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### 1 John 3:19-22 – The Unshakeable Confidence

**1 John 3:19-22:** “We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.”

Confidence before God; how can you have confidence before God?

Psalms 84:11 reads, “For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD gives grace and glory...” I like the last part of this verse, “No good thing does He withhold...” and then it tacks on this, “from those who walk uprightly.”

Who can walk uprightly? The desire is to do the right thing, isn't it? As Romans 7 so aptly puts it, “the things I want to do I don't seem to be able to do; the things I shouldn't do, I seem to do. Wretched man that I am, who will set me free from this?” The fact of the matter is that there's none righteous, no not one. Yet, “no good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.”

There's a desire to have a confidence that God is for us; and the Psalmist will write, “this I know, that God is for me.” Yet, in much of the Psalm, we begin to hear phrases like, “but I know that I'm a sinner”, and “how is it that God will hear me?” In fact, in many of the Psalm, he says, “I don't feel like You're listening. I feel like I'm distant from You.” The fact of the matter is that we all desire to have confidence that God is for us, that not one good thing will He withhold; that the blessings of God are upon us, and that heaven awaits us. To have the confidence of all the blessings of God upon us is not something that is easily attained. I think the thought in some circles is “if we just say it, if we name it, we can claim it, right?” So, you just say it and it's going to happen. Yet, saying it is not enough. There has to be a thing of reality in all of it.

John really deals with that aspect. In fact, one of the things you look at in 1 John 1, he'll use the phrase, “If we say.” So, it's talking about the fact that rhetoric is out there, and people say all kinds of things. They'll say, “I'm a Christian,” “I'm close with God” or “I know I'm going to heaven” and then they go home, and they go, “Am I going to heaven?” Maybe they feel like if they say it, it'll be true. In 1 John 1:6, “If we say that we have fellowship with Him...” That's an interesting point, isn't it? You can say, “Well, I'm close with God.” Really? So, why are you depressed? Isn't that what it says? “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness...”

"I'm confused," "I'm depressed," you're living in an obscurity. Well then, maybe you're not being truthful with yourself. Maybe your thoughts are, "If I just say it...If I go around telling everybody that I'm not a sinner, I'm not a sinner." What, do you think that saying that means that you're not a sinner?

The way that he puts it in verse 8, if you read with me, "If we say that we have no sin," you're just lying to yourself. Your thought is that by saying it, it will make it true. In fact, in verse 10, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar."

Saying things doesn't make it so. I think a lot of times we try to find some type of comfort in the things that we say. So, if we can say it, then, "ok, I'll just say it a thousand times. I'm going to heaven, I'm going to heaven, I'm going to heaven." It doesn't make it so and there's no comfort in it. "I'm not a bad person, I'm not a bad person, I'm not a bad person. Well, then why do I feel so guilty?" The fact of the matter is that just because you say something doesn't mean it's true. He follows through with this in chapter 2, as he wants you to deal with the things that you say. Verse 6 reads this way, "the one who says he abides in Him..." What should you be doing? Well, finish the verse; you should be walking just like He walks. You should be doing the same things that He does. Your life should reflect Christ. When you look in the mirror, you should actually say something like, "That looks like Jesus." I mean, if you say that you abide in Him.

So, all the way through this epistle, John's trying to get us out of the realm of just saying things, and into the realm of the reality of it all. There is something about saying things that will never give you any kind of peace, comfort, or repose in your life at all; but if in fact you walk in truth, that's where the comfort comes from. John is pulling us into that particular realm. He starts off by saying that if you're going to have fellowship, it needs to be real fellowship. Once again, I think the thought in having fellowship with God is that it's kind of this ethereal thing in which we meditate with our hands up at the skies, we're at peace with God; we're at one with God. He goes, get your hands dirty and start ministering to godless people. Get all in; Get your body in the work as well as your spirit. Look, He's either Lord of all, or He's not Lord at all, right? As the song goes. So, fellowship is all in. It's all in, physically, and that's why he starts off, the things that we've heard, we've handled, we've touched with our hands. In other words, we've actually become all in in this; and it's getting involved. He goes on, and says that in order to have real fellowship, there has to be real transparency and real truth. You have to be genuine and real about the fact that you're not perfect, you have problems, and you need a Savior. You just have to come clean with that. It's the coming clean, being truthful, and being transparent that really creates a real fellowship. If when somebody walks in a room, and everybody puts on a façade, and they act like somebody that they're not, can you actually say that there's any fellowship taking place? There's no fellowship at all taking place. So, he begins with that process.

As he goes into chapter 2, he says, "and look, when we talk about righteousness, we have to talk about real righteousness." We go, "I'm a pretty good person." He goes, "No, no, no, righteousness like Jesus." So that righteousness has to be defined by something real,

unchangeable. If you define righteousness in any other terms, it's just fake righteousness. It's just made up. You can't have a sense of confidence in fake, and this is his fundamental point.

He begins to describe the fact that the world is against the Christ, "antichrist," in the passage in chapter 2; and he begins to reveal the differences of the world, and how they perceive. What you'll see is that there is a kind of righteousness in the world, but the righteousness of the world denies the power thereof, as Paul talks about in Timothy. So, the point of the passage is that you can't have any confidence in pseudo-righteousness. So, you can go out and do altruistic things, benevolent things, kind things, generous things, and you go, "I feel better because I won a trophy for being a really nice person." Then you go home, and you see these people committing suicide, and you go, "I thought you were a really nice person, why would you do that?" Because it doesn't bring them comfort; it's not real. It wasn't a real righteousness. There is a righteousness that comes out of the desire to please other people. There is a righteousness that comes out of performance. There is a righteousness that comes out of a kind of religiosity, but the divine righteousness of Jesus in me is that which transforms the life.

Now, you come into chapter 3, and by the time he brings us into chapter 3, the confidence is just oozing out. One phrase that's going to be repeated over and over again is "you know." It is that confidence that we desire, isn't it? In fact, he starts it in chapter 2, but as you go into 1 John 3:2, it reads this way, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know..." The confidence comes when we have real fellowship and walk in real truth; when in fact the righteousness that we have is the righteousness of Christ the confidence begins to come. "We know that when He appears, we will be like Him." We know this. Where does the confidence come from? He has already established what has to take place. In other words, you can't just talk about this stuff; you can't think that just because you say it, it's true. You need to come into the reality of it. If in fact you do, we know.

Watching my father in the state that he's in, I told Connie that I walk in every morning to see if he's breathing. Sometimes in the evening, sometimes in the chair, but to hear him in moments in which he's feeling good enough to sing, he'll start singing songs of heaven to my mother. I can almost feel like he's saying in that, "If I sing enough heaven songs, maybe He will just take me while I'm singing." You need confidence at that time. If you're coming close to the end; we were just singing it in that one song, "when my days are over." When you come to that moment, you need something more than just "you know what I think?" You need something solid; a solid rock. So, he begins to talk about the "I knows" in the passage.

In verse 5, we know why Christ appeared, right? We know. In fact, if you drop on down to verse 14, "We know that we have passed out of death into life." Drop on down to verse 16, "We know love by this." Verse 19, "We will know by this that we are of the truth." What is he talking about? We have a confidence. Where does confidence come from? Well, like I said, he's been building up to this all along; and that confidence becomes very strong within this chapter. We

begin to see the authenticity of the fact that we are literally God's children. "How do I know I'm a child of God?" We begin to see the confidence come out of the passage.

So, we're going to be looking specifically at this. As we've been looking in chapter 3, we've seen the identifiable mark that we have. That is to say, if you look in verse 9, that seed of God that is implanted. Now, what that's talking about is that we have God's nature, His disposition, His sense of priorities, and His values in us. Before you receive Christ as your Lord and Savior, you had your own values; you had your own pursuits, but there is an unction that comes in, the Spirit of God that begins to move in your heart and you begin to desire other things that you never desired before. You begin to find yourself wanting to take on the disposition and the way of thinking of God. That's a different thought process that begins to take place. That's what Scripture calls repentance. You're changing your way of thinking, and the Spirit of God is moving in your heart to do that. We take on the disposition, and we know what God wants and we know and desire the same thing.

In fact, if you back up to verse 5, it reads, "You know that He appeared..." Why? People are wondering, "Why did Jesus appear? Why did God come in the flesh?" "...to take away sins." You see, the world will say, "Well, it's just a Christmas thing that you celebrate. It's an easter thing you celebrate." We know why He came. It was to take away sins; and we now join that pursuit. We want sin out of our lives. Think about it, we go on the same wavelength. We begin to hate sin like He did. We're realizing for what it is; that which is destructive, or as Paul so aptly puts it in Romans 6, "Which of the sins that you practice did you benefit from?" There's none of these things that actually bring you joy and bring you life. It is "the wages of sin is death," right.

