

ASSURANCE

EPHESIANS 1:13 • TV141A

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, APRIL 5TH, 1981

By
HENRY T. MAHAN

Transcribed, edited and published
JULY 25TH, 2014

HENRY T. MAHAN TAPE LIBRARY
Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
Pikeville, KY 41501

Ephesians 1:13

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.”

I want you to open your Bible today to the book of **Ephesians, chapter 1**. I will be reading and speaking from **verse 13**.

Our subject today is: **“ASSURANCE.”** I want to bring you a message on **“ASSURANCE.”**

As I read this verse of Scripture from **Ephesians 1:13**; I want you to remember and underscore four words. Now, let's look at it together in **Ephesians 1:13**:

“In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation in whom also after you believed you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.”

There are four words that we are going to be dealing with in this message: *“you trusted after you heard the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and after you believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.”*

ASSURANCE

EPHESIANS 1:13 • HENRY T. MAHAN

My friend, there are and have been believers who are blessed with a great assurance and confidence of their interest in Christ.

In the Scriptures we read about Job who said; *“I know that my redeemer liveth, he shall stand on this earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet I myself, in the flesh, will see the Lord.”* Job had a strong assurance of his interest in Gods saving grace. *“I know that my redeemer liveth.”*

Then, the last word that king David spoke were these, it says: *“these are the last words of David, the son of Jesse, the sweet psalmist of Israel. God hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, although it be not so with my house. Yet, he hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and is sure; this is all my salvation and all my desire.”* Again he said: *“The Lord is my shepherd.”* So, David had that kind of assurance. He had that confidence of a saving interest in God’s grace through Jesus Christ.

Then John, the apostle John, said: *“we know, we know.”* This is one of the key words of the first epistle of John; *“we know; that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.”* So, you can go through the Scriptures and you will find many people who have a strong confidence and a strong assurance of their personal interest in the Lord Jesus Christ. You will meet people today and you’ve met people in the past who said, “I know that my redeemer liveth. The Lord is my shepherd. God has redeemed me; I’m his child.”

But, there are some sincere believers, some people who love Christ. There are some people who are sincere believers who at times have a strong assurance of their interest in Christ and at other times they are filled with many doubts and many fears concerning their relationship with the Son of God.

I will tell you one of the best examples of that is John Newton, the great preacher and hymn writer. John Newton wrote:

**“Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved, that saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost
But now I’m found
I was blind but now I see.”**

That’s assurance; that is confidence. But yet, Newton wrote another hymn that is not nearly so popular, not nearly so famous but an expression of his own inner feelings, just as much as this Amazing Grace. He also wrote the hymn that goes like this:

**“Tis a point I long to know
And often it gives me anxious thought,
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I his or am I not?”**

ASSURANCE

EPHESIANS 1:13 • HENRY T. MAHAN

So, there's a man who had at times great and strong confidence of his interest, his saving interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, then at other times he struggled with this matter of assurance. He struggled with this matter of confidence.

So, I want to direct my message today, primarily, to those who like Newton, at times they have a strong confidence of their saving interest in Christ and at other times they are not quite so sure. At other times they find their hearts full of fears and doubts about their relationship with the Lord.

I think that our trouble is caused by one of four things. I think this is what causes our doubts and fears:

First of all: We compare ourselves with giants in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, we will study the life of a man like Abraham and we say: "well, I can't duplicate his feats. I can't duplicate his feats of faith so I must not be a son of God."

Or, we look at the life of a man like the apostle Peter or Paul or James, John, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah or Elijah, any of those great giants in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ and we say;

"Well, I just can't measure up to those fellows; I certainly can't come up to their great feats and works of faith, so I must not be a child of God." So, that is one of our problems, we compare ourselves with the giants in the Word of God and we just don't measure up.

Secondly: I will tell you another problem! Many of you read biographies. You have read the biography of George Whitfield, his memoirs, his diary, also his biography. You read the biography of a man like Luther, or perhaps, John Knots, David Brainerd, or one of these great men and not realizing that the authors of these books are not going to show the weaknesses of their heroes.

They are not going to show you the weaknesses of these great men; they are going to show you only their strong points and when you read these biography's you will get the opinion that these fellows prayed all the time, or they preached all the time, or they were in some kind of great spiritual revival all the time.

You never see them at their weak points. You never see them at their low points. You never see them when they are not praying or not preaching or not witnessing or not on the mountain, because the men who write the biographies don't want to picture these low points.

And so, we read these biographies and we feel "well, I'm not like that. I don't get up every morning at 4:00 and pray. I don't preach somewhere five and six times a day and I don't walk with God constantly in a frame of mind that's always rejoicing, so I must not be saved."

