

“Assurance and Faith”
2 Timothy 1:12
(Preached at Trinity, February 20, 2022)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul has been setting forth the argument for pressing on in spite of personal hardship.
Verse 5 – Remember the faith that resides within you
Verse 6 – Remember that God has equipped you for service
Verse 7 – Remember that fear does not come from God – instead He has given us power, and love and discipline.
Verse 8 – Remember the suffering that others have endured, especially the sufferings of our Lord
Verses 9-10 – Remember God's great work of salvation unto which He has called you
2. In **Verse 12** Paul reminds Timothy, “that's why I suffer these things.”
 - A. Keep in mind that Paul was writing this letter from a dark, dirty dungeon, alone and abandoned. Yet Paul writes, “but I am not ashamed” or offended. This is the same word he used in **verse 8**.
 - B. But there's more. How can one be willing to suffer so greatly and still press on? The answer comes in two simple words, “I KNOW.” He says, “I am convinced.” Paul was absolutely persuaded in the work of Christ as his Redeemer. He was absolutely convinced that he had been called into union with Christ. He had absolute assurance.
3. Ultimately, it is the assurance of our salvation that drives us to faithfulness in serving our Savior. The greatest cause of unfaithfulness, or lukewarm Christianity is unbelief. If your religion is only an external profession without any internal reality you will have little compulsion to give yourself for the cause of Christ.
Paul saw his life as a divine appointment – **Verse 11**
4. Paul is speaking with unshakable confidence:
“for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able”
5. I've been directing our attention upon Paul's words, “I know whom . . .”
The more we know Him and commune with Him the greater our confidence will be in the One whom we have believed - “am persuaded that He is able”
6. This morning I want us to consider the other aspect of Paul's statement:
“I know whom I have believed” – πιστεῶ
 - A. Paul isn't saying, “I know what I believe.” It is surely important *what* we believe and there is no doubt Paul knew *what* he believed. He wrote the majority of the New Testament. To say “I know” implies a certain knowledge.
Paul's focus here is upon the object of his faith – the person.
 - B. It is infinitely important in whom we believe. What is the object of our faith?
Paul is expressing his absolute trust in Christ. He is expressing the reality of saving faith. True assurance is based on true faith.

7. I stated before that assurance is not an absolute element of saving faith. In other words, a person may truly believe, and be truly saved and still struggle with doubts. But while saving faith does not guarantee assurance, true assurance is not possible apart from saving faith.
- I. True assurance is based upon a true faith – “I know whom I have believed”
- A. Saving faith is directed upon the object of our faith – “whom I have believed”
1. Salvation is about Christ. Everything is directed towards Him.
Paul wrote:
1 Corinthians 2:2 NAU - "I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."
 2. The one who has believed in Him has discovered the greatest treasure. He is the exalted one, the majestic one, the King of kings.
 3. Paul wrote of the marvelous knowledge of those who believe:
Ephesians 1:18-21 NAU - "*I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might ²⁰ which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come."
- B. Saving faith demands knowledge. This is why Paul writes: “I know whom I have believed.”
1. I pointed out last week that saving faith contains three elements: Notitia, Assensus, Feducia: Knowledge, Assent, and Trust
 - a. Notitia literally refers to a notion or the understanding of an idea. Simply speaking, it refers to knowledge. It describes the content of faith—those things that must be believed. In order to believe there must be an object of belief and content in what we believe. In order to know Christ, there are some things you need to know about Him. You cannot believe upon something or someone of which you know nothing about.
 - b. Assensus carries the idea of assent or agreement. It is a conviction that the content of what you believe is true.
 - c. Feducia refers to a personal trust or reliance. It is resting with confidence upon those truths that are the content of what we believe. Saving faith demands resting upon Christ alone for salvation. Jesus alone is our place of refuge into whom we have fled. Jesus came to die for sinners—He came to die for me. “I know whom I have believed . . .”

2. This faith is directed towards the eternal Christ who is full of excellence and glory.
Romans 11:36 KJV - "For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen."
Hebrews 1:3 NAU - "He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"
3. The Apostle John described seeing the risen Christ.
Revelation 1:14-17 NAU - "His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. ¹⁵ His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice *was* like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶ In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. ¹⁷ When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man."
4. To know Him is to be swept away in His majestic glory. To trust Him is the rest upon the infinite excellence of His person and work.
 John Flavel wrote: "Away with light and low thoughts of Christ. Away with formal, irreverent, and careless frames in praying, hearing, yea, in conversing and speaking of Christ. Away with all deadness and drowsiness in duties, for he is a great King. Oh that you did but know what a glorious Lord you worship and serve, who makes the very place of His feet glorious wherever He comes."¹

