

Title: Full Assurance of Understanding

Text: Col 2: 2

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There are believers who God has truly saved who do not realize they have assurance that God has truly saved them. But according to the scriptures, believers can and should know the assurance of our salvation.

Job did. He said, “For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.” (Job 19: 25-27) Paul had assurance. He said, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” (2 Tim 1: 12) John had assurance and, like Paul, John wanted other believers to have it. John said, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” (1 Jn 5: 13)

One of the main problems of the believer who does not have assurance is where they look for assurance. We make a mistake if we look to a past experience, to our religious works such as baptism, church membership, church attendance and so on, even if we look for fruit and love toward others in ourselves. We may see fruit and love in our brethren toward us, which the apostle John speaks of. But if we look to ourselves for assurance, we find disappointment. Scripture says we indeed should seek assurance. But we will never have it if we seek assurance any place but where assurance is to be found.

There are three scriptures which speak of “full assurance.” Over the course of three messages, we will use these three scriptures where the word of God speaks of full assurance. We will look at these in no particular order. These come together to us and they grow together. But these three scriptures which speak of full assurance, tell us plainly that assurance is found in God our Savior, Jesus Christ, through his word.

Today, we begin with the “Full Assurance of Understanding.”

Colossians 2: 1: For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; 2: That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

THROUGH THE GOSPEL

Where is the full assurance of understanding to be found? It is in the mystery—the gospel—of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. Paul said I want you to have the full assurance of understanding of the gospel of God, of the Father and of Christ, his Son.

Earlier in chapter 1, Paul said that Christ shall present us holy to the Father, “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.” (Col 1: 23)

The full assurance of understanding comes through the preaching of the gospel—“which ye have heard and which was preached, . . . whereof I Paul am made a minister.” This was Paul’s labor and conflict for them, for them to hear and understand the truth of the gospel. He wanted them to have this assurance because the full assurance of understanding will make you grounded and settled, makes you so you cannot be moved away from the hope of the gospel.

So first, if we will seek this assurance of understanding we must hear the preaching of the gospel. We must hear, not just any preaching, but the preaching of the word of God in truth and in spirit. We will never have assurance of

understanding if we are listening to preaching which teaches us to look to us. The message we need to hear is the message which declares the works are all accomplished by God the Father in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Most people who do not have the assurance of understanding are always speaking of how they do not have assurance. Yet, they are continually missing the service where the gospel is preached consistently in truth and spirit. We are not to come to the church service, looking to our attendance for assurance, but we must come to hear Christ teach us in spirit and in truth.

Also, we are not to come skeptical or with a haughty spirit as if we already know everything there is to know about God and his salvation in Christ. We are to come as little children, as a blank slate, willing to be taught of God in truth and in spirit.

THROUGH THE REVELATION OF GOD

Then notice, the gospel is called a mystery because God hid it for ages and from generations of the wise and prudent, but now reveals the gospel unto babes, to those God has called and sanctified, who are his saints, “*Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27: To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles.” (Col 1: 26-27)

Remember, what Christ said? He said when John the Baptist came preaching the gospel the religious folks of the day considered John too odd to listen. When Christ came they found fault in Christ and would not listen to Christ. “We’ve piped,” Christ said, “And you will not dance. We’ve mourned and you will not mourn.” (Lu 7: 32) And Christ thanked God that God had hidden the message from those who were wise and prudent and revealed the gospel unto babes. (Lu 10: 21)

Sinner, come to God like a baby. Come, open and ready to hear and receive the word of God. He will have to make you to come that way. But come honest, as one who does not know and desires to know the truth from God. If we would have true assurance of understanding then we must come to God who alone reveals it. So if we will seek the full assurance of understanding, we will have to seek it from God, asking God to reveal the gospel in our hearts.

THROUGH CHRIST HIMSELF

Also, notice this, the hope of the gospel is not a what, it is a whom, “which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.” (Col 1: 27-29) The full assurance of understanding is knowing Christ himself from Christ himself, “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (Col 2: 3) The highest wisdom and knowledge that we can obtain is by knowing Christ, whom to know is life eternal. (Jn 17: 3)

This is why I say that there are believers who have assurance but do not realize they have assurance. Every believer has Christ for our assurance. The problem is that some believers are yet looking for assurance and think they will find assurance elsewhere. But Christ is our Assurance.

Paul tells us why he wants us to understand that Christ is Assurance of understanding. He says, “And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.” (Col 2: 4) There are preachers who appeal to mans’ flesh. Their message, methods, programs and delivery, in every way is much more enticing to our flesh than anything God’s preacher says. We are preaching to the inner man; we are speaking of Christ himself.

Paul said, “For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him:” (Col 2: 5-6) False religion will claim to try to bring you to Christ but then they say the way to get more understanding and to learn to walk in this life we must move on beyond Christ. Not so! When God reveals Christ

in our heart, we do not begin in Christ then turn elsewhere for understanding. We go on walking in Christ, getting all wisdom and knowledge from Christ himself about Christ himself.