Well, that's wrong to look at it that way because you know that the Word of God, unlike the biographies of men, the Word of God points out the weaknesses of God's children. The Word of God shows us the weaknesses of Moses, and the weaknesses of David, and the weaknesses of Abraham and all of these other men.

ASSURANCE

EPHESIANS 1:13 • HENRY T. MAHAN

But, your biographies don't do that; they make great heroes of all of these believers and you would think that they would have never had a doubt, never had a fear, never had a failure, never had a low point and never did commit a sin.

Thirdly: Then, another problem we have is this: We look for a full harvest of fruit on a very young tree! The Lord saves us. We've been saved for a week or a month or six months or a year and we expect a full harvest of fruit on a tree that is a very young tree,

If you go out in your backyard and plant an apple tree, it will be three or four years before you will have any real fruit on that tree. You will have some blossoms and you will have some little nubs but in a few years, if you will be patient, you will have some fruit.

Now, when a person comes to know the Lord Jesus Christ, he's just a babe. He's just a young tree; he's just a young branch. You don't expect to find a full harvest of fruit on a brand new tree or even one that is one year old or two years old, that person must grow.

You will see the fruit in the bloom or in the bud or in the small nubbin and give it a little time by God's grace and the presence of God's spirit and you will see some fruit. You will see a manifestation of good fruit for the glory of God.

There are reasons for the times we have great assurance. We are in the worship services and we are reading our Bibles, we are singing, we are witnessing, we are praying and we are fellowshiping with other believers and we just feel on the mountain top, we feel that God is so good and God is so near, and God is so gracious, and we can say, "*I know that my redeemer liveth*" and then the next day we are down in the valley, in despondency and despair and doubts and fears, what happens?

Fourthly: One of the main reasons is this; perhaps our greatest fault is that we look for assurance and confidence somewhere other than the Word of God, somewhere other or besides the Word of Truth.

Let me make a statement here; (you listen carefully to it) the Word of God, actually, the Word of God is our only infallible and certain foundation of assurance, the Word of God is.

Now, I know that feeling has a place. Somebody says: "Well, I feel saved." Well, tomorrow you may not feel saved.

Or experience! We have a great experience; we experience the closeness of our Lord and the closeness of His spirit and the closeness of ourselves and the nearness of ourselves to Him, but tomorrow that experience may not be there. But, the Word of God is the same, like Christ, "*the same yesterday, today, and forever.*"

And God said: "*Heaven and earth shall pass away but not one jot or one tittle shall pass from my Word until every bit of it is fulfilled.*" His Word never changes. His Word is actually, the only true, infallible, certain, undeniable foundation or rock of assurance.

ASSURANCE

EPHESIANS 1:13 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Experience will fail you, feelings will fail you, and even works shall fail, although they have their place. But, true assurance and true confidence is born from a knowledge of and an interest in and a confidence in the Word of God. God said it; therefore, I believe it. God cannot lie!

So, my assurance; my salvation is in Christ. I'm redeemed because "*he loved me and gave himself for me.*" I'm redeemed because He went to the cross and bore my sins in His body on the tree and died that I may live.

And at this moment, He is my High Priest and Mediator, interceding on my behalf in the presence of God, pleading not my works, but His wounds, not my deeds but His deeds.

How do I know that God will forgive sin? The stars won't tell me that, the moon and the sun and the trees won't tell me that. Some human may tell me that but I can't have confidence in the flesh.

How do I know that God almighty, the eternal, sovereign, holy God, will forgive sin? He says so in his Word. Now, that is my confidence.

How do I know that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour? How do I know that "*there's none other name under heaven given among men, whereby, we must be saved? Another foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Christ the Lord.*" His blood is effectual and sufficient to the redemption of all who trust Him.

How do I know that, because somebody said it? Well, they may be lying. No, I know it because God's Word declares it: "*he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.*" Now, that's my confidence and that's my assurance; that's the foundation of my faith.

I know that all who believe on Jesus Christ are saved because God told me that in His Word. I know that "*if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" How do I know that? There's just one source of information, God's holy Word.

My friend; I know that the dead shall rise and I know that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. I know that "*we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

And I know all of these things because God has declared it in his Word; that's the foundation of faith, not the fruit; that's the foundation, that's the root of faith, the Word of God.

Let's put first things first:

First of all: There's the root and then there's the fruit! The root of grace is faith in Jesus Christ, faith in His Word and the fruit of grace is works, healing, assurance and confidence.

Let's look back at our text and let's just follow this text as the Holy Spirit enables us to develop it: I pray that God will make it applicable to your heart. I sincerely pray that God will take His Word and use it for His glory and for your good.

Let's see if we can learn something, four words. Do you remember I told you to underscore these words?

