

The Arrow of Faith (part 3)

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[0:00] Two things you must do to be saved, repent and believe. And having studied five points under repentance,! We have now been considering five points under faith.

! Point number four two weeks ago was the instrumentality of faith.! We saw that it's not faith that saves you, but Christ that saves you.

Christ is the only Savior. Our own faith is not a Savior. It's the object of our faith that saves us. Then what is the role of faith? And we noted that it's an instrument of salvation.

And faith operates in the same way that a snorkel operates. And Dave told me yesterday that he and Karen got a snorkel in Maui and that experience.

I don't know if you were snorkeling when we were talking about snorkels, but does anybody remember how a snorkel works or how faith works like a snorkel?

[1:13] What do you need to live with your head underwater? Air. So it's the air that gives you life, but what brings it to you is the snorkel.

It's the channel, the instrument of bringing the saving air to your lungs. And so faith is like that snorkel. It does not save you.

But it brings Christ to you that does save you. Christ is the Savior, and faith receives him. Faith brings him to us.

So why is faith made the only instrument for justification? Well, Paul tells us, because therefore the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace.

There's something unique about faith that highlights the grace of God. Anybody that understands what faith is would never think that there's something meritorious or deserving of us having salvation because we had faith.

[2:23] What is faith? It's empty hands. It's that receives Christ. It's falling into his arms. There's nothing to brag about falling.

There's nothing to brag about emptiness. But that's what faith is. It's in the first place a receiving grace. And so it is uniquely qualified to serve as the instrument that brings Christ and salvation to us because it highlights the grace of God in a way that no other thing does.

So that's the instrumentality of faith. Faith is the instrument, the channel that brings Christ and salvation to us.

Now we come to the fifth point, the last, and it's the assurance of faith. And this is the target for the arrow. We've been looking at faith as an arrow, and this is the target that faith hits.

God not only wants to save sinners, but he wants them to know in this life that they are saved. And we saw last time that some have thought that if you have true saving faith, then you will know for sure that you are saved because, as Hebrews 11, 1 says, faith is being sure of what you hope for and being certain of what you do not see.

[3:51] So some have taken that verse and said, you see, if you have true saving faith, you will be assured of eternal life. You'll know for sure. You'll have assurance.

Waldron responds by granting in the first place that there is a kind of assurance in faith, but it's not the assurance of salvation. Faith is sure of what we hope for.

Faith is certain of what we do not see. Faith is sure that the promises of the gospel are true. Faith is sure that God does not lie. Faith is sure that if I trust in Jesus, he will save me.

He said so. So faith always looks to a word from God. And if there was a verse in the Bible that said, John Christian Heaney has eternal life, then just faith in that word of God would give me assurance.

I would have assurance of my salvation. But the reality is that there is no such word from God, and you don't have a word from God with your name in it, and therefore, faith is not certain of our own

salvation, but it's certain of the word of God, the truthfulness of God, the truthfulness of the gospel.
[5 : 19] The Bible doesn't speak that way. So faith is not assurance of salvation, and we must distinguish between saving faith and the assurance of salvation.

The second point Waldron made, and this is by way of review, is that assurance of salvation, then, is not of the essence of saving faith. It's not the same thing.

Saving faith is not equal assurance of salvation. And that has some practical consequences. It exposes some of the erroneous practices often found in the church today in the matter of assurance.

Some people say to, or some say to people doubting their salvation, stop doubting God. Just trust Him. Do you have a problem with assurance of salvation?

Just stop doubting God and trust Him. But as Waldron says, often the doubts are not doubting God, but doubting ourselves. And that's something else altogether.

[6 : 25] One is legitimate. The other is not. I believe God's promise that whoever believes on Him will not perish but have everlasting life. I'm certain of that.

But I may doubt whether I have savingly believed on Jesus Christ. or merely have a false faith like the Bible warns about.

So you see, that's not doubting God's faithfulness. That's doubting myself. And that is legitimate. And indeed, something that the Bible does tell us about, that there is a false faith.

So that's one error that this should correct. Those that just say, stop doubting God if you're struggling with salvation. No, the person struggling with the assurance of salvation may not be doubting God at all, but doubting whether they have true saving faith.

Others oppose all self-examination in coming to assurance. You should never look at yourself, they say, if you're wanting to have assurance of salvation.

[7 : 34] You should never look for the marks of grace in your life as a way to gain stronger assurance. Don't look for evidences of grace in yourself.

That's bad, that's legalistic, just look to Christ. Self-examination is bad, searching, preaching is bad, it destroys assurance, it doesn't give it. But in fact, undermining their assurance of salvation may not be bad at all, but may even spare them from thinking that they are saved when they maybe really are not saved.

The Bible clearly warns men about false assurance of salvation. And we looked up Ephesians 5 last time about deceiving ourselves on this most important manner.

You remember the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, some will even say to me on that day, but Lord, Lord, did we not do many works in your life? They come to the judgment thinking they're saved when they're really not.

So that's a real category, and Jesus says many are in it. And so we can't just brush that aside and say, well then, any searching of our own hearts is out of place.

[8 : 55] No, we need to be sure that we have true saving faith and not what the Bible calls spurious or a faith that does not save. So self-examination and looking for evidences of grace are some of the ways that God uses to bring assurance of salvation.

2 Corinthians chapter 13 and verse 5 says, examine yourself to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourself.

Examine yourself. So you see, we have a command to do this. Be sure of this is what Paul is saying. Don't, eternity's too long to just, to just treat this thing lightly.

Be sure you're saved. Test yourself. Examine yourself. 2 Corinthians 13, 5. And then 2 Peter 1, 10 and 11. Therefore, my brothers, he's talking to brothers here, but he says, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure.

For if you do these things, you will never fall and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Make your calling and election sure.

[10 : 10] Again, that's too big of a thing to just leave to, well, I hope so. I hope I'm ready. No, no. Make sure of it, brethren, is the command in 2 Peter 1, 10 and 11.

And indeed, the whole book of 1 John was given so that we might know that we have eternal life. So these are some of the verses then that would be behind Waldron's point here that self-examination and looking for marks of grace in us are not something damaging to assurance. No. Now, it may be carried out in a way that damages assurance. But if it's done in the right way, these are given that we might grow in our assurance.

Now, that's by way of review and we pick up then the third point. He's got five points here under assurance and the third one is that the seed of true assurance is present wherever there is true faith.

Faith does not equal assurance and yet, the seed of true assurance is present wherever there is true faith. Some degree of assurance comes with faith.

[11:28] Maybe not enough to overcome all of your doubts and fears, but some measure of assurance. Why is this so? Because the faith that's exercised at conversion receives the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of adoption.

Look at Galatians 3, and verse 2. Faith in Christ receives the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of adoption.

Galatians 3, 2. Paul says, I would like to learn just one thing from you. Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law or by believing what you heard?

Well, the answer is obvious. We received the Spirit as a Spirit of adoption when we believed on the Lord Jesus, not by keeping the law.

And so that means that when saving faith goes upon Jesus Christ, we not only receive the Lord Jesus and His forgiveness, we receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts.

[12:36] and He's called the Spirit of adoption. Later on in Galatians 5, turn over to Galatians, I'm sorry, Galatians 4.

And verse 6, because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out Abba, Father.

Father. So, the Spirit of adoption is given when we have faith in Jesus and the role of the Holy Spirit is to assure us that God is our Father.

So that when we think of God and talk to God, we think of Him and talk to Him as Father. We call Him Father. Where did we get that sense that God is our Father?

Well, partially by the fact that the Spirit of adoption lives within us and He is enabling us to know that God is our Father.

[13:41] So that's why Waldron would say that if you have true faith, faith receives the Holy Spirit of adoption, therefore there is some element of assurance that God is your Father.

Father. Secondly, every believer is also given the grace of hope. Turn over to 1 Peter 1.3.

Every believer is given the grace of hope. And again, we need to know that when we see the word hope in the Bible, 99.9% of the time it is not talking about a flimsy thing but something that is steadfast and sure.

That confident expectation of future good coming our way. And so, here in 1 Peter 1.3 we see what's true of every believer.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

[14:48] Everyone who is a believer in the Lord Jesus has been born again unto this living hope. A hope that is not dead but that lives because our Savior lives.

Hope is assurance. It's steadfast. It's firm. It's secure. Hebrews 6.19 says we have this hope as an anchor for the soul. Firm and secure.

And so, every believer has some measure of hope. A living hope. Again, it may not be enough to chase away every doubt but there is the element, the seed of true assurance wherever there's faith. So, that's the third point. Where there is true faith there is the seed of true assurance, an element of assurance. The fourth point is that there are degrees of assurance of salvation and this perhaps just follows.

That there are degrees. It's not a, you either got it or you don't. It's not an all or nothing thing. There are degrees of salvation, of assurance of salvation, excuse me.

[15:58] And since assurance of salvation is in no small part the work of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of adoption, our assurance suffers when we grieve the Holy Spirit.

So, here's the Holy Spirit living in us. one of his ministries is to assure us that God is our Father, to enable us as we come to him to pray, not just with the words but with the sense in our heart that this God, the creator, the almighty, is my Father.

And that's the Holy Spirit's work in me. And you see the assurance that gives me in drawing near to God that he's my Father. But if I grieve the Holy Spirit by sin, an unrepented sin, I grieve him.

Then his work of that enabling me to say, Abba, Father, is affected. And so, assurance may be weaker, may be lesser.

Do you remember when David sinned grievously again and unrepented for some long period there, at least nine months till the baby was born, the illegitimate child through Bathsheba.

[17 : 19] When he repents, he doesn't say, restore unto me my salvation. We don't lose our salvation when we sin. But he does pray, restore unto me what?

The joy of my salvation. That joyful sense and assurance of salvation. But that was damaged by David's fall.

You can read Psalm 32 and Psalm 38 and see he wasn't basking in the sunshine of God's smile upon him and God's approval.

He was, his conscience was heavy and raking him over the coals. But when he repents, he asks for that joy, that assurance, that peace that comes from walking with God without sin in between to be restored to him.

There are degrees of assurance of salvation in the Christian life and indeed are grievous and unrepentant of sins can damage our assurance.

[18 : 31] Hope is a grace that may have increases and decreases. We can have more hope and less hope. Paul prays in Romans 15, 13 that the believers in Rome may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

So there's, you can have more hope than what you have now. You can have more assurance than what you have now. And that's why we're called upon to make our calling and election sure. Now some practical lessons on this point, the fact that there are degrees, is just that assurance is not an all or nothing matter then.

Every Christian has some and every Christian may have more. Secondly, you're not doomed then to your present degree of assurance or lack of it.

you may grow in grace and therefore in assurance. Different Christians have different paths and stories about coming to assurance of salvation.

When we interview folks for baptism and membership and hear their testimony we'll often ask them do you have a strong assurance of salvation?

[19 : 45] Yes or no? Tell us something about it. I struggled for a long time really wondering if I was saved and it's interesting to hear. Some the very moment upon believing know they've passed from death into life.

Everything just seems like a new world to them and they had assurance from the moment of believing. Strong assurance. And others can labor long and hard.

Truly saved. Saving faith. faith. But not that settled sure assurance that Jesus is mine and I am his. And eternal life is settled. And it may take a long time. Especially those who grew up in Christian homes and always lived a disciplined and outward moral life.

and they weren't in the gutter and then God saved them and obviously transformed them in ways that are not true of the person growing up in the Christian home where they were sheltered and didn't run headlong into the world in the same way.

[20 : 58] It's perhaps harder for them to know. Am I truly a child of God or is this just parental upbringing? Is this the life of God in my soul or just my following in the ways of my parents?

Well, again, there can be different ways of coming to a settled full assurance of faith and there are different degrees of faith.

Now, before we come to the last point on assurance of salvation, are there any questions on the point that we just covered or anything said before that?

Any questions to this point? Comments? Testimonies on assurance of salvation? How many of you would say that from the moment I trusted in Jesus I had a settled assurance and granted I've sinned every day since then I know that I'm not what I should be I'm not what I want to be but I know and I've known ever since then that my eternal salvation is settled.

How many of you have had that kind of a testimony? Okay. Not a few. How many of you would say that you went for protracted periods of time struggling before you came to an assurance of salvation?

[22 : 33] Okay. Maybe more. Obviously more I would say. Waldron said that for him he was in the latter group as well.

That he grew up in a church setting where salvation was seen to be man's work. That God had done everything he's ever going to do for all mankind and now it's just up to man.

And man has the ability to save himself by trusting in Jesus and so on. And he struggled for a long time. He grew up in a Christian home and he didn't know for sure that he was a Christian. He had some early profession as early as age three and he wondered am I truly a child of God or not? But for him part of it was just understanding what the Bible teaches about salvation. Salvation is a work of God. And the fact is that when God saves somebody he changes them and he makes them new creatures and things do become new.

[23:50] One of the things that Waldron says when someone struggles with salvation check them on the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ alone. If there's not a clear understanding of the gospel then we shouldn't be surprised if their assurance of salvation is shaky.

But you see the doctrine of justification by faith alone means that at the moment that we place faith in Jesus Christ all the righteousness of Jesus covers us.

All of our sins past present future are under the blood of Christ forgiven and all of his righteousness is mine here and now. You see there's a finished work of Christ that is mine.

It's not waiting to be done as it were but it's done. It's over. He suffered all the punishment that I should have suffered and I rest in that glorious reality.

And so there are reasons why the assurance sometimes the reasons are doctrinal and men can get hung up because they don't understand the doctrine of the new birth.

[25:01] They don't understand the doctrine of justification by faith. And the other thing was that Waldron says we were not taught to examine ourselves.

And to see if we are in the faith. And once I saw that he says my assurance of salvation just grew and it became a settled matter.

We're going to look at that here in a moment as we come then to the fifth point of assurance. And it is this that the marks of grace may be an important help in attaining a prevailing assurance of salvation.

The marks of grace in one's life may be an important help in attaining a prevailing assurance of salvation. Now there are certain marks that a tree is healthy.

If every leaf is brown and withered it's probably not a healthy tree. What's the most certain sign, evidence, mark that a fruit tree is healthy?

[26:08] good fruit. And that's not just an illustration of Waldron, that's an illustration of the Lord Jesus, isn't it? You'll know a tree by its fruit and a good tree brings forth good fruit and a bad tree brings forth bad fruit.

And so just that simple reality teaches us that looking at the evidences of grace can be a very helpful thing in discerning whether or not I'm a Christian.

Has God made this old rotten producing tree a good tree? Well, what's the fruit look like?

That should be a help, a pointer to us. And indeed that's what we find the scriptures saying. So when God's grace works salvation in the soul, it leaves certain marks upon the person's heart and life.

If you see those marks of grace in you, it testifies to the presence of grace. Are the marks of grace there? Then grace is there. The fruit of the Holy Spirit there?

[27:21] Then the Holy Spirit is there. The evidence of salvation there? Then salvation is there.

Acts chapter 11 and verse 23, the church in Jerusalem got the report that God was saving people in Antioch.

Gentiles. And so they sent Barnabas to go check it out. Turn over there to Acts 11 and verse 23. Because when he arrived, he saw something.

Here he comes, he's coming into this new territory where the gospel is just recently gone, and they've got reports that God is saving these Gentiles.

And so here he comes all the way from Jerusalem up to Antioch, and what does he see? Acts 11 and verse 23.

Would someone read that, please? When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose.

[28:25] What did he see, Mark? He saw the grace of God. All right? You're not reading the NIV. Somebody with an NIV read me the verse.

What did he see? When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged him to all remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. And what did he see?

The evidence of the grace of God. Well, which one's true? Well, Marx is more literal. That's what the Bible says in the Greek.

He went and he saw the grace of God. And the NIV is simply saying, well, the grace of God can't be seen. It's an invisible thing. It's spiritual energy in the soul.

You don't see that any more than you see the wind. What do you see? You see the evidence of the wind. And so the NIV is trying to explain to us what the Greek really says.

[29:28] Well, when he got there, he saw the evidence of God's grace. But again, literally, it says he saw the grace of God. In other words, the grace of God, wherever it is, has visible manifestations.

It shows itself. And so Barnabas comes up, are these people really Christians or are they still just pagans? And he's not there very long, but he says, look at that.

Look at that. Look at their lives. Look how they're different. Look at the fruit of the Spirit here. Look at their repentance from sin. Look how they've turned and they're living a new way.

And look at their moral life that was in shambles before. And he saw it and concluded, God has saved them of the truth.

Now, that was a man coming from the outside and looking. But it works the same with ourselves. If we see the evidences of the grace of God, it's a sign that the grace of God is there.

[30:29] And so that can be a way that we grow in assurance. So some may wonder if their faith is genuine or not.

And that's not an unreasonable thing to ask in light of many of the passages of Scripture that say there's a false faith that doesn't save and there is a faith that does save. You read James 2 and you find that there's a faith that doesn't save you.

You read Jesus' words and he talks about a temporary faith that doesn't save you. That they believe for a while. And so those passages make us wonder, do I have the real thing? Do I have faith, the gift of God?

Well, look for the evidence of grace. Turn to 1 John chapter 3. And the whole book of 1 John has these syllogisms or the ways for us to come to an assurance of salvation.

