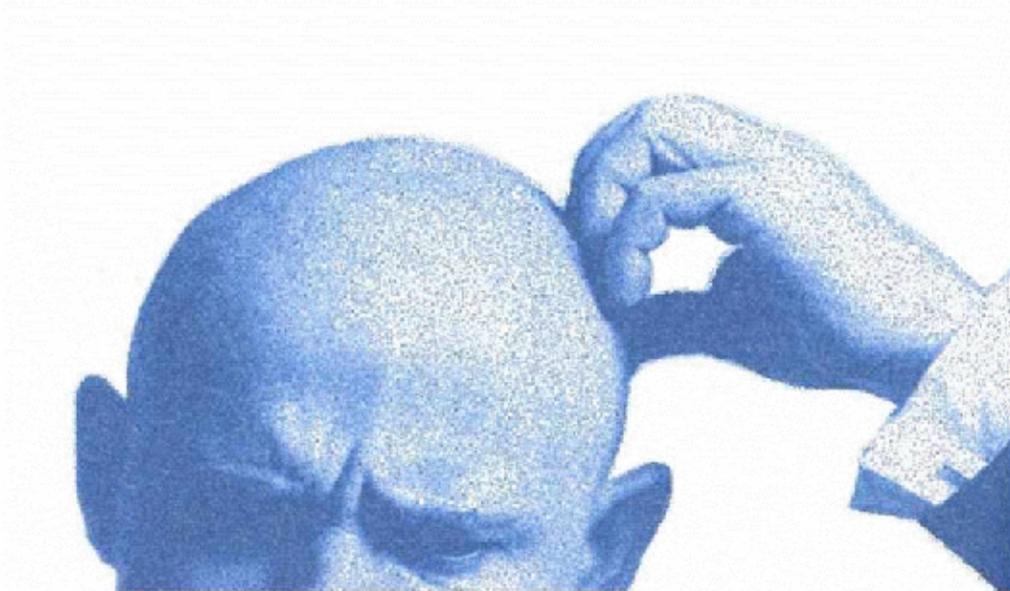


Defeating Doubts of Salvation



A Study in Why Christians Don't Grow

by

Craig Ledbetter, Th.G., B.A.

*Independent Baptist Missionary
to the Republic of Ireland*

U.S. Mailing Address:

c/o Word for the World Baptist Ministries,
P.O. Box 849, Rossville, GA 30741

The Address in Ireland is:

29 Westcourt Heights, Ballincollig, Cork, Ireland

Web: www.biblebc.com

E-Mail: craigled@iol.ie

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How the Truth MAKES You Free

John 8:32

DATE: 7 Sept, 2003 AM

PLACE: BBC Blarney

I. Introduction (1Jn 5:11-13)

- A. There is a difference between being “set” free, and MADE free! Thank God the truth of the Scriptures don’t just “set” me free, only to be enslaved again, but MAKE me free so that nothing can enslave me ever again!
- B. Holy Boldness, Confidence, Assurance – these are words that characterize a Christian, who KNOWS two things:
 1. That they have the truth in the Bible – no more lies!
 2. They know where they will go when they die – no more worries
- C. This confidence is the foundation for every victory over sin in life
- D. Without assurance of full forgiveness and eternal life, every struggle with sin in our life is useless, and we are easy prey for every form of depression and spiritual attack!
- E. The devil knows all this, so he fires his fiery darts right at our confidences (Eph 6:16), but we have some things that enable us to “quench” ALL the attacking darts!
- F. I want to look at the six reasons why people doubt their salvation, and then look at just what assurances do we have that a person can KNOW that they really are born again into God’s family!
- G. There are Six Reasons for Doubts.
 1. Having a False “Process” of Salvation
 2. People Confuse Spiritual Awakening with Conversion.
 3. People Fear Having Committed The Unpardonable Sin (Mt 3:22-30)
 4. People are Full Of Guilt, Shame, Sorrow – because of defilement (Tit 1:15)
 5. Bitterness kills the joy of salvation (Mt 6:12-15; Acts 8:18-24; Heb 12:15) – a doorway to demonic attacks
 6. Most people have No Firm Biblical Convictions (Rom 14:5) – blown about with every “wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14)

II. Message – The False Process of Salvation

- A. Let me just say, to many people, the way they FEEL is often more valid, and real than what God says, or what anybody says. The Bible believer HAS to change the way they view life – from only the senses, to God’s view.
- B. **People Doubt Their Salvation Because of a False Process of Salvation.**
 1. Was Jesus just “added” to your life, or made Lord of your life?
 - a. Jesus is not a life “enhancer”, He is the life giver – in other words, you had NO life before you got born again
 - b. You cannot ADD life to a dead thing (Eph 2:1) – the dead thing had to be resurrected – given new life (2Cor 5:17)
 - c. Too many people “ALLOW” Jesus into their lives, and then think they are keeping Him in a corner of their lives, and bringing Him out when He is needed, or for Sunday Church
 - d. You are not saved unless you SURRENDER to Jesus Christ
 - 1) Give up your sins
 - 2) Give up your sorrows
 - 3) Give up your self
 - 4) All into His hand
 2. Is your salvation Gradual, or Instant?

- a. Was there no actual point in time when you believed to the saving of your soul? Or did it just happen gradually? You may not be able to remember the exact day and hour when you were born again, but you ought to know your life has been changed
 - b. This is where per-versions have made havoc of churches
 - 1) NIV, NKJV, Good News, etc
 - 2) All say in 1Cor 1:18, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are *being saved* it is the power of God.”
 - c. According to the word of God, at the moment the sinner breaks, and humbles himself or herself AS a sinner, and comes to God asking for forgiveness, not from just “A” sin, but from their sinfulness, they are JUSTIFIED
 - d. Justified means, pardoned, paid-in-full – the record is cleared
 - e. It is not like the game we use to play: You’re getting warmer...
3. Who accomplished the payment for your sins? You, or Jesus?
- a. Almost all religions believe that Jesus died for sinners and sins
 - b. AND that we still sin (which is true)
 - c. And therefore, we still need to pay off any NEW sins we might do on a daily basis – thru confession, penance, good works
 - d. Religions in this category include the Pentecostals and Charismatics who believe that a “Christian” HAS to keep up their good works to STAY SAVED
 - e. My question is simply, WHO SAVES? (Jn 10:27-29)
 - f. Bible-believing Christianity knows all the above, but knows the answer to WHO it is that SAVES! Jesus!
 - g. People doubt their salvation, because they feel they are not doing enough to KEEP it
 - h. Here is the truth of the matter: Jesus didn’t give you a “box” of salvation that you could drop – He gave you HIMSELF, and then SEALED Himself inside you so that you could never lose Him (1Jn 5:11,12; Eph 1:12,13)
 - i. Are you still depending on any good works at all (Mt 7:21-23)
 - 1) Observing the Sabbath
 - 2) Taking the Eucharist, and participating in the Mass
 - 3) What if you forgot one Sunday, or a whole month, or a whole year? When is the cut-off date?
4. Did you have only a silent half-hearted prayer with no outward confession (Rom 10:10) – Ashamed? (Rom 10:11)
5. There may be people in this room with no doubts at all – simply because they never got born again to begin with (2Cor 13:5)
- a. Not actually believing at all – just going along with things in church. Yes, you may believe in God (so do the devils), but you don’t believe on Jesus Christ to the saving of your soul (Heb 10:38-39)
 - b. Could it be, you believe you were ALWAYS a Christian? With no need to be saved to begin with? Then you are as lost as a goose – no one is born a Christian! We are ALL born sinners, in need of Jesus the Saviour!
 - c. Was Jesus alone the only one you trusted for forgiveness from God? (Jn 5:38-43; 2Cor 11:2-4)

III. Conclusion - People Doubt Their Salvation Because of a False Process of Salvation.

- A. **We all need to “examine ourselves” (2Cor 13:5) and see if we have just gone along with the “flow” so-to-speak in the following wrong assumptions!**
 1. Was Jesus just “added” to your life, or made Lord of your life?

2. Is your salvation Gradual, or Instant?
 3. Who accomplished the payment for your sins? You, or Jesus?
 4. Did you have only a silent half-hearted prayer with no outward confession (Rom 10:10) – Ashamed? (Rom 10:11)
 5. There may be people in this room with no doubts at all – simply because they never got born again to begin with (2Cor 13:5)
- B. All our sufficiency is found in Jesus Christ
- C. Trying to get saved by any other means than by faith in what Jesus Christ did, is a false hope!

Overcoming Basic Confusion About Conversion

2 Corinthians 5:17

DATE: 14 Sept, 2003 AM

PLACE: BBC Blarney

I. Introduction (2Corinthians 5:17)

- A. This verse plainly says a person who somehow gets “in Christ” SHALL BE? a new creature? Or IS a new creature? Too many people have so many struggles in their heart with God because they don’t know what real conversion is!
- B. I want to look at the six reasons why people doubt their salvation, and then look at just what assurances do we have that a person can KNOW that they really are born again into God’s family!
- C. There are Six Reasons for Doubts.
 1. Because People have a False “Process” of Salvation – last week
 2. People Confuse Spiritual Awakening with Conversion.
 3. People Fear Having Committed The Unpardonable Sin (Mt 3:22-30)
 4. People are Full Of Guilt, Shame, Sorrow – because of defilement (Tit 1:15) – the world is very effective at RUINING people’s hearts!
 5. Bitterness kills the joy of salvation (Mt 6:12-15; Acts 8:18-24; Heb 12:15) – a doorway to demonic attacks
 6. Most people have No Firm Biblical Convictions (Rom 14:5) – blown about with every “wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14)

II. Review - People Doubt Their Salvation First of All, Because they Trust a False Process of Salvation.

- A. **We all need to “examine ourselves” (2Cor 13:5)** and see if we have just gone along with the “flow” in the following wrong assumptions! Ask yourself:
 1. Was Jesus just “added” to my life, or made Lord of my life?
 2. Is my salvation Gradual, or Instant?
 3. Who accomplished the payment for my sins? Me, or Jesus?
 4. Did I have only a silent half-hearted prayer with no outward confession (Rom 10:10) – Ashamed? (Rom 10:11)
 5. There may be people in this room with no doubts at all – simply because they never got born again to begin with (2Cor 13:5)
- B. All our sufficiency is found in Jesus Christ alone – what He did on the cross, and what HE said about our salvation, and what He is doing for us right now!
- C. Trying to get saved by any other means than by faith in what Jesus Christ did, is a false hope! And ends a person up in hell for sure!

III. Message - Confusing Spiritual Awakening with Conversion.

- A. The second reason why so many people have doubts about their relationship with God is because they confuse their “Spiritual Awakening” with actual Conversion
- B. **People are afraid of that word – Conversion** – and rightly so!
 1. You can’t “convert me!” Stop trying to “convert me!”
 2. As somebody said yesterday, “I’m beyond help” No use converting me!
 3. Meaning: *Change, Transformation, performing an exchange* – like from one currency into another. In other words, someone who has been “converted” has been changed, and is no longer the same as they used to be (2Cor 5:17)
- C. **Let’s look at what the Bible says about “Conversion”.**
 1. God’s word was written to convert the soul (Psalm 19:7)
 2. All sinners need to be “converted” unto God (Psalm 51:12,13)

3. Conversion involves starting all over and becoming like a little child again (Mt 18:3) – that’s why it is called being Born Again!
4. Even the Apostle Peter needed conversion (Lk 22:32). He was a follower, but not changed
5. All the efforts of Paul and the Christians in the Bible was directed at one goal (Act 15:3) – the Conversion of the Gentiles
6. Conversion is a complete Transformation (Isa 51:3). God compares what He was going to do to the desert, to what He wanted to do to the heart

D. Spiritual Awakening is only the first step (Acts 26:17,18)

1. Look at the process of a person’s spiritual awakening:
 - a. People’s eyes have to be opened – they are blind by nature
 - b. People have to be redirected from darkness to light
 - c. And they have to be informed that they can be free from the power of Satan (puppeteer) to the power of God
 - d. ALL so that they can be given the forgiveness of sins, and an eternal inheritance in heaven
2. The first three steps are all part of spiritual awakening
3. That last step is the receiving of the free gift of salvation (Rom 6:23)
4. The problem occurs when a person becomes spiritually aware of things, and becomes concerned about spiritual things, but never gets converted
5. Everything in a person’s life up to the time of their salvation is leading them to something called “repentance” – not *penance*, but a determined change of heart towards God
6. The sad thing is, most people only get on the train of religion, but never find Jesus as their Saviour!

