

Briefing Document: "1 John Lesson 26 – Certainty of Assurance and A New Love"

Date: July 9, 2025

I. Overall Sermon Focus: Validating and Verifying Salvation

The central purpose of the sermon, drawing from the Book of 1 John, is to provide believers with *certainty of assurance* regarding salvation. This assurance is not based merely on professing faith—*"It's not what you say; it's what you do"*—but on observable *moral or spiritual tests* that validate one's spiritual condition.

- The speaker emphasizes: *"This book is written for the purpose of giving you confidence that you're saved."*
 - Assurance leads to *"full joy"*—you cannot have joy if you're unsure about your spiritual condition.
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II. Main Theme 1: Obedience as a Test of Love and Salvation

A significant portion of the lesson focuses on obedience to God's commandments as the primary evidence of genuine faith and love for Christ.

- **The Core Principle:**
"If you love Me, keep My commandments." (John 14:15, NKJV)
The word *"keep"* implies guarding something that is precious.
- **Love and Obedience are Intertwined:**
 - The truer one's love for Christ, the stronger the desire to serve and obey Him.
 - Disobedience reflects a greater love for something else—self, friends, or sin.
 - *"Whenever you love something more than what you're supposed to be obedient to, that means you love that thing more."*
- **God's Love and Our Obedience:**
 - *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."* (John 14:23, NKJV)
 - Obedience fosters an intimate relationship with God.
- **The "Test" of Keeping Commandments:**
 - *"You cannot be perfect in your sinful body."*
 - God's grace covers imperfections, but striving for obedience is still required.
 - For Christians, sinning is *"the exception to the rule"*—unlike for nonbelievers.

- **Consequences of Disobedience (1 John 2:4):**
“He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”
 - This *truth* refers to saving truth. Without obedience, a claim of fellowship is self-deceptive and damning.
- **Contrast with True Believers:**
 - True believers *“hear Jesus’ voice”* and eagerly show obedience, allegiance, love, and trust.
- **Critique of Antinomianism:**
 - The belief that grace nullifies moral law is strongly refuted.
 - James 2:26 (NKJV): *“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”*
- **"Perfect Love" (1 John 2:5):**
“But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”
 - *Perfect* or *completed* love refers to a genuine, mature love for God expressed in obedience.
- **Christlikeness as the Model (1 John 2:6):**
“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”
 - Jesus always did what pleased the Father (cf. John 6:38, 8:29).
 - His life is the pattern for ours.
- **Motivation for Obedience:**
 - *“Why are you obedient? Out of love.”*
 - This love leads to walking in the light, keeping commandments from the heart, and striving to be like Jesus.

III. Main Theme 2: Love for One Another as the Supreme Test

This section, titled *“A New Love,”* introduces love for fellow believers as the second key evidence of salvation.

- **Love’s Supremacy:**
 - *“Love is elevated higher than anything else in Scripture.”*
 - It is the greatest commandment, covering love for both God and others.

- **Order of Love:**
 - The speaker outlines a divine order: love God first, then your spouse, then others.
 - **Love as the “Supreme Test”:**
 - Loving the unlovable demonstrates salvation.
 - *“You don’t have to like them.”*
 - **Old and New Commandment (1 John 2:7–8):**
 - John refers to love as an *old commandment* from the beginning, yet presents it as *new*—made fresh by Christ’s light.
 - *“The darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.”*
 - **Love vs. Hate in the Light (1 John 2:9–11):**
 - *“He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.”*
 - *“He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.”*
 - *“But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”*
 - Spiritual blindness results in stumbling and a lack of direction.
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IV. Important Ideas & Facts

- **Memory Verse:**
Psalm 27:14 (NKJV): “Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord!”
- **Church Announcements / Community Focus:**
 - Women’s breakfast/fellowship
 - Men’s breakfast – Saturday at 7:30
 - Hal and Beth: August monthly mission focus & will be here in August
 - Audio/Video team: July Ministry of the Month
 - Women’s retreat: Deposit due end of July; event in early September (Prescott)
 - New Life Kids and New Life Students: Resuming in August
- **Prayer Requests:**
 - Kerrville, TX & Ruidoso, NM: Flooding; children passed away; homes lost

- North Carolina: Also experiencing flooding
- Renee's son Nathan: Graduated, walked across the stage without crutches (praise)
- Carolyn and Dylan: Praise for young people at church
- Barbara: Safe travels to Montana and Colorado
- Pastor and his wife
- Jim Howard: Dermatology issues
- Donna Shull's sister, Lois: Hip fracture, hospital surgery
- Jennifer's son, Xander: Reached out—continue praying for return to Christ
- Sue Becker (CO): Parkinson's diagnosis; in nursing home
- Speaker (Steve): Officiating a funeral—prayers to share the Gospel with clarity and that God is glorified
- **Biblical References:**
 - *John*: 14:15, 14:21, 14:23, 14:31; 15:10; 18:37; 6:38, 6:66; 8:29; 10:18
 - *James* 2:26
 - *Philippians*: General reference on striving toward perfection
 - *Colossians* 1
- **Theological Concepts:**
 - Certainty of assurance
 - Gracious obedience
 - Christlikeness
 - Abiding in Christ (“the heart of Christianity”)
 - Truth as saving truth
 - Antinomianism
 - Faith without works
- **Self-Reflection:**
 - Speaker acknowledges former shallowness in teaching 1 John; now sees its profound depth
 - Shares personal story from age 14 about disobedience and its consequences

- **Analogy:**
 - “The real thing” (Coca-Cola commercial) used to describe abiding in Christ
- **Humor & Commentary:**
 - Lighthearted moments with the congregation (e.g., fishing nets, middle-aged youth, Coke, “Chris in the dark”)
 - Comment on a confusing email signature from CPS using “she/her” pronouns

V. Conclusion: A Call to Self-Examination and Deeper Faith

This sermon is a heartfelt invitation for believers to examine their lives. True salvation is evidenced by an internal desire to obey Christ and walk in His ways. These desires, expressed in action through obedience and love, produce assurance and joy. The sermon urges continued study of 1 John, highlighting its spiritual richness and power to transform.

Greek Words Used

1. **Antinomianism** (*from Greek: ἀντί [anti] = "against" + νόμος [nomos] = "law"*)
 - **Phonetic:** an-ti-NO-mee-uh-niz-um
 - **Definition:** The belief that under the dispensation of grace, moral law is of no use or obligation. The sermon strongly critiques this as a false doctrine.