



Sermon Title: Embracing Assurance (I John 2:3-11) – Part 5

IN Opportunities to connect and pray as a group

1. When you were growing up, what was something that confused you? (ex. Math lessons? comments by your parents? etc)
2. What has been a confusing aspect about the Christian faith for you?

UP Time that is devoted to the Word of God

(website for previous sermons -- <https://www.cschurch.ca/sermons/lit/>)

1. Review the focus of 1 John 1:1-2:2.
 - 1 John 1:1-4 – What did John present about Jesus? Why did John begin with this? Sermon link
 - 1 John 1:5-7 – What does it mean that Christians walk in the light?
 - 1 John 1:8-2:2 – What does it mean that Christians confess their sins?
2. Apostle John refers to obeying the commands of Jesus (2:3). Jesus speaks of his commands in Matt 28:19 and John 14:15, 21. How are Jesus' commands different from the Law of Moses? What is similar between the two sets?
3. How does John make it clear that he is not teaching a gospel of works? What does he write in these verses to show his agreement with Paul in Ephesians 2:8?
4. Pastor Henry outlined that true faith is more than:
 - a) knowing the right things;
 - b) feeling or experiencing the right things;
 - c) believing the right things;
 - d) doing the right things.

Clarify what each means. Read James 2:14 – 19. In what ways does the Apostle James address these points? To which points do Matt 7:21-23 and Titus 3:5 speak?

5. Using the illustration of an apple tree that is loaded with luscious red apples ready to be picked, how can true living faith be explained? How can a believer understand their assurance in Christ by this image? How does this show the relationship that Jesus wants to have with His followers?
6. 1 John 2:6 concludes with the words 'walk (live) as Jesus did.' How did Jesus do this? (John 14:10) Based on 2:5, why are we able to do this in the two realms (eternal and earthly) which Paul describes in 2 Cor 4:18; 5:17?

OUT Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community

1. What was a new insight for you from this message?
2. Which of the elements of 'true faith' do you need to integrate into your relationship with Jesus?
3. How can the group pray for you?

UP – IN – OUT reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

THE WORD (NIV)

1 John 2:3-11

We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. ⁴Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. ⁵But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did. ⁷Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. ⁸Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. ⁹Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. ¹⁰Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. ¹¹But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.

Matthew 7:21-23

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' ²³Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

Matthew 28:19-20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

John 14:15,21

¹⁵"If you love me, keep my commands. . . . ²¹Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

2 Corinthians 4:18; 5:17

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. . . . ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Ephesians 2:8

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—

Titus 3:5

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. . . .

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We need to recall the Apostle John wrote this letter, 1 John, in response to false teaching infiltrating the church and resulting in many believers being confused about their faith. John wrote this letter not only to confront the falsehoods, but also to clarify what it means to be an authentic follower of Christ. In 1:1-4, John says the **first thing** you have to settle is what you believe about Christ and what He did for us. This is absolutely foundational. The New Testament (NT) teaches that Jesus is God: coming to earth as a man and living in total dependence on His heavenly Father. All that Jesus taught and did were accomplished by His Father, working through Him. **Next**, John says that true Christians walk in the light of God, rather than in darkness. Walking in His way, we can say no to the power of sin and darkness in our lives (v.5-7). **Thirdly**, John says true Christians confess their sins (v.8-2:2). We don't deny or rationalize but confess, confident that God will forgive our sin and purify from all unrighteousness, because Jesus Christ died to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Fourthly, and the subject of today's message, John says that a true Christian keeps His commands (2:3-11). John refers to the commands, precepts and principles that Jesus taught. The moral precepts Christ taught were consistent with the moral and spiritual Law of Moses, while the ceremonial laws (sacrifice, rituals, offerings & restrictions) were fulfilled in Christ and no longer applicable in New Testament or New Covenant Era. So John says "one of the ways to know that you **KNOW** Christ is that you are keeping the commands **OF** Christ." Jesus made this very clear (John 14:15, 21; Matt 28:19-20).

