

Assurance of Salvation - Introduction (John [3:16](#), other scriptures)

Paul Henebury

June 7, 2026

① This transcript was computer-generated and may contain minor inaccuracies.

So we've finished our series on the [great doctrines of scripture](#). Finally, we got through it. So what next?

Well, before we get into another book or another, you know, a lengthier study, I want to spend a bit of time on some subjects, which I think are important to address. And so one of those subjects, the one that's been pressing upon me is this matter of the assurance of salvation. The assurance of salvation.

You know, for quite a few of God's people. Assurance is a struggle. Am I saved?

Am I really going to heaven? How do I know that, uh, I'm not making this up, or how do I know that I believed correctly, or, uh, you know, how do I know that this faith that seems to be, uh, frequent, uh, frequently not what it should be, is sufficient for what God requires. So this idea of assurance of salvation, which we'll deal with today, and then Steve's going to preach next week.

And then when I'm back, I'm going to address it again for a few more sermons, is such an important thing. And it is not a, a shame on a person who, uh, to confess that they may struggle with assurance. I want to put that out there straight away.

It's not something that they should be shamed for. It often comes from a misunderstanding of the gospel and what it is and what it is not. And it is often, uh, It is often aggravated by what I think is a misunderstanding of justification and sanctification.

And, uh, It's interesting that, uh, you know, those things can often, they're both things from God. They're both things that are important, they're both things produced by the Holy Spirit. And yet, in our minds, they can sometimes be jumbled a bit.

And we wonder, okay, so I, I know that salvation is trusting in Christ, but then I've got to be changed. And what does that change look like? And how does that change affect God's view of me?

And if I'm not changed radically enough, you know, does that mean I was really saved in the 1st place? And, you know, confusion comes about in people's minds because of that. Now, not all of that confusion is bad because it is important to, uh, occasionally, to, as it were, check our spiritual temperatures.

Particularly in a period that's been quite unproductive spiritually in our lives. We might want to ask ourselves, you know, have I, Do I really believe that Jesus is my savior? But there is a foundational understanding that must be adhered to, or must be stood upon, by anybody who says that they are a Christian.

They must be able to understand what the gospel is. And what Jesus' role is and what their role is. And they mustn't put their role ahead of Jesus' role.

And they mustn't put something upon themselves that only Jesus can do. And they mustn't seek qualifications for their salvation that are not found in scripture. So having said that.

The text, as you can see, there are a few other scriptures that I want to go to, but the main text here is John 3:16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Now, it's that 2nd part of the verse that I'm most concerned with today that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

So it becomes absolutely critical, doesn't it? that we can answer the question of belief or faith. What is it?

What is it to believe in Jesus? Because if you believe in Jesus, the rest follows. Can you see that?

The promise comes to you. So in order to do that, I want to strip it down a little bit, and in the 1st 2 points, just talk about what faith or belief is. First of all, belief, basically, because the Bible doesn't qualify biblical belief or biblical faith from faith in other things.

It just uses that verb, and it says, believe this is what you've got to do, and it directs that belief, that faith, to a certain person. So what is it to believe? Well, often we, uh, You know, we don't even think about our beliefs.

Often, we just use our beliefs and beliefs and in order to go about our lives. But We cannot actually go about our lives. We can't go about anything in our life, really, if we don't have some belief that goes before.

We wouldn't believe, um, and these are mundane things, but I want to illustrate the importance of belief by talking about mundane things. Um We wouldn't believe, or rather, we wouldn't gas up our cars, if we didn't believe that the gas station was where you could get gas. Isn't, um, it's very straightforward, a very simple thing, but, you know, you see your gauge going down, and you say, I need to get gas.

And so you think, oh, well, we don't do this. We don't think, oh, where do I get gas? Bank.

You know, police station. Church. No, we know automatically, the place to get gas is to go to a gas station, yes?

We know that the pumps providers of the gas. We know that thing because our knowledge is preceded by belief that the gas station is the place to get gas. Do you see that?

And I hope that you can see that our knowledge of where to get gas is preceded by belief. Faith in that's where that's where gas is. And of course, as we do it over and over again, then that just becomes a settled thing and, you know, no problems at all.

You say, well, that's really kind of simplistic and mundane, but yes, it is. Yes, it is. Um, You know, when we, uh, Somebody tells us, you know, they invite us around to dinner and they give us the address.

We believe, even though we've never been to the house before. We believe that pulling up in that driveway, that's their house because that's the address that they've given to us. And so that's where we go and we pull into their place with that understanding that there's a connection between the address they gave us and the place we're supposed to have dinner.

We believe that, do you see? And when the Bible talks about belief or when it talks about faith, it is talking in those kinds of terms. Here is a proposition, as it were.

The way to get right with God, the way to get salvation is to believe in such and such. Not in that, not in that, but in this particular thing. This particular person, this particular act.

So belief is not some airy fairy thing. It's something that we use all the time. All the time to know something, and we're going to look at the fact that we can know that we're saved.

But to note anything, you have to believe in it. If you don't believe in it, You wouldn't take it on as knowledge, would you? Do you understand that?

I know these are very simple things, but we don't think about these things very much. All knowledge, if it's knowledge, it has to be, um, it has to be true. It has to be true.

You can't know something that isn't true. You can claim to know something that isn't true. But you can't actually know something isn't true.

You know, you can uh, you can say, well, Paul, I know that your uh, birth month is September. I know it. And I can say, well, actually, it's April.

So do you know that my birth month is September? No, you're mistaken. You're wrong.

You don't have the right knowledge at all. You have false knowledge. In order for your knowledge to be real knowledge, it has to be true, it has to correspond with reality, do you

see?

A person who um, gets in somebody else's car and tries to drive away in it, can't say, I know this is my car. That's not, that doesn't cut it. They know.

Uh, the person whose car it is, is the only one who has the knowledge that it's their car. So you have to, in order to have knowledge, you have to have truth, and you have to believe that truth. So philosophically speaking, Knowledge is justified true belief.

You have to have justification for what you know. In other words, I know this is my car. Here, you know, here are the keys.

Uh, you know, here's, uh, the, uh, pink slap and so on that has my name on it and all of this. You have to have a basis, justification for what you believe. It has to be true, because otherwise you wouldn't have any justification, it would be false, but you do have to have faith.

I know that it's very, very, you know, at this point in this 1st introductory point in the sermon, it's incredibly simplistic, but you, when you go to your cars after the end of this, you'll pick your car. Because you believe that's your car, do you see? So your belief directs you.

It directs your actions. Your choices. If you believe something different.

You get into somebody else's car or try to. So you can see how basic and important belief is. Okay.

Now, biblically speaking, Faith or belief is centered on God. The god of the Bible. Not some other god.

If you go, if you believe in a God of your own imagination, then you're not believing in the biblical God. Your faith is elsewhere. And in fact, you act, you have false knowledge.

If you believe in one of the gods of the world's religions, they're false. But your belief will take you into a different direction than belief in the biblical god would. Do you see?

In scripture, Faith in the biblical God, is connected with your actions connected with where you go, as it were. Just as in the same way, belief that you came in the certain car, will direct you to that certain car. Yes, your actions will be dictated by your belief, yes?

In the same way, Your belief in the God of scripture, who reveals himself of scripture, your actions will kind of direct you and follow you according to your belief in that God. So our text says, The God, the God of scripture. So loved the world, that he gave his only

begotten son, now that's the, that's the speaker, Jesus, That whoever believes in him should not perish now of everlasting life.

Okay. So, What's the thing, the crucial thing to be believed? Here.

What's the crucial thing that we're concerned about in this text? Is it about getting gas? Is it about, you know, depositing our money?

Is it about where we're going to work? Is about it? No, the particular thing that this is calling our attention to, which is actually the most important thing, is not perishing, Under the judgment of God, but being given, Eternal life.

That's what it's about. That's the thing. And in order to get that thing, The negative is not receiving punishment, and the positive is gaining eternal life with God and all that that means.

Our faith must be in the person of God's son. Do you see that? Nowhere else.

If you're um, driving home today and you believe that you live next door, then where you really live, you're going to drive into the wrong driveway, aren't you? It's only when you actually focus, as it were, I mean, we do it automatically, but you focus on the driveway that's your driveway that you drive into the correct driveway. And in the same way, you've got to identify, you've got to focus, you've got to understand where everlasting life can be found.

And then you go that way. Do you see? You arrive at your destination.

You believe that eternal life and forgiveness is found in Jesus. Ah, so you go to Jesus. Do you see?

You don't go anywhere else. You don't go to yourself. You don't say, well, you know, I'm a good person.

I've got a heart of gold. People say I'm nice. I've got a whole litany of good things that I've done, that I can bring up, and make myself look good with.

I know that I'm a good person. If you do that, your faith is in yourself. And therefore, your faith is not going to be in the Son of God.

And it's not going to be in the love of God the Father who sent the Son to give you eternal life is going to be in you. Well, you can try that. You can try that as a way of salvation.

And you can even convince yourself that I know that I'm a good person, and that I know that God's going to let me into heaven. I know that, and you know what that would be?

False knowledge.

False knowledge. It's not true. You may say you, know it, but you don't know it.

You may say that uh, Bill Clinton was the president uh, at the time of 911. You might say, well, I know he was. But he wasn't.

It was George Bush. You may say that I know that this religion is true. I know that this philosophy is true.

But the text of scripture is telling you, That there is one way of salvation. There is one place to go. There is one address, as it were.

There's one driveway. There's one gas pump, or gas station, and for salvation, It's in Jesus Christ. It's in the quality of his person.

It's on his ability as a savior. Why would you believe in him? You believe in him because he is the one who God sent to die for your sins to take your place.

He's the one that was in heaven and came from heaven to die upon his own earth. At the hands of his own creatures, For our sins, the sins of his creatures. So you wouldn't look anywhere else.

It'd be like needing gas and pulling up at a bank. You would look to him because he is the one that if you want eternal life and you want forgiveness, he's the one who provides it. You've got to believe that.

And then you act on that belief, do you see? And that belief is not a false belief. That knowledge is not a false knowledge.

It's justified true belief. It's true knowledge. So when you go to Christ, for salvation, from your sins, you will receive what he own, he and only he can give.

This is what Jesus himself says. This is what Jesus himself on the cross did. And the eternal life that is provided is also proved by his resurrection from the dead, his defeat of death on our behalf.

So this is why we have to have a clarity about the gospel, who to go to, what it's for, why we going to him, what we expect to receive because it's what he can give, And it's our utter belief that going to Jesus, for what he can give will, we will receive what he can give, because we know nobody else can do it. Now, if I'm going to a gas bump, okay, I don't need to pull up to a gas bump, thinking, oh, I've sinned against God. And before I can pump any gas, I need to get right with God.

Okay? I need to understand that I'm a sinner. I need to understand the something of the ungodliness and the wretchedness of my own heart.

I need to understand why on earth Jesus would have to die in my place. Why I'm not good enough. Why, I don't qualify to go into heaven.

I don't need to do any of that when I'm pumping gas, okay? I can, I can, uh, pull up and it doesn't matter what, uh, uh, I'm thinking or what I'm feeling, I can just get the gas pump and pump the gas. But when you come to Jesus, for salvation, Part of the understanding of I need forgiveness, so I don't perish, I need forgiveness, so I can have eternal life.

Part of that is I don't qualify. I'm not good enough. I deserve to perish.

And Jesus went through all of that, that agony on the cross for my sins. So there is a little bit of a more of a dimension, when you come to Jesus, it's not like this thoughtlessness as you pull up to a gas pump, it is rather thoughtfulness of, I'm desperate. I'm going to perish.

