

Assurance

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Date: 19 July 2009

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[0:00] If you'll take your Bibles and turn to Romans chapter 8. We're using Terry Johnson's book, *When Grace Comes Home*, to consider how the doctrines of grace affect four particular areas of our life.

And we've considered so far how the sovereignty of God and the depravity of man and sovereign grace should influence our worship. And last week we saw how they should affect our outlook on life, talking about gratitude and hope.

And then this week, considering how they should affect our view of assurance. We want to consider how these truths affect the way we look at confidence that we are God's children.

And as we start, we want to talk about two errors to avoid when you talk about assurance.

Assurance of faith, or again, that confidence that you're one of God's own children. The first error that we want to avoid is that there are people who say that you can't have assurance.

You shouldn't look for it, you can't have it, and so don't bother. That, to put it simply, is unbiblical.

These people say that we shouldn't presume upon God, we can't know, and so we shouldn't seek to have a settled assurance of our salvation.

[1:12] People like that live without comfort, or security, and peace. And that's a ditch to be avoided on one side, and the Scriptures show us otherwise. I hope you'll see it as we go, but just one passage to take note of.

1 John 5.13, I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. John writes, so that you can know, so that you can have confidence that you have eternal life.

So people that say that you can't know that you have assurance, and you shouldn't know, aren't seeing all of what the Scripture has to teach about it.

We can know and enjoy that assurance. The second error to avoid comes under all sorts of different names, and stripes, and variations. You might have heard people say, once saved, always saved.

And technically, that is true. But not in the way that people who say that usually mean it. Maybe you've heard of the carnal Christian.

[2:12] Or having Christ as your Savior, but not as your Lord. And those who advocate such things don't root assurance in the sovereign, electing, preserving grace of God. We'll talk more about that in a minute.

But they root it in their one-time choice. A choice to believe. A choice to call on Christ. A choice that apparently has no ongoing implications for the way that they live. Their basic position is that some of them believe that once they've made the choice to believe, they've called upon the name of the Lord, that's all they need.

They can go from there, and they can live however they want. Their life doesn't need to change. It doesn't have to change. They can have Christ as their Savior, so that they're saved from their sin, but they don't need Him as Lord, so they don't submit to His rules, and they don't need to stop sinning.

They like that they're saved from their sin, but they don't want to stop. And so Christ is Savior, but not as Lord. And for these who believe this, their assurance lies in the fact that they prayed a prayer, or walked an aisle, or at one time said, I believe in Jesus.

Something like that. Johnson characterizes their view this way. All you need to do is pray. Pray this prayer to receive Christ. Once you do that, you can have perfect assurance that you are eternally saved.

[3:25] Do you see the promises of God to those who believe? Do you believe? Then to doubt it for even a moment is to call God a liar. Instant, easy assurance is given to all without exception and without delay.

And then when the new convert finds that his life is unchanged, he goes on living the way he has before. He's not troubled by that. It's not an issue for him. Because he prayed. He's believed and now he's good to go.

Once saved, always saved. Now there's a biblical problem with that. We'll see that in there in a moment. But there's a theological problem that I hadn't really seen before. And this was interesting enough that I'm going to read to you from the book a quote that shows a theological sort of dilemma that that puts people that hold to that theology in.

Johnson writes, Any believer who will stop to think about it will realize that his faith or his decision or his anything is a shaky foundation upon which to base assurance.

Indeed, this is why assurance is impossible on the basis of Arminian assumptions. They teach that one's decision to believe and follow Christ is the basis for one's salvation. But just as one decided to believe, one can decide not to believe.

[4:40] Just as one gained one's salvation by faith, one can lose one's salvation by unbelief. Assurance is impossible because there is always the possibility that tomorrow one might cease believing.

One can have assurance for this present moment, but not for the next, which is the same as saying that one cannot have any security at all. Assurance is impossible. This has not kept some from creating a Frankenstein theology, like the monster made up of bits and pieces from here and there, which insists on free will until the point one decides for Christ, and then argues from that point forward one is sealed and secure.