E. The Difference Between Spiritual Awakening and Conversion.

1. Just because a person is aware of God, prays to God, faithfully goes to church, and even knows a lot about the Bible, means nothing relating to your sin-debt that must be paid (James 2:19; Rom 6:23a)
 - a. A person can learn all there is about Law – go to school for 6 years
 - b. He can know the names, ages, and education of all the judges
 - c. And yet it will do nothing for him when he is convicted of a crime – HE WILL HAVE TO PAY FOR HIS CRIMES!
2. In simple terms:
 - a. Spiritual Awakening is an awareness that you need God
 - b. Conversion is a complete change, a transformation BY God
 - c. **Awakening** is when a person begins to think they should start living better, or stop sinning, or go back to church, hug their wife and kids, put the drink down, start tithing, saying their prayers again, obeying the speed limit, etc.
 - d. **Conversion** is when a person is transformed from the inside out – changed BY the presence of God in their life (2Cor 5:17) – not by your own will power
 - 1) Not just outwardly change either
 - a) Like going to a different church
 - b) Or like wearing different clothes – you ought to look different than you used to, but just wearing different, and modest clothes doesn’t mean you are now saved

- c) Or, like learning the “Christian lingo”: Amen, Praise the Lord, Hallelujah, Trust God brother, Keep looking up!
- 2) There has to be a change *inwardly* that shows on the outside
 - a) You can have nice clothes, but bad, smelly body odour
 - b) Nice, new paint on house, but inside, full of dead bodies
 - c) Outside of the cup is clean, but inside is filthy (Mt 23:25,26)
- e. There is such a difference

Spiritual Awakening	True Conversion
God drawing you (Jn 6:44)	You surrendering to Jesus Christ, and coming to Him as a sinner, guilty, and ready to be saved!
Fearing God, and death, and the devil – which is all good!	Running in faith, to the name of Jesus, and clinging to that Name as your only hope (Acts 4:12)
Starting to work hard at living right by NOT doing sins – aware that sins are killing you: smoking, fornicating, cursing	Surrendering to the power of the finished work of Christ on the cross, and allowing Christ to live through you every moment of every day (Gal 2:20)
Gets us coming to church	Gets us out soul-winning among the lost – can’t wait to tell the good news
Working hard, and worrying about whether you have done enough to “merit” God’s grace	Enjoying resting in Jesus, and just doing right because you know it pleases your Father!
Wanting to <i>Do</i> things differently	Wanting to Love God differently
Praying religiously	Praying passionately
Tithing 10%	Totally surrendering all of you to the will of God – the tithe is easy because it is God saying, keep the other 90%
King Agrippa had only a spiritual awakening (Acts 25:22; 26:27,28) - lost	Saul of Tarsus had conversion (Acts 9:1-6) – never the same thereafter

F. The Barriers to Conversion.

1. Pride – stops you from humbling yourself before God
 - a. No need to humble myself, and break emotionally
 - b. “I am doing my best” – which is usually a lie!
 - c. Stubbornness stops you from going all the way with God – as king Saul would not completely obey God ever, and so was lost!
2. Self-Righteousness
 - a. No need for God’s help
 - b. Doing all the moral things, without God’s support and intervention
 - c. The Pharisees, priests, religious leaders never would get converted because they believed they were “good enough” already
3. Fear

- a. Fear of losing friends
 - b. Abandoning your life and will is a big thing
 - c. Do you realize who are the first in hell? (Rev 21:8)
4. Ignorance
- a. Most of the world have been taught that just going to church, and keeping the Ten Commandments, and being sincere will be enough
 - b. So they go on through life patting themselves on the back for going to church, and trying hard to keep the Ten Commandments, and being very sincere about God – and they never come to Jesus Christ (Jn 5:40; 6:66-69)

G. **The Results/Product of True Conversion.**

1. **Confidence** – Assurance – you KNOW something happened to you! You can point to the place, and tell people the time when GOD came into your life and CHANGED you!
2. **Forgiveness** – Saved! Saved from hell, and going to heaven!
 - a. The whole reason why Christ came was because we are sinners, who rightly deserve hell
 - b. If we do all the ceremonies, and the rituals, all with the hope of being forgiven, but never get converted, we have wasted all our time!
 - c. By asking Jesus Christ specifically to forgive you and change you from the inside out – THEN are you saved!
 - d. And the forgiveness is complete!
3. You become more than just saved from hell – you become **a Child of God** – not a child of the church
 - a. We are all born the first time, a child of our parents for sure
 - b. But we are spiritually a child of the devil (Jn 8:44)
 - c. After all the process that God brings a person through to wake them up to their need for Christ, what a shame if they stop and neglect the most important part – going on through the door of Jesus Christ only?
 - d. It is at that point a person gets converted – saved – born again!
4. **Real Joy.**
 - a. There is no greater joy than finally being what God made you to be – His child!
 - b. That’s why people are called “lost” – they have no idea what their design is, or purpose!
 - c. And what they are stuck with is a defective heart, and a defective imagination, and a defective body
 - d. But when Jesus Christ changes all that, and takes even DEATH away, you can’t help but shout and jump, and leap, and sing!

IV. **Conclusion**

- A. Why might you be having some doubts about your relationship with God?
 1. Could it be because you are worried about the process of your salvation?
 - a. Did you pray right?
 - b. Was Jesus only “added” to your life, or made Lord of your life?
 - c. Was your salvation Gradual, or Instant?
 - d. Who accomplished the payment for your sins? You, or Jesus?
 - e. Did you have only a silent half-hearted prayer with no outward confession (Rom 10:10) – Ashamed? (Rom 10:11)

- f. There may be people in this room with no doubts at all – simply because they never got born again to begin with (2Cor 13:5)
 2. Or secondly, maybe you have gotten stuck in the road to getting saved, and never “arrived” at the door? Are you only “spiritually aware?” or have you been truly born again?
 3. If you HAVE been born again, praise God!
 4. But if you are only coming to church, and praying, and keeping the Ten Commandments, and trying to read the Bible, and trying to be real good, but you have no peace in your heart about Jesus being your Saviour, then today is a great day to get saved!
- B. Next Time, we will look at a third reason why people doubt and struggle with whether they are really saved or not – because sinful habits constantly are re-occurring in their life! And I will show you how to get the victory over entrenched sins!

Dealing with Sin

DATE: 5 Oct, 2003 AM

PLACE: BBC Blarney

I. Introduction (John 5:24; 1Jn 5:11-13)

A. Review

1. The Saviour – Jesus
 - a. Talking to a bunch of religious zealots, who were trying their best to work their way to heaven
 - b. Trying to convince them that the answer to sin's judgment and condemnation (conviction like a guilty criminal) was a substitute – a Saviour who would intervene and “save” them from their sins (Mt 1:21)
 - c. Only Jesus could do that – that's why it is called CHRIST-ianity, and not MARY-anity, or POPE-ianity, or CHURCH-ianity
2. The Sinner
 - a. Forget about all the pagans, and the heathens
 - b. The problem is with the religious-minded – they think they AREN'T sinners!
 - c. According to the Bible, everyone is a sinner – not to the same degree, but in the sight of God, they are condemned, lost, in NEED of a Saviour, no matter how hard they work at not sinning and being good, and going to church, and praying, etc.
3. The Process
 - a. People have controlled entire nations, and dominated the masses with the development of religious systems of good works
 - b. Yet Jesus sweeps all religions, every one of them, away with the words on the cross, IT IS FINISHED, and declares that anyone, who simply believes God was in Jesus Christ, dying in the place of all sinners, that person would be SAVED – would pass, from DEATH (being under condemnation, on death-row), unto life – eternal life!
 - c. Notice – it is all by the WORKS of Jesus Christ on the cross – no more work for me, or anyone else to do – only believe with all my heart (Eph 2:8,9)
 - d. Anything that interferes with these three simple truths, damns!
- B. The Gospel is such a powerful truth, that it changed the world – Biblical Christianity turned this world upside down
- C. But to this day, there is a lot of confusion, and misunderstandings constantly thrown at Christians, that cause many to of all things, DOUBT their salvation
 1. They come from feelings
 2. They come from failures of religions – discover they were made of straw
- D. Jesus took care of the impossible – the forgiving of every sin
- E. So many people are hindered in their growth as Christians – mostly because they struggle with sin still in their life
 1. Not that they didn't get saved
 2. But because SIN has a grip on their minds, and memories, and wills
- F. We are currently looking at the six reasons why people doubt their salvation, and then look at just what assurances do we have that a person can KNOW that they really are born again into God's family!
- G. There really are only Six Reasons for Doubts in the life of a person.
 1. Having a False “Process” of Salvation.

- a. Been through all the motions
 - b. Cleaned the outside of the cup so to speak – but no inner change
 - c. Not ever been born again!
 - d. 90% of all religious folks are lost, and if not doubting their salvation, they ought to be!
2. People Confuse Spiritual Awakening with Conversion.
- a. This is another group, who feel that since they care about going to church, and are interested in the Bible, and they love their neighbour, they must be a Christian
 - b. But that is just spiritual awareness, that is not conversion – the changing of the person
 - c. People are trusting their own “spiritual-ness” instead of Jesus Christ
 - d. They end up in hell with the devil!
3. People Fear Having Committed The Unpardonable Sin (Mt 3:22-30)
4. People are Full Of Guilt, Shame, Sorrow – because of defilement (Tit 1:15)
5. Bitterness kills the joy of salvation (Mt 6:12-15; Acts 8:18-24; Heb 12:15) – a doorway to demonic attacks
6. Most people have No Firm Biblical Convictions (Rom 14:5) – blown about with every “wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14)

H. This morning we are going to look at TWO more reasons why people doubt their salvation (**John 16:5-11**)

II. Message - Fear Of Having Committed The Unpardonable Sin (Mt 12:22-30)

- A. All sins are bad – lots of people hold to the view that there are two kinds of sins:
1. Venial sins – sins that are ok, everybody does it, God understands
 2. Mortal sins – sins that damn you
- B. Well, there ARE two different kinds of sin – just not like THAT!
1. The sin unto death (Rom 6:23) – sins that kill you
 - a. Smoking
 - b. Drinking – try driving, or getting into a fight after a few drinks – end up in A&E, or dead!
 2. Unpardonable sin – unforgivable by God
 - a. What we think are unforgiveable
 - 1) Adultery – yet the majority of people here are such
 - 2) Murder – how could God forgive a murderer?
 - b. But there is only ONE unforgivable sin – we are going to learn about it this morning – take that fear away
- C. Let’s Learn from the Lord Jesus just what this kind of sin is that is unpardonable, unforgivable, and see if anyone in this room has really committed it (Mt 12:22-32)
1. A Demon-possessed man:
 - a. blind, and dumb (mute, unable to speak) – a lot of people are that way today, and all the drugs in the world won’t help them!
 - b. Jesus simply heals him – no hocus-pocus, no struggle, no sweat!
 2. The watching crowd

- a. The people watching were AMAZED – remembered the Scriptures that said the Messiah would come and do such things – the promised Son of David!
 - b. So now you know why Jesus healed in the first place – to prove to people He was who He claimed to be- the Saviour (12:28)!
3. The problem
- a. Jesus was NOT what the religious leaders expected
 - b. They thought the Messiah would praise THEM for their goodness, and for THEIR religion – Jesus only had rebuke and contempt for them
4. The Pharisee’s solution
- a. The Pharisees believed what Jesus was doing was actually by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils – this idea had been developing since Mt 8:32-34)
 - b. They believed that if they demonized Jesus, the people would reject Him, and return back to THEIR religion
5. The Explanation (12:25-28)
- a. Divided kingdoms cannot stand – same with homes, and churches
 - 1) Satan punching his own right hand man
 - 2) Christians hurting one another
 - b. Satan only attacks Jesus Christ and anything associated with him – never himself (12:25-26)
 - 1) The Jesus of the Bible is the most hated name in all the universe
 - 2) It is THAT name that saves somebody from hell
 - 3) It is that name that grants us answered prayer
 - 4) It is to that name that we shall bow to
 - 5) It is that person that we shall stand before at the judgment
 - c. The disciples (their children) were healing everybody as well, and were doing it by the same power as Jesus (12:27)
 - d. A greater power than Satan himself was at work, and wants to work in every life on this planet (12:28)
6. The Picture (12:29,30)
- a. A house is well-protected
 - b. In order to “spoil” take –over that house, you must first BIND the strong man of the house – the person in charge
 - c. The house is US – our life
 - d. The strong man is the devil, and our choice to be under HIS dominion
 - e. Jesus is the stronger man that can defeat the devil
 - f. THAT is what salvation is – surrender to a greater force
 - g. If a person is working in any other direction that with Jesus Christ, they are working AGAINST GOD!
 - h. Now, THAT ought to scare a lot of people!
7. Jesus’ warning (12:31-32)
- a. Jesus warned them that they were in danger of committing the sin that cannot be forgiven – what a warning!
 - b. To believe that Jesus was “of the devil” is to make everything He did of no value to you –and therefore seal your own destiny – because He is the only way to heaven (Jn 14:6)

- 1) A lot of people today actually believe this – that Jesus was a liar, a fake, a fraud!
 - 2) Can you imagine anything so hurtful?
 - 3) Yet, you can be forgiven for believing Jesus was a fake – you can be told the truth, and allowed to repent
 - 4) It what you believe was BEHIND Jesus Christ
- c. But, there are two parts to this SIN
- 1) The other half of the equation is that when they believed that, they would then have to believe that the coming anti-christ was the actual Messiah, come from God instead.
 - 2) Nobody YET believes that, but in the coming tribulation (and we are nearly there):
 - a) People will only believe the Jesus of the Bible was a faker and a fraud
 - b) People will believe Jesus was a lie *of the devil*
 - c) People will then believe that a world political leader who will appear on the scene is actually the Messiah, and believe that HE has come to save the world – when in fact, he will be the anti-christ, who has come to destroy the world.
 - d) That leads to untold millions who will commit the unpardonable sin of taking the Mark of that anti-christ, called *the Mark of the beast* out of worship to him, and seal their damnation
8. Don't let charismatics, and powerful religious leaders scare you – they say when you question a religious leader, you are questioning the HOLY SPIRIT and committing the unpardonable sin!
- a. Try every spirit (1Jn 4:1) – put every thing that is preached, and presented in church to the test, to make sure it is true, and right and from God
 - b. We do that in politics, and in health, and in Schools
 - c. We should have been doing it all along in **churches** as well
- D. If you fear you have committed the unpardonable sin, then you really are ok
1. No Christian can commit this sin, because they have the Holy Spirit in their lives, and He cannot deny the truth about Jesus!
 2. Only people who couldn't care less, are on their way to hell!
 3. Only people who think Jesus was a faker and a fraud are unsaveable
 4. Remember the two thieves?
 - a. One ranted and raved about how unfair and unjust his punishment was – yelled and screamed about his righteousness – died and went to hell
 - b. The other one, accepted he was a sinner, and accepted his punishment as just and right, yet looked to Jesus and trusted that He was THE King, and would reign, and live as King forever, and so, that thief asked Jesus to save him
 - c. One thief was unsaveable
 - d. The other was heaven-bound, because of faith in Jesus
- E. Next time, we are going to look at another thing that hinders our confidence: **Being Full Of Guilt, Shame, Sorrow** – because of defilement (Tit 1:15)

III. Conclusion

- A. Many Christians worry a lot about having maybe committed this “unpardonable sin”
- B. Folks, it is very hard to commit this sin
- C. It will become easier and easier as the time approaches the Tribulation
- D. But thank God, Christians we be out of here!

E. Folks the Gospel is all about three things:

1. The Saviour – Jesus – someone who intervened to “save” us from our sins
2. The Sinner
 - a. According to the Bible, everyone is a sinner – not to the same degree, but in the sight of God, they are condemned, lost, in NEED of a Saviour, no matter how hard they work at not sinning and being good, and going to church, and praying, etc.
3. The Salvation Process
 - a. Jesus sweeps all religions, every one of them, away with the words on the cross, IT IS FINISHED, and declares that anyone, who simply believes God was in Jesus Christ, dying in the place of all sinners, that person would be SAVED – would pass, from DEATH (being under condemnation, on death-row), unto life – eternal life!
 - b. Notice – it is all by the WORKS of Jesus Christ on the cross – no more work for me, or anyone else to do – only believe with all my heart (Eph 2:8,9)
4. Anything that interferes with these three simple truths, damns! If you look to any other source for forgiveness, or become convinced that Jesus did everything he did by the power of the devil, then you are in serious trouble – there is only one more step for you – take the mark.
5. But the rest of us, are listening for a shout from heaven!

Dealing with Sin's Dominance of Our Lives

DATE: 19 Oct, 2003 AM

PLACE: BBC Blarney

I. Introduction (Tit 1:15)

- A. So many Christians are burned-out on the inside
- B. Sin has done its job – made it so people think:
 - 1. They have gone too far down to be saved
 - 2. Aren't worthy of being saved
 - 3. Can't live the Christian life
 - 4. Are only a hypocrite
- C. So the devil just keeps going on, devouring God's people, and keeping sinners from getting saved
- D. Folks, there are only two kinds of Christians in this room:
 - 1. Those who have been defiled, and stayed defiled
 - 2. Or those who have been defiled, and then purified, and decided to stay pure!
- E. The purpose of this study series is to help the Christian deal with doubts about their salvation
- F. To this day, there is a lot of confusion, and misunderstandings constantly thrown at Christians, that cause many to of all things, DOUBT their salvation
 - 1. They come from feelings
 - 2. They come from failures of religions – discover they were made of straw
- G. Jesus took care of the impossible – the forgiving of every sin
- H. So many people are hindered in their growth as Christians – mostly because they struggle with sin still in their life
 - 1. Not that they didn't get saved
 - 2. But because SIN has a grip on their minds, and memories, and wills
- I. We are currently looking at the six reasons why people doubt their salvation, and then look at just what assurances do we have that a person can KNOW that they really are born again into God's family!
- J. There really are only Six Reasons for Doubts in the life of a person.
 - 1. Having a False "Process" of Salvation.
 - a. Been through all the motions
 - b. Cleaned the outside of the cup so to speak – but no inner change
 - c. Not ever been born again!
 - d. 90% of all religious folks are lost, and if not doubting their salvation, they ought to be!
 - 2. People Confuse Spiritual Awakening with Conversion.
 - a. This is another group, who feel that since they care about going to church, and are interested in the Bible, and they love their neighbour, they must be a Christian
 - b. But that is just spiritual awareness, that is not conversion – the changing of the person
 - c. People are trusting their own "spiritual-ness" instead of Jesus Christ
 - d. They end up in hell with the devil!
 - 3. People Fear Having Committed The Unpardonable Sin (Mt 3:22-30)
 - 4. People are Full Of Guilt, Shame, Sorrow – because of defilement (Tit 1:15)

5. Bitterness kills the joy of salvation (Mt 6:12-15; Acts 8:18-24; Heb 12:15) – a doorway to demonic attacks
6. Most people have No Firm Biblical Convictions (Rom 14:5) – blown about with every “wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14)

II. Background

A. Sin – what is it?

1. We always think of sin as doing something very bad, like murdering someone, or stealing millions of euros
2. But sin is when we fall short of what God told us to do.
3. Missing the target – like in archery
 - a. The target is God's requirement for righteousness
 - b. Anything else is sin – if I do anything else than what God demands, then THAT is sin – even if what I am doing is a good thing!
 - c. EX: Dad tells his son to clean up the front garden. The son decides to wash the car. Washing the car is a nice thing to do, but because he did not clean up the front garden, the washing of the car was a SIN – it was in disobedience to what the Dad had told him to do
 - d. EX: King Saul was told to destroy the nation of the Amalekites. Instead, Saul decided to keep some things, and dedicate them to God. He was going to offer lots of sheep and cattle from Amalek to God. God rebuked Saul and said to simply obey is better than any sacrifice! Saul had sinned in doing things his own way, and not God's
 - e. THAT is what sin is – doing things our own way (Cf Isa 53:6)

B. There are four things about sin that affect everybody on this planet

1. Sin's Presence

- a. I was born with sin (Job 14:1; Ps 51:5)
- b. I will struggle with it until the day I die (Rom 6:7)
- c. No matter how many times you move and change addresses – try to live on a mountain, or in a cave, or soon, on the moon, and you still will face sin in your life!

2. Sin's Power (Rom 7:15,19)

- a. More powerful than will-power (somebody said it is not will power, but WON'T power we need)
- b. Sin affects not only the most filthy of people
- c. But also the most righteous, and most godly people – there is NONE righteous – NO NOT ONE!
- d. Mother Theresa was a SINNER! Papa John Paul is a SINNER! Pastor Craig Ledbetter is a SINNER! Bono is a SINNER!
- e. Sin has affected everyone! Without exception
- f. The only One who ever defeated sin's power was the God-Man Jesus Christ!

3. Sin's Penalty (Rom 5:12; 6:23a; Eccl 8:8)

- a. Sin kills, maims, cripples, ruins, hurts, bruises, tortures, abandons, defeats every opponent
- b. It is a spiritual law – a fixed law of God that SIN can NEVER benefit anybody more than for a short season
- c. The end result of sin is always, and only death!
- d. No matter how little amount of sin you might have

- 1) ONE sin doomed Adam and Eve
 - 2) Little infants die every day – sin in them, and in their parents, and in the doctors, and in the governments, kills them
 - 3) Sin is killing this world
- e. But it doesn't stop at the grave (Jn 3:16) if sin has its way, the sinner will die for all eternity in a lake of fire. Sin's penalty is drastic!
4. Sin's Stain – defilement - This is the after-effect of sin in our lives! It affects us even after the sin has been dealt with!
- a. Sin Stains our Conscience
 - 1) Like pornography – you can be forgiven for it, but its stain remains
 - 2) Like anger – you can be forgiven, but it burns out the heart
 - 3) Like depression and overmuch sorrow – burns out the heart
 - 4) Sin affects our ability to be soft, and innocent, and responsive to gentleness
 - b. Sin Stains/Affects other lives – that is what history is all about
 - 1) War – the direct result of sinful actions of greed and pride
 - 2) Adultery – how many lives have been ruined by lust?
 - 3) Covetousness – makes Christmas of the devil
 - 4) Lies – Hitler's lies lead Europe into 45 million deaths
 - 5) History's sins still affects people long after the sin has been forgotten
 - a) People today still carry the stains of WWI and WWII
 - b) People carry the affects of sins against them when they were children in Christian Brother-run organisations
 - 6) Everyone in this room has been stained with the stain of sin
 - 7) EX: blood stain on the road after being hit by a car – lots of work cleaning up blood stains
 - c. Sin Stains/Affects the plan of God – sins can change it
 - 1) Israel should have been in the Promised Land in 2-3 weeks after leaving Egypt. Instead it took them 40 years
 - 2) When Jesus was here, all of Israel should have gotten saved – instead they rejected Jesus as the Messiah, and were crushed as a nation by the Roman army in 70 AD
 - 3) Thankfully, God is greater than our failures, and can wash away even every stain. Let me show you how

III. Message – Undoing the Work of Sin

A. Let's First Look at What Will Not Work

1. Your best efforts – will not remove sin, its power, presence, penalty, or stain from your life
2. Religions – more and more people are realising that religions never have conquered sin, so now, religions are teaching there is no such thing as SIN any more
 - a. Homosexuality is not a sin anymore – just an alternative lifestyle
 - b. Nothing is a sin anymore – just a bad thing is someone gets hurt
 - c. All the religious effort, priests, bishops, popes, dali lamas and ceremonies in the world can never take away sin (Heb 10:11)
3. Ignoring it also will not make it go away

- a. People today are deciding that the best way to deal with sins is to ignore them – pretend that sin is not real – that God doesn't care
- b. People actually think that by saying there is no hell, then hell will disappear, and that that will be that!

B. Conquering Sin – Step by Step

1. By the New Birth – can't begin to resist sin without the power of the new birth
 2. By the Blood of Christ (1Jn 1:7)
 3. By the Bible (Ps 119:11; 9; Ps 37:31)
 4. By the Fear of the Lord (Pr 16:6)
 5. By the Blessed Hope (1Jn 3:1-3; Tit 2:11-15)
 6. By the Freedom that is in Jesus Christ (Jn 8:32,36)
 7. By Restitution (1Pet 3:15,16) – by going in the right direction, no matter the cost
 - a. We all have guilty consciences because we have not gone and repented of sins, and said we are guilty, and sorry, and willing to accept punishment (Act 25:11)
 - b. We need to become aware of how we have hurt people, and go back to them, and with a broken heart say we are sorry, and then try and make it up to them
 - c. OTHERWISE, your heart will only condemn you more and more and defile you, and there will never be any joy in either your life or the life of the one your have offended!
 - d. This step is missing in 99.9% of all people today – too proud!
- C. Every day you need to review these seven areas, and activate them, or sin will begin to accumulate and overwhelm you!

IV. Conclusion

- A. So many Christians are burned-out on the inside
- B. Sin has done its job – made it so people think:
 1. They have gone too far down to be saved
 2. Aren't worthy of being saved
 3. Can't live the Christian life
 4. Are only a hypocrite
- C. So the devil just keeps going on, devouring God's people, and keeping sinners from getting saved
- D. Folks, there are only two kinds of Christians in this room:
 1. Those who have been defiled, and stayed defiled – ruins their lives
 2. Or those who have been defiled, and then purified, and decided to stay pure!
- E. Jesus did not die in vain – He can wash away all of your sin, AND its stains

Dealing with Bitterness and the Past

Heb 12:14-15

DATE: 26 Oct, 2003 AM

PLACE: BBC Blarney

I. Introduction () Putting the Past in the Past

- A. So many people are hindered in their growth as Christians – mostly because they struggle with sin still in their life
1. Not that they didn't get saved
 2. But because SIN has a grip on their minds, and memories, and wills
- B. We are currently looking at the six reasons why people doubt their salvation, have no Christian joy, and show no signs of growth!
- C. There really are only Six Reasons for Doubts in the life of a person.
1. Having a False "Process" of Salvation. Have the motions, the prayers, but not the Person – Jesus makes you a Christian!
 2. People Confuse Spiritual Awakening with Conversion.
 3. People Fear Having Committed The Unpardonable Sin (Mt 3:22-30)
 4. People are Full Of Guilt, Shame, Sorrow – because of defilement (Tit 1:15)
 5. Bitterness kills the joy of salvation (Mt 6:12-15; Acts 8:18-24; Heb 12:15) – a doorway to demonic attacks
 6. Most people have No Firm Biblical Convictions (Rom 14:5) – blown about with every "wind of doctrine" (Eph 4:14)
- D. This morning, we will look at how bitterness ruins our relationship with God! We all know how bitterness ruins our relationship with other people, but it ruins, defiles our relationship with God!
- E. To make it abundantly clear, bitterness is a wicked, wicked sin that is present in most every person in this room!
- F. **Bitterness** (**READ**: Mt 6:12-15; Acts 8:18-24; Heb 12:15) – a doorway to demonic attacks, and a defeated Christian life!
1. The Bible tells us, Heb 12:15, "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."
 2. Bitterness is the root of so many sins – it causes people to: Kill, Hate, Hurt, Retaliate, Destroy another life
 3. Amazingly, Bitterness starts with a **grudge** – a feeling of unfairness
 - a. Adam had it when confronted by God about his disobedience. Thought God had been unfair to give him a wife who would cause him to sin
 - b. Job was ultimately bitter about losing everything – thought it unfair
 - c. Naomi that her life was unfair, and was bitter against God (Ruth 1:19-21)
 - d. Esau was bitter against Jacob's trickery – never got over it, and it ruined him!
 - e. MOST marriages are full of bitterness:
 - 1) Bitter men say the cutest things:
 - a) I married Miss Right. I just didn't know her first name was Always.
 - b) It's not true that married men live longer than single men. It only seems longer.
 - c) Losing a wife can be hard. In my case, it was nearly impossible.
 - d) Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street bald and still think they are beautiful.
 - 2) Bitter women say the cutest things:

- a) Men are like computers - Hard to figure out and never enough memory.
 - b) Men are like horoscopes - They always tell you what to do, and they usually are wrong.
4. Bitterness drains away all joy, and all strength, and leaves you only empty, and angry – what a way for a Christian to be!!!
 5. You easily will doubt you ever were a Christian when you live a life full of bitterness!
 6. A lot of Christians are under constant demonic attack – simply because they are bitter, angry, upset over people in their lives!
 7. The only cure to bitterness is
 - a. Pulling it up by the roots – carefully, one at a time – find what is feeding your bitterness, and unplug it!
 - b. Paying for any acts you have done out of bitterness, yourself:
 - 1) Every bitter word you say MUST be apologized for
 - 2) Every bitter act must be repented of
 - 3) Delve deep into your heart, and find out in your past when you picked up that bitter feeling and do the following:
 - a) Repent of harbouring it – keeping it around
 - b) Reject its power in your life
 - c) Replace it with GRACE (Heb 12:28)
 - c. It is THEN that God can restore unto the JOY of your salvation!
 8. So, let's get into the study of this attitude, and conquer it, before it totally conquers our lives!

II. Message

A. **The Curse Of Bitterness.** It is a Curse – there is NOTHING Good about Bitterness

1. Bitterness has a root – a source
 - a. Bitterness starts as a "root". It starts as a little tiny root; therefore, it is very hard to detect. The root of bitterness is not large or on the surface where it can be easily detected; rather--like a cancer--it does its insidious work deep down in the marrow of your soul. Only after it has metastasised do symptoms surface in bitter words, bitter thoughts, and bitter deeds.
 - b. All actions against us that we feel are unfair result in bitterness. And I have to admit, I feel most actions against me are unfair – only natural
 - c. Bitterness results from unresolved frustration over anger or envy between you and someone else. The key word is "frustration". And don't ignore the fact that most people, if they are bitter, it is because they are angry (openly, or secretly) with God!
2. Bitterness has fruit – by-product – it completely replaces God in your life
 - a. The fruits of bitterness are anger, wrath, slander, hate, and malice (or desire to see another suffer).
 - b. **Bitterness produces the "sin" of unforgiveness**
 - 1) Spiritually: Inability to love God. If we fail to forgive, we break the commandments of loving God and forgiving one another.
 - 2) Emotionally: Creates an emotional focus toward the one who hurt. It results in us becoming just like the one we resent.
 - c. Bitterness not only destroys your life--it ruins others! i.e. to contaminate - it makes one unable to properly worship, fellowship with, and serve the Lord.

3. Let me tell you a true story: **The Case of a Woman named Catherine**

- a. In his excellent little book, *The Secret of the Vine*, Bruce Wilkenson tells the story of Catherine, "a bright, sixtysomething professional" whom he met at a weekend spiritual retreat. At dinner on the Friday night, she admitted that she'd never been able to break through to a rewarding Christian life. "I just don't feel like my faith amounts to anything-except guilt. I always feel like God is unhappy with me."
- b. She expressed sentiments like that all through dinner. About the time dessert was being served, Bruce had an idea. "Catherine, I think there's something that's keeping you spiritually **stuck**."
- c. "Like what?" she said.
- d. After ruling out several possibilities, he suggested that unforgiveness might be the blockage in her walk with God, it is called "hardening of the attitudes."
- e. The next morning, she cornered him right after breakfast. She'd had a nearly sleepless night. Bruce's words the night before had opened an old wound. It was her bitterness toward her aged mother. She was bitter and unforgiving of her – everything about her. He advised her to write out on paper everything - all the injuries and accusations – that she associated with her mother.
- f. On the Sunday morning, Catherine found him. "This is it," she said. "This is what has controlled my life." It was five pages, handwritten, small writing, of every hurt she'd held on to for all those years.
- g. After an hour talking and weeping, Catherine was able to repent of her unforgiving spirit and release her mother. As Wilkinson writes, even amid her tears, she looked 20 years younger.
- h. But that's not all.
- i. Six months later, he got a note from Catherine. She had reconciled with her mother. But there was more. Her note said in part, "I'm back on speaking terms with God. It feels like my soul is breathing again. Even my non-Christian friends have noticed the change in me. And I've started enjoying serving God, too."
- j. There are a lot of "Catherine's" in this room today!

4. Bitterness is rampant in our families, society, and our churches. I will not be able to list all the causes for bitterness. In fact, bitterness is tailor made for every person. What may make me bitter may not make you bitter.
 - a. Children are bitter towards parents. Parents are bitter toward children. It could be for any number of "reasons!"
 - b. The divorced and separated are bitter toward their former spouses. And I mean BITTER! Again, I don't doubt it is for good reasons too!
 - c. Children of divorce and separation are bitter toward their parents for splitting.
 - d. Siblings are bitter over rivalries for parental affection and inheritances. So many loving families have been destroyed by the bitterness that came from just the reading of a will.
 - e. There is bitterness in the work place. Co-workers resent each other and their supervisors. There is class envy between employees and business owners.
 - f. There is bitterness in the church.
 - 1) People are bitter toward their pastor (they say "He doesn't understand, or he doesn't care"). And, sadly, many pastors are bitter toward church members ("Why don't they listen?").
 - 2) Bitterness between Christians over hurtful words, deeds, or attitudes are deadening and dividing churches everywhere.
 - g. Worst of all, bitterness only gets worse. Bitterness will come out into the open! Just as every cancer eventually manifests itself.

5. Think – if Joseph had gotten bitter in prison, he would have missed out on God’s miracle that he had planned for Joseph as Prince!

B. The Course Of Bitterness.

1. Do you suffer from a root of bitterness? Examine yourself. Do you have the symptoms--the Warning Signs of Bitterness?
2. **STAGES OF BITTERNESS**
 - a. Oversensitive to a verbal remark, action, or even the lack of action. Watch people on TV concerning the lack of action by a government official – it is NOT Christian to act that way!
 - b. Hurt feelings.
 - c. Repulsive feeling toward a person at the thought or sight of him.
 - d. Retaining wounds and frequently talking about them. WANTING to keep a wound open, and fresh, and painful!!!
 - e. The obvious alienation of a person that has hurt you
 - 1) Turning over in bed away from your spouse without kissing them and telling them you love them, and just ignoring them, hoping to HURT them – that is Bitterness!
 - 2) Walking right by them in your own house and acting like they are not there!
 - f. Verbal slander against the person.
 - g. Lack of obedience to what you know is right to do (ref Mt 5:44,45). Just because someone else won’t do right, makes it right for you to not do right either! Oh yeah, real Christians aren’t we?!
 - h. Becoming like the one you despise. Be very careful!
3. When a person who has offended you walks into a room, how do you respond?
 - a. Do negative feelings immediately overcome you causing you to put on a hypocritical happy face?
 - b. Do you intentionally turn away to ignore and avoid him or her?
 - c. Does the mere mention of his or her name leave a "bitter taste in your mouth"?
 - d. Does thinking about him or her "make you sick"--give you a bitter stomach?
 - e. Do you have a similar negative reaction when you just hear his or her name mentioned?
 - f. Do you resent his or her success--hearing any good report about him or her?
 - g. Do you secretly desire misfortune or failure--or worse--to come his or her way?
 - h. Does the person who offended or hurt you come to mind often? Seem to “haunt” you?
 - i. Do you mentally argue with them--i.e. dream or daydream about "putting him or her in their place"?
 - j. Do you feel the need, or do you see a tendency to talk to others about the failures or shortcomings of those who have hurt or offended you?
4. **Characteristics of a bitter person:**
 - a. A bitter person cares very little for the person he is bitter against.
 - b. He or she is very touchy about anything that has to do with the people that have hurt them.
 - c. They can be ungrateful for everything.
 - d. Gives empty flattery and harsh criticism.
 - e. Holds grudges and finds it difficult to forgive.
 - f. He displays stubbornness or a sulky attitude.

- g. Will help no one or complains sometimes when asked to help.
 - h. Experiences mood extremes—highs and lows.
5. If you have any of these symptoms, you have more than a root of bitterness! **YOU ARE a BITTER person, and are under its CURSE!** The danger is that the curse has a **COURSE** that will take you down the path of emotional, spiritual, and physical destruction without Emergency Biblical Intervention!
- a. Has that someone said or done something that offended you? Well, did you fail to deal with it Scripturally (Matthew 18:15-19)? If not, bitterness will surely take root then?!
 - b. Did you allow a bitter seed to germinate in your soul and spirit? Is it affecting you physically (other things can cause this symptoms)--high blood pressure? Insomnia? Indigestion? Is your home suffering because of that bitterness? Are others defiled because of you? Are your children infected? Could that be where their bitterness and rebelliousness comes from? **You do reap what you sow!**
 - c. Have you unintentionally contaminated others with this insidious spiritual disease? Brethren, do not err! When bitterness takes root--many are "defiled"! Hearts, homes, and churches have been destroyed! We need a cure for bitterness! The Bible gives us the cure.
6. Let me take a step back here, and clarify something: It is not wrong to feel hurt, but how you deal with it makes all the difference in what happens to you! When we are trying to deal with the hurt from someone else, don't end up hurting yourself instead!

C. The Cure For Bitterness.

1. **Examine Yourself** (Ps 139:23-24)
 - a. Have you asked God to search you and to cleanse you from the sin of bitterness?
 - b. I wrestled with bitterness against my Dad, and some of the people in this church. I have had families left our church, and I became bitter toward them for hurting the new Christians here. This root of bitterness grew in me. I had many of the Warning Signs of Bitterness in my life.
 - c. God spoke to me clearly about being bitter against anybody – I was to preach on, and love on, and let God judge them, NOT ME – and believe me, God has and will judge them!
 - d. But I have decided that God's mercy wants to get them right, not get them back! So I already forgiven them and rejected their power over my life! The same with my Dad for leaving my Mom when I was 12.
 - e. Now it is up to my Dad to get saved, and Oh how I want to do what I can to see him saved – not punished!
2. **Confess** – agree with God
 - a. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)
 - b. If the Doctor told you that a benign looking little mole on your arm was actually a melanoma--the most virulent form of skin cancer and that melanoma can spread to your liver, lungs, or brain, would you say, "Oh, let's just let it grow." Or, would you want to have it removed--immediately? Why then will you let a little root of bitterness remain in your spirit?
 - c. "For, if we would judge ourselves--we should not be judged!" 1 Cor 11:31
3. **Forgive** – only brief here, next time I will look more at Unforgiveness

- a. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31,32)
- b. Forgive--to be forgiven! Forgive like Christ would forgive. Love like Christ would love. Walk like Christ. Talk like Christ. You have no right to think you are BETTER THAN JESUS!
- c. Would Christ harbour/hold onto a root of bitterness? Why do you? Are you a Christian? Maybe not!
- d. Important – Forgiving does not mean Trusting
 - 1) To forgive someone of a sin, does not mean they can be trusted right away
 - 2) To forgive means to Accept the Pain and not make the other person hurt for it.
 - 3) Trust is something very different – everyone that hurts someone has lost the trust of that person, and must restore their trustworthiness

4. **Confront**

- a. Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. (Matthew 18:15)
 - b. After you have considered YOURSELF and after you have confessed YOUR sin, then--and only then--confront with compassion and Christlikeness those have offended you. Tell him his fault privately.
 - c. Many Christians have never realized that they have wronged someone else. Have you ever hurt someone and not known it? I have. Give them the benefit of the doubt--it's the Christian thing to do!
 - d. A sincere Christian--"A good man is a reasonable man!"--will be quick to make things right.
5. **Rejoice** – this is the burying part – ability to bury what a person did into the past, and leave it there. It will now be on THEIR head!
- a. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. (Romans 12:18)
 - b. Notice Matthew 18:15 says, "If he shall hear thee..." Some people do not repent.
 - c. If they do not do right, then they are wrong; HOWEVER, if you have done all that you should do, then you can comfort yourself in the fact that you have done what is right! There is nothing more that you can do. Don't worry about it! It is the offender's problem now.