Paul says, “Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, [in Christ himself] as ye have been taught, abounding therein [in Christ himself] with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” (Col 2: 7-9) It is vain to turn to men’s philosophy, and deceit and traditions and to the laws of the old covenant world. Everything God will reveal to us concerning God, our salvation and our pilgrimage in this world is to found in Christ bodily, in his person.

So if we would have full assurance of understanding we must hear the gospel, we come to God for revelation, we come to Christ himself and stay at his feet.

THROUGH CHRIST’S WORKS

This full assurance of understanding is to hear Christ teach us in the gospel what he has accomplished for us. The first thing we learn about Christ’s work and what Christ has accomplished for his people is this, “And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.” (Col 2: 10) We have full assurance when we understand that we are complete in Christ.

He goes on to teach us how Christ accomplished our completion. Realize that Paul is speaking to believers—to those chosen, redeemed and regenerated by the triune God in Christ Jesus. So he is saying this is how the sins of God’s elect was put away.

One, we have full assurance when we understand that the body of the sins of our flesh has been put off by Christ, not by our hands, “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” (Col 2: 11) This is what we hear and hear repeated and continually learn and continually learn more of through the gospel, by divine revelation from God, in Christ who accomplished it. We learn more fully how that Christ put away the sins of his people himself.

Two, we have full assurance when we understand that Christ accomplished this for us when our old man was buried in the baptism of God’s justice unto death when Christ endured that baptism on the cross, “Buried with him in baptism.” (Col 2: 12)

Three, we have full assurance when we understand our new man arose to eternal life with Christ when God raised him from the dead, “wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” (Col 2: 12)

Four, we have full assurance when we understand that while we were dead in our sins, God quickened us together with Christ, forgave us of all our trespasses, erased every charge against us, and took the law out of the way from barring our access to God, “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” (Col 2: 13)

Believer, to have the full assurance of understanding I do not look to myself or listen to men who point me to the law, but through hearing the truth preached in the gospel by Christ through his preacher. It is by going to Christ who is God, asking Christ, looking to Christ, and walking in Christ and believing Christ. I believe Christ himself, resting when he declares to me I am complete by what he has done for me, not by what I have done.

This full assurance of understanding will make me rooted, established, settled and built up in Christ alone! By the term “assurance of understanding”, Paul means that we believe THE gospel, that this is not merely one opinion among many. When we know and believe the Lord Jesus we are done wavering between the various opinions of man’s vain imaginations. We stand fast with a firm and constant persuasion of the truth as it is in the Lord Jesus.

Apostle John said, “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.” (1Jo 5:20)

THE VERB USE

Let me give you a few scriptures where the same word “full assurance of understanding” is used as a verb. Luke began his gospel saying, “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,..” (Lu 1: 1) To have the “full assurance of understanding” is to “most surely believe” the declaration of the gospel according to the scriptures, the same doctrine believed and declared by all God’s witnesses throughout the scriptures.

Here is another place the same word is used as a verb. Concerning God’s promise to Abraham, “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.” (Rom 4: 20) To have “full assurance of understanding” is to “be fully persuaded” that what God has promised, God is able also to perform.

My point is this. It is not assurance in our understanding. If we seek assurance in how much we know we will be miserable; we see through a glass dimly. Assurance of understanding is knowing God in Christ Jesus, knowing him as he is revealed in the scriptures and being fully persuaded that what God has promised he was and is able to perform. It is being fully persuaded that we are complete in him. Paul said, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” (2Ti 1:12)

A WORD OF CAUTION

Yet, we who believe, must remember that a believer can be saved, truly given faith by God, have Christ, the same Assurance we have, but not feel this assurance in their own hearts. Let me illustrate this.

About a week ago, window washers were eight stories from the top of the new World Trade Center—from the top. The platform on which they stood as they were washing the windows was hanging by chains. The brake gave way and that platform turned up on its end. So those men were hanging over a thousand feet up on this platform they thought might give way at any time.

First, the fire department secured the platform with their cables. When they secured the platform, it was secure. But do you think those fellows felt full assurance? Still, their feeling was not their assurance. Those new cables were their assurance. Those men were assured whether they felt it or not.

Secondly, the fire fighters cut a hole through the window, attached safety harnesses around each man. Right then, they were secure. But do you suppose they felt full assurance? Still, their feelings were not their assurance; those new cables were. They were assured whether they felt it or not.

I guarantee you those men did not have full assurance until they were standing inside that building. Yet, they were assured of salvation even when they did not feel assurance.

Here is the point. God has chosen his child, Christ has redeemed them and when the Holy Spirit has quickened and called them to faith in Christ, it is certain that you are kept by the power of God. A believer may not have assurance in our heart because we are looking in the wrong place, trying to find a feeling of assurance in our heart. But though we do not feel the assurance, it does not change the truth because our Assurance is Christ. That is what I mean when I say that a person can be saved by God and not be aware of full assurance in his heart; our actual Assurance is not of us, it is God who does the saving. Christ is the believers Assurance. Whether we feel it or not, if we have Christ then we have full Assurance.

Amen!