I am, I'm a sinner that needs salvation. I need God's forgiveness for my sins. There is, as it were, uh, uh, The salam.

In your soul, in your heart, in your mind, that you must comfort to Jesus for this. But it's also relief that you can come to him for it. There is a place to go.

And this is what Jesus is saying. Jesus says. God gave his only begotten son.

So there he is, he set forth. That whoever believes in him, because that's, uh, that's the person, the only one that set forth, should not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16 says, he who believes in the son, has everlasting life.

He who does not believe the son shall not see life. But the wrath of God abides on him. It's just saying the same thing as John 3:16.

Just intensifying as it were, the perishing is the wrath of God. So that's the basic idea that's being put across here. Romans, uh, chapter 3 and verse 24 saying, uh, says this, that being justified freely, By his grace in the redemption in Jesus Christ being justified freely by his grace.

This introduces this important concept of grace. Freely, Grace, those things go together. Okay?

Salvation is a gift. John 3:16 says it's a gift. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, for you.

It's a gift from God to you. And the salvation that's in him is for you, free gift. You just have to believe.

You have to go to the right place. You have to go for the right reason, because you want salvation. And it is by grace.

What's grace? What is this thing called grace? Freely?

Being justified, justified before God, freely. Okay, so in order to be justified, I have to, let's see. I have to do a whole bunch.

I need to be baptized. I need to be baptized in order to be saved. In order to be justified, I need to show God that I'm a religious person, I need to be baptized.

No, that's doing something. Okay? That's not receiving something, that's doing something.

Well, I need to make sure that I go to church. Well, going to church is a good thing, providing you go to the right church, then there are good churches, there are some good churches around here. But no.

That's not going to save you. Quite honestly, going to a church is not going to save you any more than pulling up to a gas bump is going to save you. It's not got to do with anything that you do.

It's not got to do with any thought of, oh, how can I show God that I'm serious, that I'm in earnest? It is simply going to the place where God provides salvation and forgiveness for you. And that place is Jesus.

It is your prayer to him. It is your plea for mercy. And it will be stowed upon you.

Freely. Freely. By God's grace.

His free gift. Ephesians 289 says, well, by grace, it is by grace through faith, that you were saved. Not of works, not of your efforts.

Lest anyone should boast. It is the Gift of God. Okay, so we understand then that you have to have belief, which means that you will go to where you believe you're going to get salvation.

That belief is Jesus, that he's the one where you get salvation. What it means is because it's about salvation. Because it's about forgiveness, because it's about restoration to God.

And not receiving the punishment that you are you deserve, but rather the grace of God, you go to Jesus Christ, in an attitude of need. Nothing in my hand I bring. Simply to thy

cross, I cling.

You come with that attitude. And you receive it. You receive it freely.

Because that's what has been provided for you. And any church, any preacher that teaches anything different than that, is teaching you a false gospel. John 3:16 says, again, whoever believes in him should not perish.

Should not perish. Okay, so if you don't want to perish under God's wrath, under God's judgment for your sins, you know where to go. Now, I've told you where to go.

But I can't believe for you. Do you understand that? Telling you what to do, telling you where to go is not the same as you going there.

And doing it. But understand that it's free. It awaits you.

And then it says that if you've trusted in Jesus, if you believed in him, that you have obtained eternal life. Whoever believes in him should not perish, but have, have everlasting life. If you flip over to John [5](#).

Verse 24 Jesus puts it this way. Must assuredly, I say to you, he who hears my word, And believes in him who sent me has everlasting life. And shall not come into judgment, but has passed.

From death to life. They've passed from death to life. Well, how did they pass from death to life?

God did the work. God conveyed them from death to life. You didn't do it.

You didn't struggle out of, as it were, the arms of death into the arms of eternal life. You actually did nothing. God did that.

What you did is that you went to the right place. So you went to the right person. In John, uh, 1st John chapter 5 and verse 20.

Penultimate verse. He says, and we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know him who is true, and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ, this is the true God and eternal life. Now, it's a fairly, you know, long way around of saying it, and there's a lot involved in it, as there isn't a lot of what John communicates.

But the idea is that you can know. You can know. Very clearly, who you've believed, you can know that you have eternal life and that you have forgiveness.

First John 5:20. So I know that this is a simple message. I know it's kind of straightforward.

But how do you know that you're saved? Because that's the key question here, isn't it? How can you have assurance?

Of salvation? Well, let's kind of go through the logic here, okay? Where do you go to get Salvation from your sins.

Forgiveness so that you don't endure the punishment of God, and granted everlasting life with God. Where do you go? Okay, you go to Jesus, do you see?

Now, have you been to Jesus there? Have you gone to Jesus? Understanding that you're a sinner in need of forgiveness and that you don't get automatically, you don't get everlasting life.

Have you done that? Well, if you've done that, then just like you, a person who's gone to a gas station and put the nozzle in the gas tank and filled it, knows they've got gas in their tank, Okay, and they can drive off again and not break down 10 miles down the road. You should know and should be assured of the fact that you have everlasting life that you've been forgiven.

The question is, okay? Have you been to uh, to Jesus for what you need from Jesus? Have you identified what you need?

Have you believed and know that? You know, you are a sinner and that you need salvation, you need his forgiveness. Have you gone to Jesus for that?

If you have, Well, these passages say that you will not perish. And they also say, you have, Everlasting life. You've passed from death to life.

Don't feel like it, you know, inside you, probably. But you have, you pass from death to life. That transaction has been done for you.

You can have assurance of your salvation. Now, I hope that you understand why there's more sermons that need to come on what I've said, but that's, uh, that's the most important thing. It's certainly possible to be a Christian and not live the way God wants you to live, not live in gratitude, not live, in consecration to him, not live, in accordance with the word of God, but be worldly and carnal in the way that you live your life.

It is possible. And if you live that way, if you live in a worldly way, as it were, then sure, your assurance is not going to be as bright and not to be as clear to you as it would be if you were walking with God. But if you have come to Christ, with the right heart, if you

have come to him knowing that you need salvation and you've asked him for salvation and say, unless you give me salvation, I perish, And you've come to him for that, you have it.

And you can be assured of it. And that's kind of where I want to leave it today. We need to address some issues.

We need to address the carnal Christian. We need to address the issue of the people who think, well, you know, I know God loves me, but I don't think he likes me. Or, you know, because I'm not really sure I like myself.

All those people that think, well, it's, I'm never good enough, you know? It's like, I feel God's always ticked off with me. You know?

So, like, I feel that I'm just, yeah, I fail all the time. And God just thinks that, you know, Him again. So we need to address that.

What does God really think about you? Even in the midst of your failures? Even in the midst of your doubts.

What does God think of you? So we need to address that. We need to address issues of death.

Being sure when we face death that our faith is true, it's real. And several other things that I want to bring across. I hope that that's a helpful introduction.

I hope that that, you'll go away and think about this simple message. Have I believed? In Jesus Christ for salvation and forgiveness from my sins.

If you have, You have it. That's the good news. You didn't earn it.

But it was given to you by a gracious and loving God. Let's pray. So, heavenly Father, we come to you and we come in gratitude.

Because Father, we believe that you have the words or Jesus has the words of eternal life. There's nowhere else to go. There's nowhere else we would go.

We believe that Jesus is the Savior. There's no other name under heaven, whereby we must be saved. What Jesus has done on the cross is sufficient to save us forever.

And we hold, Lord, that if Jesus fails, there's no backup plan. There's no other way of salvation. But Father, we trust that Jesus will never fail that nobody will be able to take us out of his hand.

And a father who is greater than any, that no man is able to take us out of the father's hand. Lord, we're secure. In your grace.

We thank you, Lord, for the salvation that's freely offered in Jesus Christ. And we pray that everyone here will go to the right place. With the right motive and find eternal life and forgiveness in him.

Thank you in Jesus' name. Amen.