III. Conclusion - May God purge out any root of bitterness in our lives!

- A. Folks, bitterness ruins our relationship with God! We all know how bitterness ruins our relationship with other people, but it ruins, defiles our relationship with God!
- B. To make it abundantly clear, bitterness is a wicked, wicked sin that is present in most every person in this room!
- C. I hope you have learned that Bitterness is a doorway to demonic attacks, and a defeated Christian life!
- D. The only cure to bitterness is
 1. Pulling it up by the roots – carefully, one at a time – find what is feeding your bitterness, and unplug it! Called, **Examining Yourself!**
 2. Paying for any acts you have done out of bitterness, YOURSELF:
 - a. Every bitter word you say MUST be apologized for
 - b. Every bitter act must be repented of

- c. Delve deep into your heart, and find out in your past when you picked up that bitter feeling and do the following:
 - 1) Repent of harbouring it – keeping it around
 - 2) Reject its power in your life
 - 3) Replace it with GRACE (Heb 12:28)
3. Then you can forgive them
4. Then you can go and confront the person who hurt you
5. It is THEN that God can restore unto the JOY of your salvation!
- E. Next time, in three weeks, we will study Unforgiveness, which is another name for bitterness

How Forgiveness Works

How A Person Finds Forgiveness, Instructs Us About Salvation

Genesis 33:1-11,20

DATE: 2 June, 1995 AM; 16 Nov, 2003 AM
DATE: 26 Aug, 2001

PLACE: BBC Blarney
PLACE: BBC Mallow

I. Introduction

- A. So many people are hindered in their growth as Christians – we are like an engine that instead of new oil lubricating all the inside wheels and gears, there is a lot of old, hard *gook* that makes it impossible to even get the engine started!
1. That gook is sin in our lives – all mucked up inside our hearts!
 2. It is sin that has a grip on our minds, and memories, and our attitudes
 3. And it hinders a Christian's joy, and growth, and makes them doubt they really are saved to begin with!
- B. There really are only Six Reasons for Doubts in the life of a person.
1. Having a False "Process" of Salvation. Have the motions, the prayers, nut not the Person – Jesus makes you a Christian!
 2. People Confuse Spiritual Awakening with Conversion.
 3. People Fear Having Committed The Unpardonable Sin (Mt 3:22-30)
 4. People are Full Of Guilt, Shame, Sorrow – because of defilement (Tit 1:15)
 5. Bitterness and unforgiveness kills the joy of salvation (Mt 6:12-15; Acts 8:18-24; Heb 12:15) – a doorway to demonic attacks
 6. Most people have No Firm Biblical Convictions (Rom 14:5) – blown about with every "wind of doctrine" (Eph 4:14)
- C. This morning, we will continue to look at how bitterness ruins our relationship with God! We all know how bitterness ruins our relationship with other people, but it ruins, defiles our relationship with God!
- D. To make it abundantly clear, bitterness is a wicked, wicked sin that is present in most every person in this room!
- E. **Bitterness** (**READ**: Mt 6:12-15; Acts 8:18-24; Heb 12:15) – a doorway to demonic attacks, and a defeated Christian life!
1. The Bible tells us, Heb 12:15, "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of god; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."
 2. Bitterness is the root of so many sins – it causes people to: Kill, Hate, Hurt, Retaliate, Destroy another life
 3. Amazingly, Bitterness starts with a **grudge** – a feeling of unfairness
 - a. Adam had it when confronted by God about his disobedience. Thought God had been unfair to give him a wife who would cause him to sin
 - b. Job was ultimately bitter about losing everything – thought it unfair
 - c. Naomi believed that her life was unfair, and was bitter against God (Ruth 1:19-21)
 - d. Esau was bitter against Jacob's trickery – never got over it, and it ruined him!
 - e. MOST marriages are full of bitterness:
 4. Bitterness drains away all joy, and all strength, and leaves you only empty, and angry – what a way for a Christian to be!!!
 5. You easily will doubt you ever were a Christian when you live a life full of bitterness!
 6. A lot of Christians are under constant demonic attack – simply because they are bitter, angry, unset over people in their lives!
 7. The only cure to bitterness is

- a. Pulling it up by the roots – carefully, one at a time – find what is feeding your bitterness, and unplug it!
 - b. Paying for any acts you have done out of bitterness, yourself:
 - 1) Every bitter word you say MUST be apologized for
 - 2) Every bitter act must be repented of
 - 3) Delve deep into your heart, and find out in your past when you picked up that bitter feeling and do the following:
 - a) Repent of harbouring it – keeping it around
 - b) Reject its power in your life
 - c) Replace it with GRACE (Heb 12:28)
 - c. Forgiving those acts done against you
 - d. It is THEN that God can restore unto the JOY of your salvation!
8. The source of bitterness, simply is unforgiveness!
- a. Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, was once reminded of an especially unkind act that had been done to her years before. But Miss Barton could not seem to recall it When her friend asked, "Don't you remember it?" The reply came, "I distinctly remember forgetting that incident."
 - b. Corrie ten Boom likens forgiveness to letting go of a bell rope. If you have ever seen a country church with a bell in the steeple, you will remember that to get the bell ringing you have to tug awhile. Once it has begun to ring, you merely maintain the momentum. As long as you keep pulling, the bell keeps ringing. Corrie ten Boom says forgiveness is letting go of the rope. It is just that simple, but when you do so, the bell keeps ringing. Momentum is still at work. However, if you keep your hands off the rope, the bell will begin to slow and eventually stop. It is like that with forgiveness. When you decide to forgive, the old feelings of unforgiveness may continue to assert themselves. After all, they have lots of momentum. But if you affirm your decision to forgive, that unforgiving spirit will begin to slow and will eventually be still. Forgiveness is letting go of the "rope" of retribution.
 - c. Art Linkletter interviewed a boy who said that he remembered this prayer in church: "And forgive us our trashbaskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets." (cf: Matt. 6:12, 14)
 - d. A visitor from across the mountain leaned on the rail fence, watching his old friend plow. "I don't like to butt in," he finally said, "but you could save yourself a lot of work by saying 'gee' and 'haw' to that mule instead of just tuggin' on them lines.' The old timer pulled a big handkerchief from his pocket and mopped his brow. "Yep, I know that," he agreed, "but this mule kicked me six years ago, and I ain't spoke to him since."
 - e. In a recent chapel service bulletin from Chaplain Wendell C. Hawley, comes a classic illustration of forgiveness. When the Moravian missionaries first went to the Eskimos, they could not find a word in their language for forgiveness, so they had to compound one. This turned out to be: Issumagijoujungnainermik. It is a formidable-looking assembly of letters, but an expression that has a beautiful connotation for those who understand it. It means: "Not-being-able-to-think -about-it -anymore."
 - f. An Epigram On Forgiving. The Bible tells us to love our neighbors, and also to love our enemies; probably because they are generally the same people.
 - g. Epigram On Forgiving. Corrie ten Boom reminds us that when God casts someone's sins into the depths of the sea, He figuratively places a sign nearby, "No Fishing."
 - h. Epigram On Forgiving . An apology is a good way to have the last word.
- F. Let's take a look at a couple of Scriptures this morning (Col 1:14; Eph 4:32; Acts 13:38,39)

1. On God's agenda, the forgiveness of sins seems to be pretty high – the most preached and explained subject of the Bible
 2. The primary reason for the crucifixion - "Father forgive them..."
 3. The need of the whole world is to be able to deal effectively with SIN!
 4. One of the greatest hallmarks of Bible Christianity is the ability to forgive. Why? Because it is the true Christian who has them self found forgiveness in Christ – full and complete pardon!
- G. Most people live with massive amount of guilt, heartache, and stored-up anger! Why? They have been mistreated, abused, and used. And because they themselves have mistreated, used and abused others. And they don't know how to fix it! The world doesn't allow people to forgive and be forgiven!
- H. The problem goes very deep - They are convinced that everyone has wronged THEM, and yet they themselves have wronged no one! People don't usually say "I'm sorry, I was wrong". So, it makes for "cold," "stiff," and unreal people whose hurt and shame is all crammed inside. They don't know how to obtain forgiveness, nor how to give it!
- I. I'm dealing with husbands and wives, parents and children, employers and workers, neighbours and friends, brothers and sisters.
- J. Forgiveness is a very complex action of the heart. Complex because of all the pain associated with it - memories, scars, anger, issues at stake. But God has all the answers
- K. Define Forgiveness: **TO EXCUSE AN OFFENSE OR TO PASS OVER A FAULT WITHOUT DEMANDING PUNISHMENT**
- L. This morning we are going to see how a strong man, named Jacob, obtained forgiveness, and how that anyone can obtain the same thing!
- M. Why? Why study someone who GETS forgiveness? Because until a person learns to BE forgiven, they will probably never learn TO forgive!

II. Background (Genesis 32)

- A. Abraham had Isaac. Isaac had two boys: *Esau* and *Jacob*
- B. Jacob turns out to be trouble from the start - His name means 'Crooked, Deceiver, Schemer!'
1. He stole Esau's 'birthright', or position in the family as 'head' - which meant that he got all the inheritance. Jacob ended up having to run for his life (27:41-43)
 2. Later, when he married Rachael, Jacob worked for his father-in-law (Laban) and worked so that everything worked out always in his favour at Laban's expense! Jacob has to run from Laban!
- C. *You see, God says, You reap what you sow!*
- D. Jacob decides to head home. He knows that Esau is back there, and so sends a message hoping that all is forgotten, and that they can now get along together. He gets news that his older brother (32:6) is headed towards him with an army of **400** armed men! Now Jacob is really afraid (32:11)
- E. But all this is God working in Jacob's life to get Jacob to deal with God - Jacob was very good at dealing with other people and had a knack at always coming out ahead. But here he is at his wit's end.
- F. And it is here that Jacob deals with the Lord - he 'wrestles' all night with Him (32:24), and discovers that to really win in life is to lose your life - to Christ! For the first time, Jacob lost, and was humbled - but for the first time Jacob also truly won, and was a different man! **THAT'S the KEY!**
- G. After that encounter though, Jacob must still face Esau - he must still face those whom he has wronged and hurt! Jacob just wanted to go home, but God had other plans for Jacob - God wanted to teach ol' Jacob just how Forgiveness Works!
- H. This morning, God wants to give us Scriptural steps to real forgiveness

III. Message - How Forgiveness Works (Genesis 33:1-11,20)

A. It Requires Initiative - Jacob Took the Initiative (32:3; 33:1-3)

1. There are always two parties to hurt – the person who did wrong, and the person wronged – well, someone has to take the initiative
2. Here, Jacob WANTED forgiveness. He HAD to have forgiveness – he was facing disaster if he didn't get forgiven by his older brother! He had truly hurt him, and thought it didn't matter for all those years (20 years)!
3. People are so proud - We always expect the OTHER person to come to US! Proud, stiff-necked, rebellious generation we are! Sit and wait on someone else to act – THANK GOD for people who “break rank” and humble themselves so that God's blessings can once again flow!
4. Realize that YOU are the solution to the problem. If there is a problem between you and someone else, YOU TAKE THE INITIATIVE! Don't waste half your life waiting on someone else!
5. Realize that it is going to take YOU facing them. So, Jacob settled that he was not going to run away anymore – too many Christians RUN from their responsibilities – especially in relation to other people!
 - a. In spite of his fear of his brother's wrath (32:6,7)!
 - b. In spite of what it may or may not cost you - Care not!
6. You want a good example? GOD took the initiative with Jesus (Rom 5:8)
7. The other person may not respond right, but at least your own heart will be finally right with God!

B. It Requires Humility - Jacob Humbled Himself (33:3) Don't wait on the other party to humble themselves - this initiative is going to cost you your pride

1. Humble yourself to God first - Pray (32:9-11).
 - a. Get right with God first, and you will be ready and able to get right with any man!
 - b. If you can't forgive then you need to get saved! Get forgiven yourself
2. Humble yourself **TO** your enemy - The main reason why you are in the trouble with that person to begin with is because you are just as proud as they are! James 4:6, “God resisteth the proud...” God fights against us!
3. The reason why there is so little forgiveness experienced today is because there is no change in those who claim to be Christian. We must be transformed from selfish, self-centred brats, to those who seek the forgiveness of even unsaved people because of what we did to them in the past!
4. Note: Include your family in your humiliation (33:1,2) Your family and the people closest to you will have been infected by your attitude toward others, so when you want to get it right, they need to be included!

C. It Requires Surrender- No Demands! **Accept What Comes Your Way** (33:4) Don't gripe and complain about how people treat you, when it is only you reaping what you sowed in other people's lives coming back to haunt you!

1. Jacob doesn't defend himself, or explain himself – he is completely vulnerable as his brother runs to him, and... HUGS him!
2. Here, Jacob is greeted by a loving brother who has forgiven him right on the spot! Why? Because right off, Esau noticed that his deceitful and crooked brother has changed! Something happened to him - he is limping, he is bowing, he is praying, he is crying! This is NOT the Jacob he knew 20 years ago! **WHEN GOD CHANGES YOUR HEART - IT IS EVIDENT TO YOUR ENEMIES (Pr 16:7)!**

3. This scene is not always going to happen - but you can leave it with the Lord when you have done what you should do!
4. When a person comes to Christ, as Jacob came to Esau, you can be SURE that Christ will respond in exactly the same way! That's why most people don't **EVER** get saved – never surrender to Christ AS a sinner!

D. It Requires Giving All the Glory to God - Jacob Glorifies God (33:5-7) No longer to himself

1. Publicly acknowledge God's work in your life - no longer boastful of what "Jacob" had accomplished - it was all God! We need this again! Far too much self-sufficiency! Our "testimony" is what GOD has done in our life, and it alone can win many people to Christ!
2. Publicly acknowledge God's grace in your life - accept the fact that you are not worthy of anything you have - All by God's grace - He doesn't owe you ANYTHING! He's GOD and you're MUD!
3. Publicly acknowledge your new position - as SERVANT. Jacob here is truly a changed man because he willingly accepts his place as servant now, and not as leader, boss, manipulator, controller, schemer, hustler!
4. A lot less talking about ourselves, and a lot more talking about the Lord Jesus is needed for the world to know there are some Christians here!

E. It Requires Proving that you Mean Business - Jacob Was Committed to His Decision (33:8-11). Not just doing the "easy thing" but the right thing! Back up what you say with actions and commitment!

1. Decide that *Forgiveness* is the Highest Need - Jacob was not looking for personal gain anymore - he truly had had a spiritual victory back the night before with the Lord. Now he wanted a personal victory over his past.
2. Be willing to lose everything in order to gain what really matters
 - a. Your family matters more than your promotion and pay-raise!
 - b. Your eternal salvation matters more than your reputation!
 - c. Be willing to lose it all in order to obtain the **real** prize - forgiveness
3. Jacob had learned what the Lord Jesus meant in Mark 8:34-37

IV. Conclusion - How Forgiveness Works

- A. Truly, something had happened to ol' Jacob that long night in chapter 32 that had changed a lying, scheming, and crooked man into a humble servant, and a prince with God - what was it? It was meeting Christ and getting what only He could give - forgiveness of sins, and a whole new life.
- B. But what about all the people Jacob had hurt? God demonstrates that His grace is sufficient for every relationship!
- C. **It Requires Initiative - You must ACT!**
 1. If you have wronged someone, for whatever reason - YOU go to them, and begin the process of reconciliation - *say I am sorry!* Please forgive me
 2. If you are not saved - realize that the stakes are VERY high! You have wronged God, and He has already gone to the Cross for your sins, He only awaits you to lose your pride and to come to Him completely trusting His GRACE to be sufficient for all your sins
 3. realize that if you do not obtain forgiveness, the God who waits to be your Saviour, will end up being your JUDGE - your choice!

D. It Requires Humility

1. Deal with God first - Pray. Get right with God first, and you will be ready and able to get right with any man!
 2. Humble yourself to your enemy - The main reason why you are in the trouble with that person to begin with is because you are just as proud as they are! James 4:6, "God resisteth the proud..."
- E. **It Requires Surrender** - Make no demands! Don't gripe and complain about how people (or even God) treat you, when you are only reaping what you sowed in other people's lives! Use the situation to learn to completely trust the Lord to work everything out!
- F. **It Requires Giving All the Glory to God**
- G. **It Requires *Proving* that you Mean Business** - No one respects those who only "talk" a good line, but rather are dead serious about themselves, and how their primary motive is to obtain forgiveness!

IV. How To Stay Free Of Unforgiveness

- A. Forsake being worldly. Holding a grudge is what the devil does best
- B. Ask the Lord to change your way of thinking: from long memories to
- C. Be slow to take offence. Don't get hurt every time something is said or goes wrong!
- D. Refuse hurt feelings. Reject them as the doorway to bitterness which only ruins YOU
- E. Stay in the Word and nourish your spirit by reading and obeying the Word.
- F. Expand your prayer life. Pray for anyone who despitely uses you (Mt 5:44).
- G. Take action to forgive, or to get forgiven—the choice is yours. (Mt 5:23,24) Go to your brother and be reconciled. Do you have problems toward? Parents, yourself, repressed anger toward God, a former mate (or perhaps his family), those in authority over us, others - friends
- H. Ro 12:19-21-Never take revenge, but let the Lord do it. Do good to your enemies; thus, hurting them in the best way.

Biblical Convictions

The Sanity and Safety of Firm Biblical Convictions

DATE: 23 Nov, 2003 AM, and PM

PLACE: BBC Blarney

I. Introduction (John 8:32; Gal 5:1)

- A. There is a difference between being “set” free, and MADE free! Thank God the truth of the Scriptures don’t just “set” people free, only to be enslaved again by sis, but MAKE us free so that nothing can enslave us ever again!
- B. Holy-Boldness, Confidence, Assurance – these are words that characterize a Christian, who KNOWS two things:
 1. That they have the truth in the Bible – no more lies!
 2. They know where they will go when they die – no more worries
- C. This confidence is the foundation for every victory over sin in life
- D. Without assurance of full forgiveness and eternal life, every struggle with sin in our life is useless, and we are easy prey for every form of depression and spiritual attack!
- E. The devil knows all this, so he fires his fiery darts right at our confidences (Eph 6:16), but we have some things that enable us to “quench” ALL the attacking darts!
- F. We have been looking at the six reasons why people doubt their salvation, and studied just what assurances Christians have so that they can KNOW that they really are born again into God’s family!
- G. There are Six Reasons for Doubts.
 1. Having a False “Process” of Salvation
 2. People Confuse Spiritual Awakening with Conversion.
 3. People Fear Having Committed The Unpardonable Sin (Mt 3:22-30)
 4. People are Full Of Guilt, Shame, Sorrow – because of defilement (Tit 1:15)
 5. Bitterness kills the joy of salvation (Mt 6:12-15; Acts 8:18-24; Heb 12:15) – a doorway to demonic attacks
 6. Most people have No Firm Biblical Convictions (Rom 14:5) – blown about with every “wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14)

II. Background to Biblical Convictions (Rom 14:5)

- A. What is the Importance of Having Biblical Convictions?
 1. People constantly go to seminars, conventions, and discussion groups – watching videos, and reading books
 2. But most NEVER learning the Bible from page 1, and settle it in their heart that GOD is true, and EVERY MAN is a liar (Rom 3:4)
 3. And then building what they believe from a firmly BIBLICAL basis
 4. So many religions are built simply upon what a great leader taught
 - a. Lutherans on what Luther taught and wrote
 - b. Calvinists on what John Calvin taught and wrote
 - c. Catholics on what a collection of about 300 “church fathers” taught
 - d. Methodists on what John Wesley taught and wrote
 - e. Muslims on what Mohammed taught
 - f. Buddhists on what Buddha taught
 5. A “Bible-Believer” bases what they believe simply on what GOD wrote – full stop!
 6. If you never have ANY Bible convictions (firm beliefs of what is right to do, and wrong to do), then you will be blown around like a leaf in a tornado!
 7. Don’t get convictions because I have them – get them because the BIBLE says it!

8. I'm talking about convictions about:
 - a. How to dress
 - b. What words you will allow to come out of your mouth
 - c. What TV rubbish you will not allow into your home
 - d. Whether you will work on the Lord's day, or worship
 - e. Whether you will tell people the Gospel or hide it from them
9. God give us a new desire to have some Bible convictions
10. Otherwise, you will be blown about with every "wind of doctrine" (Eph 4:14)
 - a. The world, sin and the devil will run you over so many times you will look like you married a JCB!
 - b. So many Christians are getting caught up in New Age philosophies, cults, meditations (that aren't on Scriptures), miracles – and their lives are a wreck!

B. What are Biblical Convictions?

1. Anchors of what we believe and allow in our lives
2. The absolute CERTAINTY of the rightness of something
3. Non-negotiables – not up for review every decade or so
 - a. If something was wrong to do in the Bible, it is wrong today
 - b. If something was wicked in the Bible, it is STILL wicked today
 - c. If something was right to do in the Bible, it is still right to do today
 - d. Time does not change anything in the Bible!
4. A "convict" is someone who is placed behind bars – someone who is "convicted" about something from the Bible, places THEMSELVES behind a line they can not now cross, because they are fully persuaded that it is wrong!
5. They are the decisions that act as armed guards at the gates of our lives:
 - a. Eye Gate (Ps 101:3)
 - b. Ear Gate (Eccl 7:5)
 - c. The Heart Gate – keep your heart (Pr 4:23; Mk 7:18-23)
 - d. The Feet and Hand Gate
 - 1) Allowing your feet to take you places
 - 2) Allowing your hands to touch and take things that don't belong to you – including the fondling of girls and guys!
 - e. People used to trust in Censors and Parents and Governments, , to keep them out of trouble (and the fact that is was just too expensive to mess with the sins of the rest of the world).
 - f. But God help us to BE RESPONSIBLE for what we allow and don't allow into our homes and lives (2Tim 2:19)

C. Signs of the *Lack* of Biblical Convictions

1. More and more worldliness and sin in our churches – like a disease
2. Less and less clarity in our preaching – not able to speak the truth about the sin of homosexuality, and premarital sex, and of corruption in religions, and of the love of money, and of the wickedness of abortion, and of the lost condition of the whole world, and the exclusiveness of Jesus Christ – for fear of "offending" someone!
3. Less and less commitment by people to spiritual things – barely committed to ANYTHING these days
4. Fewer and fewer people getting saved – like a dribble instead of like God designed soul-winning to be like

5. Less and less Bible in churches – more and more entertainment and fellowship and food (none of which is wrong, but are SECONDARY, 1Cor 1:21)

D. What are we going to study today?

1. There are six general areas of conviction for the Christian – non-negotiables
2. There is no one exempt for the need for Biblical convictions. From the Pope, to the Teaschuc, to the Painter Decorator, to the College professor, to the Chef, to the Street-sweeper, to every Christian
3. What are those six areas?
 - a. Your Personal Walk and relationship with Jesus Christ
 - b. Your Purity
 - c. Your Purpose
 - d. Your Praise and Attitude
 - e. Your Place in God’s Kingdom
 - f. Preaching and Your Church
4. We will look at the first three this morning, and the remaining three this evening

III. Message - Getting Biblical Convictions (Rom 14:5)

A. **Six General Areas of Conviction for the Christian** – non-negotiables

1. **Personal Walk and Relationship with Jesus Christ**

- a. Jesus said Ye MUST be born again (Jn 3:3) – Saved, Converted
 - 1) To live a whole life, and be very religious, and even gain the whole world, and die without Jesus as your personal Saviour is the greatest travesty of all time (Mk 8:36,37)!
 - 2) Jesus never commanded us to come to his mother, or to His church, or to His disciples – He commanded people to “COME UNTO ME...” – that is where 95% of the religious went wrong
 - 3) This is not a suggestion, or an option for people – it is THE ONLY HOPE (John 14:6)
 - 4) Repent, and simply believe that Jesus died for you in your place on the cross, and ask Jesus for forgiveness from all your sins!
 - 5) Otherwise, you will split hell wide open – not because of just your sinfulness, but because you rebelled against the only Saviour – Jesus, and instead chose to trust in yourself or your own religion!
 - 6) Please, before it is eternally too late, decide to be Christian in your **heart** – where it really matters
- b. God says secondly, you MUST **lean** on Him (Pr 3:5,6) – develop a closeness with Him that comes when you cling to Him! Be a Christian in your **choices** - choose to trust in Him, and not in your abilities
- c. The Bible says that any day without God in all your thoughts is a wasted day (Ps 10:4)
 - 1) Decide to be Christian in your **thoughts**
 - 2) You see, without a determined choice to meditate on the goodness of the Lord, our hearts only slide backwards to the way it was just before the Flood (Gen 6:5)!
- d. You need a Bible Conviction that you MUST be studying and reading your Bible everyday (Job 23:12) Be Christian in your daily **habits**

