

Egypt & Exodus

THE YEAR OF THE BIBLE

Sermon 6: Certain Peace

1 John 5:11-13

Dr. Matt Cassidy --- April 12, 2020

Well, good morning, Grace Covenant Church. Happy Easter! Here's a greeting that goes back a few years. "He is risen" – and then you say, "He is risen indeed." He is risen – He is risen indeed. That greeting goes back to the beginning of the Christian faith. It is a declarative statement. He is risen – He is risen indeed. It is a definitive statement. It defines every man, woman, and child. It defines life. It defines death. It defines all history. He is risen – He is risen indeed. All things point to that in the human timeline. Men, women, and children will be celebrating all over the world this Easter.

In the history of Christendom, they have met in catacombs and in caves and cathedrals. But this year we meet in homes, all over the world. And this is a very special year, 2020. We're into month four and it has been a year of uncertainty and fear. It's been a year where we're having to stop and look at the frailty of mankind, and sometimes that frailty finds itself in reflection of our own personal frailty. Is this going to happen to me? Am I next?

And in that frailty, we find ourselves living in fear and uncertainty. And Resurrection Sunday shows up and says, *You don't have to live in fear. You don't have to live in uncertainty.* That's certainly one of the points of the resurrection story, to free us from the slavery of fear and the slavery of uncertainty.

Religion as an Expression of a Ledger

Here's the problem, fundamentally. Whether it comes to us from world religions or our own intuitive soul way of thinking (and I would say that thinking is bent and broken), here's why we feel anxious during these times and are afraid. Most all world religions and the way we think about our soul's health is analogous to accounting, a merit and demerit system. Just fundamental accounting – it's a ledger book.



And in ledger books the basic accounting goes like this. If you have an asset then it counts as – it's written in black, if you own that. That's an asset, that's black. And if you have a liability, you're indebted, that's written in red ink.

If a person is living with more assets than liabilities, that's great. That person's living in black. And if someone is living with more debt than assets, you say, *Oh, man. That man is living in the red.* That's accounting.

What people do is they attach that same ledger system to the very health and destiny and the fate of their soul. It's a moral ledger book. And so, when we do good, that's an asset. And when we fail to do the right thing or we do the wrong thing, or when we reject goodness, when we ignore God – those are liabilities. Those are red-ink sorts of things. That's our indebtedness to God.

And the way the system works is if your assets, your black-ink good works, are more than your red-ink bad works, you're doing good. You're a good person. And then at the end of life, hopefully you have more assets than liabilities. You're living in the black and you're dying in the black ink. And then you get whatever that religion or whatever your heart thinks it ought to get, like heaven or nirvana. Or maybe you can be recycled as a really rich lady's cat, right? Something like that. That's whatever it's promising. That's how the ledger system works.

Result: Slavery of the Soul

And the point is that this model of soul accounting is all about doing and it's all about you. And that system enslaves the soul to fear. It is insidious. It is burdensome. If the ledger system is applied accurately, truthfully, it's life-consuming. Because you're perpetually keeping account for all your actions, your thoughts, and your very motives.

Even in actions we're so broken that when we're told to do something by an authority, whether it's God or a parent, or not to do something by God or an authority, we think, *No! I don't want to do that!* Look, maybe it's just me, but when the people in charge said, "Don't touch your face," I don't think I touched my face that much. And now since that's been rolled out, I touch my face more than I ever have. And do you know why? Because someone said I can't. So, on the moral part of this, at least my experience has not been good.

But even if we did do the right actions and we were doing okay with that, it's still also about motive. Whether it's Aristotle or Shakespeare, we all know the motive makes it so. And so, if we're keeping a true accounting of things, we have to include not just our actions or our thoughts, but also our motives. And I find it's almost impossible to change motives. Because if you did the right thing for the wrong reason, then you have black ink getting spilled with a bunch of red ink. And the motives, like envy and pride or revenge – or pity, whatever it might be – they just show up in the midst of doing maybe even the right thing.

And pride: in the Jewish faith, in the Christian faith, pride is the greatest of all sins, because the God of the Bible is the only god that's only been written about that's humble. And it's the humility of God that says that pride is the worst of all sins. That's some very deep red ink on our moral ledger.

And so, in summary, even when we do good things, we can do it for the wrong reason, and it counts as a liability against us. And so, what do we do with all of that red ink?

If that weren't bad enough, you study the saints and you will find that the closer a person is to knowing the Lord and the closer a person is to becoming a saint, you find in their writings that they become super sensitive to what they think and to what motivates them. And they don't like it.

In other words, the more holy you become, the more you realize how sinful you are. And so, you can even look at the autobiographies of heavyweights like Billy Graham or Mother

Teresa of Calcutta. And when they write about their soul's health, they were drowning in red ink. They were not good and healthy souls. So, if they can't do it, I'm not sure how you and I can do this ledger system.

Psalm 130:3

Lord, if you kept a record of sins, who could stand?

That's why it says in the Psalms, "Lord, if you kept records of our sins, who could stand?" Who could stand?

Result: Slavery of Uncertainty

And listen, the ledger system isn't just evil in the context of how we live; it's also even worse in how we die, under the ledger system. Because in our death it brings the fear of uncertainty to eternal destiny issues. And when we're lying on our deathbed, we have to wonder, *Can I be certain? Did I do enough? Are my assets greater than my liabilities, even when I include my thoughts and motives? Can you be sure? You can't be sure. You can never be sure going all the way to the end.*

And Jesus doesn't help much. In His teachings on the ledger system, He says this: "Unless your righteousness exceeds these religious leaders who have given their entire lives to living holy lives ... unless your righteousness exceeds theirs, there's no place of the kingdom of God."

So, there's slavery in living under the ledger system. And there is fear in dying in the ledger system. How good is good enough? Are you there? When are you going to find out, when you get to judgment day? Did you make it? I don't know. We'll see.

What Kind of God Would Create a Ledger

And can I ask you to go deeper on this whole ledger system? What kind of God sets up a ledger system for soul health and soul destiny? What kind of God puts us in a way that says, *Okay, your whole life is a performance review, and here's how we're going to do it. Two rules.*

One, love the Lord your God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength. Two: love your neighbor as yourself. Wow. Those are some pretty high standards to live by in the ledger system.

And then on death, final judgment: how did you do? Is it enough? Don't know? Well, you'll find out ... in eternity. And you'll have to live with the consequences of that. We'll see. What kind of supreme being sets up a ledger system where it's all but designed to fail, and then causes you to live your life in fear and uncertainty? I'll tell you – that's not a loving god.

And the resurrection says this and the resurrection proves this: that Jesus personally came here to dissolve and throw away any hopes that anyone would have in the ledger system. He destroys this method of keeping score. It wasn't from Him, but He wants everyone to give up on it, so that we can live with certainty in our relationship with God in our lives, and know for certain our eternal fate. And this is the way He does it. He frees us from the debt that our sins have, and He gives us certainty of our destiny.

Jesus Gives Us Freedom and Certainty

When you study the teachings of Jesus Christ, let me show you what makes Christianity different. It's not as though Jesus came here like other religious leaders to maybe give us an exemplary life and to teach us about the ways of God. He did that. But that – other people could do that and have done that. Jesus came for a particular thing that only He could do. And that was this. That for 2,000 years, the promises and prophecies that led to His birth, His life, His death, and His resurrection were pointing to this promise. And the promise was a freedom to live and a freedom to die. It's the death of the debt system, of the ledger system. He takes on our debt. That's what He does. And only He could do that.

1. Certificate of Debt

If you look in the Bible at the teachings about His death and resurrection, I want you to see in these passages how much of the ledger system vocabulary is being used so that we can see that He has done away with that.

Colossians 2:13-14

When you were dead in your sins ... God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the certificate of debt, which stood against us and condemned us; Jesus has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

In Colossians, it says, “When you were dead in your sins” – drowning in red ink – “God made you alive in Christ. He forgave us all our sins.” How did He do that? “Having canceled the certificate of debt” – there’s that certificate of debt, all red ink – and that certificate of debt “stood against us and condemned us; and Jesus has taken it away, having nailed it to the cross.”

Jesus becomes the moral ledger. And that moral ledger is standing – look at the passage – it says, “standing against us. It is condemning us.” And so, Jesus takes it away. How does Jesus take it away? “... having nailed it to the cross.” Jesus is the certificate of debt. And that is the certificate of death. And Jesus takes that on for us.

Someone has to pay the price of our debt. Jesus says, *It’s going to be you or it’s going to be me. I will pay that debt.* We all have to choose, though. Someone’s going to have to pay for all of that red ink.

And how can you be certain that His death was sufficient for that payment? Look at what He paid. He gave His life. And look at His method of death, that torture and even the crucifixion itself. It’s a public display of all debts paid. It’s to give a certainty that all the red ink has been vanquished.

Now God wants us to be certain about our certainty. And I love this. That’s one little metaphor of this ledger system. But in contrast to the ledger system, God says this. He gives us another analogy to help us understand that that merit system is not to be used and it’s been taken care of.

2. Inheritance

Another analogy that God uses for salvation, our soul’s health in this life and its certainty in the next life, is the idea of inheritance. So, not only is the debt system done away with because the debt has been paid and cast away, those sorts of things; we also find out that salvation is like inheritance, the inheritance of the riches of the righteousness of Jesus Christ.



It's the idea of a last will and testament where we receive this from God. As a matter of fact, in a last will and testament, this analogy that's going to be used is for two purposes. One is to show us that God wants us to be part of His family. He wants to be involved in our lives, as a father loves his son or daughter. And then, second, He wants us to know that we are heirs to the riches of Jesus Christ.

In the Bible, the concept of a judge declaring us benefactors to a promise of an inheritance of Jesus' righteousness is the strongest emphasis of where we stand in relation to God.

And because the theology of inheritance is so profound, it is also the most impactful analogy or metaphor for salvation. Look what one Bible scholar says. "In the Bible, the concept of a judge declaring us to the promise of an inheritance of Jesus' righteousness is the strongest emphasis of where we stand in our relationship with God." Inheritance is the strongest emphasis if where we stand in our relationship to God.

What the scholar is saying is, could you imagine this moment where you're called into God Almighty, the judge of the universe, into His courtroom? And He opens up the papers and He calls out your name. And He says, "According to this, you've been adopted into this family."

That's point one. "You've been adopted into this family. You are part of this group now. And wait ..." He turns the page over. "It says here that you've inherited the lavish righteousness of Jesus Christ. You are no longer lost and homeless; you're one of us, and you have exceeding wealth."

Look what it says in Galatians about the idea of inheritance. "And if you put your faith in Christ, you are Abraham's offspring," – family – "heirs according to the promise." You're in that family now. But you're also inheriting righteousness, a perfect standing before God.

Ephesians 3:6

The Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

In Ephesians, Paul says this: "The Gentiles" – non-Jewish people are called Gentiles – "are fellow heirs and fellow partakers of the promise of Christ Jesus through the gospel." Our faith in Christ makes us His children. Our faith in Christ makes us rich in righteousness.

And I want to emphasize again that the point of this metaphor is that He is in a familial relationship with us. In other words, He doesn't want to be our boss. He doesn't want to be heard from your calculator or your accountant. He wants to talk to you as a child as often as possible, so that He can say to you, "I love you. I always will, no matter what." It's a relational dynamic here, so that you live a life of peace and you live a life of courage, because you can be certain of these things.

Resurrection Sunday changes so much. It changes the idea that we might have of our own heart or other world religions that communicate to us that we ought to be on a ledger system. It changes that and takes away the red ink of indebtedness. And it changes to an idea of inheritance. It gets rid of the payment of debt. It kills the debt payment by crucifying that and gives us an inheritance of the righteousness of Christ.

And the point I'm going back to again and again, it's so that we can live, not a life of uncertainty and fear, but rather, a life of assurance and a life of courage.

So, where is your faith and the health of your soul and its eternal fate? Is it in a ledger or is it in a will and testament? That's what Resurrection Sunday is. It's about where you're putting faith in the health and the fate of your soul. Where is that?

3. A Gift from God



Wait ... there's more. So that you and I will be certain about certainty and will be able to manage our fears as they rise up, and we can quench them with courage, there's another metaphor that's used in the Bible to make sure we know. It's the idea of salvation being a gift. And again, you look at the context of it being a gift, and it's opposed to it being a work or something that you earn. And even in that, what is the relationship? God is saying, *Oh, no, I want you to see salvation as a gift that I give to someone that I love, not as a work to someone that's I've employed.* You see? He doesn't want you to see yourself as a slave, because He doesn't see you that way. He wants you to see yourself as a child of His.

And so, just to make sure that you understand, because people get this mixed up when they're in relationship with God --- if we have a very nice car sitting out front and I say, "Look, I'll give that to you if you work a thousand hours for me." Then that car is not a gift. It's a wage. You earned it. There's no benefit, really, on your part.

But if I said, "There's a car out front and it's the one you've always wanted and here's the keys, and it's free" --- that's a gift. Gifts are free. That's the idea. Salvation in the Bible is

defined by this. That you receive by faith, by putting your faith in Jesus Christ, that His righteousness is a gift, and you just receive that gift.

And so, in the Bible – you need to know this – the word “grace” means “gift.” The word “grace” is like a Bible/church word for the word “gift.” I want you to see as we read these passages together, when we emphasize the word “grace”, it means it’s not a business contract – *If you do this, I’ll give you this gift.* Because if you do this, it’s not a gift anymore. It’s a salary. And so, the concept is this. God doesn’t see you as an employee. He sees you as a child, He sees you as somebody He loves, so it’s just like, *It’s here.*

Here’s another metaphor. It’s a gift to a loved one, like a lover. *I love you. I want to spend eternity with you. I’d like to give you this ring. Will you marry me?* The only action on your part is simply to receive the gift.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith in Jesus, and this not from yourselves,⁹ it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.

So look what it says in Ephesians 2:8-9, and how he’s stuttering. Paul is stuttering, using “gift” and “grace” interchangeably so that we get it. “It is by grace” – it is by a gift – “that you have been saved. It’s through faith in Jesus. It’s not from yourselves, it’s not works. It’s a gift from God – not by works, that anyone should boast.” Because it’s not works. It can’t be works. It’s a gift. It’s a free gift.

Titus 3:7

Because of His grace, He declared us righteous and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life.

The next passage I want you to look at with me is interesting because it uses both the idea or metaphor of gift and inheritance, being an heir. Titus 3:7 says, “Because of His grace,” – because of His gift – “He declared us righteous and gave us confidence” – there it is, certainty – “that we will inherit eternal life.” Because it’s a gift and we don’t have to earn it, this gift of

righteousness, then we can have confidence because it's not up to us. It's up to His gift that He gave us.

And how can we have assurance? Look at the gift. Jesus Christ himself is our gift, so that, it says in the passage, so that we can have confidence, so that we can live without fear, so that we can live courageously.

So, Resurrection Sunday is this: it's a decision about where you put your faith, your hope, your trust. Is it going to be in a work schedule or is going to be in a gift? Is it about a ledger or is it about a will and testament? That's what it's all about.

And here's what I'd like us to all do. If this is something that's on your heart, if you have questions about it, I'd like for you to text "Jesus" to the number that's on your screen. And here's the three ways we'd like to contact you, the three reasons that we'd love for you to contact us and we'll call you back.

One is, if you're having a hard time understanding because this is a huge paradigm change in how you're viewing your relationship with God and you have questions about it. *Really? Salvation is a gift through faith alone?* Yeah. You have questions about that? Please text "Jesus" to that number.

And then another one, because that's the second part of the sermon here, is certainty. I know a lot of people growing up in some Christian churches feel like they can't be sure of their salvation. They can't be certain of their inheritance. So that's a big question that we want to help answer. So, you just text "Jesus" to that number.

And the third thing that we'd love to hear from you if this happened – if this is the first time you put your faith in Jesus as being the person that gives you an inheritance, that makes you His child, that gives you a gift – if this is the first time you're putting your faith as a means of salvation to live by and to have certainty to die by, we want to know that. Because we want to follow up and tell you more about the great news. So, if you could do that, that would be great.

Let me just summarize. Our relationship is not merit-based system. It's based on inheritance. It's not a wage system. It is based on receiving a gift. And because of that, we can have certainty and we can have assurance. And we can live courageously and boldly, without fear. The promises of God – these are very big promises, and they're radical promises. That's why there was a resurrection. Because other people could promise these things and you'd say, *Oh, that's too good to be true.* And it kind of is. And so, in the fullness of time, in the wisdom of

God, He would say, *I'm going to put all these promises on the back of this miracle that's going to take place where Jesus says, If it's not true, then look – you'll know – I won't be raised from the dead. If I'm raised from the dead, here's what it means.*

And that's why the resurrection is so powerful. That's why all of history revolves around this. That's why it's the declarative, definitive statement in every man, woman, and child. Because the resurrection says this: that debt payment is paid in full. That inheritance – it's applied. That gift – it was granted. You just need to receive it.

Some of the last words of Jesus are "It is finished." And that phrase is used in the Greek New Testament times, sometimes, in accounting. When you paid for something they would write, "It is paid in full." And "paid in full" is the same as "It is finished."

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is righteous and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Resurrection Sunday in one sentence. Here it goes. 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, God is righteous and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Today – choose today. Choose today the method of salvation and soul health that the Bible speaks about from cover to cover. And then live in courage and in certainty.

I'd like to play a video for you right now, and it is written in a way that it is a message of love from God. God is speaking in this video about our entire lives together. And it's a love letter. As you watch that, I'd like for you to just consider the power and the depth of that video. But hang in there, come back. I have two questions I want to ask everyone. And if you get these questions right, it will radically change your life. So, join me after the video. See you in four minutes.

Video: Falling Plates

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGlX11BxF24>

[*Sound of glass breaking. Music.*]

You. Look at your eyes. Look at them. Speckled, colorful, each one unique. And I created every one of them. I created everything - the universe, and you. I gave you your personality. I made you pure, complex. And every day I give you life. I love you.

But something happened. You cheated on me. You didn't trust me. You sinned. [*Sound of breaking glass.*] You cut yourself off from me. And although you're still alive, you are slowly dying. So, you look for other things to fill the void. But nothing works. [*Sound of breaking glass.*] It just kills you faster. And it separates us more and more. [*Sound of breaking glass.*] What are you searching for? [*Sound of breaking glass.*]

I don't want you to die. I created you, not to be destroyed, but to know me. So, I became one of you, a fragile creation. I was tempted, but I never sinned. I came to save you. You have so many sins and they have a cost. Someone has to die --- you or me. So, I took on your sin and traded in my life for yours. And I died in your place because I love you.

Then ... I rose from the dead. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I'm Jesus. I'm not here to condemn you. I came to bring you back to life. Rely on me. I will forgive you and give you eternal life. I love you. And I did all of this to have a relationship with you. Will you follow me?

That was a beautiful video --- the power of the gospel and what Jesus has done for us, so that we might live.

[Matt is seated at a small table with several chairs as if in casual conversation with someone.]

What I thought I'd do now is – when I was thinking six months ago about the Easter sermon, I wanted to reenact what I do when I sit down with people and they've come to me and they're wondering about their relationship with God. And so, six months ago, I had this in my mind to do this live, and I can't let it go. So, I'm going to do it not so live.

This is what I do when I talk to people about the gospel, and I'd like to just show you how answering these two questions can change your life. It's about how we can live without fear because we can live with certainty.

It would go like this:

“Listen, I understand that everything that I just shared about what the Bible says about salvation is kind of radical. It's not based on a ledger; it's based on inheritance. It's a gift, not a work. It's a beautiful thing about the nature of God to give us that.

“So, what I'd like to do is just show you how you live in certainty without fear. There's a book in the Bible written by John. John is one of the four guys that wrote a biography about Jesus. And he was the closest of all the disciples to Jesus. He was the one whom Jesus loved.

“And toward the end of John's life, there were people that were being persecuted unto death that were followers of Jesus Christ. And they were afraid. They were seeing that if they were found, they would be killed. It's a little bit like today where death was a little closer than normal. And people were living in fear because they were uncertain.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is righteous and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

“So, John writes a book and it's called 1 John. And he writes it so that you and I can have certainty and confidence about where we stand with God and where we'll spend eternity. It's this letter, it's 1 John, it's towards the end of your Bible. And I want you to mark and dogear that page, because it's written to you. It's that passage that we just read, that single sentence, that

defines the gospel. 1 John 1:9 says, 'If we confess our sins, He is righteous and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.'

1 John 5:11-13

And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. ¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.

“And then, just a couple of chapters over in chapter 5, it says this: ‘And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you might know that you have eternal life.’

“So, here’s question number one: If you were to die right now, what are the odds that you would go to heaven?”

A lot of people that I’ve talked to over the years say, “Well, when I came in here, I didn’t even think I would go to heaven. And now I would say after what you’ve talked about, about sixty percent. There’s probably a sixty percent chance that I would go to heaven.”

I’ll say, “That’s great. Let’s read that first verse that we looked at again in chapter 1. It says, ‘If we confess our sins, He is righteous and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.’ See how it says all unrighteousness? Everything is purified.”

“Yeah, but you don’t know what I’ve done.”

And I’ll say, “Yeah, I appreciate your tenderness towards some of the decisions you’ve made and how much pain it’s cost other people. But while it sounds humble, it’s actually a very proud statement to say, ‘You don’t know how bad I am or the bad things I’ve done,’ because what the Bible says is – do you have any idea what the price Jesus paid? I mean, are you saying that the death, the torturous, terrible death, of Jesus Christ was not enough to pay your debt? I think you might have just said that your sin is greater than ‘God so loved the world that He gave His only Son.’”

And they’ll say, “Wow, okay.” Sometimes they’ll say, “Okay, but I can’t forgive myself.”

And I'll say, "You know what? I appreciate that. I do. Because that means your heart is tender towards some of the decisions that you've made. It sounds like you've taken a spiritual inventory and you don't like what's coming up." I'll say, "But listen – what you said is not an expression of humility. It's another expression of pride. Because what you just said was, 'Okay, God can forgive me, but I can't forgive myself.' In other words, you're saying that you have a higher standard than God in the context of holiness. And I don't think you mean that your standard of holiness is greater than God's standard."

"No, I don't mean that."

"Okay. Could it possibly be that what you're trying to say is that you just can't believe it? It's just too good to be true?"

"Yeah. Okay."

"Well, let's just read that verse again. It says, 'If we confess our sins, He is righteous and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.' I want you to see there how – see in a circle --- He is righteous and just to forgive us. It is the nature of God that obligates God to forgive us from all of our sins. He has to because He's perfect. It is the perfect nature of God to purify us from all imperfection, it could say. So, what are your odds of going to heaven now?"

"Oh, wow, you're right. That's like ninety percent."

"Good, ninety percent. That's great. Let's look at those passages in chapter 5. Remember those? Here's verse 11 and 12. It says, 'And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life.'" Do you have the Son? Okay, then do you have the life?"

"Yes."

"Okay. 'These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know you have eternal life' – know you have eternal life. So, you said, what, ninety percent? What are your odds of going to heaven?"

"Oh, wow, it's like ninety-nine percent."

"Okay, great, ninety-nine percent. Let's look at that passage again where it says, 'If we confess our sins, He is righteous and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.' And look at this other one that says, 'He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son does not have the life. I have written these things to you who believe in the

name of the Son of God, in order that you might know” – and I circle the word “know” – “ ‘In order that you might know you have eternal life.’”

In their Bibles I will circle “He will purify us from all unrighteousness” and “you will know you have eternal life.”

“Now what are your odds? What do you think your odds are? What does it say? What do you think? One hundred percent?”

“Yeah! It’s a hundred percent.”

“Okay, you answered question one right. So, how do you know? That’s question two. How do you know? I mean, when you came in here, you came in here not even thinking you would go to heaven, and then you went to sixty percent after I explained what the good news is. Then you went to ninety percent, then ninety-nine, now you’re a hundred. I think it’s pretty bold of you, maybe even arrogant, to say that there’s a hundred percent chance of you going to heaven. I mean, how do you know that?”

And the person will say, “Well, that is bold, a one hundred percent chance of going to heaven. I don’t know.”

And I say, “Well, look, let’s read these verses. Look what it says. ‘He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son does not have the life. And these things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you might know that you have eternal life.’ Do you know you have eternal life? You said you did. You said there was a hundred percent chance of going to heaven.”

“Yeah, I know.”

“Then how?”

“I don’t know how. I mean, you told me I did.”

I say, “Well, yeah, but I think the more you get to know me, the less you’re going to trust me, especially with your soul. So, let’s read that verse again. Look how it says, ‘He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you might know that you have eternal life.’ Do you know you have eternal life?”

“Yes, I know I have eternal life!”

“What are your odds of going to heaven if you died right now?”

“One hundred percent.”

“How do you know that?”

“Because it says so right there in the Bible.”

“Uh-huh, there it is. There it is – right there in the Bible. That’s how you know. That’s how you can be certain. That’s how you can live in peace. That’s how you live without fear. That’s how you can live with courage. And if you went to a church that kind of taught the Bible - -- certain churches would teach the little kids this song. I’m going to teach you this song, because it is a profoundly deep song that can change your whole world. It goes like this: *Jesus loves me, this I know because the Bible tells me so*. Okay, that sounded terrible. Let’s all sing it together, right now, in our living rooms. Ready?”

Jesus loves me, this I know, because the Bible tells me so.

And what does the Bible tell you? The Bible tells you that if you have the Son, you have the life. He does not have the Son does not have life. If you confess your sins, He is righteous and just to forgive your sins and purify you of all unrighteousness. These things I have written unto you who believe in the Son of God, who believe in Jesus, so that you might know you have eternal life, so go and live in courage. Go and live in certainty. Go live a life of assurance.

And when you get to heaven and some guy is working that front gate and says, “Why should I let you in here?” you say, “God promised.” You say, “Jesus provided.” You say, “Jesus said so in His Bible.”

Now let me ask you something. What kind of God does that? What kind of God tells you how you can have a relationship with Him? And it’s not based on works, it’s not based on a ledger, it’s not based on merit or working; it is based on a gift. He provides the way.

And then He writes it down in multiple ways, in multiple venues. There are five different analogies at least in the Bible from cover to cover through various stories, about how God says it’s a gift. The righteous shall live by faith in the gift that Jesus Christ is. What kind of God does that? Wow. That’s a great God. That’s a loving God that does that.

That’s what I want us to leave with today on Resurrection Sunday. And listen – what do you do with all that power, with all of that certainty, now that you’ve released these feelings of fear and now you can realize, *I’m a child of God. My identity is found in Him*. What do you do with that? You use that, because now the Spirit of God lives within you, and you use that to become like Christ in all of life. The Spirit of God makes you become like Christ in all of life. So, that gives you the authority to maybe face an addiction you might have, an addiction to

perfection, an addiction to control, a need for feeling like other people should have pity on you, an addiction to worry, a compulsive pride that you can't get rid of.

Now you have the courage of a new identity and a new power. You can join us at Celebrate Recovery. You would expect during this season that people are coming to terms with what they thought was kind of a glitch, but is now something that overcomes them, chemically speaking or attribute-wise. Become like Christ in all of life. Maybe you should consider joining us at Celebrate Recovery. And you can go on the website and find out about that. You can do it, certainly, during these days, especially during these days, and find some fellow traveler to live one day at a time with.

You know where you can take this courage, this newfound courage, this newfound power of knowing who you are and where you'll spend eternity? You can take into forgiveness, asking for forgiveness, receiving forgiveness, in the relationships that you are quarantined with, maybe.

You know where you can take this courage, this freedom? You can take it to make your marriage what God meant it to be. I think, because of this quarantine, our marriages are getting strained. We have a ministry that I feel like has been ramping up for years to get ready for this very day, so that we don't survive, but we thrive during this time. And thriving means going to Re|Engage. It's called Re|Engage. Go to the website and join a new group and then maybe even get in a closed group during the quarantine. And you guys can work out what it looks like.

Our men's Bible studies, our women's Bible studies, those are available too. And the purpose of these ministries that we have for you is so that you don't survive this experience; you thrive in it. And the resurrection gives us the power to thrive, not survive. Because now we have the Spirit of God. Now we have the courage of God. Now we have the power of God. Now we have freedom from God. Now we live without fear – no fear. No uncertainty. We're going to be different. We're going to live different. We're going to die a different death, if that be the case.

Guys, would you join me in prayer and celebrate this very unusual and uniquely powerful Resurrection Sunday of 2020? Let's pray.

Lord, what a message from You in a time like this. We are so grateful that Jesus came for this very purpose, to help us abandon and maybe re-abandon the ledger system of keeping track of our soul's health; that we would abandon that, as it stands over us and condemns. And that Jesus would take that, having nailed it to the cross. He became our certificate of debt, our

certificate of death. I ask that You would help us visualize that so we can be free of that ledger system, and that we could receive as an inheritance this bringing and coming into Your family; in this inheritance of Christ's righteousness, so that we would see ourselves as rich children of yours; that You want a relationship with us, that You want us to talk to You, all the time, about everything, and that we would take You up on that offer as our loving Father.

God, I'd ask that You would give us this courage and this sense of safety, that we wouldn't be compulsively afraid or worrisome, that we would turn that over to You, that we would seek help if necessary; and that we would live lives that thrive.

God, I thank You for putting us in this situation where we have to stop and realize who we are, who we've become, and how that happened. And now, Lord, lead us out. Lead us out through the truth and the love that You've given us, as You've written down in that Holy Bible, Jesus loves us, and this we know, because the Bible tells us so.

Now we live courageously through You in the power of the resurrection. In Jesus' name. Amen.