II. Saving faith is supernatural. It is a work of God's Sovereign Spirit.

- A. Part of the problem of evaluating Assurance is the problem of presumption – believing you possess eternal life when it is not a reality.
 1. We are plagued by a low view of Christianity. Too many equate Christianity with church attendance. I've heard people declare with joy, "So and so has started attending church again" as if attending church assures that all is well with their soul. That is a false assurance.
 2. We want so badly to believe our departed loved ones are in heaven we bend the demands of the Gospel rather than maintain the purity of Gospel honesty.
 3. Many confuse presumption with assurance. Since they feel that all is well with their soul it must be so. It can be most dangerous.
 4. It demands serious evaluation. Assurance demands self-examination. The necessity of self-examination has abundant Scriptural support.
2 Peter 1:10 NAU - "Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you . . ."
2 Corinthians 13:5 NAU - "Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?"

¹ Flavel, John, *The Fountain of Life*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), pages 514-515.

- B. We are not looking for the graces to be fully developed – this will never occur in this life. But the graces are there, none the less.
1. We are examining our highest desires – we are examining the direction of our life. Our greatest pursuit. We are examining the evidence that we have been born again—our attitudes, our appetites, our heart.
 - a. The lost man is in love with his sin.
John 3:19 NAU - "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."
 - b. The person of faith hates his sin. A person flees from that which he hates.
 2. Our consciences are sensitive to that which offends God
We do not excuse our sin or gloss over it.
- C. Saving faith is demonstrated by a change of heart, mind, and spirit and is always validated by observable fruit.
1. The Parable of the Sower describes four different classes of those who hear the Word of God – three which bear no fruit and one which does.
 - a. In one the Devil snatches away the good seed out of the heart.
 - b. In another they believe for a while but in time of temptation fall away.
 - c. In a third they are choked with the cares and riches of this world.
 - d. Then there are the “good ground” hearers. How did Jesus describe them? They bore fruit.
 2. Conversion demands a transforming work of the Spirit
 - a. There will always be evidence.
 - b. **Samuel Rutherford (1637) –**
“You may put a difference betwixt you and reprobates if you have these marks: If you prize Christ and His truth so as you will sell all and buy Him, and suffer for it. If the love of Christ keeps you back from sinning more than the law or fear of hell does. If you be humble, and deny your own will, wit, credit, case, honour, the world, and the vanity and glory of it. Your profession must not be barren and void of good works. You must in all things aim at God’s honour; you must eat, sleep, buy, sell, sit, stand, speak, pray, read, and hear the Word with a heart purpose that God may be honoured. Acquaint yourself with daily praying; commit all your ways and actions to God by prayer, supplication and thanksgiving; and count not much for being mocked, for Christ Jesus was mocked before you.”²

² Pink, Arthur, W., *Studies in Saving Faith*, (Reprinted: Petersburg: Pilgrim Brethren Press, 1990), pages 132-133.

III. The more we know Him and commune with Him the greater our confidence will be in the One whom we have believed. Jesus Christ is our full confidence.

2 Timothy 1:12 NAU - "I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day."

A. This was demonstrated in the confession of Peter

1. Peter declared, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."
2. Jesus answered, "flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven"
3. This has been revealed to us. Our only hope rests in Christ – there is no hope in any other.

John 6:66-69 NAU - "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. ⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."

B. We rest upon and find great comfort in our union with Him.

Romans 6:4-5 NAU - "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection,"

1. This confidence in the sufficiency of His work upon the cross and of our union with Christ gives us boldness before the throne of God. It is the chief and highest ground of our assurance.
2. The Words of Charles Wesley –
 "No condemnation now I dread; Jesus and all in him is mine!
 Alive in him, my living Head, and clothed in righteousness divine, bold I approach th'eternal throne, and claim the crown, through Christ my own."

Conclusion.

1. Paul was in the worst of conditions and he had little hope of escaping execution. Yet, he had no regrets in giving his life in service to Christ. His confidence was in the promises of the Gospel.

2. Saving faith is believing and trusting in the unseen.

Hebrews 11:1 NAU - "Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Herein lies our problem

A. Saving faith rests upon the unseen. The Holy Spirit takes the unseen and gives it substance. He gives us eyes to see. The eyes of faith.

Jesus said to Thomas:

John 20:29 NAU - "Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed *are* they who did not see, and *yet* believed."

B. But there are many hindrances to our spiritual sight. We'll see more of this next week.

3. It demands much prayer and a constant dependance upon the Christ of our salvation.
We pray, "Oh Lord I love You. Help me to love you more."
1 Peter 1:8-9 NAU - "and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls."
4. We cannot see Christ, yet by faith we know Him and have come to love Him.
We trust Him and know He will never fail.