As we said from chapter 5 and verse 12, we see one of the purposes of this book was that it was written, I'm sorry, not 512, but verse 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.

[32:00] So this book is written that we might know, that we might have assurance that eternal life is ours. Well, how does he do that in this book? Look at chapter 3 and verse 14.

We know, there's that word, that's the key word in 1 John, we know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers.

So there's one of the evidences of grace in the heart. It's one of the ways that you can know for sure you're a Christian because we love our brothers.

Not talking about my brother Stan and Tom, just fraternal brothers, but he's talking about the body of Christ. We love other Christians.

We love not just hypothetical other Christians. We love the other Christians in this church as well as outside. We love the brethren.

[33:02] So, here's the syllogism that we can follow from a verse like this. If we love our brothers, John says, then we have passed from death to life.

I do love my brothers. Therefore, I have passed from death to life. You see, how do you use such a verse as this?

In the assurance of our salvation? Now, it must always be remembered in the context of salvation by grace alone and Christ alone by faith alone.

But wherever faith looks to Christ alone to save, the Spirit of God comes in and rehails the life and heart, gives grace so that the evidences are there.

And those marks of grace are marks of genuine spiritual life. So, the whole epistle of 1 John gives us such statements.

[34:05] use them then in noticing the presence of saving grace, true faith. And be careful that you stick to biblical tests.

Someone struggling with assurance may put themselves to this test. Well, if I was a Christian, I wouldn't sin anymore. Something's wrong with that test. It's not a biblical test, is it?

No. In fact, 1 John tells us if we say we have no sin, we're a liar. And the truth isn't in us. No, the test is not do I not sin?

What would be a better test with regard to sin? Do I repent of my sin? What do I do when I do sin? Do I have the spirit of God that convicts me of sin and brings me back to Christ to confess my sin and to enjoy the washing of my conscience and the freedom that it gives to know I'm forgiven by Christ's blood?

That's a mark of grace. Not that I don't sin, but that when I do, I repent. I come back to Christ in repentance and faith, repentance and faith.

[35 : 15] So be sure that the test is a biblical one. Now to help sort through this, Waldron included a chapter, tacked it on at the end of the book to show the difference between counterfeit and genuine faith.

faith. It's the last chapter of his book and he says, how can you know the counterfeit from the real article of faith?

Well, he says this, the fundamental distinction is that true faith is from the heart, false faith is superficial and only surface deep. Romans 10, 9 and 10, if you turn faith is from the heart, the fundamental distinction is that true faith is from the heart.

Romans 10, 9 and 10, familiar words, that if you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. Twice Paul says that faith that saves is heart faith.

[36 : 35] It's believing in your heart, it's believing with your heart. In Jesus' parable of the soils, the second soil that he mentions, there's the hardened path where the gospel comes and the devil snatches it away so it doesn't produce fruit.

The second soil, the gospel seed goes out, it's rocky ground. It means there's a whole shelf of rock underneath the dirt, so the dirt's very shallow, and there's an immediate response to the gospel of joy and gladness and yes, I'm saved, and profession of faith, but as soon as a little persecution because of Jesus and his word comes along, it just withers and dies.

It doesn't last at all. But it was shallow, you see, instead of from the heart. It was just a shallow response to the gospel, and therefore there was no lasting fruit.

True faith is heart faith. The second distinction between counterfeit and genuine faith, true faith is lasting while false faith is often temporary.

Indeed, our confession of faith speaks of temporary faith. faith. And it's due to Jesus' words in the parable of the soils. Turn back to Luke 8 and verse 13.

[37 : 58] Again, it's this rocky soil response. when they hear the word, they give a certain response to it very quickly. They jump on the bandwagon.

They profess Christ. They're baptized. They join the church. They're excited. And then a little trouble for Jesus' sake comes along, and they're off the bandwagon as quick as they got on.

And notice what Jesus says. Someone read Luke 8, 13 that describes these folks. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy.

But these have no root. They believe for a while, and in time testing, all the ways. They believe for a while. They believe for a while.

Let that sink in. They believe. They have faith. But it's for a while. What does that mean?

[39 : 04] It means it's not genuine faith. It's spurious faith. It's counterfeit faith. It's not the real thing. How do you know? Because if it's the real thing, what does it do?

It perseveres. It continues to the end. Not because of us, but because God says that wherever I do a good work, I will continue it until the day of Jesus Christ.

