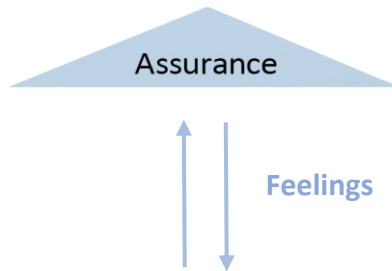


02 – THE BEGINNING OF ASSURANCE

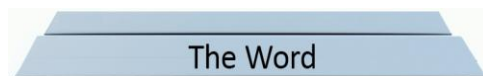
Building a Structure of Assurance

- a. We pictured assurance as the “**roof**” of our structure. Like any roof, assurance needs something to rest on.
- ✓ Think About It: When they built your house, they didn’t build the roof first (and then hang it in mid-air while they built the rest of the house underneath it). You can’t float a roof in mid-air! But that’s what a lot of people try to do with their assurance. They don’t have anything under their assurance for support. Consequently, it rides up and down on their feelings.



- ✓ Over the next few weeks, we’re going to build a solid structure for your assurance to rest on.
- b. **The Foundation** of our structure is the Word of God. (Only the Word provides a foundation for a true, lasting assurance.)

1 John 5:13 – “These things have I **written** ... **that ye may know** that you have eternal life ...”



- c. **Four Pillars of Assurance** – On top of that foundation, we’re going to erect four pillars that, together, will support the weight of your assurance.

Defining the Four Pillars



◆ **Pillar 1 – What Jesus Did**

- ✓ Big Idea: The rescue plan was successful! God was fully satisfied by what Jesus did. (This is where we’ll begin to shift our focus away from our feelings and onto the Plan of Redemption.)

◆ **Pillar 2 – What You Did**

- ✓ Big Idea: This is where we’ll deal with the concerns I had. (“Did I repent/believe *enough*? Did I skip a step?”) In this section, we’ll “check the boxes” and make sure you did what you needed to do.

◆ **Pillar 3 – Self-Examination** – (2 Cor. 13:5)

- ✓ Big Idea: Here we’ll examine you for “signs of life”. Is there evidence of salvation?

◆ **Pillar 4 – John’s Tests**

- ✓ Big Idea: In this section, we’ll look at the verses in 1 John. (“This is how we *know* ...”, “This is how we are *sure* ...”)

Pillar One – What did Jesus do? (Christ’s Work on the Cross)

- ✓ I can’t over-emphasize the importance of the first pillar. (It’s impossible to have assurance without thoroughly understanding Jesus’ work on the Cross.)

- ✓ Let me start with a quick warning. As we look at this pillar, the danger we face is familiarity. (When something is too familiar, our minds tend to say, “I already know that! Tell me something new!”) In this case, our break-through isn’t going to be found in new information. It’s going to be found in details that we’ve heard a hundred times. (As we read, don’t let familiarity distract you! Don’t let your mind skip over the details. In a large measure, this first pillar is why Bev had assurance and I didn’t. Skip this step and you risk losing the assurance your heart longs for.)

What Did Jesus Do?

1. Jesus Lived a Perfect Life

- ✓ *Everyone* agreed on that point:
 - The Father : “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am **well pleased**.” (Matt. 3:17). He’s called the “**spotless**” lamb of God (1 Pet. 1:19).
 - Pilate: “I find **no fault** in Him.” (John 18:38, 19:4,6)
 - The Devil Couldn’t Find Anything – “The prince of this world is coming. He has no power over me, for **he has nothing he can use against me**.” (John 14:30)
 - The Pharisees Couldn’t Find Anything – “Who among you can show I’m guilty of sin?” (John 8:46). At the trials, they **had to bring false evidence** (Mark 14:56).
- ✓ Jesus lived a perfect life and received a perfect score from Heaven – 100%. That’s the score you needed! God has one passing mark – 100%. (99.9% is a “flunk”!)

2. An Exchange Took Place at the Cross

- ✓ Jesus brought His perfect score (100%) to the table. You brought your sin and condemnation.

- ✓ **On the Cross, your sin was transferred to Jesus** (Isa 53:6), and God poured out *your* punishment on Him. (That was the first half of the transaction.) And **Jesus’ perfect score was given to you**.
- ✓ At the Cross, God “crossed his arms”, and the blessing that should have gone to Jesus came to you. And the curse that should have come your way was placed on Jesus. (Gen. 48:13-14).

2 Cor. 5:21 – “Christ never sinned but God **put our sin on Him**, so that in union with him **we might fully share in God’s righteousness**.” (NLV, CJB)

Romans 5:17 – “... those who receive God’s overflowing grace, and the **free gift of righteousness** ...” (AMPC)

3. Jesus’ Sacrifice Fully Satisfied God

Isa. 53:11 – “God shall see of the travail of his soul, and He shall be **satisfied**.”

4. Jesus Rose From the Dead

- ✓ What does that have to do with assurance? Everything!!!

Acts 17:31 – “**God has given assurance** (credible proof – AMP) unto all men, **by raising Jesus from the dead**.”

- ✓ Credible proof of what? Proof that Jesus sacrifice was accepted!
- ✓ Think About It – If Jesus said, “I’m dying for your sin”, and then He died, and nobody ever heard from Him again, what proof would there be that it worked? But, if He said, “I’m going to die for your sin, and after three days, I’ll rise from the dead as proof it worked”, and then He DID rise three days later, that’s pretty good proof!

“He gave Him life again **to show that He accepted Jesus’ death** ...” (Int.)

Romans 4:25 – “He was surrendered to death because of the offenses we had committed, and He was raised to life **once we had been acquitted.**” (Weymouth)

Jesus paid the price & all of Heaven heard the verdict as God’s voice thundered, “They’re not guilty anymore”! The price had been paid! **We’d been acquitted, but we didn’t know it.** So, God raised Jesus from the dead and sent Him back to tell us.

5. Everything Was Done On Legal Grounds

- ✓ And it created a new reality. You really *are* clean in God’s sight. (Like we used to say as kids, it’s “for real!”) It really happened! God’s not going to have to hide His eyes, while you quickly run into Heaven. Your record really does say that you got 100%, and God is completely satisfied with you! That thought, once you renew your mind to it, will hold a LOT of the weight of your assurance.

“What Happens when I Sin?”

- ✓ “Does it mess up my 100%?” No. Your day-to-day sin as a believer doesn’t affect your standing before God. (Jesus’ righteousness is *still* credited to your account.) Sin doesn’t destroy your *relationship*, it only disrupts your *fellowship*.
- ✓ Natural Illustration – When I messed up as a kid – (ie: disobeyed, talked back to my mom) – our relationship wasn’t severed. (I was still their son, and they were still my parents. I still lived in their house, and I was still named in their will.) Our relationship wasn’t severed, but our fellowship was hindered until I apologized.
- ✓ In the same way, when you sin as a believer, you don’t lose your place in God’s family, nor do you lose the 100% that Jesus credited to your account. But there’s something disrupting your fellowship, and you need to use 1 John 1:9 to get rid of it.
- ✓ The first pillar is strong! The plan worked. Next, we need to make sure that you’re covered by that plan.