

The Assurance of Salvation

by Steve Gallagher

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a deep sense of sin and repentance in order to have a true conversion, and provides six proofs of faith in 1 John to help determine the validity of one's faith.

Duration: 58:30

Scripture: Galatians 6:7, 1 John 2:6

Topics: "Assurance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a predominant passion for God as a born-again Christian. While it is not wrong to occasionally engage in worldly activities like watching movies or sports, the focus of a believer's life should be on God. The preacher highlights the need for concrete evidence of one's faith, comparing it to the evidence presented in a courtroom trial. He also emphasizes the importance of resembling Jesus in one's life, walking in the same manner as He did. The sermon references various verses from the Bible to support these points.

Transcript

I want to open with a word of prayer. Lord, I'm just very aware of how minuscule we are before You. I just think of Your almighty presence looming above us.

And Lord, I just want to, at least for myself, humble myself before that presence and acknowledge that You alone are the Lord. You alone are the Lord. You alone deserve the glory.

in the honor of you alone, O Lord. May every man be abased in your presence, O God. And any who are in this room who defy you or rise up in pride against your authority, Lord, I pray that this morning you would lay them low, lay them low, God, in your great mercy now.

Do it now, Lord, so that they won't have to face it later. Lord, you know my heart. I just ask, God, that you would breathe life into your word this morning, that your word would carry this message, that you would subdue my flesh, my natural passion, God, that you would come forth with what you wish to be expressed this morning, Lord.

Open hearts, please open hearts here this morning, God. There are hearts in this room right now which desperately need to be opened and penetrated by the imperishable seed of Jesus Christ. And I pray that you will accomplish that this morning, Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

A couple of weeks ago on Saturday, Kathy and I were at the office and Mike was there and we were all just doing some work and no one else was in the building. All of a sudden I heard the front door open and I went out to investigate and it was a young guy who had driven here from Indiana and he was surprised that I would be there to greet him like that. But he was also very grateful and this young man was distraught.

He was full of fear and weighed down with condemnation because he had been hearing some sermons that, for whatever reason, I don't know what the sermons were or whatever, but for whatever reason they had left him shaken. And naturally, you know, that he was, because he was coming to pure life, I assumed that he was involved in sexual sin. And as I talked with him, I found out that actually he had overcome his sin a year before and was walking in victory.

God had done a work in his life and so we were able to express some things and I think help him in some ways. And it just made me realize that many people who name the name of Christ have a lot of, how do I say it, there's a lot of confusion, I think, if I could put it that way, about salvation and about faith. And I want to just state it up front, exactly what I hope to accomplish here with this message this morning, that my purpose in this message is to erase any doubts by God's grace.

That every hearer of this message this morning would leave this room today without any question in their minds, which camp they belong in, which camp that holds their hearts, if I could put it that way. Paul said, there is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Now that doesn't mean just evangelicals, that doesn't mean people who just go to church or whatever. That means people who are in Christ Jesus. There is no condemnation.

And we can be comforted by that promise, by that word. We can have the peace that surpasses all understanding. We can be and should be secure in our faith.

I am His and He is mine. That kind of assurance should be ours. Or, there should be no question in our minds that we have not been converted.

And if that's the case, and if that becomes real to you this morning, then it is right that you leave this service with a sense of alarm, with a great concern. Even fear. It is right that you feel that way.

And I want you to feel that way. I want you to walk out of here either completely comforted or in great dread of God. One or the other.

No in between. That's my hope. Now I don't know that that's going to happen, but that's my hope.

Alright, before we get into the message though, there's something I need to just touch on very briefly. And that is the difference between a true conversion and a false conversion. You see here two lists up on the screen here.

And I just want to express a couple of things about this because there's a lot of misunderstanding about what it means to be a Christian. Everyone who names the name of Christ will eventually come to a fork in the road. And at that fork in the road is the cross of Calvary.

And it's Calvary which will determine, which will force a decision. And so look at these two lists here. Both of these people experience a conviction of sin.

Both of these people experience spiritual enlightenment. Like the phrase we used to use. Hollywood has shamed us out of it I suppose.

But we used to say, I saw the light. Well that's real. That is a true statement.

Those who come to the cross see the light. And what that means is that their understanding is opened and they can see the realities of the spiritual realm. But that's not conversion.

That's not conversion. That's leading to conversion. It's a step of conversion.

But here's where the separation begins. The person who has a true conversion enters into a condition which Jesus calls poverty of spirit. They start feeling.

It's like the ground goes out from under them. It's like all that they had ever put their hopes and trusts in themselves. It's all starting to fall away from underneath them.

And a sense of dread and a sense of fear is taking its place. And they see the reality of their sinful condition. And there's a sense of mourning and sorrow over that sin.

And from that comes true repentance. Oh God forgive me for my sin. There's a sense of the wrongness of their lives.

There's a sense of guilt. A sense of their conscience is stricken. We're talking about real repentance and what it looks like.

But there's also those who come right up to that same crossroads, that same fork in the road. And rather than experiencing that, they shut off the Holy Spirit's conviction. And what they have is instead a superficial repentance.

An alteration of their life. So they kind of deceive themselves. They're not willing to go that path of surrender and so on.

So what they do is they just make an alteration in their course so that outwardly their lives will line up with those around them. The lives of true believers. And then now look at the next step.

The true convert. There's a transference of faith. All of us live our entire lives with our faith in ourselves.

We believe in ourselves. And that's our problem. But when you have been converted, that faith is transferred now to Jesus Christ.

What faith means, belief in Christ means is that for the rest of your life you're going to trust in Him. Rely on Him. And look to Him to lead you and so on.

That's real faith. And that's the born again experience. But the person with the false conversion, now remember he's had a superficial repentance.

It didn't penetrate into his heart. He's made an alteration. Now his faith is mental acceptance of biblical facts.

Oh yeah, I believe in Jesus Christ. Yes, I believe Jesus Christ died on the cross. Oh yes, I believe that the blood of Christ cleanses us from sins.

Yes, I believe those things. But see it's mental, it's not in the heart. There's a huge difference guys.

There's a huge difference between the two. Look back here again at the true convert. After that experience, there's a process that continues on.

The Bible calls it sanctification. In other words, little by little there's a changing, a transforming of the character and it's becoming increasingly more like Christ. And there's fruit that comes forth out of that person's life.

Jesus said it over and over and over again that the true Christian will bear fruit, some 20, some 50, some 100 fold. But on the other side, the false convert doesn't grow in his likeness to Christ. He might be able to alter his outward actions just simply because he's around Christians and can watch the things he does a little bit.

But the change that goes on in him is simply acquiring more and more knowledge, information about Christianity. That's the difference. So I just needed to get those out so you understand what's the difference between a true conversion and a spurious conversion.

Alright, how do we know? How do I know if I'm in one or the other? Well I want to just tell you, you will never have the assurance of faith by relying on experiences or feelings. You won't have an assurance of salvation that way. But praise the Lord, God has given us a concrete way of discovering or determining the validity of our faith.

The only trustworthy gauge, the only thing we can trust is what scripture tells us. That's the only thing. Nothing else.

Not man's doctrines, not man's ideas, not some experience or some feelings or any of that. The only thing we can trust is what the word of God says. That's the only thing.

Now I want you to open up to the book of 1 John. John wrote this epistle, I think it was probably about the mid 80's of the first century. So this was 50 years after the death of Christ.

50 years this man had been living for his savior and ministering and pastoring and so on. For 50 years this man had seen and experienced true fellowship with sincere godly people. But he had also seen people come and go who were false.

By this point John had seen it all. He had seen it all. And at the end of his epistle he states the purpose for writing it.

In chapter 5 verse 13, this is what he says. These things I have written to you, in other words everything that he has expressed in this book, these five chapters. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God.

That's who it's written to. It's true, sincere believers. I've written these things to you.

Why? So that you may know that you have eternal life. Hallelujah. You don't have to go on in fear or in anxiety.

If you're a true believer, I've written these things in this book. I've written them so that you can have the assurance of your salvation. That's wonderful.

It's wonderful. Now I want to say something about the book of 1 John before we get into these things. The book of 1 John is a book of contrasts.

Just like his savior, John knows no gray area. He sees everything black and white and that's for good reason because that's the way it is. You are either of the kingdom of darkness or you have been transferred to the kingdom of light.

You are either a believer in Jesus Christ or you are a believer in self. You either have the life of God flowing through you or you are still dead in your trespasses and sins. You are either walking in the truth or you are deceiving and being deceived.

You are either a saint, one who is separated unto God or you are still immersed in the world. You are either held captive by the cords of sin or you are obeying the commandments of Jesus Christ. There is no in between.