Again, we must be mindful that John was bringing correction to false teaching. He is not teaching a gospel of works or contradicting the fact that we are saved by grace through faith (2:2; Eph. 2:8). Both John and Paul clearly say that we are saved by grace through faith in the atoning work of Christ on the cross. John also wants us to understand there is a true and living faith and a faith that is false and dead. His focus is not "how we are saved" but what "true saving faith" looks like.

1. True faith is more than **knowing** the right things. The Gnostics were proud of their intellectual knowledge – they thought they knew all about God. But they did not know God; nor they did live out their faith – they had head faith, not heart faith (v.4). The Apostle James agrees (James 2:14).

2. True faith is more than **feeling or experiencing** the right things. Some may be aware, moved by great need and pray for God to provide, but do nothing to actually help (James 2:15). This is dead faith. James does not suggest that people of true faith will respond to every need, yet they always seek to give and help in whatever way they can.

3. True faith is more than **believing** the right things. Some find a false spiritual confidence by their belief in God, the Biblical doctrines, and hours of study & debate in small groups. They think right beliefs are key to eternal life (James 2:19). While they have good theology, their hearts and behaviour are unchanged. Believing IS important. What we believe determines what we do. But right belief is not enough (Matt 7:21).

4. True Faith is more than **DOING** the right things. Some substitute a relationship with Jesus with being a good person, living a good life, doing good works (Matt 7:22). The heart of true faith is an intimate friendship with Him (Titus 3:5). Good works do not save us; we are saved by grace through faith to do good works.

Our works and obedience to Christ show that our faith is real. Consider an apple tree, loaded with ripe red apples ready to be picked. Do the apples give life to the tree? **NO**. The apples receive life from the tree, but they also prove the tree is alive. We receive eternal life through faith in Christ alone; a true living faith is evident in the fruit of our lives (Galatians 5:22, 23). Attitude and character changes, love and trust in Christ grows, and we'll do what He calls us to do. We may not always understand the ways of God. We don't always trust that God has our best interest at heart and be tempted to do what we want rather than what God wants - this is what sin is. But God says trust me in this, I will take care of you (1 John 2:5). Becoming a Christian involves more than just intellectual consent, to do the least possible and still have eternal life. It is a total change of mind about whom you will serve. It is putting your trust in God alone: the God who is. Choosing the god you want, you only deceive yourself (1:6, 8, 10; 2:4).

Those who sincerely want to know and love God but are overwhelmed by shortcomings or not being able to measure up – accepted when good and rejected when they sin - were encouraged by last week's teaching. 2 Corinthians 4:18 tells us that we live in two realms, the Eternal (spiritual, heavenly, unseen) and the Earthly (natural, visible). The Eternal realm is of completeness and perfection. It is where, through Christ's death and resurrection, our spirit is set free from the penalty of sin to begin a relationship with God. The Earthly realm is where we live in our soul and body and much growing to do; where God has a lot of building to do in us. In the Spiritual realm God takes our sin and places it on Christ's account and takes Christ's righteousness to put on our account. You have become a new creation, you have a new identity (2 Cor. 5:21, 17). You are perfect in Christ because He is righteous and perfect. Meanwhile in the Earthly realm, you are still growing in the love and grace of Christ. Hebrews 10:14 speaks to both realms: "... because by one sacrifice **He has made** perfect forever (Eternal) those who **are being made** holy" (Earthly).

Assurance: our position in Christ is secure in the Eternal Realm, even as we still struggle in the Earthly Realm. We will not always live as Jesus lived; we will fail and sin. It does not mean that we are not followers of Christ or that our position in Christ in the Eternal Realm is revoked. Not perfection, but the direction of your heart and life reveals whether or not you are a believer (1 John 2:5, 6). We can know that we are in right relationship with God. We can embrace Paul's words in Romans 8:1 "... now no condemnation." God's judgment is not directed at you: Jesus took all God's wrath upon Himself on the cross. We come to Him as Father and Friend in our new freedom. We serve and follow out of love, not fear. Nothing comes our way that He does not allow. In hardships we remain convinced that His motive is love: disciplining for correction or pruning for growth. In this Earthly realm, John calls us to live as Jesus did: in total dependence and trust in His Heavenly Father. Jesus invites us to do the same and enter into the richest life possible. Jesus calls us, "Trust me and jump in; live life to the full."