So, as we come into the passage, he begins with this identifiable mark, the seed; as it says in verse 9, "No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him." You're a chip off the old block. You can't help it; the Spirit of God is now within you. He goes on and begins to talk about this obvious nature in verses 10-12; that is a nature that practices, actually makes it your business to do the right thing. You know those choices that you have to make, and people say, "Well, you can make more money this way." You don't think that way anymore. You go, "No, what's the right thing to do?" Then, you begin to make your decisions based off of that.

So, as he begins to describe in verse 10, "By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious..." What do you mean? "...Anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God." In other words, what are you doing? What are you practicing? What is your business? What is your pursuit? What is the work or the deeds that you're doing? The point is that we pursue the deeds of righteousness. So, the work or the practice of righteousness is the obvious nature. This is what makes us obvious. Those guys are pursuing money; these guys are pursuing the right thing. It's so clear and very distinguished. So, the stark contrast even comes more in focus if you look in verses 13-15; as he begins to say, "Look, here's the deal: don't marvel when the world hates you." Now, what you're going to see repeated in these verses is the words "hate" and "love"; but it's the stark contrast. So, what does the world do? The world hates, it's

what the world does. They hate this, they hate that; in fact, that's why bad news is so popular. You could never have a news company just report good news. It would be a total flop because people love to hate things. So, the world hates. They're always in this hate mode, but God's people love. Scripture is going to literally describe, as John will go on to say, "God is love." So, if we have God in our hearts, guess what?

So, the way he puts it in verse 13 is,

"Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you."

(1 John 3:14) We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death."

That's actually a general term, "he who does not love," he does not know how to love. Now, we know that the word "love" is clearly described more accurately in 1 Corinthians 13, that is the love of God that we're talking about; not man's perception of love because man's perception of love is really a form of hate because it's really a form of usury. It's exploitation, "I love this." Why? "Because they can do something for me." But the love of God is selfless and sacrificial. That's why he goes on, and he begins to describe that, "We know love by this." It goes on to say in verse 15, "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." His point is that there's a stark contrast between those who are God's children and those who are of the world. It's obvious; it's clear. There's irrefutable proof, if you look in verses 16-18; in which he begins to talk about that which is real, true, selfless, and sacrificial. Once again, his point is that the world will talk about these things, but the true will always do them. So, people can talk about how much they love their family and their church, but the true will always demonstrate it in the things that they do, and he begins to describe that.

Verse 16 reads this way, "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us." Now, stop right there. That's pretty clear. It's not like God's walking up and going, "I've told you I loved you a thousand times, so why don't you believe Me?" He doesn't do that. He goes, "Watch me. I'm about to show you how much God loves you." It's basically the prayer of John 17, "I'm about to show you the glory of God and His love for you. So, watch Me because I'm going to the cross." Then we go, "Ok, greater love has no man than this." We begin to realize that sincerity is actually in practice, and it's being demonstrated. Well, that's how you know. So, the evidence is being proven by the things that we do.

Verse 17, "But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?" There is a sense of mercy and compassion. There is a sense of bonding with the people of God that is the Spirit of God in us, and he says when these things are true in you, when you can't hate even if somebody mistreats you or reviles you, or you're persecuted falsely. You can't hate them. There is something in you that prays for those who spitefully use them. What is that? That's the Spirit of God within me that identifies who I am. So, the wonderful things of forgiveness and the wonderful things that

come out of that are that which identifies us and gives us great comfort; and John is making reference to that.

So, we now come to that which is the assurance of our heart, and he ties it directly to these things. So, if you look with me in verse 19, he'll say, "We will know by this..." He uses the Greek word "*ginōskō*," which is basically a way of process. He doesn't use "*eidō*," which would be a complete understanding; but he's basically saying, "we come to know that we are of the truth."

(1 John 3:19) "We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him."

Now, he's taking into consideration the things that have been said up to this point. The question is, what are the things that have been said up to this point? Well, we've kind of touched upon it, but let me just nail it. He's been saying that there is this Spirit of God in us that won't allow us to be unmerciful, will bring us to a heart of compassion even to the ungodly, and will bring us close to those that love God. So, you have a brotherhood to those that love God; a desire as "*phileo*" will oftentimes be used in relationship with a brother in the Spirit. So, it's that sense of having a fondness for someone. I want to be with God's people. I want to be with the children of God because I love God. So, I want to be with His children. The Spirit of God will not let you be hostile or hateful towards others no matter how hateful they are against you. This is an amazing thing, but it's a clear example of the Spirit of God in you. He's basically saying that you can take great comfort in this because this is what will assure your heart. You say, "Well, why does my heart need assurance?" That's the interesting point in this. Verse 20 reads this way, "in whatever our heart condemns us." We're not perfect. We know that, if we're of the truth. So, as James says, we stumble in many ways. We sure do. Do you know what begins to hound on you? It's this thing called "conscience." In this text, it says that your heart condemns you.

The way that it's put in Romans 2, your heart ultimately accuses you or affirms what you do. So, there's this sense of accusations. It's those nights where you're lying in bed, and you're going, "I probably said the wrong thing. I shouldn't have done that." You're working through all the scenarios of your life and then there's almost a side doubt that comes in, "Maybe you're not even saved." You know that voice that gets really loud at that particular point, especially when you're rehearsing all the terrible things that you've done? In this passage, if I can sort of take some liberties, it's fundamentally saying is, "Do you love the brethren?"

You go, "Yeah, I really do love the brethren."

"Do you hate anybody?"

"No, I couldn't wish anybody to hell."

"Ok, we're good. You're Mine."

The passage reads this way, “in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart.” Now, the passage is telling us that God clearly is a greater judge than we are, but He’s also able to supersede the guilt of our sins.

Paul makes an interesting statement in 2 Corinthians 4, he says, “I’m really not conscience of anything that I did wrong, but I’m not by this acquitted.” His statement in that is saying that ultimately, it’s God’s judgement that matters, not mine. That works both ways. So that when I’m feeling pretty good about myself, it doesn’t mean I’m ok; and when I’m feeling terrible about myself, it doesn’t mean I’m condemned. It means that God is the one that does the judging and it’s in His hands. Now, the way that it ends in verse 19 is, “it will assure our hearts before Him.” “assurance” is where we get the word “believe” by the way, *“peithō.”* The word is making reference to “that which persuades our hearts.” God can literally persuade our hearts before Him. That phrase is tribunal. So, it’s like God is sitting there as a judge. Here’s the point, there’s a power that comes upon us that gives us assurance and persuades our heart even against the guilt that we’re feeling for failing in so many ways. What is that assurance? The point is that you have the Spirit of God’s love within you that causes you to love those who love God. You’re drawn to them, and the Spirit causes you not to hate. It’s that Spirit that is evidence that God is in your life, and God has declared you clean.

Romans 8 is the great passage in which we realize that there is such a thing as condemnation upon ourselves; but if you look with me at Romans 8:33, there’s an interesting question that’s posed. The question that’s posed is “Who will bring a charge against God’s elect?” God is the one who justifies. Who is the one who condemns? Jesus Christ is He who died. Yes, rather was raised. He’s at the right hand of God, and He interceded for us. Now, the way that it’s put in 1 John 3:19-20 is,

“We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him

(1 John 3:20) in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.”

We continue to go back to this incident in the gospel of John, but one of the most comforting stories is the woman at the well. This is a comforting story on so many different levels; but to me one of the things that jumps off the page as this woman who married five times is now in an adulteress relationship, and Jesus is talking to her. She realizes that He begins telling her things that she thought were probably hidden, obviously to this rabbi stranger. He tells her things that “Ok, a rabbi stranger shouldn’t know.” She walks away rejoicing, and you go, “Why is she so happy?” The answer is that He accepted her despite knowing all these things about her. The fact that God knows all things about us, and still, I have the love of God in my heart. He knows all things. You’re sitting there with your conscience, and your conscience goes, “I bet if God knew that.” He already knows it and He still tells you He loves you. It’s the fact that He knows all things. It’s His omniscience in these things that is even more powerful than our conscience. Realizing that in spite of His infinite knowledge of the details of my life, He’s forgiven me. It’s

that forgiveness that has become such a part of our lives; that has transformed us into thinking differently about people. I don't know if you think about this or not, but the evidence of that forgiveness is that we forgive other people, and we don't hold onto hate.