There is no in between and we can't make it just because we want it to be something different. You know when we stand before him one day the only thing that matters is the reality of our lives and what the word of God has expressed. Now in this little epistle of 1 John, he gives us six proofs of faith.

Six proofs of faith and I'm going to try to get through these as quickly as I can. But before I do that I just want to say one thing. I am not telling you, please hear me, as I go through these six things, I am not telling you to try to do these things.

Try harder or try to do a better job of these things and somehow earn your salvation. Salvation is the free gift of God by grace. That's what it is.

These are not meant to be. These six things you have to really try real hard to do them and you will get saved. I'm not saying that.

So I just want to get that clear right up front. What I'm going to give you is the litmus test that John laid out. Here is how you will know if you are a true believer or not.

That's all this is. If you are a true believer then these six things are going to apply to you. So that's what this is.

Number 1 is found in the first chapter, walking in the light. In verses 6-10 John presents two different people. Now he kind of goes back and forth a little bit so I broke them down.

The first person is found in verse 6 and verse 8 and the second person is found in verse 7 and 9-10. I know that is confusing but I will read these verses. Here is the first person.

Verse 6. If we say, in other words if we present or portray this image to those around us, that we have fellowship with Him, with Christ, and yet the reality is that we walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. So the first thing that he is saying about this first person is that this person is presenting the image to other people that he has fellowship with Christ. But the reality is that he is walking in darkness.

And the second thing is in verse 8. If we say, in other words here again it is a presentation to those around us that we have no sin. Now when he says it this way he is not meaning that people walk around saying I have no sin. I mean it does happen occasionally but not really.

That is really not the way it usually happens. It is more of you say it by the way you present yourself. You are communicating with others certain things and this person is communicating the sense to other people that he really does not have sin.

In other words he is minimizing. He is downplaying his sin. He is avoiding letting anyone see what the reality is of his heart.

He is circumventing anything that would expose what he is in. If we say that we have no sin we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. Ok that is the first person.

Now look at the second one. Verse 7. But if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his son cleanses us from all sin. Praise the Lord.

In other words if we are making ourselves an open book and being honest. If we confess our sins he goes on here. He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Praise the Lord. Now what I get out of this is this. There are two clear characteristics about true believers.

One is that there is a constant or a growing awareness of the reality of sin in your life. I tell you the closer you get to Jesus Christ the more you are going to see yourself as being riddled with sin. It is just true.

The most godly people that you will ever find. If you get into a conversation with them, if you can even get them to talk about themselves, but if you get into a conversation with them you will not be hearing them talk about how great they are or how godly they are or anything like that. All you are liable to hear is how they have failed the Lord, how they see sin is still in their lives, how they see pride and selfishness that is still at work within them and so on.

I remember reading the story about William Carey who was on his death bed and after 50 years on the mission field paying a terrible price to bring the gospel to a dark country of India. After all that he had done, opened that continent up, thousands of people ended up coming to the Lord because of his efforts and yet as he was on his death bed he was in fear and trepidation because he knew he was about to stand before the Lord and it terrified him. He had the assurance and he even said it, I know whom I have believed in and he understood that and yet there was still a real fear in him.

That is a real Christian. Also a readiness to confess, to acknowledge. The people who are closest to God are always ready to confess their failures and faults and sins.

By contrast someone who is unconverted or whatever will do the opposite. There is no growing awareness of sin and they never want to talk about their sin. I just received a letter a few days ago from a young man who was in the program here and basically it was his first week or two he was here.

He supposedly had some great experience and from then on he had no sin. Every week he would come in to his counselor and his counselor was practically pleading with him, trying to reason with him and just say, listen I am not here to browbeat you or anything but we have to deal with the issues that brought you to this point. The things in your life that brought you to the point that you were given over to the kind of sin

that you were involved in.

But he would say, nope there is nothing and just would stonewall his counselor week after week after week. He was one of these guys with a Teflon personality. I don't know how else to say it.

Just a smooth personality, nice guy, been that way his whole life. Can I tell you that just because you are a nice guy does not mean you go to heaven. Sinners who are converted go to heaven and no one else.

So he ended up leaving and so on and then he wrote this letter to try to convince me that he is sinless. That probably wasn't the thing to do. The funny thing is that over the years as I have preached in different situations in churches, more in the earlier years I used to travel around preaching a lot more.

