

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Salvation, Session 19, Preservation and Perseverance, Part 3, Systematic Formulations, Assurance

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This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Salvation. This is session 19, Preservation and Perseverance, Part 3, Systematic Formulations, Assurance.

We continue our lectures on the Doctrine of Salvation.

We have studied Preservation, how God keeps his people saved. We saw passages about the Trinity, Trinity going to work to accomplish that, God's attributes keeping us saved, and the work of Christ, different facets of it, likewise, keeping us saved. We're studying Perseverance, and it must be a complementary truth since the Bible is teaching is coherent, although it's not self-evident how they cohere immediately.

But the Bible also teaches God's people must persevere in faith, love, and now holiness. Believers must continue to pursue holiness. Christians must persevere in holiness if they are to be finally saved.

Salvation is by faith, not by pursuing holiness. But true saving faith works, it produces good works. Quote, for in Christ Jesus, Galatians 5, 6, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision accomplishes anything.

What matters is faith working through love, Galatians 5, 6. We will see this truth in four passages. First, in Paul's most famous faith and work texts, Ephesians 2:8 through 10, for you're saved by grace through faith, and this salvation is not from yourselves. It's God's gift, not from works, so that no one should boast.

For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand for us to walk in them, for us to do, Ephesians 2:8 to 10. Salvation is by grace through faith, and it's God's gift from beginning to end. Justification is not from works, for if it were, those saved would have reason for boasting, but that is not the case.

Quoting Romans 3:27-28, where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law is it excluded? By one of works? No, on the contrary, by a law, a principle of faith. For we conclude that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law, Romans 3:27-28.

So then, does salvation have nothing to do with works? Salvation is not based on works, but true salvation results in good works. Ephesians 2:10, for we are his

workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand for us to do. Believers are already a part of God's new creation.

The word is created beforehand so that we can walk in them. It does not say it recreated the word, but the meaning of the word created in the context of Ephesians 10 is exactly recreated. It is talking about the new creation of God, which, like every major eschatological theme, is already and not yet.

Not yet do we see the new heavens and new earth, but we are already regenerated and recreated in the image of God, in the true image of the Lord Jesus Christ. Believers are already a part of God's new creation, 2 Corinthians 5:17, that will only appear in the new earth. In the meantime, God recreated us in Christ to do good works.

In fact, God prepared these works for us to do ahead of time. That is why Christians feel God's pleasure in doing his will. It's just like I've almost been made to do this.

I have such joy in this. Yeah, well, you were remade to do it. True believers persevere in holiness for doing so is as much God's will as is free salvation.

I might say it's as much his, not only his will commanded, but it is his will. It is his plan before we even existed to do those very things. In the second passage, Paul again insists that justification is not based on works but inevitably leads to good works.

Regeneration and justification do not involve human achievement but are all of God's grace. Titus 3:4 through 7, but when the kindness of God, our savior, and his love for humankind appeared, he saved us, not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. He poured out his spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, so that having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.

Second, I mean, Titus, excuse me, Titus 3:4 through 7, salvation is not due to our works of righteousness, but to God's kindness, love, mercy, and grace, words that appear in the passage I just read. As a result, we are saved, that is, regenerated, justified, and heirs of eternal life. Paul could not be clearer that salvation is not by works but faith.

Or perhaps he could be. In Galatians 2:16, he says it three times, negatively and positively. But anyway, it's very clear here.

At the same time, he is also clear that free justification results in a godly life. Immediately following the verses above, we read, quote, this saying is trustworthy. I

want you to insist on these things, Paul writes to his understudy Titus, so that those who have believed God might be careful to devote themselves to good works.

These are good and profitable for everyone. Verse 8, Yarbrough, in his *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, Pilgrim New Testament Commentary, page 552, Yarbrough highlights the importance of good works in the Christian life for Paul. Quote, these things in Titus 3:8 are the good works that Paul is urging Timothy to make sure that the Cretan believers set a high premium on Titus ministers in the isle of Crete.

Their behavior will benefit not only those performing such actions but also those in the world to whom God calls the church to witness. For everyone is for people, *tois anthropois*, an expression inclusive of everyone. Those who claim the church might be tempted to despise, verse 3, are among those Paul calls on Christians to bless by their stellar comportment in society. Verses 1 and 2 of Titus 3.

Third is a text in Hebrews, the third passage showing the necessity of believers to persevere in holiness. Following the passage that enjoins the readers to endure persecution as divine discipline in Hebrews 12, the writer says, Hebrews 12:14, pursue peace with everyone and pursue holiness without which no one will see the Lord. Hebrews 12:14 commands readers to seek peace with everyone.

The author puts peace in the first emphatic position in Greece. In context, this refers to peace within the community of faith. Pursue is a strong verb and communicates active effort on the reader's part with regard to harmony and holiness.

Pursue peace and pursue holiness. The word pursue, in fact, is not repeated, but it is plainly understood with both verbs. The readers are commanded to pursue holiness and warn that those who lack it will fail to experience the beatific vision, the seeing of God, the final seeing of God that fills the beholders with joy.

F. F. Bruce is accurate, quote, the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord is, as the words themselves make plain, no optional extra in the Christian life, but something that belongs to its essence. It is the pure in heart and none but they who shall see God. Matthew 5:8.

Here, as in verse 10, it is the practical holiness of life that is meant the converse of those things against which a warning is uttered in the verses that follow. Close quote. F. F. Bruce's commentary on Hebrews. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, New International Commentary on the New Testament.

Believers must persevere to the end in holiness to enter the final kingdom of God. The next passage teaches us that his holiness is this holiness is not sinless perfection but that it involves the confession of sin.

The fourth passage demanding the holiness of believers if they would be finally saved is for in first John. This passage adds balance to the study of perseverance in holiness. It emphasizes the necessity of such perseverance for salvation as strongly as anywhere in scripture.

1 John 1:5 and 6. This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you. God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him.

If we say we have fellowship with him and yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. 1 John 1:5 and 6. 1 John 2:3 through 5.

This is how we know that we know him. If we keep his commandments, the one who says I have come to know him and yet does not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps his word, truly in him the love of God is made complete.

1 John 2:3 through 5. 1 John 2:29. If you know that he is righteous, you know this as well.

Everyone who does what is right has been born of him. 1 John 2:29. 1 John 3:6 through 8 and then verse 10.

Everyone who remains in him does not sin. Everyone who sins has not seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you.

The one who does what is right is righteous just as he is righteous. The one who commits sin is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. Verse ten.

This is how God's children and the devil's children become obvious. Whoever does not do what is right is not of God, especially the one who does not love his brother or sister. 1 John 3:6 through 8 and then 10.

1 John thus places great emphasis on believers living out the faith that they profess. In the passages cited this involves saying no to sin and yes to holiness. In fact, it is possible to interpret the passages above as teaching that Christians never sin.

Such an interpretation would be wrong, however, based on 1 John 1:5 through 2:2. Basic to this whole passage is verse five. Basic to the whole of 1 John is verse 5 of chapter 1.

God is light, and there's absolutely no darkness in him. God's holiness is absolute and certain implications follow from that fact. Quoting first John one, six through two, one.

They're a unity, and it's good to see the balance as John puts one thing next to another in very helpful ways. The Bible is not a systematic theology book, but I say in certain places, it shows a systematizing tendency. So, it is here.

Usually, the author, the biblical author behind whom is the holy spirit, sees a need to qualify to explain the contours of God's truth lest the readers misunderstand Christian theology or ethics. If we say 1 John 1:6, we have fellowship with him and yet walk in darkness we are lying and not practicing the truth. If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus's son cleanses us from all sin.

If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous in forgiven us and cleansing us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin, but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ, the righteous one. These verses alienate me,. These verses alternate between one statement that denies sin theoretically or practically and two statements that admit sin or commend a holy life.

- 1:6 a statement that denies sin practically.
- 1:7 a statement that commends a holy life.
- 1:8 a statement that denies sin theoretically.
- 1:9 a statement that admits sin.
- 1:10 a statement that denies sin practically.
- 2:1 a statement that commends a holy life and admits sin.

These statements accomplish a number of things. They show that God hates sin in the lives of his people. He commands them to be holy as he is holy. Compare Leviticus 11:44; 19:2; 1 Peter 1:16.

Holiness is not optional but rather an integral part of what it means to be a believer. It is possible for Christians to deny sin theoretically or practically, both of which are disastrous. Omitted from the list above are statements in the passage of God's grace, Christ's cross, and forgiveness, even if, to the best of their knowledge, Christians are not sinning, they do not save themselves, but Christ's atonement avails for them, that is, the blood of Jesus' Son cleanses us from all sin, verse 7. In other words, I omitted these things, but they're in the passage. I omitted them to show that the clash between the two, the cross and forgiveness, is not a sin.