So, how do I know I've been forgiven? You forgive. How do I know I've been loved? You love. That's how I know. How do I know the Spirit of God is in me? I look in the mirror and I see love and not hate. That's why in Matthew 6 Jesus will say, "Look, when you're praying, 'forgive us our trespasses,' now you've got to forgive others of their trespasses." He goes on, and He says, "But your trespasses won't be forgiven unless you forgive." The point is that when you realize true forgiveness, you will be forgiving. When you realize true love, you will be loving; and it's the evidence of that in my life that affirms that I've been forgiven. It's the evidence of that in my life that affirms that I've been loved. There's a great passage in Psalm 103, if you turn there with me. It's a favorite Psalm I'm sure for a number of us. It begins to describe the fact that well, we know that we have sin in our life, but how wonderful it is that God heals, and He blesses in spite of that. Like the song we sang,

(Psalm 103:1) "Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
And all that is within me, bless His holy name.

(Psalm 103:2) Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
And forget none of His benefits;

(Psalm 103:3) Who pardons all your iniquities,  
Who heals all your diseases;

(Psalm 103:4) Who redeems your life from the pit,  
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion;

(Psalm 103:5) Who satisfies your years with good things,  
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle."

(Psalm 103:8) "The LORD is compassionate and gracious,  
Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.

(Psalm 103:9) He will not always strive with us,  
Nor will He keep His anger forever.

(Psalm 103:10) He has not dealt with us according to our sins,  
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

(Psalm 103:11) For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.

(Psalm 103:12) As far as the east is from the west,  
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.



(Psalm 103:13) Just as a father has compassion on his children,  
So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.

(Psalm 103:14) For He Himself knows our frame...

Where's my confidence? Well, the Lord knows all things. He knows who I am; He knows my weakness; He knows, and yet, He still said, "Come unto Me all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." He knew me, and He still invited me. He still says in John 15, "Abide with Me." He still does that, when knowing everything about me, He still wants me to live with Him. It's that which brings a tremendous amount of confidence in my life. He says, "This is the assurance of your heart." How do you know you've been forgiven? Well, there's such a change that takes place.

In fact, Psalm 32 begins to talk about that sense of change that has happened; which goes beyond saying "I don't have any sin," because that's not going to bring any comfort, but I can be relieved from my sin; I can be forgiven of my sin. So, it starts off this way in Psalm 32, "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!"

We'll put it another way, "How happy is the guy?" It goes on, and says, "How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit!" It's actually just "coming clean with God." You know I'm a sinner.

We were talking about Zaccheus, "You want to come to my house? You know who I am?"

"Yeah, you're a tax collector."

"Ok! I'm good with that."

(Psalm 32:3) "When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away  
Through my groaning all day long.

(Psalm 32:4) For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;  
My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer.

(Psalm 32:5) I acknowledged my sin...

"I just became transparent. You're right, I sin. I didn't hide it anymore. I confessed my transgressions." Now, watch how it ends in verse 5, and I think the translators were accurate on this one, "And You forgave the guilt of my sin." That's one thing that you can't get rid of. You can say "I'm not a sinner," you're not going to get rid of your guilt; you can rationalize the things that you've done, you're not going to get rid of your guilt, but you confess them to God, and He will get rid of your guilt because He's greater than your guilt. Isn't that great?

The psalmist will say in Psalm 90:8, "our sins are in the light of Thy presence." We also know according to Psalm 19:12, we have those things called "hidden faults." It says, "acquit me of hidden faults." There are some things that I don't even see, and Paul makes mention of that.

The point of these passages is that God is greater than the condemnation of our heart. So, how do I have confidence when my conscience is tugging at me? He says, "This is the way you have confidence; you just simply ask yourself, 'Do I love the brethren' and 'Do I hate anybody?' If you can walk away saying, 'I don't hate anyone' and 'I love the brethren,' this will assure your hearts." Look, this isn't you covering your sins with good deeds, this is God saying, "This is evidence that you've been forgiven because you have a heart of forgiveness within you; you have a heart of love within you."

He goes on in this passage, in 1 John 3, by taking us even a step further, and he writes this way, (1 John 3:21) "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us..."

That was to say, "You've been walking in righteousness; you've been doing the right thing; then there's a greater bonus for that." What is the greater bonus?

"Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God."

What's the confidence that we have? He describes it in verse 22, "Whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight." The point is that if we've been walking in the way that is pleasing to Him; that is to say, as Ephesians 5 says that we've been walking in a way trying to know what is pleasing to the Lord; our desire is to lift Him up; our desire is to follow His ways. We've been walking and living in such a way, then we know that whatever requests we have is attuned with whatever He wants. What, do you think that God's not going to do what He wants? So, it puts you on the path of having efficacious prayers. Your prayers become effectual because you're thinking like God; you're doing the things that God does; you're pursuing the things that God does. As you put this to practice, then when somebody asks you, "What do you think we should do?" You'll say, "I think we should do this." They'll go, "Why do you have so much confidence?" "God gave me the confidence because I've been wanting with all of my heart just to please Him; to do what He wants."

In fact, Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1, it's interesting the way that he puts it. He writes to Timothy, and he says in verse 3, "I thank God, whom I serve..." Watch the phrase that he uses, "with a clear conscience." I'll tell you, nothing beats a clear conscience, does it? Now, there are going to be days when you don't have a clear conscience, but you don't have to feel like you're doomed forever because God says, "I've given you a sign that you're still Mine." But if you have a clear conscience, wow. Now, you can come boldly before the throne of grace and believe that whatever you ask, it's done.

The passage reads this way, "I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers..." You can actually put in there, "in my petitions." "As I constantly remember you 'in my petitions' night and day." It sounds like Paul has confidence that his prayers are heard because, why? "I served the Lord with a clear conscience." You'll never have conviction; you'll never have a sense of persuasion in your heart

that the prayer is going to be answered if in fact you're not walking right. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord does not hear and there's a sense of "Is He hearing me?" No, because you're pursuing other things. James talks about the fact that you don't have because you ask with wrong motives, and your pursuits are all for you, they're not for God; but as you begin to walk with God and in the Spirit of God with the desires of God then God begins to give you such a boldness and a confidence. Of course, as you begin to speak, God gives you the words to say. So, Peter will say, "If you sanctify Christ as lord of your heart God will give you the answer." You won't have to try to figure out what to say, it's who you are. You've been living this life; you've been walking this life. So, it's the very walk that gives you confidence.

In both cases, John wants to give a sense of assurance in their hearts. That assurance is unshakeable because of the evidence of the Spirit of God within you by the way that you feel towards others; and as you begin to walk in righteousness, the way and the confidence that you have in your prayers.

As we go to Acts 4, one of the things that we oftentimes mention and is repeated is that whether it was Peter or the church, they were filled with the Spirit and they all spoke with boldness; and the very evidence that you are filled with the Spirit and are doing the will of God is that you have great boldness. You want boldness and you want confidence? Start obeying God; start making this a way of life. Get rid of that old conscience on your shoulder, and just start doing the things that are pleasing to Him and you'll have confidence in your prayers; you'll have confidence before the throne of grace. How wonderful it is that the Lord, even in the midst of accusations, we have an Advocate. If you look in 1 John 2:1, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ." How comforting that is.

So, John is giving comfort in both areas; you'll have times where your heart condemns you; God will sure you up in that time. Obviously, he will tell you, "You need to confess those sins for He is faithful and just to forgive you," but then you'll have times in which you're walking in what you know God wants you to do; and God's going to give you great boldness in your prayers and in your ministries.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Father, we give You thanks for the assurance that we have in our salvation. *Blessed assurance Jesus is mine, O what a foretaste of glory divine.*

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I don't know if you have confidence and assurance, but it's for you. God doesn't want us to live in obscurity, darkness, confusion, depression, feeling doomed and concerned about the future. Good want us to have a confidence; and that confidence is readily available for us if we'll just confess our sins; if we'll

just receive Him as Lord and Savior. That the love of God, the righteousness of Christ would dwell in us. It will transform your life. It will make you a new creation and God longs to do that. He longs to be merciful to you. Receive Him; come to Him. You'll begin to see a change in the way that you view people as well as the way that you view God. There will be a tremendous amount of love for God and for God's people. In addition to that, that love will be so powerful, God will not allow you to hate. God will cause you to respond in a way that is forgiving towards those that are unforgiving and hateful. God will change you. You'll think that perhaps, "So what?" Then God will say, "Wait a minute. That's evidence that I'm in you." You can't deny that. That's not you and you'll realize that's one of the most wonderful things that you and I can ever have is that assurance that God abides in me. God wants you to have confidence in every area of your life. He wants you to have confidence in your prayers; He wants you to have confidence in the things that you say. So, start doing what He says.