

The Whole Christ

By Sinclair Ferguson

Lesson 10: How Assurance of Christ becomes Assurance of Salvation

This chapter starts with a lengthy portion of the Marrow in which Evangelista and Neophytus are talking. Neophytus is struggling with _____ and after some back and forth Evangelista gets to the real issue:

“Well, now I understand what you mean; it seems you do not want a ground for your believing, but for your believing that you have believed.”

Many times, a lack of assurance is not about whether Christ is able or powerful to save but instead involves the question of “how do I know if I have truly believed?”

“It is the difference between confidence in Christ’s ability to save and the self-awareness that one has this confidence and is among those whom He saves.”

When dealing with this issue the first thing that must be clarified is that true assurance is a fruit of _____ with Christ. We must be one with Christ for us to know true assurance. One cannot have true assurance and at the same time deny Christ. Once this has been established there are three factors that play into a believer growing in assurance.

1. Growing in understanding the _____ of God in Christ

“Assurance is nourished on a clear understanding of grace and especially of union with Christ and the justification, adoption, and regeneration that are ours freely in Him.”

Grace-We by nature are opposed to grace. Our natural way of thinking will always be seeking to pull us away from grace back to some form of _____ - _____ merit.

Justified by the Father-In Christ we are completely justified. God the Father sees us, in Christ, as being legally perfect. If we do not remember this, _____ thoughts of the Father can begin to grow in our minds.

“God the Father is absolutely, completely, and totally to us what He reveals Himself to be to us in Christ.”

Justification is final and _____ - *“In justification we are counted as righteous before the Father as Christ Himself, since the only righteousness with which we are righteous is Jesus Christ’s righteousness. When faith thus grasps the reality of this inheritance, then Christ Himself looms large. This is the key to the enjoyment of assurance precisely because assurance is our assurance that He is a great Savior and that He is ours. Thus, in gospel assurance Christ is central; indeed, Christ is everything.”*

2. Walk in Faith-Our assurance grows as we walk in _____ to the commands of God

“High degrees of Christian assurance are simply not compatible with low levels of obedience. If Christ is not actually saving us, producing in us the obedience of faith in our struggle against the world, the flesh, and the Devil, then our confidence that He is our Savior is bound to be undermined, imperceptibly at first, but really.”

We should strive to live out our faith in Christ. We should desire to live _____ in this life. This involves both doing what is right and not doing what is wrong. Living rightly before the Lord also involves actively seeking to love your neighbor.

However, we must not get the order inverted here: Faith in Christ and the promises of God are always the _____ of our assurance. While living a godly life can build assurance it is never to be the foundation on which our assurance rests. Faith produces obedience (not the other way around).

“Such faith cannot be forced into us by our efforts to be obedient; it arises only from larger and clearer views of Christ. Herein lies the paradox: we want to talk and think about how to get better evidences; Boston is concerned that we get a better grip of Christ. Then the evidences will grow like fruit.”

- 3. The internal testimony of the Spirit-**The Spirit of God does bear _____ with our Spirit that we are children of God.

“It is the believer who bears witness thus to Christ; but it is only through the ministry of the Spirit in his life that this can take place...The testimony of the Spirit of sonship is therefore not something existentially distinguishable from this testimony of our own spirits.”

“Abba! Father! Is not a restful whisper of contentment and security. It is the cry of a child who has stumbled, tripped, and fallen, and is crying out for his or her father to come to help. It is the deepest instinct of the child in need...it is the co-testimony with our spirit; even in the hour of darkness the believer possesses an instinct, a testimony: he or she knows him or herself to be a child of God.”

“Gospel assurance is not withheld from God’s children even when they have not shown themselves to be strong. What good father would want his children’s assurance of his love to be possible only when they have sufficient accomplishments in his life to merit it? Shame on such a father! Yet how sad that we impute such an attitude to our heavenly Father.”

Chapter 2-The Law of Faith (the Covenant of Grace)

Continuing with his encouragement to Neophytus, Evangelista discusses how our _____ with Christ guarantees our salvation.

Evan. It is an union betwixt the nature of Christ, God and man,¹ and you it is a knitting and closing, not only of your apprehension with a Savior, but also of your soul with a Savior. Whence, it must needs follow that you cannot be condemned, except Christ be condemned with you; neither can Christ be saved, except you be saved with Him.

I beseech you, then, say unto Christ with bold confidence, I give unto thee, my dear husband, my unbelief, my mistrust, my pride, my arrogancy, my ambition, my wrath, and anger, my envy, my covetousness, my evil thoughts, affections, and desires; I make one bundle of these and all my other offences, and give them unto thee.

’Now then,’ says Luther, ‘let us compare these things together, and we shall find inestimable treasure. Christ is full of grace, life and saving health; and the soul is freight-full of all sin, death, and damnation; but let faith come betwixt these two, and it shall come to pass, that Christ shall be laden with sin, death, and hell; and unto the soul shall be imputed grace, life, and salvation. Who then is able to value the royalty of this marriage accordingly? Who is able to comprehend the glorious riches of His grace, where this rich and righteous Husband, Christ, doth take unto wife this poor and wicked harlot, redeeming her from all devils, and garnishing her with all her own jewels? So that you, through the assuredness of your faith in Christ, your husband, are delivered from all sins, made safe from death, guarded from hell, and endowed with the everlasting righteousness, life, and saving health of your husband Christ.’

¹ “That is, an union with the whole Christ, God-Man” Boston’s notes