- e. You need the Bible Conviction that you **MUST** pray about everything you do – for wisdom, for strength, and for perseverance (1Pet 5:7)
 - f. How can so many people claim to be christian, and yet do so little of any of these? It is only because they do not have the Biblical Conviction that is the **RIGHT** thing to do!
2. **Purity** (James 1:27)
- a. Doesn't anybody want to be clean anymore?
 - b. Doesn't anybody value the treasure of a:
 - 1) Clean Conscience
 - 2) Clean Record – not having been in court, or in jail
 - 3) Clean Reputation
 - 4) Clean Heart (Ps 51:10)
 - 5) Clean Home
 - 6) The job of this pastor and church is convince parents that all the efforts will be worth it to keep the lives and consciences of our young people clean from sin!
 - 7) The reason why we spend so much time in God's word is so that our lives can **GET** cleaned up (John 15:3; Ps 119:9)
 - c. We have to start drawing a line in the sand
 - 1) About what we watch on TV – too flippant
 - 2) About what we listen to on the radio – if we only thought about how much people are being “programmed” by the songs, and the talk-shows
 - 3) About how we dress – whether we encourage impure thoughts in others, or fuel pride in ourselves by what we wear and how we wear it (1Pet 2:9,10) More for the ladies than the men (Isa 3:16; 2Kgs 9:30; Cf Ps 45:13 and 1Pet 3:3-5)
 - 4) About what we think about – we need to care about how our minds wander and start thinking about things we have read, or seen in the past – we need to purge it all in the precious blood of Christ on an instant basis!
 - 5) About the friends we hang-out with – not just relating to teenagers. Be careful who you “hang-out” with. Good Christians don't make the world better – good sinners make Christians worse (1Cor 15:33; Ps 1:1,2)!
 - d. I am no thought police – I just want to keep myself unspotted from the world, and admonish you to do the same!
 - e. There are too many shipwrecks of Christians who would not deal with sin in their life in order to stay clean for the Lord's use (2Tim 2:19-21)

How to Fight Discouragement

The Sanity and Safety of Firm Biblical Convictions

DATE: 30 Nov, 2003 AM

PLACE: BBC Blarney

I. Introduction (John 8:32; Gal 5:1)

- A. There is a difference between being “set” free, and MADE free! Thank God the truth of the Scriptures don’t just “set” people free, only to be enslaved again by sis, but MAKE us free so that nothing can enslave us ever again!
- B. Holy-Boldness, Confidence, Assurance – these are words that characterize a Christian, who KNOWS two things:
 1. That they have the truth in the Bible – no more lies!
 2. They know where they will go when they die – no more worries
- C. This confidence is the foundation for every victory over sin in life
- D. Without assurance of full forgiveness and eternal life, every struggle with sin in our life is useless, and we are easy prey for every form of depression and spiritual attack!
- E. The devil knows all this, so he fires his fiery darts right at our confidences (Eph 6:16), but we have some things that enable us to “quench” ALL the attacking darts!
- F. We have been looking at the six reasons why people doubt their salvation, and studied just what assurances Christians have so that they can KNOW that they really are born again into God’s family!
- G. There are Six Reasons for Doubts. The final point in the series is, Most people have No Firm Biblical Convictions (Rom 14:5) – blown about with every “wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14), and every emotion imaginable

II. Background to Biblical Convictions (Rom 14:5)

- A. What is the Importance of Having Biblical Convictions?
 1. So many religions are built simply upon what a great leader taught
 - a. Lutherans on what Luther taught and wrote
 - b. Calvinists on what John Calvin taught and wrote
 - c. Catholics on what a collection of about 300 “church fathers” taught
 - d. Methodists on what John Wesley taught and wrote
 - e. Muslims on what Mohammed taught
 - f. Buddhists on what Buddha taught
 2. Many religions are built upon special events – visions, miracles, the day of Pentecost, great victories, etc.
 3. But, a “Bible-Believer” bases what they believe simply on what GOD wrote in His word – full stop!
 4. If you never have ANY Bible convictions (firm beliefs of what is right to do, and wrong to do), then you will be blown around like a leaf in a tornado!
 5. Don’t get convictions because I have them – get them because the BIBLE says it!
 6. I’m talking about convictions about:
 - a. How to dress
 - b. What words you will allow to come out of your mouth
 - c. What you allow your mind to think about
 - d. What TV rubbish you will not allow into your home
 - e. Whether you will work on the Lord’s day, or worship
 - f. What you allow your heart to feel
 - g. Whether you will tell people the Gospel or hide it from them

7. God give us a new desire to have some strong Bible convictions
8. Otherwise, you will be blown about with every “wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14)

B. **What are Biblical Convictions?**

1. Anchors of what we believe and allow in our lives
2. The absolute CERTAINTY of the rightness of something
3. Non-negotiables – not up for review every decade or so
 - a. If something was wrong to do in the Bible, it is wrong today
 - b. If something was wicked in the Bible, it is STILL wicked today
 - c. If something was right to do in the Bible, it is still right to do today
 - d. Time does not change anything in the Bible!
4. A “convict” is someone who is placed behind bars – someone who is “convicted” about something from the Bible, places THEMSELVES behind a line they can not now cross, because they are fully persuaded that it is wrong!

C. What are we studying today?

1. There are six general areas of conviction for the Christian – non-negotiables
2. There is no one exempt for the need for Biblical convictions. From the Pope, to the Teaschuc, to the Painter Decorator, to the College professor, to the Chef, to the Street-sweeper, to every Christian
3. What are those six areas?
 - a. Your Personal Walk and relationship with Jesus Christ – a must
 - b. Your Purity – a must
 - c. Your Purpose – a must
 - d. Your Praise and Attitude – a must
 - e. Your Place in God’s Kingdom – a must
 - f. Preaching and Your Church
4. We will look at our Attitude this morning

III. Message - **Biblical Convictions About Our Praise and Attitude** (Rev 3:15-16)

A. **Morale is 80% of any Battle.**

1. We are told over and over again
 - a. Fret Not
 - b. Fear not
 - c. Faint not
2. Jeremiah was told not to look upon the faces of those he was preaching to, lest he get discouraged (Jer 1:8)
3. The Christian is told NOT to look on life’s outer shell, lest he be discouraged (2Cor 4:18)
4. In other words, our enemies don’t usually ruin us, our attitudes do

B. **Troubles, Persecutions, Failures, Embarrassments, are all God Given** – Appointed – specially chosen for a person according to God’s will, and His great abundant grace

1. Philp 1:29
2. Acts 5:41; Mt 5:11
3. 2 Cor 1:8-10; 4:8-11
4. 2Cor 12:7-10
5. Over and over Paul prays not for deliverance, but for GRACE for believers (Gal 6:18; 2Tim 4:22; Philemon 1:25)

6. They are all part of God's hand in moulding us, reshaping us, transforming, converting us (Rom 5:1-5; Jam 1:2,3) into His Glorious Bride!

C. We are Commanded to Protect our Hearts - have firm Biblical Convictions about what our hearts can and cannot conclude about our situations in life (Pr 4:23)

1. Keep it unspotted from the world (Jam 1:27)
2. Keep it soft towards the Lord and towards others – humble, meek, tender-hearted
3. This is a non-negotiable

D. Jesus Christ is Our Example (Isa 42:4)

1. Thank God, He did not, and never will ever fail
2. Thank God ALSO that he never got discouraged (Heb 12:1-3)

Then Jesus took his disciples up the mountain and gathered them around him. And He taught them, saying,

Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are the meek.

Blessed are they that mourn.

Blessed are the merciful.

Blessed are they who thirst for justice.

Blessed are you when persecuted.

Blessed are you when you suffer.

Be glad and rejoice for your reward is great in heaven.

Then Simon Peter said, "Are we supposed to know this?"

And Andrew said, "Do we have to write this down?"

And James said, "Will we have a test on this?"

And Phillip said, "I don't have a pencil."

And Bartholomew said, "Do we have to turn this in?"

And John said, "The other disciples didn't have to learn this."

And Matthew said, "Can I go to the bathroom?"

And Judas said, "What does this have to do with real life?"

Then one of the Pharisees who was present asked to see Jesus' lesson plan and inquired, "Where is your anticipatory set and your objectives in the cognitive domain?"

And Jesus wept.

3. The fact that Jesus did not fail, secures your success as a Christian
4. The fact that Jesus never got discouraged, proves that we must conquer our discouragements as well!

E. The Christian Attitude (James 4:2,3; Rev 3:15,16)

1. What kind of attitude should a Christian have?
 - a. We need to test not only demonic spirits, but our own spirit as well!
 - b. According to God, we are either HOT, or COLD
 - c. Either, all the way excited for God, or might as well be an atheist
 - d. AMEN!
2. That Bible presents a wide range of attitudes (full spectrum) that believers expressed at different times, but it always showed that God's people were called by God to cast away

any chaff, blockage that hindered their joy in the Lord, which was supposed to be the centre-piece of their life – their HEART!

3. In other words, we need a firm Biblical conviction about
 - a. The sin of holding on to bad attitudes, and bitterness
 - b. The sin of continual worry and depression
 - c. The sin of NOT praising the Lord and being thankful (Rom 1:21)
4. We must to determine that out of these lips will go forth:
 - a. Praise towards God (Ps 34:1) – constant praise
 - b. Encouragement towards men (James 3:8-10)
 - c. Rebukes for the devil – never should we agree with the devil’s assessment of our situation (see how he worked on Eve)
5. Let me show you how!
 - a. First, **Fear the Lord**
 - b. **Pray**
 - c. **Ponder**/Meditate on Right Things (Phil 4:8)
 - d. **Praise God** about Everything
 - e. **Pardon** all offenders
 - f. **Plunge** every feeling under the cleansing power of the blood of the lamb
 - g. **Preach** – come out of the closet, and be what God saved you to be
 - h. **Persevere** – stay at it – it is called the Christian life (Pr 24:16; Ps 34:19; 37:23,24; Micah 7:8) We are in this for the whole race!

IV. Conclusion

- A. **Morale is 80% of any Battle.** Don’t lose any fight before you begin it!
- B. **Troubles, Persecutions, Failures, Embarrassments, are all God Given** – Appointed – specially chosen for a person according to God’s will, and His great abundant grace.
- C. **We are Commanded to Protect our Hearts** – from the spots of the world, and from the hardness that sin creates!
- D. **Jesus Christ is Our Great Example** (Isa 42:4) Thank God He never got discouraged
- E. **The Christian Attitude is Summed Up in one Word - HOT**
 1. How is your attitude?
 - a. According to God, we are either HOT, or COLD
 - b. Either, all the way excited for God, or might as well be an atheist
 2. Are you holding on to bad attitudes, and bitterness?
 3. Are you continually worrying and depressed?
 4. Do you struggle to praise the Lord and being thankful (Rom 1:21)?
- F. Out of our lips shall from today onwards go forth:
 1. Praise towards God (Ps 34:1) – constant praise
 2. Encouragement towards men (James 3:8-10)
 3. Rebukes for the devil – never should we agree with the devil’s assessment of our situation (see how he worked on Eve)
- G. Let me show you how!
 1. First, fear the Lord
 2. Pray
 3. Ponder/Meditate on Right Things (Phil 4:8)
 4. Praise God about Everything
 5. Pardon all offenders

6. Plunge every feeling under the cleansing power of the blood of the lamb
7. Preach – come out of the closet, and be what God saved you to be
8. Persevere – stay at it – it is called the Christian life

The Biblical Conviction of Purpose

Finding and Living God's Purpose for Your Life

DATE: 7 Dec, 2003 AM

PLACE: BBC Blarney

I. Introduction (Gal 5:1)

- A. Holy-Boldness, Confidence, Assurance – these words characterize a Christian
- B. This confidence is the foundation for every victory over sin in life
- C. Without assurance of full forgiveness and eternal life, every struggle with sin in our life is useless, and we are easy prey for every form of depression and spiritual attack!
- D. The devil knows all this, so he fires his fiery darts right at our confidences (Eph 6:16), but we have some things that enable us to “quench” ALL the attacking darts!
- E. We have been looking at the six reasons why people doubt their salvation, and studied just what assurances Christians have so that they can KNOW that they really are born again into God's family!
- F. There are Six Reasons for Doubts. The final point in the series is, Most people have No Firm Biblical Convictions (Rom 14:5) – blown about with every “wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14), and every emotion imaginable

II. Background to Biblical Convictions (Rom 14:5)

A. What are Biblical Convictions?

1. Anchors of what we believe and allow in our lives
2. Absolute CERTAINTIES of the rightness of something
3. Non-negotiables – not up for review every decade or so
4. A “convict” is someone who is placed behind bars – someone who is “convicted” about something from the Bible, places THEMSELVES behind a line they can not now cross, because they are fully persuaded that it is wrong!

B. What are we studying today? The Assurance of Purpose in My Life

1. I can't tell you exactly WHAT God's purpose for each of your lives is
2. It would be as varied as each cell in a human body
3. But the whole of a church has three BIG purposes in their collective lives
 - a. To Know God
 - b. To Love God
 - c. To Enjoy God Forever
4. Everything in your life needs to be operating within those three fence-posts. I intend to show you how to stay within those guidelines!

III. Message - Biblical Convictions About Our Purpose

A. First of all, Let me say, We Need Purpose.

1. What is Purpose?
 - a. Purpose is the God-given aim of a life. The worthwhile goal, intent, result, reason for a life
 - b. Like an arrow must have a target, so must a life have a purpose
 - c. Without it, society ends up debating abortion, euthanasia, and methods of population control: Ted Turner was the one who said "We have to defeat those congressmen and senators who are standing in the way of progress. We've got to win the next election." The founder of CNN and vice chairman of Time-Warner, Inc., was sounding the alarm that something must be done about dreaded *overpopulation*. This

father of five said we need to achieve the "ideal" world population of two billion people, as opposed to today's six billion.

2. There are so many Wasted Lives (Mk 8:36,37)
 - a. The Wealthy - Billionaire Howard Hughes - died miserable and alone
 - b. The Famous - Janice Joplin, Jimmy Hendrix, Judy Garland
 - c. The Religious – Judas Iscariot
 - d. The Intellectual – Albert Einstein
 - e. Untold billions of people who know neither God, nor God's purpose for their lives!
3. We all really need true purpose to our lives!
4. The only way our families are going to survive, our church is going to survive, our country is going to survive is if we dig deep into God's word, and find our purpose for living, for breathing, for doing anything!
 - a. Folks, You will only find who you were designed to be in this Book!
 - b. Whether you are a husband, wife, farmer, butcher, pest controller, chemist, lawyer, preacher, missionary, son, daughter, student, artist, programmer, engineer, chef, secretary – we all need to be what we are for the glory of God! And that comes by knowing every page!

B. Only God Can Give a Person Purpose.

1. Do you know why God made you? You DO realize it was GOD that made you and not some cosmic hiccup?! (Psalm 139:14,15,17,18)
2. The rush to do away with God, is a demonic push to block the revelation that God **designed** us, and has **purpose** for our lives – without which, the human race will self-destruct!
3. **The Fruits of Believing the Lie of Evolution – no need for God**
 - a. No human theory launched upon mankind has made such an impact as Darwin's theory of evolution. Evolution accepts man only as an animal, responsible only to himself.
 - b. It promotes suicide, animalistic murders, perverted sexual behaviour, drugs, divorce, abortion, lying, stealing, rape, child abuse, homosexuality, and the list goes on.
4. **The Fruits of Knowing the Bible's Revelation – total dependence upon God**
 - a. ***We learn all people are of immense value to God. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*** Jn 3:16
 - b. ***Every human being is separated from God*** by an immense universe filled with deterioration caused by sin. God is NOT this universe, but is outside it, and if He created it, then He is GREATER than it!
 - c. ***This Creator has intervened in history*** several times (at the creation, with the flood, in the birth of Jesus Christ, etc). Especially when our Creator took on Himself a human body 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem to save lost sinners by paying for their sins with His blood!
 - d. ***All people who live by the Bible as their authority, are free, and least fettered by sins and sorrows!*** Not perfect, but much better off

C. So, What the Purpose of My Purpose (Rom 14:7,8)?

1. According to the Bible:
 - a. God made us for Himself (Rev 4:11) – for His pleasure, enjoyment
 - 1) God made us So that we could know Him

- 2) God made us So that we could love Him
 - 3) God made us So that we could enjoy Him forever
- b. But something (sin) got into the way. With free-will comes the potential to disobey, and with disobedience comes death!
 - c. So He had to do something more that just make us – he had to go the extra mile and die to save us
 - d. Without a new birth, paid-for by the death of Jesus, none of us could ever BE what God intended for us to be!
 - e. So, as a summary, God made us for His pleasure, but even more miraculously, God set out to SAVE us for His Glory – so that we **COULD** know Him, love Him, and enjoy Him forever!
2. So, my purpose fits into one big blueprint outline:
 - a. God’s purpose for my life is something that allows me to:
 - 1) Know God
 - 2) Love Him
 - 3) And Enjoy Him with my life forever
 - b. Anything else is a loss – a deficit – a wasted and ruined life
 3. Therefore, it is the most important aspect of my life – what was I designed by God to be?

D. Finding Specifically My Purpose.

1. **Discovering My Purpose begins only at Conversion** – Being Born All Over Again – most religions and politicians side-step this completely
 - a. The Humanistic way of thinking
 - 1) I don’t need “Jesus”. I can find my own way without HIM getting involved. Just leave me alone
 - 2) Yet, two world wars and a divorce rate of over 75% of all marriages today are or will end in divorce, puts that lie to bed!
 - b. People need a Saviour (Isa 53:6)! Not a new career, or a new wife, or a new home, or a new boyfriend! Your purpose is not physical!
 - c. No one can find purpose without God showing them that purpose
 - d. The first birth of a person is a death-trap – headed for a grave!
 - e. Only by the second birth is someone freed to discover their purpose
 - f. Why? Because it makes their “spirit” alive, and able to communicate with the God who made them, and has a plan for them! And more importantly, it gives eternal depth to that purpose
 - g. Without the new birth, all of a person’s life, no matter how humanistically good, is a total waste!
2. **My Purpose is God’s Design, not Mine** (Eph 1:11; 3:11; Rom 8:28) – It is God’s business what I am - not mine, or anyone else’s
 - a. Job knew that his life and circumstances were all of the Lord – not just the good things (Job 1:20,21)
 - b. For the Christian, nothing is:
 - 1) An accident
 - 2) A failure
 - 3) Impossible – Praise God!

- c. Even my disasters are God's great opportunities!
 - 1) See Joseph in prison, and his brother's actions – not permanent
 - 2) Peter denying the Lord
 - 3) Adam and Eve's sin – God made a way back
 - 4) The crucifixion of Jesus – caused by people – the Lord's way of purchasing eternal forgiveness
 - d. Therefore, everything I do matters immensely to God. Even my sleep
 - e. So, some hard questions need to be asked of ourselves:
 - 1) Does my life reflect a love for God? Does it show a softness towards God and His design for my life? Or am I discontent, and angry and bitter at where God has me, and what God is doing in my life?
 - 2) Do the things that I do show any purpose other than myself and my selfish-desires?
 - 3) Shouldn't I be known more for who Jesus is in my life, than for who I am? A Christian is a little Shadow of who Jesus Christ would be if He were in your shoes!
 - f. We have to look at our lives and determine, is what I am doing today:
 - 1) Developing my relationship with the One who gave me purpose and meaning? Jesus Christ? It is making that relationship stronger or weaker?
 - 2) Is what I am doing reflecting God's will for my life, or only MY will?
 - a) People looking at you – would they see a rebel, or a son?
 - b) Would people see a servant's heart, or an angry spirit?
 - 3) Is what I am doing today Obeying God's word, or like Jonah, running away from it?
3. **It is My Decision whether to Be Committed to God's Purpose or Not** (Dan 1:8; Acts 11:23; Ps 37:23)
- a. All of us need to search diligently in this Bible with prayer to find out what is God's purpose for my life within those three corner-stones
 - b. I need to fear failing God's grace (2Cor 5:9-11; Heb 12:15)
 - 1) This means, worry about God for once instead of your neighbour's opinion
 - 2) This means, check your attitude, and get back to clinging to God's greater grace for every situation you are in instead of complaining and giving up
 - c. I need to want to do ALL that God has for me to do (Acts 20:24; Philp 3:13,14)
 - 1) We are a bunch of lazy bums
 - 2) We struggle so little against sin
 - 3) We set out to win at almost nothing
 - 4) We need a Revival of Drive, spiritual Ambition, and Godly Motivation
 - d. I need to strive against anything that blocks God's purpose for my life (as Daniel did in Dan 1:8)

IV. Conclusion

- A. I can't tell you exactly WHAT God's purpose for each of your lives is
- B. It would be as varied as each cell in a human body
- C. But the whole of a church has three BIG purposes in their collective lives
 - 1. To Know God

2. To Love God
 3. To Enjoy God Forever
- D. God's Job was to Design purpose into each live, just as He designed purpose for every star, and even every atom in the universe
 - E. My job is to find that purpose, and fulfil it to the extreme!
 - F. After Christmas, I want to look at one or two more areas of Biblical Conviction that has to be firmly in place in your hearts, and minds

G. **Place** (Ps 37:23) – Your Place in God’s Kingdom – different than Purpose

- a. Is God in control of your life? Does He direct your steps?
- b. Are you IN the middle of God’s perfect will?
- c. We need a conviction about WHERE we are and where we should be
 - 1) When it is time for work, we need to be at work
 - 2) When it is time for church and Bible Study, we need to be THERE
 - 3) When we are in the middle of something we can’t control, then we need to let God be God, and let Him move us, and make us IN the situation!
- d. Do you know why so many Christians keep finding themselves ending up away from the Lord, and backsliding? Because they have no firm conviction about where they ought to be instead – so they wander, run from troubles, fret, and worry instead of grow!

2. **Preaching and Your Church** (Eph 5:25)

- a. Conviction that through PREACHING is the work of God accomplished (1Cor 1:17-23; 2:1-5; Eph 4:15a)
- b. Conviction that the local church is the right one – not a centralized one either in Rome, or Nashville, TN, or in England, or in Dublin even.
- c. Conviction that a Baptist Church is the right one – one that stays by the Bible, not by what a teacher said!
- d. Conviction that this is YOUR church
- e. Conviction that we ALL have to work together in some ministry to build this church, and other churches all over Ireland!

V. **Conclusion**

- A. Next Week we will conclude this series, and look at the rock-solid assurances that a believer has to show that he is either a child of God, or an impostor
- B. But, let me ask you:

1. **How is your Personal Walk and Relationship with Jesus Christ?**

- a. Jesus said Ye MUST be born again (Jn 3:3) – Saved, Converted
- b. God says secondly, you MUST lean on Him (Pr 3:5,6)
- c. The Bible says that any day without God in all your thoughts is a wasted day (Ps 10:4)
- d. You need a Bible Conviction that you MUST be studying and reading your Bible everyday (Job 23:12) Be Christian in your daily ***habits***
- e. You need the Bible Conviction that you MUST pray about everything you do – for wisdom, for strength, and for perseverance (1Pet 5:7)

2. **How is your Purity** (James 1:27)

- a. Clean Conscience
- b. Clean Record – not having been in court, or in jail
- c. Clean Reputation
- d. Clean Heart (Ps 51:10)
- e. Clean Home
- f. Are you now willing to take a good look at what you allow on your TV, and on your Radio, and what books to be read, etc?
- g. How about your clothes – guys, full of pride – girls, full of attraction?

3. **What is your Purpose** (Ps 139:14) Why did God made you?

- a. Does your life reflect a love for God? Does it show a softness towards God and His design for my life?
 - b. Do the things that I do show any purpose other than myself and my selfish-desires?
4. **Praise and Attitude** (Rev 3:15-16)
 5. **Place** (Ps 37:23) – Your Place in God’s Kingdom – different than Purpose
 6. **Preaching and Your Church** (Eph 5:25)

Overwhelming the Doubts of Salvation

I. Message

A. Assurances of Salvation – How to Know For Sure!

1. **The Word of God** – you have to have God's word on the subject
 - a. Not the church's; Not the Pope's; Not your own feelings
 - b. But what God says in the Scriptures (Jn 5:38, 46; Mt 22:29)
 - c. The heart is NOT a valid gauge of the truth (Jer 17:9)
2. **The Son of God** (2Tim 1:12)
 - a. What HE did – His works – the atonement, propitiation
 - b. What HE said (Jn 10:28) – It is finished!
3. **The Spirit of God** (Gal 4:6)
 - a. Came into your heart and life at salvation
 - b. Began to change your life (Philp 1:6)
 - c. Corrects you/Chastens when you sin
 - d. Uses you as you yield to His gentle hand

B. The Fruits of Salvation.

1. New Awareness of Right and Wrong (Jn 16:8; 1Jn 5:19)
2. Hunger for God's Word (Job 23:12; Jer 15:16)
3. Desire for a Changed Life that Glorifies God (2Cor 5:17)
4. Increase in testing and Chastisement (Lk 6:22; 2Tim 3:12; Heb 12:6)
5. Love for Other Christians (1Jn 3:14)
6. Desire to tell Others the Good News of the Gospel (Acts 4:20)

II. Conclusion

- A. Probably, there are several people who struggle with doubts about their salvation – with so many things against the truth of the Bible, no doubt!
- B. But you have the Word of God, the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit of God on your side – if you would just allow them to work in you, and change you!
- C. The proof is in the taste – do an inventory today – is Christ in you, or are you only faking it
- D. If he is there, you and the whole world will know!