



Light from the Word

Confidence in the Finished Work of Christ Jesus

*“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:”*¹

Fundamental to the gospel message is the truth that we are saved by grace—no works of our own can accomplish that miracle.² No human effort can pay the debt of the sin load we bear. The hymn writer put it this way:

*“Not the labor of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law’s demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.
Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling.”*³

If we are honest, grace seems almost too good to be true. Much of life’s experience teaches that we don’t get something for nothing. Surely man must do something to deserve God’s forgiveness. Yet Scripture is clear, God is “good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon (Him).”⁴ In fact, it is God in His goodness that leads us to repentance!⁵

To be sure, there are many warnings in Scripture—the Christian is called to a life of watchfulness, prayer, and perseverance in the service of the Lord.⁶ But right along with that are many promises of God that give us confidence in our salvation. This article is intended to highlight the assurances—without in any way minimizing the warnings—rejoicing as we do in the Lord’s mercy and faithfulness. We do well to focus on the promises as we earnestly strive to bear fruit unto goodness, righteousness, and truth; which is powerful against Satan’s attacks of doubt and fear.⁷

We have been taught that scriptural hope is a noun, not a verb. It’s something we possess, not an action on our part. Many scriptures provide assurance that our salvation is provided by Christ’s finished work on the cross and accessed through faith in His shed blood. As we consider just a few of them, notice the strength of wording associated with our faith and standing in Christ:

*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”*⁸

*“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”*⁹

*“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”*¹⁰

Our statement of faith puts it this way, “the gift of eternal life is the present possession of every true believer.”¹¹ Great comfort and assurance is found in Paul’s words to the Romans, “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”¹²

Further, the Lord gives us multiple assurances that our life in Him is to be one of full abundance, not walking in fear but in the joy of the Lord:

*“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”*¹³

*“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”*¹⁴

*“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”*¹⁵

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*“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”*¹⁶

As we walk this abundant life in Christ, we rest in the promise that He will be with us and will strengthen us throughout life and to the end. *“And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”*¹⁷ *“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”*¹⁸ *“They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”*¹⁹ Indeed, Jesus promises strength to help us do that which we have promised in the covenant of baptism.

Our Christian walk is in the fear of the Lord, recognizing both his goodness and His severity.²⁰ In fact, we will never fully appreciate the mercy of the Lord if we don't first recognize his justice. But it is in this recognition of our complete need for a Savior and utter inability to save ourselves that we begin to grasp the gospel message. As we

consider—ponder, reflect upon, come to appreciate—the absolute contradiction of sinners against our Lord Jesus,²¹ we grow in our love for and dependence upon Him. And although we truly marvel that he “saved a wretch like me,”²² we do not confuse our good works, which spring forth as a response to this amazing grace and the clarion call of Christ, with anything that would add to or detract from the finished work of Jesus on the cross.²³

Rather, we rejoice in the Assurance of True Faith when we sing such blessed words as:

*“My faith gives joy and sweetest rest,
Leads me to heaven and the blest,
To Thee, my God and Father.
The comfort of mortality
Preserve with steadfast faith in me;
I'd follow Thee forever.
Salvation is the noblest part;
Impress this deeply on my heart.”*²⁴

(Footnotes)

- ¹ Phil. 1:6
- ² Eph. 2:8-9
- ³ “Rock of Ages,” A.M. Toplady
- ⁴ Psalm 86:5
- ⁵ Rom. 2:4
- ⁶ Matt. 10:22
- ⁷ Eph. 5:8-9
- ⁸ John 5:24
- ⁹ Rom. 10:9-10
- ¹⁰ John 10:9
- ¹¹ Apostolic Christian Church Statement of Faith, #19
- ¹² Rom. 8:38-39

¹³ John 10:10

¹⁴ 2 Tim. 1:7

¹⁵ Rom. 15:13

¹⁶ 1 Peter 1:8

¹⁷ Matt. 28:20

¹⁸ Isaiah 41:10

¹⁹ Isaiah 40:31

²⁰ Rom. 11:22

²¹ Heb. 12:3

²² “Amazing Grace,”

John Newton

²³ Eph. 2:10, Matt. 5:16,

Rom. 10:1-4

²⁴ “The Assurance of True Faith,”

Zion's Harp #102, v. 1.

Who are the Poor?

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But there is hope!

*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.
(2 Corinthians 8:9)*

May God grant us grace to demonstrate and proclaim the love of Christ who alone is able to reconcile every aspect of poverty in us and those we minister to. (2 Corinthians 5:18)
— by John Huber

¹When Helping Hurts by Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert

²When Helping Hurts by Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert