

“Blessed Assurance”

Epheians 1:9-20

David P. Nolte

Assurance. We all want and need it. Assurance that our doctor is competent; that our job is secure; that the foods we buy are uncontaminated; and most importantly, that our sins are forgiven and that we are right with God. We need the assurance Gerald sang about today.

Frances Crosby, who wrote that hymn, enjoyed that assurance even though a doctor applied a mustard plaster poultice to her eyes when she was only six weeks old, making her totally blind. Yet, she began writing hymns when she was 6. When she was 9, she wrote:

“O what a happy soul am I,
Although I cannot see,
I am resolved that in this world
Contented I will be.
How many blessings I enjoy
That other people don’t.
To weep and sigh because I’m blind,
I cannot, and I won’t.”

During her lifetime, Fanny Crosby wrote eight thousand hymns but “Blessed Assurance” is one of the most well known. God wants us to have assurance and that our assurance be founded on faith and what Paul calls, “confident hope.” But, what is our “confident hope?” And of what are we assured?

Let us check Paul’s words, “God has now revealed to us His mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill His own good pleasure. And this is the plan: At the right time He will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for He chose us in advance, and He makes everything work out according to His plan. God’s purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, He identified you as His own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom He promised long ago. The Spirit is God’s guarantee that He will give us the inheritance He promised and that He has purchased us to be His own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify Him. Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God’s people everywhere, I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope He has given to those He called—his holy people who are His

rich and glorious inheritance. I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe Him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms." Ephesians 1:9-20 (NLT).

I. BE ASSURED: WE ARE PART OF GOD'S PLAN:

- A. "And this is the plan: At the right time He will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for He chose us in advance, and He makes everything work out according to His plan."
 - 1. Did you know that God chose you?"
 - 2. Did you know that you are a pleasure to God?
 - 3. Did you know that God has written you into His will as an heir?
- B. What is the impact of that?
 - 1. We are not accidents of mindless, godless evolution.
 - 2. We are here by Divine Design.
 - 3. We have purpose and meaning and value.
- C. God had a plan before creation. He was not forced from that plan by Christ's rejection and death – that was the fulfillment of His plan. Paul wrote, "Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure." Ephesians 1:4-5 (NLT)
- D. If you are in Christ, you are part of God's eternal purpose, His Divine design.
- E. In a mythical garden the Gardener had daily visits with his many plants. His favorite one was a blue rose tinged with lavender highlights. One day the Gardener came to the garden and went directly to the rose bush. He said to the roses. "Roses, I am going to use you today." They perked up, and said, "We are ready. Use us as you will." He said, "To use you I must cut you from the bush." "Cut ...us... from...the...bush? Oh, not that! Use us but do not cut us from the bush!" The Gardener said, "I cannot use you unless I cut you from the bush." Then the roses said, "Master, if you cannot use us other than to cut us from the bush.. then do your will and cut." The Gardener had a plan for the roses. He took them and made a bouquet for a sick child in the hospital. And the roses rejoiced as they saw the joy they brought by surrendering to his plan.

God's plan for us may not be easy; it may cost us something; it may be beyond what we think we can do – but be assured that you are part of His plan and will find joy in serenade. And,

II. BE ASSURED WE ARE PARTICIPANTS IN GOD'S PROMISES:

- A. "He identified you as His own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom He promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that He will give us the inheritance He promised and that He has purchased us to be His own people."

1. God's promises are not for those who disbelieve. For a scoffer to claim God's promises without first surrendering to Christ, would be like total strangers trying to claim promises I made to my children.
 2. God's promises can be trusted:
 - a. "For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory." 2 Corinthians 1:20 (ESV).
 - b. Abraham believed God and was "fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform." Romans 4:21 (NASB).
- B. What are your favorite promises? Make a mental file of them for difficult times. There is a promise for every human need – seek them out and file them for future reference.
- C. People also make promises
1. Some don't intend to keep them.
 2. Some forget them.
 3. Some are unable to keep them.
 4. Some change their minds.
- D. But God Who cannot lie is faithful and wanting "to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us." Hebrews 6:13-18 (NASB).
- E. Pedro walked his son Esteban to school in a little village in Mexico and promised to return that afternoon to walk him home. Mid-morning, an earthquake hit and many of the village's buildings collapsed, including the school. Pedro ran to the school and with other parents pulled away the rubble. Pedro called out, "Esteban!" as he worked. After hours of work he heard a faint reply, "I'm here, Papa." Digging more feverishly, Pedro lifted his boy from a cave under the rubble. Esteban said, "I was real scared, but I knew you'd come for me. You promised!" Would that we have that confidence in God's Promises. And

III. BE ASSURED: WE ARE PURCHASED FOR GOD'S POSSESSION:

- A. "When you believed in Christ, He identified you as His own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom He promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that He will give us the inheritance He promised and that He has purchased us to be His own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify Him."
- B. We have been purchased by God; It cost Christ His life. Jonathan Edwards said, "God is both the purchaser and the price; for Christ, Who is God, purchased these blessings for us, by offering Himself up as the price of our salvation."
1. So, Paul wrote, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are

not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NASB).

2. With what were we purchased? Peter said, “you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.” 1 Peter 1:18-19 (NASB).
3. We belong to Him and “‘The LORD knows those who are His,’ and ‘All who belong to the LORD must turn away from evil.’” 2 Timothy 2:19 (NLT).

C. The implications of this are:

1. We are not our own and can’t claim, “It’s my body; money; life.”
2. We are to glorify God by how we live.
3. We must turn from evil and not pursue it.
4. God knows us and claims us as His own.
5. As the song said,

“Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine
O what a foretaste of glory divine
Heir of salvation, purchase of God
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.”

- D. Some say, “But I don’t want that!” You don’t have to be His – you get to choose – but if that’s your choice you forfeit the benefits. There is blessing in belonging to Him.
- E. A little girl had been adopted by a family but she was never integrated into their family of biological children. Whenever they vacationed, they left her with a family friend. After a couple of years, they dissolved the adoption, and another family adopted her.

When her new dad learned her history, plans were made to take her to Disney World. What he didn’t expect was that this would produce terrible behavior in their new daughter. She became a total brat.

A couple of days before heading to Florida, dad pulled her into his lap to talk through her latest escapade. “I know what you’re going to do,” she stated flatly. “You’re not going to take me to Disney World, are you?” Her misbehavior suddenly made sense. She knew she couldn’t be good enough to be included— she had tried that and failed — so she was acting out her anger inappropriately..

Dad asked her, “Is this trip something we’re doing as a family?” She nodded. “Are you part of this family?” She nodded again. “Then you’re going with us. Sure, there may be some consequences to help you remember what’s right

and what's wrong — but you're part of our family, and we're not leaving you behind." And they went as a family.

In the hotel room that evening, a very different child emerged. When bedtime rolled around, dad prayed with her and held her. "Daddy," she said, "I got to go to Disney World. But it wasn't because I was good; it's because I'm yours." (Daniel Montgomery and Timothy Paul Jones.)

And God blesses us not because we are good – but because we are His!

IV. BE ASSURED: WE ARE PROTECTED BY GOD'S POWER;

- A. "I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe Him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms."
- B. Peter assures us that God's power protects us, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:3-5 (NASB).
 - 1. This power is incredibly great.
 - 2. This power is for those who believe.
 - 3. This power raised Jesus from the dead and will raise us up, too.
- C. We may lose everything we have on earth; we may never enjoy earthly riches but:
 - 1. We are heirs of God.
 - 2. What we inherit will never cheapen but will endure for eternity.
 - 3. We are protected by His power through faith so that we will get to heaven where we will enjoy it forever.
- D. The power is not in us; not in our best intentions; not in our most diligent efforts; not in our deepest sincerity; not in the greatness of our giving; not in the intensity of our enthusiasm. The power is God's to save and preserve us.
- E. A missionary, Dr. Jackson, was assigned a car that would not start without a push. After pondering his problem, he devised a plan. He would ask people in the vicinity to push the car so it would start. Otherwise he would either park on a hill or leave the engine running. He used this procedure for two years.

Ill health forced the him and his family to leave, and a new missionary came to that station. When Jackson proudly began to explain his arrangement for getting the car started, the new man began looking under the hood. Before the explanation was complete, the new missionary interrupted, "Why, I believe the only trouble is this loose cable." He tightened it and stepped into the car,

pushed the switch, and the engine roared to life. For two years needless trouble had become routine. The power was there all the time. Only a loose connection kept Jackson from putting that power to work. Stay connected to God if you want to be part of His plan. included in His promises, one of His own and protected by His power. For those who belong to God, these words are true.

“Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.”

PRAY / INVITE

ROOM AT THE CROSS FOR YOU