



Assurance doesn't save us, but it certainly helps in our Christian life. Lack of it quenches our joy and witness. Doubts can rise for several reasons. Maybe it's our temperament or past guilt. Maybe we just doubt God's love for us! Maybe other people have contradicted what we have been taught and now we're doubting the

truths of the Christian faith. The believers John was writing to were troubled by false teachers who were undermining the teachings of the apostles. For those who struggle with doubt John has these wonderful words, *"We have seen and testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God."* Our assurance rests on two things: the apostles' testimony about Jesus, and our Spirit-given confession of who he is. (v14-15)

Apostolic Testimony Christianity is based on faith. *"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (Heb 1:11)* Faith is not blind. John roots the Christian faith in real history! His testimony is so compelling because it is in living memory! *"That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched, this we proclaim to you concerning the Word of Life".* And *"For we did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty".* (2 Peter 1:16). The Christian faith is rooted in seen-history, public events! *"The Father sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world."* *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.* (v10) John is telling us to look no further than Jesus Christ! In him we have assurance by these two things: the witness of the apostles and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

The story of the Bible is that God created a very good world. (Gen 1) When we get to Genesis 3, sin (that would be passed on to the next generations) had entered the world, with dreadful implications for everyone. While we were lost, and broken, enemies of God and undeserving of anything good from him, he sent his Son in human flesh as *"the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."* (1Jn 2:22) By accepting the testimony of the apostles and the witness of the Holy Spirit (v13), we are able to confess who Jesus of Nazareth is!

Apostolic Confession *"If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God."* Confession is a public allegiance rooted in the heart. Merely saying something doesn't always reflect the heart. Unlike the German soldiers in WWII who swore allegiance to their Feurer while all the while were plotting Hitler's assassination. (see Valkyrie film) genuine Children of God say and believe in their hearts that Jesus is the Son of God! Who do you say in your hearts of hearts that Jesus is?

During my student days as part of the Christian Union in Aberystwyth, we would ask the students to write on stickit notes *Pwy yw Iesu? Who is Jesus?* Some answers were true as far as they went but we are not children of God because

we believe certain things about Jesus or follow his teachings or example. The commentator Howard Marshall says: "To acknowledge that Jesus is the Son is not to make a statement about his metaphysical status but to express obedient trust in the One who possesses such a status". It is not the confession that earns the relationship. The confession is the Spirit-given evidence of that relationship and shows the reality of our salvation.

There are two types of beliefs. Open-handed beliefs like the mode of baptism, gifts of the Spirit and Calvinism vs Arminianism which allow fellowship, agreeing to disagree. But the divinity of Jesus Christ who came in the flesh is definitely a Closed-hand belief.

Is the Jesus we confess the Jesus of the New Testament, the Jesus the apostles saw and testified about? If your answer is 'Yes!' then you have solid grounds for assurance of your faith.

In order to guard the truth the early church wrote clear summaries of who Jesus is, called creeds...

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ
The only begotten Son of God,
Born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
True God from true God,
Begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
Through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
He came from Heaven,
And by his Holy Spirit was incarnate of the virgin Mary
And became man.

When we confess Jesus as the Son of God we show that God is at work in us to make us more like his Son. We will have a desire to please him and grow to hate sin and be grieved by it. We will grow in love for God and for others especially our brothers and sisters in Christ because God is in us and we in him who is love.

If we are confident in the truth and assured of our identity in him our assurance of salvation will give us confidence to proclaim the gospel and confess that the Father "*sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world*" and that is where our confidence rests.