

“Assurance and Knowledge”
2 Timothy 1:12
(Preached at Trinity, February 13, 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. As I've pointed out, Timothy was enduring great conflict in his labors at Ephesus. Paul has been setting forth the arguments why he must press on despite 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 a sound mind
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. And remember, the same power by which you are saved is the same power that will keep you and sustain you.
2. In **Verse 12** Paul reminded Timothy that it was the knowledge of God's great work of saving grace kept him pressing on. He is saying, "that's why I suffer these things." Paul says in the face of all of his suffering he had never been disappointed, never offended, "but I am not ashamed."
3. Paul knew the doctrines of God's sovereign grace. In **Verse 9** he reminded Timothy that God has "saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity."
For Paul, this was not some statement of theoretical doctrine. It wasn't mere religion. No! For Paul it was far more. He had met a person and had an intimate relationship with Him. Paul was convinced in the power and sufficiency of that relationship. Paul says, "I know Him, and I am absolutely convinced of His sufficiency."
4. Paul had an unfailing assurance of his salvation, of the surety of his relationship with Christ. "I know whom I have believed. . ."
This knowledge kept Paul pressing on through all of the suffering he endured. He was never offended at the trials because he had his eyes fixed upon his Savior.
5. 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. It is religion void of Christ. Without the assurance of your relationship with Christ you will have little compulsion to give yourself for the cause of Christ. You'll always find more important things to do.
6. If you have confidence that the most powerful being in the universe has called you and placed you in His kingdom then you will have no problem serving Him. And if you are persuaded that He will keep all that you have entrusted to Him, you will not be ashamed to even die for Him.

7. The question is, do you know whom you have believed? Do you have confidence in your salvation? Last week I began a mini-series on this important doctrine of Assurance.
8. Last week I set before you some preliminary points by way of introduction.
 - A. As with every doctrine, we must be Scripturally balanced. We need preaching and teaching that stresses both the free unmerited justifying grace of God *And* the transforming work of God's Spirit.
 - B. A second preliminary consideration is the difference between assurance and presumption. Many people just presume all is well with their soul without any biblical basis for this confidence. Presumption is based upon blind ignorance.
 - C. A third preliminary matter is although assurance is of great importance, it is not an essential element of genuine faith. A true believer can struggle with doubts and insecurity.
 - D. Finally, we need to understand that true assurance is available to every believer. In fact, God wants us to have assurance. The Scriptures give ample grounds for assurance.

We will now begin to examine the matter of Biblical Assurance

- I. True assurance is based upon a true knowledge - "I Know Whom I have believed"

The word "Know" is from the Greek word, οἶδα

It literally means to perceive, discern, or understand with confidence.

 - A. The knowledge of assurance has a particular object in focus.
 1. It is based upon a proper knowledge of Jesus Christ - "I know Whom . . ."

Philippians 3:10-11 NAU - "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."
 2. This knowledge contains both a personal and an intellectual element.
 - B. Our knowledge of Christ has an intellectual aspect.
 1. The Reformers described three elements of saving faith. We'll look more at this next week. But I want us to consider the first element. Notitia.
 - 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 we 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.
 2. Our intellectual knowledge has many facets.
 - a. A person doesn't have to be a theologian to be a Christian. You don't have to have a full knowledge of the body of Christian doctrine.

- b. There are some things that are essential for you to know about Christ in order for you to be saved—some things which must be believed.
- c. We must know and comprehend His work as Savior.
- This demands comprehending and acknowledging your sin and your just condemnation before God. You are guilty and subject to all of the penalties levied by Holy God.
 - Of course, this also demands knowing something of God’s standard—His Law. What have you done that has made you guilty?
 - Then you must understand the work of Christ as our Redeemer. His birth, His life lived in perfect conformity to God’s Law, His death on the cross as our substitute.
 - Salvation demands resting upon Christ alone as Lord and Savior—as fully sufficient to satisfy God’s divine justice.
- d. Paul is saying, “I know the one upon whom I have believed.”
3. These are some very basic elements that must be known in order for a person to believe. Mere knowledge alone can puff up and give us a false confidence. But true saving faith cannot be void of knowledge.
- a. It is also true that more we know *about* Jesus, the stronger our relationship with Him will be and the greater our assurance. The Bible describes growing in grace and knowledge.
2 Peter 3:18 NAU - "but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity."
- b. We must grow our understanding of the incarnation – “I know Whom . . .
The nature of His life – God’s Law obeyed.
The nature of His death – our substitute, reconciliation.
The nature of His resurrection – Christ’s work validated.
- c. We grow in our understanding of His offices as Mediator
He is Prophet – He has become for us the Living Word
He is Priest – Our Savior, our intercessor, our Mediator
He is King – He rules His kingdom with absolute sovereignty
We can be confident that He WILL accomplish His purpose.
He HAS defeated Satan, Death, and Hell. He WILL save His own
“I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able”
- C. If your knowledge of Christ is only on the intellectual level, no matter how accurate, no matter how detailed, you are still in your sin. You are lost. You have no grounds for assurance.
1. When Paul says, “I know Whom I have believed” he is talking about a relationship.
 2. We call this a “saving knowledge of Christ.” It is experiential or experimental Christianity.

II. Experiential knowledge is essential to saving faith

A. This is essential to “fiducia”

1. We must have a personal trust, a full confidence in the Savior, Jesus Christ
2. Paul described the value of this knowledge

Philippians 3:8-11 NAU - "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."

3. Jesus described the necessity of this knowledge which must be shared between the Saviour and His people

Matthew 7:21-23 NAU - "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. ²² "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness."

4. The presence of this relationship increases our confidence before Christ.

B. This experiential knowledge is fixed upon the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit – it includes several key elements:

1. The knowledge that we are the children of God - this assurance is imparted by the Holy Spirit

Romans 8:16 NAU - "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,"

2. 1689 Confession – “This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith founded . . . on the testimony of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God; and, as a fruit thereof, keeping the heart both humble and holy.”

3. It is a knowledge that embraces the person of Christ. It is an intimate relationship. The more we learn about the perfection of His being and the excellence of His work, the greater our confidence in Him as our Savior.

4. This knowledge involves the endless supply of the Holy Spirit who continually points the Christian to Christ.

John 14:13-16 NAU - "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*. ¹⁵ "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. ¹⁶ "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;"

John 14:26 NAU - "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

- C. To know Him is to grow in our knowledge of His love for us.
1. It is an infallible love
Romans 8:35 - "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?"
 2. The more we learn of this love the more we will grow in peace and assurance before Him. This was Paul's prayer for the church
Ephesians 3:19 NAU - "and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God."
 3. We must admit that this is a paradox – we must know that which cannot be known – it surpasses knowledge.
Our intellectual knowledge of Christ always returns to a personal, spiritual level. I know Him and His particular, infinite love for me.
- D. The more we know Him personally and intellectually the more we will respond in communion with Him in prayer – prayer increases the assurance of our relationship with Him.
1. We find ourselves drawn and strengthened even in our weakness
Romans 8:26 NAU - "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;"
 2. We are reminded of our privilege as children
Romans 8:15 – "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

Conclusion:

1. The Christian knows the Savior – "I know whom I have believed"
2. He is able, sufficient. He alone is able to save His people. He is able to preserve them until time slips away into eternity.
3. I know whom I have believed.