

Podcast: Confessing The Faith

Episode 14: Can A Person Know That They Are Saved?

Participants: Mike Thezier, Joe Anady

Published: 02/18/2016

The doctrine of assurance: Can a person know that they are saved?

Q1: Joe, what made you want to talk about this subject?

1. It has come up often in my ministry. Pastoral concern.

Q2: Is it possible for a person to know that they are saved?

1. Different views:
 - a. No, never.
 - b. Yes, but only through a supernatural revelation (super-Christians can know).
 - c. Yes, all true Christians have it.
 - d. Yes, but it must be cultivated.

Q3: What is our view?

1. There are some who have assurance who should not.
2. There are some who should have it who do not. In other words, assurance is not automatic.
3. Common Christians can have assurance.
4. It is obtained through the due use of ordinary means.

Q4: What are "ordinary means"?

1. The word
2. Prayer
3. The sacraments
4. The fellowship

Q5: Why do people lack assurance?

1. A misunderstanding of the gospel
2. Neglect of the means mentioned above
3. Temptation
4. God withdrawing his countenance for a time
5. Sin

Q6: What would you say to someone who is lacking assurance?

1. I would assure the person that to lack assurance does not mean that their faith is not true!
2. I would proclaim the gospel.
3. I would ask, are you trusting in Christ now? (true faith, not perfect)
4. I would ask, do you have a true love for God now? (true, not perfect)
5. I would ask, are you producing fruit and forsaking sin? (a life marked by repentance/holiness, not perfection)
6. I would exhort the person to pursue assurance

Q7: What are some key scripture texts which speak to this issue?

1. Those that explain the gospel - Salvation by grace alone through faith alone:
 - a. Ephesians 2:8-10
 - i. By grace, through faith
 - ii. The place of good works
2. Those which address what true saving faith is:
 - a. James 2:14ff.

3. Those which directly address one's sense of assurance:
 - a. "And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments." (1 John 2:3, ESV)
 - b. "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." (1 John 3:1-3, ESV)
 - c. "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death." (1 John 3:14, ESV)
 - d. "Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth." (1 John 3:18, ESV)
 - e. "By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him;" (1 John 3:19, ESV)
 - f. "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;" (1 John 3:21, ESV)
 - g. "Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us." (1 John 3:24, ESV)
 - h. "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:13, ESV)
4. Hope
 - a. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials," (1 Peter 1:3-6, ESV)