I would bring strong messages sometimes in churches and there would be certain ones weeping and broken by the conviction of the Lord. Later on I would be talking to the pastor and the ones who were in the most sin and rebellion were sitting there stone faced. Their hearts just cold and hard and practically glaring at me.

But the ones I found out later who were crying were the most pious people in the church. Why? Because they have a sensitive heart to the Holy Spirit and to the word of God. Number two, this person has a lifestyle of keeping the commandments of Jesus.

Look at chapter 2 verses 3 and 4. By this we know that we have come to know him. Here it is, this is proof. By this we know that we have come to know him if we keep his commandments.

The one who says, ok here again this is the way of communicating a certain impression to others around you or putting out an image out there. The one who says, I've come to know him, but doesn't keep his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him. Now what I want to focus on here is this word know, ginosko in the Greek.

It is everything hinges on this word know. Jesus said this is life eternal that they should know thee. Knowing God and God knowing you, there is a connection there.

But Paul talked about those who profess to know God but by their deeds they deny him. Again here we see the contrast between the true believer and the false believer. The false believer professes to know God but by the reality and actions of his life he is denying that he knows him.

The sermon on the mount and one of those concluding parables Jesus gives. He says not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of my father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to me on that day, that terrible day of judgment, Lord, Lord did not we prophesy in your name and in your name cast out demons and in your name perform many miracles and then I will declare to them I never knew you.

Depart from me you who practice lawlessness. There is a connection between obedience and saving faith and you cannot get away from it. You cannot separate the two.

You have to do damage, violence to the scriptures to separate those two. That is what Christianity and being a follower of God is all about is obeying him. Not that we are saved by our works but if you have been saved you are going to obey him.

Not that you are going to be perfect but there is going to be a pattern in your life. Your lifestyle, he is talking about the way you walk, the way you live your life. There is going to be a pattern of obedience there.

Jesus, let me put it this way, Jesus came to this earth to purchase a bride for himself. To purchase a bride for himself. That is what it is all about.

I remember a few weeks ago Mike shared when he was in the military working at a military base before he came to the Lord. Of course he comes out of a homosexual background. He knew a number of homosexuals there working at that base who were actually in the military.

If they were married they got better benefits. A number of these guys married women with no desire to have a true intimate connection with them. They weren't marrying them because they were devoting their lives to them and they were committed to them or anything like that.

They were marrying them just to use them to get something out of them. There is a picture of people who enter into this Christian life but have never really given their hearts to Jesus. Jesus will say, I never knew you.

We never consummated this marriage because you held me at arms length. You would not submit your will to mine. Alright, number three.

I'm trying to get through these. Number three, there will be a resemblance to Jesus in the person's life. Look at the end of verse 5. This is one of these unfortunate verse separations here.

At the end of verse 5, By this we know. Here again. How do you know if you are saved? Here is another one.

By this we know that we are in him. The one who says he abides in him ought himself to walk in the same manner as he walked. In other words, that kind of walk, that lifestyle is a resemblance.

A family resemblance. Now I took some verses, all of these in this epistle. Go ahead and put them up there Robert.

I'm going to blow through these real quick. Look at what is said about those who are born of God. We're talking about the rebirth experience.

Born of God. Born into the family of God. Here they are.

I think it's six of them. Real quick. If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of him.

1 John 2.29 Second one. No one who is born of God practices sin, because his seed abides in him. And he cannot sin.

In other words, continue in habitual sin. Because he is born of God. 1 John 3.9 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

1 John 4.7 Fourth one. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. 1 John 5.1 Fifth one.

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. 1 John 5.4 And lastly, we know that no one who is born of God sins. 1 John 5.18 Alright, I'm just trying to establish the fact that John is continually bringing it back to this thing.

Of a true rebirth experience. This book is about true sons of God. And those who are not really true sons of God.

That's what this is all about. When I was a baby, people would tell my dad that I looked just like him. Now I don't understand that, because to me all babies look exactly the same.

They are all bald and plump. And my dad later on would be bald and plump, but at that point he was skinny and had hair. So I don't know what they are talking about.

I could never understand that. But I will never look at your baby and say he looks just like you. Because they all look the same to me.

But later in my teen years, you started seeing the resemblance. You know, I mean, anyone who has seen my dad. Kathy is the only one in here who has ever seen my dad.