The Apostle Paul said: "*You heard the word of truth,*" you heard it." Then he said: "*You believed the gospel.*" Then he said: "*You trusted the Lord Jesus.*" Then he said: "*You were sealed with that Holy spirit of promise.*"

Now, let's take them one at a time:

First of all: Paul said: "*You heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation*"

Here's another statement that I want you to consider. I want you to think about this. Let me tell you what it is: the preaching of the Gospel, the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not just preaching about the Gospel, the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is a soul-saving ordinance.

Baptism is not a soul-saving ordinance. Nobody is saved by the act of baptism. Sacraments, communion, and the Lord's Table; they are not soul-saving ordinances. Easter, Christmas, or any other church traditional holiday is not a soul-saving ordinance; it cannot save your soul.

My friend, the preaching of the Gospel is a soul-saving ordinance. How do I know that? Why do I say that? It's because Paul said in **Romans 1:16**: "*the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.*"

Do you see how important this thing is of preaching the Gospel? Somebody writes in and says: "Why don't you have more music on your program?" Well, let me tell you something friend: I just have a short time with you and we must devote whatever time we have to the preaching of the Gospel.

Somebody says: "Why don't you do this, that, and the other on your program?" We must devote every moment we have to the preaching of the Gospel, for the preaching of the Gospel is the soul-saving ordinance.

Listen to this: "*God hath chosen by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe,*" not the foolishness of singing, not the foolishness of visual aids, not the foolishness of chalk artists, not the foolishness of music.

"*God hath chosen by the foolishness of preaching,*" not the preaching of foolishness, but the foolishness of preaching. "*It's foolishness to them that perish. It's the wisdom of God to those who believe.*"

But, "*God hath chosen by the preaching of the gospel to save them that believe.*" What I am doing is a soul-saving ordinance. Our Lord sent His disciples out and he said: "*you go preach the gospel to every creature.*"

ASSURANCE

EPHESIANS 1:13 • HENRY T. MAHAN

“He that believeth (that gospel) and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned.” Do you hear what I am saying: *“faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God?”*

James says: *“Of his own will begat he us with the Word of truth.”* Paul says, *“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved but how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed and how shall they believe in him of whom they haven’t heard and how shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they preach unless they be sent?”*

I know that in 1981 on most television programs, radio programs, and church programs; the preaching has been relegated to the scrapheap. Preaching has been turned into a time of entertainment.

It’s been turned over to a group of comedians. It’s been turned over to the healers and to all of these other things. Let me tell you this: the true prophet of God is still preaching the Gospel. He’s still lifting up the Lord Jesus Christ who said: *“If I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”*

In every age God has had His preachers. In every age God has had men who were faithful to the preaching of the Gospel: *“Elijah may ascend but his mantle falls on Elisha.”*

Paul may die but Timothy preaches the Gospel. The true preacher of the Gospel of the Word of God has a claim on your attention by the preaching of the Gospel men are saved. Without the preaching of the Gospel men aren’t going to be saved.

They may be religious; they may enjoy religion and they may have a zeal for God but without the preaching of the Gospel and a revelation of the Holy Spirit through the heart of that Gospel, man will not be saved.

What is this Word of truth that you heard? Paul said: *“You heard the Word of truth.”*

First of all: It’s the Word of God that you heard! It’s not human logic. I hear a lot of human logic today, (what it seems to me) they will say. *“This is what tradition says or the philosopher said this.”* I’m not interested in what the philosophers say or what tradition says or what human logic says; I’m interested in the Word of God.

Paul said: *“Timothy; preach the Word.”* I’m not interested in speculation or men’s thoughts; I’m interested in the Word of God. *“It is the word of truth, that you heard, the gospel of Jesus Christ.”*

He said: *“Brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached to you, that you received, which you believed, wherein you stand, by which you are saved: How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures: And that he rose again and ascended to the right hand of God according to the scriptures.”*

Our Gospel is Christ incarnate. The angel said to Joseph: *“Mary will bring forth a son. Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sin. This was written that it might be fulfilled by the prophets, as the prophet said: A virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is God with us.”*

Christ incarnate: that’s the Gospel. Christ’s obedience: *“He was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were born under the law.”*

Christ crucified: *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so, must the Son of man be lifted up that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

Christ is risen: Paul said: *“if he be not raised you are yet in your sins.”* If He be not raised, I am a false witness of God. If He be not raised, those who are asleep in Christ will perish. If He be not risen: *“we are yet in our sins and we are of all men most miserable.”*

But, Christ has risen and then Christ ascended and Christ is interceding. He says: *“Who can condemn me? Christ died, yea rather, is risen again who is ascended and seated at the right hand of God whoever liveth to make intercession for us.”*

My friend; you heard, you heard and *“you better be able to give a reason for the hope that’s in you.”* The only way to give it a reason for the hope that’s in you, if it’s a sure, a certain reason, it’s what does the Word of God say? You heard the Word of truth.

Secondly: The second word is believe!

Now watch this; he said: *“You heard the word, the gospel of your salvation.”* He said: *“Then you believed it.”*

Now, hearing; listen to me, (here is another statement; you weigh it and think about it) hearing is no good except it be received by faith.

Can I make good on that? Turn to **Hebrews 4:2** and listen to this: *“unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them but the gospel preached unto them did not profit them.”* They heard the Gospel too, just as you heard it, but he said *“it didn’t profit them.”* Why, *“not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.”*

So, hearing is no good if you don’t have faith. Hearing won’t accomplish a thing if you don’t believe. Hearing will profit you nothing if it’s not mixed with faith. Paul said in **Hebrews 11:6**: *“without faith it’s impossible to please God.”*

Actually, in hearing the Gospel, if it’s not mixed with faith, it will add to your condemnation, *“death upon death,”* Paul calls it. He said: *“To him that knoweth to do his master’s will and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.”*

ASSURANCE

EPHESIANS 1:13 • HENRY T. MAHAN

This faith, this belief, embraces all of the Word of God; not just that which I approve, this is where so many people fail. “Well, I believe the Word of God, that is the part of which I approve or the part which I understand.”

That’s not faith. Faith embraces all of the Word of God. Faith says: *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God and all scriptures are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness.”*

“Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.” I take all the Word of God by faith. Faith is not sight. We walk not by sight; we walk by faith.

We walk by a heart confident in God’s Word, not part of it, not the part of which we approve or the part that we understand, but we believe all the Word of God, *“knowing that we see in part, we know in part, we prophesy in part: But when that which is perfect is come, we shall know as we have been known.”*

Faith is not judged by its quantity but by its quality. That’s the reason the Centurion said: *“Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”*

So, there you have two words, *“you heard the Word of truth.”* Some of you have never heard it. Some of you have been going to church all of your lives, you have been programmed to death, you’ve never, really never, heard any teaching. You really don’t know anything about the Word of God but some of you have heard the Gospel and you believe Him.

Now, watch the third word *“and you trust him.”*

Well, you say that trust is just another word for faith. You are right, it is. Trust is just another word for belief. You are right and it is but trust implies more than belief and more than faith; it implies a commitment. Trust is a commitment, surrender; listen to Paul:

He said: *“I know whom I have believed and I’m persuaded he is able to keep that which I’ve committed unto him.”* Paul said; *“I heard and I believed and I believed he was able but I committed it to him.”*

Abraham believed God but he still had to go out of his father’s house. Noah believed God but he still had to build an ark. Do you see what I am saying? Moses believed God but he still had to put the blood on the door.

So, you heard the Word, you believed the Word and then by God’s grace, you trusted, you committed it to Christ:

**“My life, my love
I give to thee
Thy Lamb of God
Who died for me.”**

ASSURANCE

EPHESIANS 1:13 • HENRY T. MAHAN

It's faith that justifies the soul before God. It's obedience that justifies your faith before men. "*Show me your faith without your works and I will show you my faith by my works.*"

So, we heard the Gospel and we believed the Gospel and we intelligently, willingly, and consciously, committed, trusted, and surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ. We receive Him!

Now, the fourth word: "*And you were sealed, with the Holy Spirit of promise*"

Now, in hearing, our mind is active and so is my heart: "*with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.*"

In hearing and believing my mind is active. In trusting my mind is active. He said: "*If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord and to believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead thou shalt be saved.*"

"*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*" I'm active in all those things. I heard, I believed, and I trusted by God's grace.

But, in this sealing it doesn't say that you sealed yourself, Paul says: "*you were sealed, you heard, you believed, and you trusted.*" But watch the difference in the expression: "*you were sealed, by whom, the Holy Spirit of promise.*"

But, in this sealing it doesn't say that you sealed yourself, Paul says: "*you were sealed, you heard, you believed, and you trusted.*" But watch the difference in the expression: "*you were sealed by (by whom?) by the Holy Spirit of promise.*"

In this sealing I am passive; it's the work of God's spirit. In faith I do something; I believe. In faith I do something, I will commit myself to Christ; I trust Him. In sealing, I receive something. God sealed me, God almighty sealed me.

"*Salvation is of the Lord.*" It was God who gave us life. It was God who convicted us by His Spirit. It was God who baptized us into the body of Christ. It was God who sealed us by His Spirit.

It was God who taught us by His Spirit and produced the fruit of the Spirit and it is God who keeps us by His power through faith.

He said this: "*I will make a covenant with them, an everlasting covenant. I will not turn away from them to do them good. I will put my fear in their hearts and they won't turn away from me.*" That's what our Lord said; "*I won't turn away from thee and they won't turn away from me.*"

We persevere in faith and we are preserved by the power of God, sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise!