

Dear congregation,

Please bring this sheet with you to this evening's sermon. It will assist you greatly, I believe, as I bring to you what God's Word says on how believers may experience and grow in a well-grounded assurance of their salvation. May God bless His Word today. Warmly, Pastor Beebe

WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH

Chapter 18

1. Although hypocrites and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes, and carnal presumptions of being in the favour of God, and estate of salvation; which hope of theirs shall perish: yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before Him, may, in this life, be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.

2. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God: which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.

3. This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto. And therefore it is the duty of everyone to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure; that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance: so far is it from inclining men to looseness.

4. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin, which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of His countenance, suffering even such as fear Him to walk in darkness and to have no light: yet are they never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart, and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may, in due time, be revived; and by the which, in the mean time, they are supported from utter despair.

Three Kinds of Assurance	Holy Scripture	Heidelberg Catechism (1563)	Canons of Dort (1619)	Westminster Confession (1647)
Primary Ground: The Promises of the Gospel	"For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. 1:20).	"All things promised us in the gospel" (Q. 22).	"Assurance... springs from faith in God's promises, which He has most abundantly revealed in His Word for our comfort... (V, 10).	"... the divine truth of the promises of salvation..." (18.2).
Secondary Ground #1: Inward Evidences or Fruits of Saving Grace	"And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (1 John 2:3).	"We must still do good works... that everyone may be assured in himself of his faith by the fruits thereof" (Q. 86).	"Assurance... springs from a serious and holy desire to preserve a good conscience and to perform good works..." (V, 10; cf. 1, 12; V, error 5)	"... the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made..." (18.2).
Secondary Ground #2: The Testimony of the Holy Spirit	"Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:15b-16).	"By His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life" (Q. 1).	"Assurance... springs from the testimony of the Holy Spirit witnessing with our Spirit that we are children and heirs of God..." (V, 10).	"... the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God..." (18.2).

4th kind = rejection of love of God