It's Christ who is that person behind the wall. Remember, Christian comes into interpreter's house and he sees a fire burning and sees a man pouring buckets of water on it.

And it douses it, but it keeps coming back and it keeps burning. And he says, what's the meaning of this? He says, well, come around behind. He goes around behind the wall and there he sees a man secretly pouring in oil.

That's the Lord Jesus. That's why faith never goes out. If it's real faith, Jesus keeps feeding it.

Peter, I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail.

[40 : 07] And when you are restored, strengthen your brother. Not if you're restored, when you're restored, because I'm going to keep pouring oil on the fire. So that's the second way to know the

difference.

true faith is lasting while false faith is often temporary. He cites John 6 where Jesus is preaching and a whole group of disciples followed him no more.

Because they said, these are hard sayings. Who can accept them? He turned to his disciples, will you leave me too? And they said, no, no.

To who else could we go? You have the words of eternal life and we believe you are the son of God. So that's true faith versus the temporary faith of the masses that left him.

But he has a word here to say that false faith is not always temporary. It may last all the way through life. People can continue to have their false faith all the way.

[41:06] They don't all just suddenly abandon everything. Abandon Christ, abandon religion, no longer go to church, no longer profess his name. Some people go on professing Christ all the way to their death.

And all the while it's a false faith. Those are the ones that Jesus speaks of in Matthew chapter 7, 21 through 23. The third difference.

True faith is fruitful while false faith is dead. Again, James chapter 2. And then the last distinction. True faith is universal while false faith is partial. What he means by that is true faith does not pick and choose which commands it will obey or which doctrines it will believe, but it has regard for everything that Christ says.

Acts chapter 3 and verse 22 and 23, speaking of that fulfillment of prophecy about the coming prophet that would be like Moses, you must listen to everything he tells you or you will be cut off from his people.

[42:15] Everything. What did Jesus say in the Great Commission? Go into all the world, make disciples of all nations, baptize them, and teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you.

Lo, I am with you always. And that's what we find in John 6. Some of these people, they couldn't handle what Jesus said in John 6. And so they said, that's it for us. We're no longer following you, Jesus.

We like this, this, and this, and this that you say, but we don't like what we heard today. We're out of here. That's a sign of false faith. True faith is universal.

It accepts everything Jesus says, every command, every doctrine that he teaches. Whatever he says, I must believe.

Whatever he says, I must do. Not that they do so perfectly, but that is their desire and aim and sincere endeavor, and that's something they repent of when they fail to do so.

[43:18] So you can know if you're saved, if you have saving faith in contrast to false faith. They have different fruits. They have different things about them. There's a world of difference between genuine faith and a false faith.

So as we come to see the marks of genuine faith, these are there. I've been through troubles, and I didn't chuck the faith when I came to troubles.

I'm continuing in the way. And Peter says that's one of the purposes for suffering, is that it teaches us, and it shows us that our faith is genuine.

Do we have a woodpecker bugging us today? Oh, okay. Yeah. Okay.

Well, sometimes woodpeckers attack, and I've had that before. It kind of sounded like that, and I thought maybe that's what we have. Well, any question or comment?

[44:34] Got time for one, and then we'll conclude. There. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Very much one of the struggles of the Christian in this whole area of assurance is that the devil wants to rob us.

Why do you suppose that is? Well, because assurance is a sanctifying thing. And if we know we're Christians, and we're dead certain of it, well, then when we come and pray, we know God's our Father.

We know he hears us, and we know what he's done for us, and our witness is brighter. We know we're on our way to heaven. Let me tell you what he's done for me. And there's so many fruits of a solid assurance of salvation that the devil doesn't want us having, that he does assault our assurance of salvation.

It's no small reason why he loves to trip us up in sin, to weaken our assurance, because an assured Christian is a dangerous thing for the devil's cause.

Well, let's pray. Thank you, Father, for your word that is true. Keep us from deceiving ourselves.

[45 : 48] give us to have an open, sincere heart as we come before your word. May it search us and try us, and may your precious Holy Spirit dwelling in us convince us from the scriptures, convince us in our hearts that we belong to you.

And if there's any that do not have that assurance, don't let them rest, but help them to make every effort to make their calling and election sure.

And if they find that they're outside of Christ, to run to him today, to not let the gospel rest unanswered by them a moment longer.

Thank you that such is your kindness, that you not only want to save us, but to have us know that we are yours. Help us to revel in it today.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen.