



LESSON 1

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

You know God has forgiven your sins. Yet you look at your life and wonder if you are indeed a child of God. Why do I struggle? Why do I always seem to sin no matter how hard I try not to? Do Christians struggle in life? Yes, they do. Sometimes, even more than the unbelievers. All of the struggles Christians face in this world come from three sources: the world, the flesh (Our sinful nature that craves evil), and the devil. A disciple of Jesus Christ is confident that God has saved him and rejoices in the grace of God in the midst of trials, tribulations, and temptations.

Study Questions

As human beings, it is our natural response to look at our outward actions and think that somehow we have a right relationship with God because we do (or don't do) certain things.

1. Read Luke 18:10-14. Compare and contrast the prayers of these two men. Which one was justified?

Why? _____

2. What did the man who beat his breast admit about himself? _____

3. Read Ephesians 2:1-3. What do you learn about yourself from these verses? _____

4. Is a dead man able to do anything? Did you contribute anything towards your salvation? _____

5. How is a person saved from their sins? Find the answer in Ephesians 2:8-9. _____

Salvation does not depend on our efforts or works. We are not saved by trying to be good or by doing good deeds. In other words, we are saved based on the work of Christ on the cross (See 1 Peter 2:24). We are saved by grace. Do not get caught up in the trap of dwelling on questions such as, "Was I sorry enough for my sins?" "Do I believe strong enough for God to accept me?" These types of questions spawn doubt in hearts. Disciples of Jesus look *outside* themselves for assurance of salvation. When we look inside ourselves, we find imperfection. God requires perfection. Because God knew that we were not, by any means, able to pay for our sins by living a perfect life, He did it for us through His son Jesus Christ (See John 3:16).

God uses instruments to bring us His grace. These instruments are called "means of grace."



The primary means of grace is God’s Word.

Romans 1:16-17

Romans 10:17

John 5:24

John 8:31-32

God’s Word, then, is:

Inspired (2 Timothy 3:16-17) - breathed out by God

Inerrant (2 Timothy 2:15) - God’s Word is truth

Infallible (Matthew 5:17-18)

There is much more to be said about the truth of God’s Word: Why it must be true, why it is true in the original manuscripts, and why we can trust the transmission of those manuscripts through our English translations today. But that is for another class (Resource: Surprised by Faith, Dr. Don Bierle, Faithsearch International).

Secondary means of grace

Because God’s Word speaks of others means by which he grants us His grace, there are secondary means of grace as well. These secondary means tie a physical element to specific promises in God’s Word, thus connecting those promises to the one who partakes. Since secondary means of grace depend on God’s Word, they must be understood by studying that word.

Lutheran theology identifies two secondary means of grace, baptism and the Lord’s Supper. See the attached Scriptural references for selected teachings on these means.

6. Read Mark 16:16. What “means of grace” can you pick out from this verse? _____

7. Read Acts 2:37-38. The people that heard Peter’s sermon were “cut to the heart.” What did Peter tell them to do? What was the result? _____

Were you baptized as an infant? Praise God that He brought His grace to you! If not, talk to your pastor about setting up a time to be baptized.

Another means of grace that God uses is the Lord’s Supper.

8. Read Matthew 26:26-28 and write what you learn about the Lord’s Supper _____

9. God’s Word contains so many promises of His grace. Read Romans 10:9, 13. What does God promise in these verses? _____

10. Even when we sin as Christians, God is ready to forgive and cleanse. Read 1 John 1:9 and 2:1. Who forgives us? _____



Read 1 John 5:11-13.

11. What do believers in the Son of God have? _____

12. Who has eternal life and who doesn't? _____

13. What are "these things" in verse 13? Does it include the whole Bible? _____

14. How do the words of the Bible bring assurance of salvation? _____

15. What have you learned from this lesson? _____

Assignments to help you prepare for Lesson #2

- 1) Read the book of Ephesians, one chapter a day.
- 2) Complete Lesson 2, *Life as a Disciple of Jesus Christ*, before the next appointment with your discipler.
- 3) Memorize Ephesians 2:8-10.
- 4) Go to church and take notes during the pastor's message, and bring them with you to your next appointment.
- 5) Remind yourself of the truths you have learned in this lesson. Rejoice in the grace of God!

Notes: