

December 03, 2017 -

I John 3:19-24 - “Blessed Assurance”

Introduction:

In the award winning [British film](#) entitled “The Mission,” Robert DeNiro plays Mendoza a mercenary who has taken asylum in the local church after killing his brother in a fit of jealous rage. Mendoza eventually leaves the church and heads to a mission post located above the waterfalls in the South American jungle. Because of what he has done, and how bad he feels, he ties himself to a several-hundred pound net of items that represents his sinful life. He feels compelled to drag this sack of sin around with him as a way to do penance for what he has done. So caught up with his sin he slips under the burden of his past, with the rope choking the very life out of him. He feels terrible and yet doesn’t know what to do with his sin and the shame that comes with it. Mendoza can’t let go of his past life. Have you ever felt like that? This theme is as relevant today as it was in the 1800s.

Are you tethered to some indiscretion this morning? Are you gasping under the guilt of things you did several years ago? What do you do when you realize that you’ve messed up? How do you stabilize your life when you experience more ups and downs than the stock market? Where do you go when you’ve failed? Where do you turn when you’ve hurt those closest to you? Do you grab some rope and hitch it up to your sin pile and start dragging?

Multitudes of Americans are doing something different, they take tranquilizers. This way they can’t feel anything. They have to have a pill to get them up and going in the morning. They have to have a pill to put them to sleep at night and another pill to enable them to deal with their own condemnation of heart. The sad fact is that there are many Christians who lack peace in their heart the same as Mendoza and they know the Lord Jesus as their Savior. In I John 3:19-21, God has given us the resources for managing our consciences. They are:

I. Claiming the Truth 3:19

1. In the Christian life there will be times when we have a condemning heart and don’t feel like Christians. Sometimes this is the work of Satan who falsely accuses us to make us feel guilty and unusable by God. John writes: ... if our heart condemn us (3:19-20a). This verse refers to the previous passage that teaches true Christians cannot hate or hoard. In other words, when doubts about our relationship to God arise in our hearts, one way to eliminate our doubts is to remind us of the truth of the word of God. - [John 8:32](#) / [Titus 1:1-2](#)

John assures us that **God is greater than our heart**, and so reminds us that we cannot base our relationship with Him purely on how we *feel* in His presence.

2. Condemnation can well up inside us but that has nothing to do with our standing before God. It may be the work of the enemy of our souls (who, according to [Revelation 12:10](#) accuses the brethren), or the work of an over-active conscience.

Satan will aid in parading our failures and shortcomings through our minds, causing us to doubt our sincerity and perhaps even our salvation. By this method he devours us. To counter this, we must exercise the mental process of mediating on the truths of God's Word. Write down when you were saved and baptized and the scriptures that give you assurance.

II. Demonstrations of Your love (3:20)

1. Another way to eliminate our doubts is thinking on specific acts of love the Spirit of God has laid on our hearts to perform. There are times when I get really down on myself. At those times I go to a file in my office, it is labeled "The Encouraging Files. We all need reassuring proof when our hearts condemn us. Help yourself a little and keep track of these authentications. We must exercise the mental process of mediating on deeds of love we have performed.

---James 2:18

Faith without works is dead. Remember James told us our works speaks of our love. We cannot hold folks to our standards and if they don't measure up give them the boot or become unkind and unloving. Agape love makes sacrifices to love the unlovable, the person that trouble us the most. When we act with love we are demonstrating the love of the Holy Spirit.

2. *When our hearts condemn us, we need to remember God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things* (3:20b). Our hearts will always condemn us because- Jeremiah 17:9

The heart [is] deceitful above all [things], and desperately wicked: who can know it?

God knows us better than we know ourselves; He knows everything about us and still loves us.

3. When our hearts condemn us, we need to remember the truth found Romans 8:1:

God never condemns us, even when we sin. He wants to forgive and cleanse us. So, when we fail the Lord, and our hearts rush in to accuse and condemn us, the first thing we should do is confess our sin. Thank God for the promise in Psalm 103:12- *As far as the east is from the west, [so] far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

4. When we fail the Lord, we need to remember Peter failed the Lord miserably after His arrest by denying Him three times. 'When Peter realized what he had done, he thought Jesus would never want to see him again. However, on the first Easter morning the large stone that sealed Jesus' tomb had been rolled away. As they looked for Jesus in the tomb, an angel tells them he is risen; he is not here (Mk 16:60) and the angel tell them "Go tell my disciples and Peter. The only disciple the angel called by name.

Why? Jesus knew Peter failed Him horribly, but He also knew Peter was broken-hearted because of his sin. Therefore, He wanted Peter to know He still loved him. There are times we shouldn't trust our feelings. When you don't feel like a Christian, remember, the truth & your acts of love. Then, your-

III. Answered Prayer (3:21-23)

A. When we assure our hearts by remembering our acts of love and our hearts no longer condemn us that will result in confidence. The word-translated confidence means we have freedom and openness of speech. If we let our hearts condemn us, we feel guilty and unworthy to pray, but when our hearts don't condemn us, we can come before Him with confidence. This peace and assurance is important for praying. This doesn't mean we are self-righteous. It means we are confident of our standing before God. Note what John writes- (3:22).

1. The first phrase of this verse is one of the greatest promises in the Bible: whatsoever we ask, we receive of him. However, we must remember every promise in the Bible is conditional, and so this promise is only valid if two important things from God's Word are governing our lives: precepts and principles. We are instructed in scripture to follow line upon line and precepts... **But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; Isa. 28:13**

Precepts are commands or written orders that apply to particular areas of our lives. For example, Psalm 119:4 tell us *"Thou hast commanded [us] to keep thy precepts diligently.*

A precept is a clear command, such as: Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice (Eph. 4:31).

2. Second, we must do those things that are pleasing in his sight (1 Jn 3:22b), which refers to principles. A principle is a fundamental truth or motivating force that can be applied to many areas of life. For example, there is no precept, or command, in the Bible that says, "Thou shalt not use crack cocaine or LSD, PCP" which are addictive drugs. However, a principle that applies to many areas of our lives does forbid it in - I Corinthians 6:12, 19.

Allowing anything to control us, or bring us under its power, is wrong. Last, remember, the truth, your acts of love, prayers and...

IV An Awesome Presence (3:24)

1. Obeying His precepts and principles causes us to sense an awesome Presence in our lives. Every time we keep God's commandments, especially through acts of sacrificial love, we can sense God's approval through what we might call "spiritual impression." It is beyond the power of words to describe. When we obey God's commands in difficult circumstances, we can almost sense God's empowering us with spiritual power and wisdom by the Holy Spirit in us. This is one way we experience the truth that Paul express in **Romans 8:16**.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

When we perform sacrificial acts of love and obey God's precepts and principles, we can sense an inward confirmation that we are God's children.

Conclusion:

We can gain victory over our conscience. We must first follow submit to God's truth, know sincere acts of love and answered prayer and we will know the awesome power of God in us.

December 03, 2017 - Hebrews 13:7, 17-18- “Pray for Us” - Charge to Danbury Church

Introduction:

Good afternoon. It is a privilege and an honor to be here with you today. For Linda and I this is bitter sweet. We are so very happy for you in the calling of Brother Bob Payne as your next pastor. However it is sad for us to see our dear friends Dave and Janet leaving... Down thru the years we developed a special relationship with them and with you. But all things end.

Today I want to take you back many years ago at the end of another pastor's ministry. The date is June 7, 1891 and we are in London, England. We are at the great Metropolitan Tabernacle where over 6,000 people congregate. Charles Haddon Spurgeon has pastored the church for 38 years and today he preaches his final sermon. He was devoted to the Scriptures, to discipline in prayer, to godly living and commitment when he stood in the pulpit. This is believed gave power to his preaching. Spurgeon, however contribute the success of that ministry to the faithful people of that church who prayed for Him and for souls to be save.

When people would walk through the Metropolitan Tabernacle Spurgeon would take them to a basement prayer room where people were always on their knees interceding for the church. Then the pastor would declare, **“Here is the powerhouse of this church.”** He understood that there were times he could barely make it to the pulpit because of illness that the prayers below were holding him up. You see Spurgeon suffered constantly from various ailments and fell into serious depression at times. He had rheumatic gout that eventually took his life at the age of 57.

Spurgeon overcame physical limitations and relentless criticism to be established as the greatest Victorian preacher. He came to that Church as a teenager and on his first Sunday preached to eighty people. The congregation grew to become the largest evangelical church in the world. Spurgeon was known as “The Prince of Preachers and he attribute this to the power of the people prayers. That is my charge to you today and it is given to all churches by an even greater preacher; the apostle Paul.

I. Pray for us!

1. The apostle Paul at the end of his first epistle to the Thessalonians simply asked one thing of these dear saints. Brethren, pray for us in chapter 5:25 and again to these folks in II Thessalonians 3:1...Finally, brethren, pray for us... Paul constantly asked other Christians to pray for him ([Romans 15:30](#), [2 Corinthians 1:11](#), [Ephesians 6:18-19](#), [Philippians 1:19](#), [Colossians 4:3](#), and [Philemon 1:22](#)). Paul knew that the success of his ministry in some measure depended on the prayers of God's people.

(Spurgeon) “You cannot tell how much God's servants are helped by the prayers of his people. The strongest man in Israel will be the better for the prayers of the weakest saint in Zion.”

2. He is a little more specific here...that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you: Paul asked for prayer so that the Word of God would have liberty to run freely, without any hindrance. Paul's prayer request makes us wonder how often the work of God's Word is hindered by our prayerlessness.

II Remember them! Hebrews 13:7

1. ***Remember those who rule over you:*** We are told to recognize and follow godly leadership in the body of Christ, leadership shown to be legitimate by faithfulness to the word of God and by godly conduct. Recognize your pastor, respect him and protect his time is the word of God...

The writer to the Hebrews in chapter 13:17 states, "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

2. The writer to the Hebrews in verse 18 again states "**Pray for us**" he considered it important that others pray for him.

In the grammar of the ancient Greek language, **pray** is in the *present imperative* verb tense. It indicates continuous activity and implies that they were already praying for the writer of this letter. I hope you are already praying for Pastor Bob and the ministry of this church.

We all need and should welcome the prayers of others but pastors need your prayers. Pray for him, his wife his family. So that he can be free from the stresses of life to pastor with joy.