

19. Learning That We Can Be Certain of Eternal Life

In our last topic, we saw that one of our goals, as Christians, should be to help our physical and spiritual children learn what it means to be an overcomer. We help our children understand that we were given the divine nature at the moment we repented of our sin and placed our trust in Christ. We then show our children, by our example, that as a result of having the divine nature, it is our desire to love the Lord and others and be obedient to the Lord. Then, we help them grow and learn to experience victory as they learn to yield more and more frequently to Christ. Today, we will see how to help our children be certain they have been given eternal life.

In 1 John 2:12, we read, “I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.” Here, we see that one of the things spiritual children know is that their sins are forgiven. However, there are many people who have followed Christ for many years that are not certain they have had their sins forgiven. As a result, they are not certain they have eternal life. Such people are basing their beliefs on the opinions of others instead of basing their beliefs on the Word of God. We want to help our physical and spiritual children know what the Word of God says, so, they will base their beliefs on the promises of God.

In 1 John 5:9, we see that one of the things we want our children to understand is the fact that the promises of God are greater than the words of other people. That verse says, “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.” The Father has given us testimony about His Son, because He wants us to be overcomers and experience the victory Christ has made available. In this verse, we see that the Father has testified that Christ is His Son. Because of that witness, we know that all the Father says about Christ is true, and we can place our trust in what the Father has said about the fact that we receive forgiveness of sin and salvation when we place our trust in Christ.

Then, 1 John 5:10 goes on to say, “He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.” In addition to the promises the Father has given us in His Word about forgiveness through Christ, we also have the witness of the Holy Spirit within our lives. Anyone who rejects what the Father has said about forgiveness, through Christ, is actually calling God a liar. That means the person has never received Christ because they have not believed what the Father has said about Christ.

However, it is the desire of the Lord that every person who has placed his or her trust in Christ will know that God has forgiven their sin. That is why 1 John 2:1-2 tells us that the Father is satisfied with the payment that Christ made for our sin. Those verses say, “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” The word “propitiation” means *that which satisfies*. The Father says that He is satisfied with the payment Christ made for our sins, and on that basis, has forgiven us.

As we come to 1 John 5:11-13, we see one of the great results of that forgiveness of our sins. Those verses tell us, “And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.” God gives His testimony to every person who has placed their faith and trust in Christ and the payment He made for their sins. Because our sins are forgiven, God has given us eternal life.

An important thing to notice is that this verse tells us that God has already given us that eternal life. In fact, Ephesians 1:13-14 says, “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Here, we see the fact that we received the Holy Spirit, at the moment of salvation, is the guarantee of the fact that we have been given eternal life. Romans 8:9 says, “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” If we do not have the Holy Spirit, we have never placed our trust in Christ. If we have the Holy Spirit, He is the guarantee of the fact that we have been given eternal life.

Due to a lack of understanding of passages like the passage here, in 1 John 5:11-13, many Christians are still uncertain whether they have eternal life. That is why we want to help our children clearly understand these verses, both for their own lives and so that they can help others understand these verses. Verse 12 says, “He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.” This verse makes it very clear that if we have the Son, we have life. Galatians 2:20 promises us that, as Christians, we have Christ living in our lives, when that verse says, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Since Christ lives in the life of every Christian, every Christian can know that God has already given them eternal life.

Just as verse 12 says that every person who has the Son already has eternal life, that verse also states that every person who does not have the Son does not have eternal life. This is a warning to anyone who might try to depend on something else to give them eternal life. Christ said, in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Christ is the only way to the Father. Christ is the source of all truth. Christ is the source of eternal life. That is why each person must make the choice to repent of their sin and come to the Father by placing their faith in the fact that Christ died for their sin and the Father showed that He was satisfied with the payment by raising Christ from the dead. We need to help our children know how to explain the choice every person must make in order to receive eternal life.

1 John 5:13 says, “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.” In this verse, John said he was writing to those who already believed in the name

of the Son of God. As John neared the conclusion of the book of John, he told why that book was written. John 20:30-31 says, “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” We see that the book of John was written so people would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and receive eternal life. Here, we see that as John nears the conclusion of this book, he said his reason for writing this book was to give all who have believed assurance that they have eternal life.

God wants all Christians to know they have received eternal life. 1 John 4:17-18 says, “Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” Here, we see that, as Christians, the Lord does not want us to have fear as we face the Day of Judgment. Instead, He wants us to have boldness. This will only happen as the fear of judgment is taken away.

As Christians, we will stand at the judgment seat of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” Those who have rejected Christ will be judged for their sins. However, as Christians, our works will be examined to see what works can be rewarded. 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 says that our works will be tested by fire, when those verses say, “Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” The works that are for this earth will be like wood, hay and stubble and will be quickly gone. The works that are for eternity will be purified and will shine in all of their glory.

In Matthew 10:42, we read, “And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.” Here, we see that the Lord will reward even the smallest work that was done in His name. This is why we can stand with boldness before the Lord, because He is going to reward us for our works of service that have eternal value and there will be no judgment for our sins because they have been blotted out and removed. If our physical and spiritual children know they have eternal life, they can look forward to that day with boldness. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your physical and spiritual children understand how they can have boldness when they meet Christ.