He's been dead for 20 years or something. But anyone who saw him or was around him. It was just obvious I looked just like him.

I had the same mannerisms. My personality is just like his. And even the sin patterns that he had, I followed in the same sin patterns.

I mean, there was no question. You didn't have to wonder, was my mom fooling around. If you knew my mom, you'd know that's absolutely ridiculous anyway.

Very godly woman. But there is no question that Jack Gallagher was my father. Why? Because I looked just like him and I acted just like him.

Praise the Lord, there is a rebirth experience. I still look like him, but at least I act a little different. And you know, when you are born into the family of God, something happens inside you.

The imperishable seed of Jesus Christ is implanted into your heart. And something starts growing inside you. And there is a transformation that starts to happen within you.

And more and more you start resembling Jesus. It's not that you have to work it up. You don't have to make it happen.

It just overtakes you. It just takes you in a direction. If you've been born again, that's what happens.

It's not that you just learn a bunch of more stuff about Christianity. Something is changing inside you. And you are coming to resemble Jesus Christ more and more.

Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews, He said, you are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. And that last statement is so true. You will want to do the desires of your father.

You will want to do the desires of your father. Who is your father? Because that's going to determine what the desires are that dominate your heart and push you in your destiny. When you are born again, you start to take on the image of Christ.

You are on this path of becoming conformed into the image of Christ. Alright, number four. We're getting through these pretty quick here.

If you have been born again, there will be an increasing desire to separate yourself from this world system. From the spirit of this world. Look at verses 15 to 17.

Do not love the world. Now here again we see one of these black and white contrasts. Do not love the world nor the things in the world.

If anyone loves the world. Can I just remind us this is the word of God that is absolutely every jot and tittle of it is complete truth. If anyone loves the world, The love of the father is not in him.

Okay, and then he explains it. A little more, he breaks it down. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life is not from the father.

Remember what I said about you will do the desires of your father. But it's from the world. The world is passing away and also it's lust.

But the one who does the will of God. There it is again. Lives forever.

Alright, I wrote a book about this subject. Most of you know that. Intoxicated with Babylon.

And I'll just read a little passage here just to break this down a little better. Because you know sometimes this can be vague. What does that mean? The lust of the flesh? What does all that mean exactly? We're talking about the desires of your father.

You ask yourself, just between you and God. I'm not looking for anything from you. I'm just asking you to please honestly examine your hearts today.

That's all I'm asking of you. I'm not up here because I enjoy this. But you know, I'm just going to read this one little paragraph out of this book.

This book is all about how, well it's called Intoxicated with Babylon. The seduction of God's people in the last days. It's all about how the spirit of the world has gotten into the church.

Alright, here it is. These three carnal appetites. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the lust of pride.

Pride are branches of sin. The lust of the flesh represents the entire realm of pleasure, entertainment, amusement, and comfort. It includes addictions, movies, sports, television, travel, and all the many kinds of activities people become involved in.

The lust of the eyes describes a person's intense desire to have something he sees. It usually revolves around the desire for possessions, trendy clothes, the latest technology, a new car, and so on. The pride of life is a person's exaggerated estimate of his own value as a person.

Self-ambition, a drive to be successful, to have more prominence, an urge to keep up with the Joneses, or the prideful desire to be the one. These are evidences of the pride of life. The entire evil tree with its three main branches could be described by the single term, coveting, which in its simplest meaning is the desire for something for self.

Now, I only read that. I'm not trying to say that if you are a born-again Christian, you won't ever watch a movie, or a television show, or a football game. That's not what I'm saying.

But what I'm saying is this, that the predominant passion of your heart is going to be for God. And yes, a true believer can occasionally do those things, but their lives aren't consumed by them, and their lives aren't made up of those things. There isn't a time, Kathy and I occasionally watch a video, a documentary, or every now and then Justin and I, when we've been out traveling, we'll watch a ball game or something.

We can take some enjoyment in that. It's okay. It's not like we have to walk around with some morbid whatever.

That's not the point. The point is if you have the living God dwelling within you, you're not going to be drawn into that stuff. It's not going to be the predominant passion of your heart.

Who is the father of your desires? Alright, number five. The truly born-again person practices righteousness and not sin. Alright, now we have a long passage here.

You're just going to have to bear with me, and I'll do my best to read it in a good way. 1 John 3, verses 6 through 10. This is the New Living Translation.

I just like the way that it kind of brought things out, but it does not... I can just tell you, it's not moving away from the truth of what's being expressed. 1 John 3, verse 6. Anyone who continues to live in Him will not sin. But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know Him or understand who He is.

Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this. When people do what is right, it shows that they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous. But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning.

But the sin of God came to destroy the works of the devil. Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God.

So now we can tell who are children of God and who are children of the devil. Anyone who does not live righteously and does not love other believers does not belong to God. Alright.

There is a deception, and the deception is that you can live as you wish, and because we're not saved by works, that that has nothing to do with anything. If we're in sin, it doesn't matter, because we belong to Him and so on. And I'm telling you, man, it's a deception.

And too much hinges on the truth here, to make a mistake. I want to just say something here about these words. It's very interesting.

Don't let anyone deceive you. That phrase is only used, I think, five times. I think, if I remember right, that phrase is used five times in the New Testament.

That was one of them. And I'm going to read three others. 1 Corinthians 6, 9, and 10.

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Don't you know that? Do not be deceived. It's a warning. Don't be deceived.

Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, etc. will not inherit the kingdom of God. 2 Galatians 6, 7, and 8. Do not be deceived.

God is not mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The man who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction.

The one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. And the last one, James 1, 14-16. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

Then when lust is conceived, it gives birth to sin. And when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

Alright, there you have it. I'm going to just leave that where it is. Number six.

Love for the brethren. 1 John 3, 14-19. Here's these words again.

We know. Praise the Lord. Here's another litmus test.

We know that we have passed out of death into life. Because we love the brethren. Now, the problem is, love is one of those concepts that can be very vague, and kind of ethereal, and well, what exactly does it mean to love others? And I'm a nice guy, and I treat other people nice, and I like people, you know.

But that is not what agape is. Agape is defined at Calvary. That is the definition of the term agape.

It's Calvary. And there is nothing less. There is no gray.

It's black or white again. But he goes on to define what exactly he's talking about. We know love by this.

That he laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. And then he gives an example.

But whoever has the world's goods. Okay, we all have the world's goods. And he sees his brother in need, and closes his heart against him.

How does the love of God abide in him? You know, in other words, Jackie Pullinger really says this well. She says, when you see the need. When you see the need.

It doesn't mean that every time you walk by a poor person, that you're supposed to empty your pockets. It doesn't mean that every single collection plate that goes by, you need to write a check for a thousand dollars or something. It doesn't mean that every time you see some need, that you have to go out and give your life for it.

That's not what's being expressed. This word see here is theoreo. And it really means to contemplate.

You know, in other words, a true believer, this is what happens. Let me put it this way. A true believer has his heart open to God.

And when he sees a need, and God shows him a need, instantly, he stops. And he goes to meet that need. That is why this ministry is here.

Can I just say that? This ministry would not be here if it wasn't for that principle. When God shows you a need, and every believer sees the need. Not every need, but the ones that God puts in his heart.

Every believer. It's a fruit of true salvation. There is fruit that comes from salvation.

And the fruit is that you go out and you lay down your life for others. And then John says this. He says, little children, let us not love with word or with tongue.

In other words, talk is cheap. That's what he's saying. Talk is cheap.

Don't just say that you love. Oh, I love the Lord. Oh yeah, I love my brother as myself.

Talk is cheap. He says, but to love in deed, and in truth, or reality. And then he says this.

We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before him. There it is again. Another assurance, another test, of the reality of your walk with God.

Alright, we're just about out of time. I want to bring this to a conclusion. Move forward a thousand years.

Just take yourself forward a thousand years. The millennial period is over. Whatever that is, I don't even know.

But whatever it is, it's over. The devil, the false prophet, the antichrist have all been thrown into hell. Now there's this great white throne judgment.

And almighty God is sitting on that judgment seat. And it says that heaven and earth flee from his face. Justin and I were talking last night about an experience he had a few years ago.

Where he could sense God's eye looking at him. Because he was getting himself in trouble. He was almost in trouble.

He was going to end up marrying some girl or something or other. But then God made himself real, that he was looking at him. Can you imagine the face of God? A thousand years from now, every one of us will stand before the Lord in that scene.

It's not just talk. It's not just some fairy tale. It's reality.

And you and I will all stand before him in that great courtroom of heaven. And there's one thing that's going to be brought forth. And it is evidence.

The evidence of the reality of your faith. If you were born again, there will be evidence to show. If you've been born again, there will be concrete evidence sized up against the kinds of things we have heard this morning.

There will be concrete evidence. I used to be a bailiff in the L.A. County Courthouse. Where many of those famous trials have taken place.

And they would have a box. It would sit right in front of the judge's bench. And I would like to go up and look through the evidence box.

I just like to see the pictures and stuff. It was before I knew the Lord. But every time there was a case, there had to be evidence.

If there was no evidence, then there was no case. And that's the way it's going to be standing before God. That there will be evidence to show that you have been born again.

And if you've been born again, then there is no condemnation. I'm going to end with this quote from J.C. Ryle. It will be utterly useless to plead that we believed in Christ unless our faith has had some sanctifying effect and been seen in our lives.

Evidence, evidence, evidence will be the one thing wanted when the books are opened and the dead are arraigned before the bar of God. Without some evidence that our faith in Christ was real and genuine, we shall only rise again to be condemned. The question will not be how we talked and what we professed, but how we lived and what we did.

Let no man deceive himself on this point. If I could draw my own experience in meetings like this and offer you advice, I would say that the best thing for you to do today is to take all of this and to get in a very quiet place with God and really just let the words that you've heard and these points size up where you really stand. You know, like Steve said, if we are in the faith, then this is a tremendous assurance and that will be a source of great comfort to you.

But if you're not, then it's a great, incredible opportunity to take a step into real saving faith today. And there are those of you in this place who need that. I know what it was like for me to have to face the reality that I was not in and what was expressed this morning.

And it is a terrifying thing and it is a fearful thing, but God wants you to sense that and feel that so you will be moved to step into the real thing and to truly give your will and your heart and consecrate yourself to truly knowing God, no longer just professing, no longer just kind of going along with the evangelical movement. So don't let your flesh or other people or other circumstances distract you from doing this today. Do not let it happen.

There's too much at stake. There's just too much at stake. Don't do it.

Get before God. Open your heart. And let him look in and show you what he sees.

Lord, I thank you that you want nothing more than for us to live in the truth and in the reality of where we truly stand with you, Lord. There is no better place for us to truly be than in the reality of where we stand with you. Because it is in that place that we are moved in your direction, Lord.

When we see that we are not there, we are moved to get right with you. And God, I pray for the people in this place who really need this sight to come upon them. Lord, I pray that you would not spare them one shred of the reality that needs to fall on their shoulders today.

God, if the great weight of their sin and the conviction of it has to come crashing upon them, so be it, Lord. That is your mercy. God, I ask for mercy that is severe to the point of saving and rescuing souls.

Lord, plucking as a brand out of the fire, Lord. God, I just ask you to do that. To not let any that need to truly see the reality that they are not in this saving faith.

They have no true assurance that God, you would not allow them to escape it. That they might truly be saved, Lord. I'm believing for conversions today, Lord.

We are believing for men to step across a line and into a life of true saving faith by the power of the Holy Spirit. Lord, you have the power to regenerate. And I pray that men's hearts would be regenerated today in this place, Lord.

That you would do it by the power of your Holy Spirit. And for those who need the comfort that they have stepped across that line. Lord, I pray that such a great, wonderful wave of the comfort of the Holy Ghost would come upon them, Lord.

That no longer do they have to wonder. No longer do they have to live questioning, doubting, Lord. Fearing, Lord.

But they would see that their lives finally line up with your word. And they can have that assurance. They can grab a hold of that anchor that has passed within the veil, Lord.

Their forerunner, where Jesus you are standing. That they can know that they are saved, Lord. And that you save to the uttermost.

And they can have that confidence. The blessing that comes with knowing that they are yours, Lord. Wherever the need lies today on either one of these areas, we are believing for you to meet this need.

And we're believing for you to have your way. Thank you for your truth. Thank you for your word.

Thank you that you don't leave us in the dark. Thank you that you don't leave us wondering where we really stand. Thank you that we can know beyond a shadow of a doubt if you are our Father or not.

I love you for that. Thank you for meeting with us this morning. And I pray, Lord, your blessing on everyone in this room, Lord.

Bless them. Make your face to shine upon them, Lord. And draw everyone to you this day that we might come back tonight closer to you than we were this morning.

We pray that you would do that. And we believe for an answer to all these prayers according to your great willingness to hear and answer the prayers of your sons and daughters. Hallelujah.

Amen.

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