If one asks, what if I decide not to believe anymore? They say, you can't decide not to believe anymore. To which we say, where is your free will now, friend?

If free will is jettisoned in favor of divine sovereignty at this illogical and inconsistent point, what is the objection to affirming sovereignty throughout the process of salvation, like the Bible does?

You see, they like God's sovereignty after you make the choice to believe. They don't want you to be able to unmake the choice, and so once you make the choice to believe, then apparently God steps in and you're secure, you're sealed, you're safe.

[5:56] And you can't unmake that choice. Instead of seeing God's sovereignty working throughout, that He draws us to Himself and He preserves us and keeps us. And so they've got that theological dilemma, that all of a sudden they affirm God's sovereignty and you're not free to change your choice.

The biblical problem, I hope, is obvious. The Scriptures are clear that everyone who has truly been saved will desire and will aim for holiness, for likeness to Christ, to obey God, to keep His commands.

And those who don't are not merely carnal Christians, but aren't Christians at all. They've never been saved in the first place. And so faith without works, James says, is dead.

Right. And without holiness, says the author to the Hebrews, no one will see the Lord. And Paul says to the Ephesians, He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight.

Or 1 John. Those who have believed in Christ can't, will not go on sinning. Or as our memory work is clearly showing us in Romans 6, that when we're saved, we're dead to sin.

[7:09] We don't go on living in our sin. And so Johnson says, There's no comfort, no assurance anywhere in the Bible for those who have professed or even presently do profess Christ and do not walk with Him. Alright?

So, there's that easy assurance, but there's nothing to show for it. That's the other error to avoid. So we've got two errors to avoid. One, you can't have any assurance. And two is the easy assurance that people who aren't even saved can enjoy.

Once saved, always saved. Any questions about those two errors that we want to avoid when we talk about assurance? Or any comments? Okay, it must be crystal clear.

Good. So if there's errors to avoid, what then is the truth that we should embrace? And we're going to talk about the P in TULIP today.

Some say it's the perseverance of the saints, and some say it's the preservation of the saints. And if you're really, really Reformed, you say it's both. Because we affirm the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man.

[8:16] And salvation, and it comes to the fore in assurance as well. Let's talk about perseverance first, which might not be what you would expect when you come to a lesson on assurance, but let's talk about perseverance.

Or just listen to some texts. Matthew 10.22 You have to stand firm to the end. That's directed at you.

You have to endure to the end. If you want to be saved, you've got to stand firm to the end. You've got to persevere. Or Hebrews 4 and verse 1. Therefore, since the promise of entering His rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.

There's this promise of the eternal Sabbath rest that we'll enjoy in heaven. And Paul says, make sure that you don't fall short of it. Or not Paul, the author did the Hebrews. I don't think Paul wrote Hebrews. Some people do.

But whoever wrote Hebrews says that you've got to endure to the end, that you can't fall short of that promise. Or Hebrews 6 and verse 4 and following.

[9:15] It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance.

Because to their loss, they're crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace. These verses talk about those who have professed faith, those who have believed, those who have enjoyed real blessing and benefit, but have fallen away.

And so we've got to guard against falling away. We've got to persevere. Or Hebrews 10.36.

Couldn't be any more explicit. You need to persevere. So that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised.

You won't receive what He's promised until you've persevered. And so it's our responsibility to persevere in the faith, not to fall away. Again, not what you would expect on a lesson about how the doctrines of grace affect the way we look at assurance, but it's in the Scriptures, isn't it?

The doctrines of grace don't deny the responsibility of man. We must persevere to the end. And we do that only by the strength of God. And so let's turn and consider the work of God in preserving us to the end.

[10:24] Preservation. Now, this is where our great comfort and assurance lies. Yes, we have to persevere. And there's got to be fruit there. And we look at that when we think about assurance. But my hope isn't in all of my hard work and all of my persevering.

It's in God preserving and keeping me. If my hope is in myself, then I'm a fool. My hope is in the God who preserves me. And so we've turned here to Romans 8. Look with me at verses 29 and 30. Romans 8, verses 29 and 30. For those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.

And those He predestined, He also called. Those He called, He also justified. Those He justified, He also glorified. You see, it begins with God's foreknowledge and His predestination.

He knew us. He loved us beforehand. He chose us. And everyone that He chose, He's going to save. So those that were chosen, those that were predestined, were called and justified and glorified. Now, the thing that I love about this verse is that all of those things are in the past tense, in the aorist tense.

[11:34] And that talks about things that have been completed. They're done. They're in the past. But glorification is in the future. You haven't been glorified yet. Sorry. You can just tell by looking at your faces this morning.

You haven't been glorified yet. Neither have I. You don't get that until you die and go to heaven. But Paul talks about it as something that's completed. It's done. It's finished. It's guaranteed.

Everybody that God foreloves, foreknows, He predestines, He calls them, He justifies them, and He glorifies them as well. That's future, but it's spoken of as though it's done.

It's guaranteed. That's God's work. If He's decreed it, it will happen. That's the glory of believing in what the Bible teaches about the sovereignty of God and salvation. We're guaranteed to get to glory.

If He determines to save you, He won't fail to accomplish it. As our own confession of faith says, It is on no free will of their own that the saints' perseverance depends, but on the immutability of the decree of election, which in its turn depends on the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, the efficacious merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and the saints' union with Him.

[12 : 50] Right? We don't base our assurance on our own free will, but rather on the unchangeable decree of God. If God decreed to choose you to save you, nothing can change that.

And that's comforting. That's assuring. That's where we find our confidence. Look down just a few verses. Romans 8, 35-39. Romans 8, 35.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble, or hardship, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, for your sake we face death all day long.

We are considered a sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, neither angels, nor demons, neither the present, nor the future, nor any powers, neither height, nor depth, nor anything else, in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Are there more comforting words in Scripture? I suppose it's possible. This has got to rank right up there at the top of the comforting words that we find in the pages of our Bibles.

[13 : 57] There's absolutely nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Christ. The work of Christ is perfect. It is complete. If He has died to save you, you will be saved.

He's not going to lose you. Nothing can take you away from the love of God in Christ. We are secure. John 10, 27-29 My sheep listen to My voice.

I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can snatch them out of My hand. My Father who has given them to Me is greater than all, and no one can snatch them out of My Father's hand.

Johnson says, we are not just secure. We are doubly secure. Doubly wrapped in the hands of the Son and the Father. Father, we are, shall be, and cannot but be saved.

And so, God has decreed to save us. He's saved us, and He's going to bring us safely home. We're in His hands, and nothing can snatch us out of His hands. Nothing can separate us from His love.

[14 : 58] Just as surely as we've been predestined and called and justified, we'll be glorified. And so, while we must persevere, we find our hope and our comfort in God's preservation, not in our own strength.

You say, well, how can you tell? How can I know that these promises apply to Me? How can I know that I'm one of these people that are predestined and called and justified, and my glorification is guaranteed?

Well, sometimes it can be difficult to tell, can it? True and false believers can be hard to distinguish. You think of the parable of the sower.

The sower grows out and he sows seed. And plants sprout up everywhere. Some of them in good soil, some of them in rocky soil, some of them in thorny soil, and sometimes the seed is snatched away.

But those plants don't look any different. They all look the same. It doesn't matter where they're grown. It's the same seed. And so the plants that spring up, they look the same. The ones that are in rocky soil, they look the same.

[15 : 58] The ones in thorny soil, you can tell they're in thorny soil, but the plant looks the same. And you don't know until later whether they are good plants that will last or those that will die out very quickly.

It's hard to tell sometimes between a true and a false believer. People might claim to have faith. They might deceive other people on purpose. They might have deceived themselves.

We saw in Hebrews 6 that there may be real and lasting change and blessing for a time, even a lengthy period of time. But some are simply deceived. Lord, Lord, they'll cry out.

Didn't we do this and that in your name? But they'll find that they never knew Him. It's not always easy to tell. It's why there's no pure churches in the world. We try to be careful who we admit into membership.

We interview them. We go over their testimony. We look for fruit in their lives and all of these things. And then we baptize them and out of the church. But even then, we don't always know, do we?

That the people who have been brought into the membership of the church are saved.

[17:01] And then if you've ever struggled with assurance, you know that it's hard to tell sometimes. Do I have the genuine article? Do I have true faith? Am I really one of God's children?

Well, God's given us, I like to call it a three-legged stool. Three ways we can know that we have assurance. And don't just go with one of the legs and run with that one.

You need all three. And that keeps us from being imbalanced. And we'll see that. But all three. First is faith in the promises of God. The promises that we've already seen.

That we're secure in the hands of God. That nothing can snatch us out of His hand. You've got to believe that. You've got to trust that God is able to do what He says. That if He's called you, then He's going to get you home to glory.

He's promised to do it. Do you believe Him? Romans 10.13 Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Are you part of the everyone? Well, yes. You're everyone. Have you called on the name of the Lord from a sincere heart?

[17:58] Yes. Then you will be saved. The promise is yours. Now this isn't just the one saved, always saved. You say you're sounding like those people you talked about at the beginning. Well, this is just one leg of the stool.

Okay? But if you've called on the name of the Lord, you'll be saved. That's one of the promises that you believe by faith. John 3.16 For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whosoever...

I'm combining translations. Sorry. That whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Hey, are you part of the whosoever? The whoever? Whatever.

Are you part of the whoever? Yes. Have you believed in His Son? Yes. Then you're not going to perish. You'll have eternal life. The promise is yours.

We just looked at John 10.27-29. My sheep hear My voice. Do you listen to Jesus' voice? Then you're one of His sheep. Nothing can snatch you out of His hand or the Father's hand.

[18:53] And again, the promises we've already mentioned. Part of assurance is taking God at His Word. Is believing Him. As He said that He will save to the uttermost, then He will.

As He said He'll preserve and watch over and keep His children, He will. He cannot fail. That's one leg of this three-legged stool of assurance. The second is that there will be fruit.

There will be evidence. There will be something to show for your profession of faith. Jesus said, If you love Me, you will obey what I command. John 14.15 If you love Me, and those who truly love God are those that have believed in His Son, if you love Me, Jesus says, you'll keep My commands. If we've been saved, and therefore have the Spirit of God dwelling in us, as all His children do, we'll be showing forth the fruit of the Spirit, won't we? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

So you have a look at your life and say, do I see these things? Not in perfection, but are they there? And growing. Fruit. Evidence that the Spirit is dwelling in me. That I'm one of God's children.

[20:03] Read the book of 1 John. The letter of 1 John. And work through these things. 1 John 2.3 We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commandments. And you know that when you read through 1 John, you see that God's true children have a love for God.

They obey His commandments. They love God's truth. They love God's children as other people. They delight in God's people. So, it's the fruit there. Do I love God? Do I love His children?

Do I obey Him? And it's fruit that won't be temporary. It will be lasting. And when you do sin, there will be repentance and restoration. Not continuing on in your sin like you don't care.

And letting it go. And so, Peter writes in 2 Peter 1 and verse 10, Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. Or 2 Corinthians 13.5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith.

Test yourselves. How do you do that? Well, you look and you see if there's fruit. To demonstrate your claim. Good trees produce good fruit. Bad trees produce bad fruit, Jesus says. What does your fruit say about you?

[21:09] That's the second leg of the stool of assurance. You believe the promises of God and then you look to see if there's fruit. The third thing is the witness of the Holy Spirit.

The testimony of the Holy Spirit. Something that only you can know. We've mentioned here that all of God's children are indwelt by His Spirit. And that's what 1 John tells us. 1 John 4.13 We know that we live in Him and He in us because He has given us of His Spirit.

Again, he used that word know. You can know that you're in Him and He's in you. How can you know? Because He's given you a Spirit. How can I know that? How can I know if the Spirit's dwelling in me?

Well, what we just said, there's the fruit of the Spirit. But also, look over at Romans 8, verses 15 and 16. There's the testimony of the Spirit in our hearts.

Romans 8, 15 and 16. For you did not receive a Spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of Sonship. And by Him we cry, Abba, Father.

[22 : 16] The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. You see, the Spirit that we've received is one of Sonship and testifies to our spirit that we are children of God.

How can you know that you're a child of God? The Spirit in you giving witness and testimony. You say, how does that happen? I ask you, have you experienced it?

Do you know what it is to have the Spirit testify to your spirit? That witness of the Spirit doesn't happen, Johnson says, in a vacuum. He testifies that we're children of God through His Word, through the means of grace. Nevertheless, it is a direct spirit to spirit communication that cannot be analyzed, examined, or explained.

God grants this spiritual sense to His children. I don't want to say more than Scripture. It says that right there in verse 16, the Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

I don't know exactly how that works, but if you've experienced it, then you know. the comfort, the presence of the Spirit within you by which you cry, Abba, Father.

[23 : 26] You cry out to God, knowing that you're one of His children and that He'll hear you as a loving, heavenly Father. And so we can praise God that He's given us means by which we can enjoy true assurance.

And all three legs of the stool are important here. You focus on one to the neglect of the others and you start going in ditches. You focus on the promises of God to the neglect of fruit and the testimony of the Spirit, then you get that one saved, always saved.

Well, I believed. I called. I'm good to go. I'm not going to look at my life. I'm not going to examine myself. So it's good that that's not all we have. And it's good that we don't just have the exhortations and the challenges to not fall away.

The fruit. Because then we could either go one or two routes. We either get really proud and say, look what a good person is. Look at all this good fruit I've produced. We're pretty pleased with ourselves.

Or we despair. I can't do this. So we never have assurance. And if you just focus on the testimony of the Spirit, then you can sort of delve into some sort of mysticism and some kind of ooshy-gushy feeling and there's nothing concrete to lay hold of.

[24 : 29] But God doesn't just give us one of those, does He? He gives us all three by which we can know. And so I say that God knows His creation pretty well.

He knows us well. He knows that we're dust. He knows what He created and He knows what we needed. And so He doesn't just give us promises about Him securing us for heaven.

If He did that, we'd be lazy. And He doesn't just... And if He just gave us the promises, we wouldn't strive after holiness and likeness to Christ. We wouldn't seek to persevere.

We wouldn't aim to be holy. But if God had only given us threats and warnings, again, we would either despair or we would become exceedingly proud. And so again, what we see is that God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are always balanced.

Whether we're talking about salvation itself or the assurance of that salvation, you've got both. And Johnson says, we come face to face again with the tension between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility.

[25 : 31] God's sovereignty protects and preserves His people in the faith. They will not fall away. He won't let them. What then are we to make of all the warnings about falling away and the conditional exhortations about endurance?

It is simple, really. Don't forget means. God preserves His people, but it is not apart from the reality of their own perseverance that genuine believers are preserved.

They will persevere. Through His preserving power, we are able to persevere. And so, I trust that there's something for everyone here today.

And you have to know yourself and you have to know your tendencies. There's a danger whenever you teach about assurance or preach on assurance. There's a danger that the wrong group of

people are going to get hold of the wrong emphasis.

And so, you have to know yourself. By emphasizing the promises of God, we could possibly lull into deeper, comfortable sleep and assurance those who should be examining themselves.

[26:30] Maybe some people living in sin. And they're going, I've got the promises of God. And I heard them say today that if you believe, then you're saved.

And somebody lays hold of that. And they tune out the exhortations, but what they really need is the exhortation to persevere. So some people might grab a hold of the wrong thing. So you emphasize one thing too much and you lull somebody to sleep.

On the other hand, you run the risk of breaking a bruised reed whose tendency is too much introspection, too much looking at themselves. And, oh, there's not enough fruits there.

I've got to try a little bit harder. And they never look up to Christ and see what He's done. And they never put faith in the promises of God. Some people look entirely too much at themselves. One of the Puritans said, for every one look you take at yourself, you should take ten looks at Christ.

Some people are too prone to introspection and not looking to Christ. And so we've tried to set before you today a balanced view. Some people need to hear and heed more of perseverance and self-examination.

[27:33] Others need to hear and heed more of preservation and God's promises. We all need to strike the balance that the doctrines of grace strike, holding the responsibility of man and the sovereignty of God without neglecting either.

I've got one other thing to finish with, but we're way early here, so I need some comments, some questions, and we can fill out the rest of the time with some of those things if you have any comments or questions this morning.

Jim? I just want to make one comment. I appreciate all the facts. Yeah, that's exactly right. If we try to do that work that we must do of persevering and not falling away in our own strength, then we fail.

Even that is a gift from God. Paul says to the Ephesians, for we were God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Even the good that we do is prepared for us by God. We do it in His strength, in His power. And so when he writes to the Corinthians, I love this passage.

[28:42] Of course, you love the Bible, don't you? But there are certain things we find encouraging. And he says in 2 Corinthians 12, he's talking about his thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment him, but also from God to keep him humble.

Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me, but He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses so that Christ's power may rest on me.

That is why for Christ's sake I delight in weaknesses and insults and hardships and persecutions and difficulties, for when I am weak, then am I strong. And then none of the credit goes to us because we're weak and the glory goes to God because we're persevering in His strength.

Good. Good. What else? What other comments or questions? Roger. No, that's right. Something we've looked at on Wednesday nights and talking about repentance and the true nature of repentance.

And one of the fruits that you'll find in your life as a child of God is that you will repent of your sin. You won't let it go in check. Like, it's no big deal. Like, there's nothing there. And part of repentance, of course, is hating and forsaking, turning away from your sin.

[29:50] It's not ignoring it. Yeah, absolutely. Good. What other comments or questions? Dare. Yeah, it's preaching the whole Bible and the Bible talks about sin, doesn't it?

Hating evil and loving God and loving that which is good. That's right. Good. Good. Good purpose. That's my last thing that I've got here.

That's exactly right. Yeah. Yeah. We're close to that being the last thing. Any other thoughts, comments, or questions this morning? That's exactly right. Good. Ed.

Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And, yeah, the deeper you go, the more you have to show. And it depends on the person that you're talking to. You might make those connections and might not make them.

[30:57] And it'll vary from person to person. But, yeah, people do look at things through a different sort of lens than we might. That's helpful.

Anybody else this morning? All right. Well, we'll have a little extra time for some fellowship between the services. But, I hope that you go away from here challenged to persevere to the end but also comforted and encouraged that God will preserve you to the end if you're one of His children. And, as our brother Dennis quoted in Philippians 2, verses 12 and 13, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. That's for you to do.

Work it out. Do it with fear and trembling. Your responsibility in the very next verse for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose. Well, let's pray and ask for His blessing then.

Father, we give You thanks this day for the truth of Your Word. We thank You that You have given us that Word and that we have it to read and to understand and we thank You that You've taught us from it and we pray that we would not emphasize one thing to the neglect of another but that we would embrace both our responsibility, Your perfect sovereignty and we pray that You would give us grace to persevere to the end in Your strength and Your power but to seek to do that which is right, to love the good, to hate the evil, to shun it, to turn away from it, to repent of it when we find it in our own lives.

[32 : 30] And we pray that You would give us grace to cling to the sweet promises of Your Word that You will not let us go, that nothing can snatch us out of Your hand or separate us from Your love. We pray that we would find comfort there as well as in the Spirit who dwells in us testifying that we are Your children.

What a blessed thing it is this morning to be able to say that we're Your children, to be able to pray, Father, and know that You hear us as a father hears his child, that You delight to give us good gifts. And so we pray that You'd give the good gift of assurance to each one of Your children here this morning. May we delight in it, may we find comfort and peace in it. And we pray that You would give us the good gift of Your Spirit as we meet together to worship in a few minutes.

We ask that You'd pour out Your Spirit to help us to understand, to help us to worship, that You might be praised, all for the sake of the name of Christ in whose name we pray. Amen.