It is not a sin, but it is between denying sin, theoretically or practically, and God commending a godly life that goes back and forth. When they do confess their sins,

God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, verse 9. Even when believers stumble and fall, they have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous one, 2:1, who made propitiation for all who believe, verse 2. Thus, 1 John 1:6-2:1 qualifies interpretation of the apparent perfectionist texts in the epistle. Key aspects of perseverance in holiness include acknowledging sin, both theoretically and practically, confessing sin as a normal part of the Christian life, and relying on God's grace and Christ's atoning sacrifice to save and keep us.

God preserves his people and preservation. Believers must persevere in faith, love, and holiness. Assurance, God's preservation of his saints, and their perseverance in faith, love, and holiness affect other doctrines, including assurance and apostasy.

We will briefly treat them in turn. Assurance is the confidence in final salvation. God graciously assures his people by three primary means.

The promises of salvation in his word is the most important, but it's not alone. The internal witness of the Holy Spirit and spiritual growth in the lives of his people. I point you to a fuller treatment in my book, *The Assurance of Salvation, Biblical Hope for Our Struggles*, Zondervan 2019.

Assurance through the word. Here are the headings. Assurance through the spirit.

Assurance through spiritual growth. Assurance through the word. Gospel promises belong here.

For example, God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life, John 3:16. When people trust the Son to give them eternal life, they gain confidence in salvation. God's reliable word is the fundamental source of assurance for all who believe its saving message. 1 John also grounds or bases assurance in faith in Christ.

Quote, and this is a testimony. God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his son. The one who has the son has life.

The one who does not have the son of God does not have life. 1 John 5:11 and 12. John distinguishes between the haves and the have-nots.

His distinction is not based on beauty, brains, or brawn, three things we highly value. Rather, his distinction is based on whether Christ is savior by grace through faith or not. God assures those who have the son of God of eternal life.

The preservation passages that we study likewise teach that God grants assurance to his people via the word. Here are a few excerpts from John 10:26, I give my sheep

eternal life, and they will never perish. Romans 8:1, therefore, does not condemn those for those in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:38-39, for I'm persuaded, Paul wrote that neither death nor life, neither angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other creative thing would be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Hebrews 7:24-25, Jesus holds his priesthood permanently because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 7:24-25, assurance is chiefly through the word but it's not the only way God assures us. Assurance through the Holy Spirit. Although the word of God is the primary way that God assures his own, it's not the only way.

God also grants confidence of final salvation by his spirit working within believers. Romans is the primary witness to this truth but 1st John also testifies. 1st John 4:13, this is how we know that we remain in him and he in us.

He has given us of his spirit. 1 John 4:3, 1 John 3:24, and this way and the way we know that he remains in us is from the spirit. He has given us.

1 John 5:6-10, Jesus Christ, he is the one who came by water and blood—a reference to his baptism and cross. Not by water only, those are, I'll explain in a moment, but by water and by blood.

And the spirit is the one who testifies because the spirit is the truth, for there are three that testify: the spirit, the water, and the blood. And these three are in agreement.

If we accept human testimony, God's testimony is greater because it is God's testimony that he has given about his son. The one who believes in the son of God has this testimony within himself or herself. 1 John 5:6-10, the first two texts merely state that the Holy Spirit plays a role in believers knowing that they are united to Christ.

The third text includes a spirit among the three witnesses to Christ. John places signposts at the beginning and end of Jesus' life. Water, Jesus' baptism, and blood, his crucifixion.

The spirit bears witness to these historical markers like John 17:17 and the son, John 14:6. The spirit is the truth. 1 John 5:6, for people to be saved, they must believe God's witness concerning Jesus. When someone does, he has, quote, this testimony within himself, close quote, because of the spirit's witness in his or her heart.

1 John 5:10, Romans offers the two most outstanding passages concerning the Holy Spirit's inner witness to assurance. Paul extols the hope of final salvation that believers enjoy because Christ has reconciled them to God. Their hope rests on God's word and his working in their lives, Romans 5:1-4. Christians need not worry if their hope is secure, for Paul explains and quotes that this hope will not disappoint us, this hope of final salvation, this hope of glory.

It won't disappoint us because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us, Romans 5:5. The spirit assures us inwardly that God loves us. He thus complements assurance given through the word. The word and spirit work together to strengthen believers' confidence that God loves them and will keep them saved until the end.

The textus classicus on the internal witness of the Holy Spirit is Romans 8:16. The context deals with God's adoption of believers. God's children are identifiable. You can pick them out, quote, for all those led by this God's spirit are God's sons, Romans 8:14. The father delivers his children from fear when he gives them the Holy Spirit.

This is because, quote, the spirit of adoption enables them to cry out, quote, Abba, Father, verse 15. Abba is not baby talk but is a children's term of endearment for their father. Here it means father, father.

The term cry out signifies and carries with it emotional intensity as indicated by the ESV, NASB, and CSB, Christian Standard Bible, punctuating the sentence with an exclamation point. The term cry out, the spirit enables us to cry out, father, father. The spirit not only empowers lost persons to call God father in truth, he also assures believers inwardly of the father's love, quote, the spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, verse 16.

God assures his children of his love outwardly by making promises to them in his word. He also assures them inwardly by virtue of the Holy Spirit's bearing witness with their human spirits that God is their father and that they are his beloved children. Because they are children, they are also, quote, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, close quote, if their faith is genuine.

Those who trust Christ as Lord and Savior and are united to him in his death and suffering will also be united with him in glorification, Romans 8:17. God ministers to both the head and the heart. Many evangelicals in their zeal to give scripture the utmost place in their faith, minimize the heart as Moo, referring to the verb in Romans 8:16, observes in his great Romans commentary, page 502, quote, in using the verb crying out, Paul stresses that our awareness of God as father comes not from rational consideration nor from external testimony alone, important word, but from a truth deeply felt and intensely experienced.

If some Christians err in basing their assurance of salvation on feelings alone, many others err in basing it on facts and arguments alone. Indeed, what Paul says here calls into question whether one can have a genuine experience of God's spirit of adoption without it affecting emotions. God brought me to himself as a 21-year-old as I was led to read the Bible, and I devoured it. I believed it was from a message, a word from God, and I believed the gospel.

And I had an inexplicable inner sense of assurance that Mu is talking about. I was on, I was high on Jesus, if you will, on the gospel for months. And I was smart enough to know by God's grace that this was not the normal Christian life.

And it wasn't what I was trusting in, but boy, it was nice. And it was so encouraging. I had a wonderful sense of assurance from devouring the word, especially Paul's letters, and understanding the message of salvation, but also this strange internal conviction that, along with the Bible, carried the day for me and saw me through some rough patches.

Assurance through the word, assurance through the spirit within, assurance through spiritual growth. God blesses his own people with assurance via the promises of preservation, of salvation and preservation in his word, via his spirit's testimony in their hearts, and via his work in their lives. We'll investigate this last point with the help of three passages.

First, Luke 8:11 to 15, distinguishes inadequate from adequate reception of the word of God. Jesus told the parable of the sower and the seed. Some seed fell along the path and birds ate it.

Some fell on rock where it sprouted but withered without moisture. Some fell among thorns which choked it. The seed is the word of God.

The first three types of soil are hearers of the word who do not truly receive the word so as to produce lasting fruit. Only the last type of soil represents true believers, as Jesus describes them. Quote, but the seed in the good ground, these are the ones who, having heard the word with an honest and good heart, hold on to it and by enduring produce fruit.

Luke 8:15. The assurance of Jesus' followers who were growing in their faith would increase as they heard these words. Second, the second passage tying assurance to spiritual growth is Peter's challenge to his readers to pursue godly lives.

He reminds them of God's provision in his power and word of everything required for life and godliness. 2 Peter 1:3, and 4. He then exhorts them to quote, make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge,

knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. 2 Peter 1, verses 5 through 7. Peter promises his readers usefulness and fruitfulness if they are growing in these qualities.

Verse 8, moreover, someone lacking in these qualities gives evidence of being unsaved. 2 Peter 1:9. Most important for our purposes are Peter's next words. Therefore, brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things, you will never stumble.

For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you. 2 Peter 1:10 and 11. Their calling in Peter, as in Paul, is God's effectively summoning them to Christ through the gospel.

Their election is God's having chosen them for salvation before the foundation of the world. Of course, their calling and election are known to God who elected and called them. Peter prays that his reader's confidence that God has chosen and called them might increase.

He puts calling before election because that is how they came to know the Lord. They did not reason their way to God's election of them. Rather, they believed the gospel when God effectively called them.

It is by their calling that they came to know their election. Compare 1 Thessalonians 1:4 and 5. Harvey and Towner, in a commentary, capture Peter's message to his readers. Quote, he holds before us the promise that by pursuing such growth, they will confirm the reality of their place among God's chosen people.

Verse 10, avoid damaging spiritual reverses, verse 10, and enrich their capacity to enjoy the glories of eternal life. Verse 11, Robert Harvey and Philip Towner, second Peter and Jude, intervarsity, and it's page 51. So, God's people strengthen their assurance as they pursue God and the qualities of life that he desires for them.

Third, 1 John powerfully bears witness to the fact that God connects assurance to growth in obedience to him, as is his custom. John teaches this truth both positively and negatively. Quote, 1 John 2:3 through 6, this is how we know that we know him if we keep his commands.

The one who says, I have come to know him and yet doesn't keep his commands, is a liar and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps his word, truly in him the love of God is made complete. This is how we know that we are in him.

The one who says he remains in him should walk just as Jesus walked. 1 John 2:3 through 6, positively by keeping God's commands, Christians gain assurance of

knowing him. Verse 3, conversely, claiming to know him while disobeying his commands is a very bad sign.

Verse 4, positively again, God's love attains its goal in believers when they obey his word and thereby strengthen their assurance. Verse 5, in sum, those who claim to be in union with Christ must live following his example. 1 John 2, 6, our emphasis on assurance through spiritual growth can be misunderstood.

At no point is the Christian life a self-help program. Believers are active throughout and must persevere in faith, love, and holiness to be saved in the end. But they are not independently active.

God works in and through his children every step of the way, including that of spiritual growth. We really grow by grace through faith, but God enables that growth. We see this for each of the Trinitarian persons.

We, quote, work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Philippians 2:12 and 13. For it is God, in context, the Father, who is working in us, both to will and to work, to his good purpose.

We work out the salvation that God worked into us, and we do it reverently, even with fear and trembling, because it is the salvation God is working in us, both to will and to work according to his pleasure. Even the good thoughts we have ultimately bring glory to God. We abide in the true vine, Jesus Christ when he reminds us, quote, you can do nothing apart from me.

Apart from me, you can do nothing, John 15:5. We walk by the Spirit, Galatians 5:16. Compare verse 25. But the fruit we bear is the fruit of the Spirit.

In other words, we are active in the Christian life, but underneath are the everlasting arms, not only keeping us saved, but producing fruitfulness through us, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Moose summarizes the fact that assurance is based in part on our pursuit of godliness and holiness. Quote, Paul insists that what God has done for us in Christ is the sole and final grounds for our eternal life.

At the same time as he insists on the indispensability of holy living as the precondition for attaining that life. Moo Commentary in Romans 495. That is beautifully stated.

Years ago, I was teaching these matters in a classroom, and there were two students there from a very non-reformed background who had stumbled upon Charles Hodges's Systematic Theology book, and they were, shall we say, born again. They were converted to the reformed faith at these truths they had never heard. And they were struggling but making progress.

They were learning so much. Sponges. And I'm teaching different ways that God assures us, as I have been doing here.

And they said, Doc, we found one passage that has all three in it. Now, part perhaps is because of my slowness of mind and another part because of my reluctance to teach anything but the truth. I listened to them, and I said, boy, that's interesting.

But I said I needed to think about it more. Well, I thought about it more. I've written about it numerous times.

And this is one of them. One passage combines the three means of assurance. My newly reformed students were absolutely right.

This is the best passage because it combines all three means in one text, setting them alongside each other in the most helpful way. God is good to his children. He not only saves them by grace through faith, but he also assures them that he is theirs and they are his.

He does so in three ways, primarily by promising them salvation in his word. That is the stable underlying foundation of assurance. At times, we cannot adequately feel or perceive the spirit within.

And at times, frankly, our lives are not an encouragement but a discouragement. Always underneath are the everlasting arms. Yes, we repent of those sins of which we are aware.

And we pray God would enable us to feel the spirit. But regardless of all that, the word remains firm. But the word is not alone.

God also assures us within by his spirit and by producing spiritual fruit through us as we seek him and seek by his grace and spirit to do his will. Remarkably, Paul in Romans 5:1 through 10, for our purposes, I'll say Romans 5:1 through 5, and then verse 10, combines the three means of assurance. On the basis of scripture, Paul gives his readers confidence in their justification and reconciliation.

God declared them righteous when they trusted in Christ, Romans 5:1. Though they were God's enemies, he reconciled them to himself through Christ's cross. It follows then, verse 10, how much more having been justified, sorry, how much more having been reconciled, will they be saved by his life? Verse 10, the Bible affirms final salvation for God's people, thereby assuring them through the promise of the word. If when we were enemies, God reconciled us to himself, how much more having been reconciled, we will be saved by his life.

As we have seen, the Holy Spirit also plays a part in confirming Christians' hope of future glory. This hope does not disappoint us, Romans 5:5, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us, Romans 5:5. The Spirit assures us within that God our Father loves us and will keep us saved. Actually, I even abbreviate these things because Paul gives two arguments based on the word.

It's all this is the word, but here the word points us to the Spirit, and here the word points us to God working in our life, but it uses arguments from justification and reconciliation in Romans 5:6 through 10, and they go like this. If when we were condemned, God justified us, since therefore, verse 9, we have now been justified by his blood, Christ's blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. If when we were condemned, God justified us, now that he justified us, he will keep us saved to the end, and he repeats the same argument.

It's a Jewish argument from the greater to the lesser, from the harder thing to the easier thing. God did the harder thing. He declared condemned sinners righteous in his sight.

It's incredible. Now, having declared them righteous, verse 9, how much more shall they be saved by him from the wrath of God? Good grief. It makes sense.

He did the harder thing. He'll do the easier, and it's the same argument shifting from the picture of justification to reconciliation in verse 10. In verse 10, for if while we were enemies, God did the harder thing, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more, that's a verbal indicator of this Jewish type argument, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life? By the way, blood is the reference to the cross in verse 9. His life is a reference to Jesus' resurrection in verse 10, and we're not to parcel out justification to atonement, the cross, reconciliation, or resurrection.

No, they're both; the death and resurrection of Christ are the basis for both justification and resurrection, reconciliation, but Paul parcels it out like this. Each one is a part of the whole. Blood stands for blood and life.

Life stands for blood and life as well. Here, again, is that same argument. If, while we were enemies, God reconciled us.

Now that we're friends, now that we're God's friends, we're reconciled, we surely shall be saved by the resurrected Christ. That is an argument based upon God's promises, God's word. 5:5 is an argument for assurance through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us, pouring out God's love in our hearts.

The spirit within whispers, as it were, he convinces us that God loves us. That is never apart from the word, but is not the same as the word. The word is out here, that this witness is in here, and this witness agrees with that witness.

That is, God establishes convictions concerning the truth of his word, and he assures us inwardly, agreeing with his assurance of us outwardly in the word. Not only so, but all three ways of assurance are in the same passage. God's working in our lives also reinforces assurance.

As a matter of fact, it is put first in this passage. Because of God's promise of heaven, believers rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Oh, perhaps I misspoke.

That promise of heaven in verse 2, that's the word. So, you've got word, then you have God assuring us through working in our lives, then you have God assuring us by his spirit, verse 5, and then the verses that follow show God assures us by, again, by the word. So, the word is at the beginning and at the end of the passage.

Word changed life, Holy Spirit within, word again, 3 through 4, give the argument from the changed life. Not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions because we know that affliction produces endurance, endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope, 3 and 4. Here, Paul teaches that God assures us by changing our lives. He gives a chain, and affliction leads to affliction, persecution, suffering, and affliction. Rightly responding produces endurance and steadiness.

And if you are steady long enough, your character changes. Affliction produces endurance, produces a proven character, and that produces hope. When Christians respond to affliction in a God-honoring manner, God builds endurance into them.

If they do this often enough, it becomes a pattern of life, and God changes their character so that they become steady persons. And Paul, we must read between the lines. He doesn't tell us how that character change produces hope, but I don't think it's hard to read between the lines, and the commentaries agree with these thoughts.

When they see God at work in them in these ways, in ways they can see, it strengthens their assurance for God's working in ways they cannot see. Observing God at work in the here and now in our lives, even to change them toward godliness, bolsters our confidence of his working in the future. Quoting myself.

Sorry, I didn't know that. God's work in what we can see produces hope for what we cannot see. Romans 5 then portrays God's word, the Spirit's inner witness, and changes lives as ways God assures believers of their heavenly hope.

In our next lecture, we will deal with the difficult biblical teaching of apostasy.

This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Salvation. This is session 19, Preservation and Perseverance, Part 3, Systematic Formulations, Assurance.