health, visas applications, job prospects, income levels, stability of world governments etc.

In many countries people have no confidence that tomorrow will be better.

In many places in our world many people think things can only get worse!

In our own personal lives there are also many factors that affect our confidence. Past successes and or failures, if we are rich or poor, personality – extravert or introvert, our family background, words of encouragement or discouraging words spoken over us as a child or young person and of course our health mentally and physically. These all affect our confidence in life.

What makes a Christian different from those who don't know Jesus as their personal Saviour?

What is it that enables a Christian to be confident about their faith?

As Christians we believe that because God loves us through His Son, Jesus Christ, that when we die we will go to be with Jesus in heaven.

But, how do you know that? What is the basis for this trust in God?

The question I want to help us answer today is:

PP 3 How can we be sure that we have eternal life now, and will go to heaven when we die?

Being sure of our salvation is one of the keys to living a victorious Christian life in a world that is very anti-Christian.

Living with joy and a passion for life is, for the Christian, a blessing that flows from a confidence that God loves us, has a plan for our lives, and will welcome us into heaven one day.

I am sure most of you have flown on an aeroplane, either overseas or here in NZ.

As you wait for your plane have you ever noticed the difference in body language between

a person who has a confirmed ticket and boarding pass, and a person who is on stand-by? A person with a boarding pass is normally relaxed and sitting quietly waiting for the announcement to board the plane.

However, the person on standby is tense, looking at their watch, pacing up and down and generally unsure what to do. This difference is caused by the confidence factor. **One person knows, the other is unsure.**

If you knew that you only had 15 minutes till you died what would your reaction be? Confidence and peace, or a feeling of panic and uncertainty?

I once had the very difficult experience of knowing an elderly lady who was dying of cancer, and although she had been a Christian for many years, yet during her last days she began to panic and think that she was not saved. It was very sad for us all. But we encouraged her, and endeavoured to build up her faith again.

There are many wonderful stories of what it means to know Jesus, and be confident that from the moment you believed you have eternal life and will go to heaven one day.

Last week I read a newsletter from a friend in China whose grandfather was very ill and dying.

She wrote: "As we prayed for him and the family, we were praying for an opportunity to show the power of God. Remarkably, about 3 days before his passing, grandfather had a day of clarity and asked Jesus into his heart . My husband had the privilege of baptising him. His non-Christian daughter noted that after receiving Christ his fear and discomfort dropped away and he was at peace with His God."

So, how can we be confident that all is ok, and we are a child of God?

PP 4 My Baptism

When I was baptised at the age of 12, my church gave me a baptismal card that had **2 Tim 1 :12** printed on it.

'That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.'

When this was written the apostle Paul was in prison because of his faith. He was being persecuted and faced death every day. Yet, even at this difficult time he was able to proclaim a number of amazing things.

- He was not ashamed of being a Christian.
- He knew Jesus in whom he trusted.
- He was sure that he had trusted his life into the hands of God who would guard his life.
- He was sure Jesus was coming again. (Last week)

When we know Jesus and can trust him what a difference it makes to life and living. So what is it, that we know, that makes us so confident that our faith is real and that we are not just believing a lie?

Hundreds of years ago people believed the world was flat and lived their lives in very restricted areas. When the real facts came to light and they discovered the world was round the age of travel and exploration was born.

PP 5 When historical fact and personal experience come together it gives confidence to know that what you know is true.

We can say with confidence : **I KNOW.....**

Historical Fact + Faith + Personal Experience = Confidence = I KNOW

So what is about Christianity that gives us the confidence to say, I know?

I know that when I die I will go to heaven. I know I am saved now and will be on the day of Christ's return?

In the book of 1John chapter 4 and 5 there are at least ten ways that John puts forward as proof that you are saved and going to heaven.

Five are what **WE do**, and five are what **GOD did**.

Before we look at these let me explain to you a basic principle of scripture.

FACT < FAITH < FEELINGS (Train illustration.)

PP 6 What we experience as Christians (BOXES)

- We love each other : 1 John 4: 7 & 20- 21
John 13:35 Your love for each other will prove to the world that you are my disciples.
- We love God because he first loved us: 1 John 4:19 (Doreen and my story)
- We obey God's commandments: 1John 5:2. Change of lifestyle and life focus.
- We pray prayers that please God and receive answers: 1 John 5: 14 -15

Prayer is not to convince God that our desires are good and right but to find God's will for our lives and do it! If your plans are not working out as you thought then pray and ask God if he has a Plan B!

- We have victory over the pressures of the world through faith: 1 John 4 : 4 & 5: 4 – 5 (balloon illustration)

PP 7 What God did for us (BOXES)

The testimonies from God:

- The testimony of Jesus Baptism: 1John 5:6
Our baptism is a witness to our faith.
- The testimony of Jesus Death: 1 John 5:6

1 John 4:9 God showed His love by sending His one and only Son into the world.

- The testimony of the Holy Spirit : 1 John 4:13
Paul emphasises this when he wrote to the church in Thessalonica 1Thessalonians 1:5 'For when we brought you the good news, it was not only with words but also with power, for **the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance** that what we said was true... '

- The testimony of first hand witnesses: 1 John 4: 14 Study of John's gospel with ladies group and last week we read: John 20:30 -31

- The testimony of the Bible: 1 John 5:13, 1 Corinthians 15: 3 – 9(500+ eyewitnesses)

PP 8 and 9 A well - known preacher and church leader by the name of Rick Warren who wrote 'A Purpose Driven Life' and many other excellent books, said this:

'What is your assurance of salvation? The promise of God's Word.

If God says it, that settles it, because God cannot lie. You can trust the promises of God's Word.'

PP 10 So John sums it all up in 1 John 5:7- 12 (read). They all say the same thing!

'Jesus said it and that settles it. Jesus cannot lie'. ALL AGREE

PP 11 Are you convinced?

' I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.'

(Read together)