

have assurance of faith, circumstances don't control you or upset you, because then you always see the larger picture and you know you are in His hands! What a way to live and die, trusting Christ fully. "Blessed assurance" as the hymn expresses it, leads to "perfect submission, perfect delight". Yes, "Perfect submission, all is at rest, I in my Saviour am happy and blest; Watching and waiting, looking above, filled with His goodness, lost in His love. This is my story, this is my song, praising my Saviour all the day long."

This is the worth of assurance that Paul shows us, and not only is it such a blessing in helping a person rise above all circumstances but by means of it you also bring so much more praise and glory to God in all circumstances. The assured believer is the praising believer, pointing to God at all times. Having assurance of faith makes a person to be so much more an encourager to others in the gospel way. A Christian who is mostly doubting and in the dark won't shine brightly for Jesus and can even be a discouragement to others in the gospel way, whereas the person knowing Whom he has believed, and glorying in the God of salvation, come what may within him or around him, what an encouragement and help such a person can be! The worth of true faith and of assurance of faith - is there something you would pursue as being of greater worth than this Christian blessing? It is safe and right to say, there can be no greater blessing and you can be of no greater blessing than when knowing and living with true Christian assurance of faith. This blessing is available to all in the same place where Paul found it, namely, with Jesus Christ the Saviour and hearing His voice, and following after Him in accordance with all His Word and will. Will you do so too, by God's grace? The Bible says in Psalm 146:5, "*Happy is he who hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God.*" Listen again next week to learn about the way of true Christian assurance. Amen.



FAITH AND ASSURANCE [1]

We have spoken so far about faith and grace, faith and works, faith and doubts, and now this message is on faith and assurance. The text for this message is II Timothy 1:12b, where Paul states, "*nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.*" This text expresses such assurance of faith and it reflects the blessing of such assurance too. Looking at our text and drawing from it, notice with me in connection with our theme, Faith and Assurance, the words of assurance Paul used and then briefly something of the worth of assurance Paul showed. Then next time, we will consider more the way of assurance Paul knew

Just the words in II Timothy 1:12 can teach us much about faith and assurance of faith. Notice right away what may seem obvious but can be and is all too often forgotten or overlooked. Assurance of faith is only in the way of faith. What does Paul say? "*I know Whom I have believed.*" Assurance of faith is not something that is given apart from faith ever. If you have assurance of faith that you are saved and you will go to heaven but you do not live in faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, your assurance of salvation is plainly false and only deception. You can know without a shadow of a doubt, to live and die without true faith in Christ means to perish forever in your sins. The Bible tells us today is the day of salvation; now is the time to repent and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ. Assurance of faith is in the way of believing the gospel and more and more looking to and reaching out for the God of our salvation as made known in Jesus Christ the Lord.

You need to catch here too exactly Paul's expression or his words reflecting so much assurance of faith. Notice Paul does not say, "I know not what I have believed," but I know Whom I have believed." Paul gained so much assurance of faith when in faith focusing on God Himself as revealed in Christ Jesus and His Word. I so agree with the commentator who wrote, "The statement of II Timothy 1:12 would have lost immeasurably if Paul had said 'what' instead of 'whom'." The Christian faith we are called to believe in, and that Christians trust, is not simply a bunch of true facts and figures nor is it wonderful treasures of some sort, but it is about the living Triune God Who is infinitely glorious and the overflowing fountain of all good, the Creator, Redeemer, and Provider of all true blessings for us now and forevermore!

Hans Overduin, Radio Pastor

August 26, 2007

Publication No.325

BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

Radio Ministry of the FREE REFORMED CHURCHES of North America

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)

Assurance of faith is not about assurance of ourselves but assurance of God in whom you put your trust. The whole verse is totally God-focused. If you want assurance of faith, the way to have it and grow in it is to be God-focused. Get to know Him as He has revealed Himself in His Word and in the Person and work of Jesus Christ especially, and even yes, from the realm of nature. While in difficult circumstances, Paul is neither ashamed nor regretting in the least his trust in God and gospel labours in His service, “for” Paul says, “*I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.*” The text itself suggests Paul’s own self-doubt and weakness, but looking to the Lord, he has great confidence for he knows God and His almighty ability and faithfulness to His promises and to His people who trust in Him.

Looking to the Lord and being God-focused in faith, Paul so came to enjoy great assurance of faith. His strong assurance and confidence in the Lord comes out in several words of the text. When Paul says “*I know Whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him*“, “I know” and “I am persuaded” are in a verb tense meaning, ‘I have come to know and be persuaded and I am continuing all the time to know and be persuaded and convinced that I can have all assurance of faith looking to the Lord.’ Paul isn’t filled with assurance one day and the next having no assurance of faith at all, or hardly at all. No, he lives his Christian life in the way of assurance of faith. Again, the secret to this is that his assurance of faith is not based on his feelings or his circumstances or his mood, but on the object of his faith, God Triune Himself! Is not the Lord God as revealed in Jesus Christ the all powerful, ever faithful, merciful, loving and gracious, holy and righteous God? Can He not be trusted in all things in all ways in all needs and cares for body and soul, in life and death, for time and eternity?

Paul entrusted his whole life and salvation and gospel ministry all in the Lord’s hands, knowing there was no safer and better place to go, and nothing and no one could give so much peace and calm and joy and confidence in God’s ways than God Himself! John Calvin writes about Paul’s words, “If our salvation depended on ourselves, [and it was left to our protection], to how many dangers would it continually be exposed? But now it is well that, having been committed to such a guardian, it is all out of danger.” You see, God is so great and gracious and glorious, nothing of His promises will ever fail with Him, and you and I are safe in the arms of Jesus in life and death, come what may!

Literally the phrase, “*that which I have committed unto Him*”, is in the Greek a noun referring to a deposit. You want to put your deposit in a safe place. Paul sees and knows the greatest deposit of all is having the gospel of Jesus Christ for that is worth infinitely more than all the gold and silver and oil in the whole wide world. But Paul knows well this deposit is

never a matter of our own achievement, but a free gift from God, nor is it a matter of our own keeping ever, but something that always needs to be kept for us by God. Paul’s assurance of faith is grounded on nothing in himself, but everything in God!

Another phrase Paul uses in our text further brings out his strong assurance of faith is, “*against that day*”, which surely refers to the end of his life and the final judgment day. In other words, the apostle is saying here, ‘I know I can always count on the Lord to save and keep me, and I never need to doubt Him, or become despairing before Him, not even when facing execution from Nero and when coming to the point of death and facing an endless conscious eternity and coming to the last Judgment. I am safe and sound in and through Jesus Christ the Lord and trusting Him.’ This Paul knew so well, but notice from the words of the text, his assurance of faith had nothing to do with himself but everything to do with God. He knew God in Christ is faithful and true. You can’t go wrong putting your hope and trust in Him, whereas you only always go wrong looking to and depending on yourself somehow, someday. We are more than conquerors only always through Christ Jesus the Lord, as Paul also states in Romans 8:37 and what follows. Only in and through Christ the Saviour can we be persuaded that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, the once crucified and now risen and ever exalted Saviour of sinners.

What beautiful, bountiful, blessed assurance of faith we hear in Romans 8, but also very much in our text, II Timothy 1:12. “*...nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against [until] that day.*” Paul says, “I know” in the sense of, ‘I am personally acquainted with Him, coming to the Lord and calling out to Him in repentance and faith, and love and devotion every day again and drawing from Him as a poor and needy sinner, even so, I know and keep knowing Whom I have believed’. It is clear from just looking at the words of Paul in our text that assurance of faith comes in the way of faith in Christ. It is found and gained in the Object, never in the subjects of faith, people such as you and me, or Paul and Timothy. And from Paul’s words we learn considering the Object of faith there is so much reason for every believer to have such assurance of faith too. No believer needs to live in continual doubt and lack of assurance of faith, and certainly God’s revealed will is that what Paul says in our text is something all who trust and follow Him will confess and know too. Is what Paul says in II Timothy 1:12 also your prayer and testimony?

Just think with me here, having looked at the words of assurance Paul used and at something of the worth of assurance of faith that Paul showed. Think of Paul being so comforted and content in his dismal circumstances. He was in a dungeon in Rome and on death row. Yet He gloried in the gospel and had so much joy and peace and hope. When you