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Abiding Confidence

1 John 2.28-29

Series: Blessed Assurance (Communion Series)

The Village Church

March 2, 2025

- I. Introduction
 - A. Sometimes knowledge can be frustrating
 - B. I can be frustrated pretty easily when I watch college basketball on TV
 - 1. Now Jean can tell you that referees can frustrate me
 - a. I am reminded, from time to time, that my flesh has yet to be eradicated from my nature when a referee makes a bad call
 - b. A bad call, of course, when it goes against the WVU Mountaineers!
 - 2. More than once Jean has had to tell me to sit down when we were watching a live game at the WVU Coliseum
 - a. Evidently, I was embarrassing her!
 - 3. And I have been known to carry on a conversation or two with the TV when watching game in my living room
 - C. But apart from referees, the commentators can often frustrate me
 - 1. They say things that I have to say to myself, "Wait a minute, that's not true!"
 - 2. And more than anything else, what bugs me is how commentators talk about the game, and about players
 - a. Many times, what they say just doesn't make sense
 - b. Or their logic is entirely convoluted
 - c. That drives me crazy
 - D. I'll give you an example
 - 1. An example I can relate to
 - a. As a basketball player, my primary skill was shooting
 - b. Unfortunately, I played before the 3 point shot was installed
 - c. If I had had a three point line when I played, I'd have scored a whole lot more points!
 - 2. Now my pet peeve is how commentators talk about shooters
 - a. They always talk about a shooter's confidence
 - b. When a shooter makes several shots in a row, they say, "Boy, he's really confident in his shot"
 - c. When a shooter misses a few shots, they say, "Oh no, he's really lost his confidence"
 - 3. So, I'm thinking, "Wait a minute. How do you know he's confident?"
 - a. They would say, "Because he makes a lot of shots"
 - b. So I say, "Well, why do you think he makes a lot of shots?"

- c. And they would say, “Because he’s confident”
 - 4. Do you see my problem?
 - a. Is he confident because he makes a lot of shots?
 - b. Or does he make a lot of shots because he’s confident?
 - 5. Why don’t they just say, “He makes a lot of shots because he makes a lot of shots?”
 - a. It’s a circular argument, isn’t it?
 - b. Kind of chicken-egg conundrum; which comes first?
- E. The problem with confidence from a human perspective is that it always gets confused with performance
 - 1. Our own performance
 - a. When we perform well, we say we’re confident
 - b. When we don’t perform so well, we say we’re not confident
 - 2. So our confidence is dependent on what we do
 - a. And that’s a dangerous position to be in
 - b. Our performance varies
 - c. No matter what kind of performance – it always varies
 - d. Skilled performance – like writing, or planting flowers, or driving a car, or teaching a class, or cleaning house, or praying...
 - e. Or preaching...!
 - 3. And if our performance varies, our confidence varies
- F. But the Bible has a very different conception of confidence
 - 1. According to the Bible, our confidence does reside in us
 - a. In who we are
 - b. And certainly not in what we do!
 - 2. If we are believers in Jesus Christ, our confidence comes not from ourselves, but from God
- G. Listen to how Paul talks about confidence
 - 1. **Philippians 3:3–4** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—
 - b. 4 though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more:...
 - 2. And then he goes on to recount, in worldly terms, how much of a resume he would have if he were to look at his status and accomplishments
 - a. He talks about his Jewishness, his zeal, his law-keeping
 - b. All the religious works that, compared to other Jews, he could claim excellence
 - 3. **Philippians 3:7–9** (ESV) —
 - a. 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.
 - b. 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.
 - c. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

- d. 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—
- 4. Paul puts no confidence in himself, in his flesh
 - a. Any confidence that he has, he finds in Christ
- 5. **2 Corinthians 3:4–6** (ESV) —
 - a. 4 Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God.
 - b. 5 Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God,
 - c. 6 who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
- H. We pick up our communion series from 1 John again
 - 1. And our text is about confidence
 - 2. Of course, 1 John is a letter about assurance
 - a. Assurance of salvation – which is another way of saying confidence
 - b. The theme verse for the epistle, the purpose statement:
 - 3. **1 John 5:13** (ESV) —
 - a. 13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.
 - 4. And then John speaks of confidence
 - 5. **1 John 5:14** (ESV) —
 - a. 14 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.
 - 6. So assurance, and confidence, go hand in hand
 - a. And it is a very practical concern in the Christian life
 - b. The assured Christian, the confident Christian, finds increasing fruit in the Christian life
 - c. In prayer, and in many other dimensions of life
- I. **1 John 2:28–29** (ESV) —
 - 1. 28 **And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.**
 - 2. 29 **If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.**

II. **The Test of Assurance**

- A. I know it was a long time ago when we were in 1 John
 - 1. So it's appropriate to remind ourselves of what John teaches about assurance
 - 2. Up to this point in the epistle, he has taken us to assurance school
 - a. And given us lessons of assurance
 - 3. And then provided tests of assurance
 - a. So that we won't fall into the trap of false assurance
 - b. Believing we are saved when we really are not

4. But that if we pass the tests, we can be more and more confident that we indeed belong to Christ
5. But keep in mind, that these tests don't reduce to our performance
 - a. But have everything to do with our relationship with Jesus Christ
6. **1 John 1:3** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

B. The Test of Obedience

1. The first test we encountered was the test of obedience
2. **1 John 1:6–7** (ESV) —
 - a. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.
 - b. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.
3. **1 John 2:3–6** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.
 - b. 4 Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,
 - c. 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.
 - d. By this we may know that we are in him:
 - e. 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.
4. You see, our obedience to the commands of Christ are an indication that we are in Christ
 - a. That we are united with Christ
 - b. Sons of God, children of the heavenly Father

C. The Test of Love

1. The second test is the test of love
2. **1 John 2:9–11** (ESV) —
 - a. 9 Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.
 - b. 10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.
 - c. 11 But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.
3. So, our love for our brothers and sisters is an indication of our spiritual state
 - a. That we indeed have Christ dwelling in us
 - b. Loving us, and pouring out His love through us to others
4. That love is cause for our assurance, for our confidence

- D. **The Test of Truth**
1. Then there is the test of truth
 - a. Specifically, the truth that Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh from the Father
 2. **1 John 2:21–23** (ESV) —
 - a. 21 I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.
 - b. 22 Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?
 - c. This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.
 - d. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father.
 - e. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.
 3. Do you believe that Jesus is God come in the flesh?
 - a. That Jesus is the incarnate Son of God?
 4. That is an indication that you belong to the Father
 - a. That Christ dwells in you by faith
 - b. That the Spirit of God is in you, transforming you, little by little, into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ
 5. Knowing and believing the truth about Jesus is a cause of great assurance and strong confidence
- E. **The Test of Abiding**
1. Finally, John gives us the test of abiding
 - a. Abiding in Christ
 - b. Abiding in His word
 2. **1 John 2:24–25** (ESV) —
 - a. 24 Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you.
 - b. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father.
 - c. 25 And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.
 3. So, as we continue in, abide in, the word of the gospel – what we heard from the beginning – then we can know that we ourselves will abide in the Son and in the Father
 - a. That we will live in Him, reside in Him, remain in Him
 4. And so we are exhorted:
 5. **1 John 2:27** (ESV) —
 - a. 27 But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you.
 - b. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.
- F. So, dear students, here are the exams, the tests, of our belonging to Christ
1. Of our relationship with God through Christ by the Spirit
 2. The test of obedience
 3. The test of love
 4. The test of truth
 5. And the test of abiding
- G. So now, John takes us to a summary of all of this

1. A summary which confirms wherein our confidence resides
- H. **1 John 2:28–29** (ESV) —
1. 28 And now, little children, abide in him,
 2. so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.
 3. 29 If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

III. **Motivation for Abiding**

- A. As is typical for many NT epistles, not only are we commanded to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called” (**Ephesians 4.1**)
1. We are given motivating conditions to spur us on in that pursuit of glory
 2. And in this text, two motivations for abiding in Christ are given to us
 - a. Motivations which are designed to enhance our assurance and build our confidence
 3. And the first may surprise you!
 4. It is the motivation rooted in the anticipation of the 2nd coming of Christ
 5. “And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.” (**1 John 2.28**)
- B. **The Anticipation of His Coming**
1. Now we don’t talk very much about the 2nd coming of Christ in the church today
 - a. And those who do, usually get tied up in knots over the details of events and timing
 - b. Even though we are told that no one knows the hour of His coming
 2. Most of that discussion is an exercise in missing the point
 - a. Because the point is usually not in the details at all
 - b. But is in the admonition to be ready!
 3. But you can’t read the NT through with any kind of objectivity without seeing how often the NT writers speak of the coming of Christ
 - a. Indeed, how Christ Himself spoke of His coming
 4. Boice reports that one verse in 25 in the NT speak of the return of Christ
 - a. That in the 260 chapters of the NT, the 2nd coming is mentioned 318 times!
 - b. Every book in the NT mentions the coming of Christ except Galatians and the very short books of 2 and 3 John and Philemon
 5. Just take a sample from the gospels
 6. **Mark 8:38** (ESV) —
 - a. 38 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”
 7. **Mark 13:24–26** (ESV) —

- a. 24 “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,
 - b. 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.
 - c. 26 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.
8. **Mark 13:32–33** (ESV) —
- a. 32 “But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.
 - b. 33 Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.”
 - c. [Again – that’s the point of these passages]
9. In Mark 14, when the high priest pressed Jesus to identify Himself...
10. **Mark 14:62** (ESV) —
- a. 62 And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”
11. Mark is thought to be the oldest of the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), and Matthew and Luke appear to draw on Mark a great deal, adding some details
- a. But each one has parallels with those verses and others
12. But even John, the gospel writer who offers the most stories which are unique to his gospel, speaks of Jesus coming
13. **John 14:1–3** (ESV) —
- a. 1 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.
 - b. 2 In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?
 - c. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”
14. **John 21:22** (ESV) —
- a. 22 Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!”
 - b. [Again – what’s the point? Follow me!]
15. Paul, in his epistles, speaks frequently about the coming of Christ
16. **1 Thessalonians 4:16–18** (ESV) —
- a. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.
 - b. And the dead in Christ will rise first.
 - c. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.
 - d. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.
 - e. [So the 2nd coming is to be a source of great encouragement]
17. **Philippians 3:20–21** (ESV) —

- a. 20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,
 - b. 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.
18. **Titus 2:11–13** (ESV) —
- a. 11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,
 - b. 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,
 - c. 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ...
 - d. [The anticipated coming of Jesus Christ is motivation for godly living]
19. And Peter chimes in with similar emphases
20. Calling the return of Christ “a living hope” (**1 Peter 1.3**)
- a. That even through our trials, we have the genuineness of our faith tested, so we “may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (**1 Peter 1.7**)
21. And of course, John reports in the Revelation the prominence of the expectation of the coming of Christ
22. **Revelation 1:7** (ESV) —
- a. 7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.
23. **Revelation 22:20** (ESV) —
- a. 20 He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!
24. The early church lived in constant anticipation of the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ
- a. And for them it wasn’t about predicting events and timing
 - b. It was an incentive for holiness of life, for readiness with expectation
25. And now, in 1 John, this anticipation is to bring us great confidence
- a. So that, far from shrinking from him in shame
 - b. Would instead bring us to that place of great expectation
 - c. Because it would confirm all that we’ve staked our lives to
26. The time when we would receive the rewards that only come to those who have entrusted their lives to Jesus
27. **2 Timothy 4:8** (ESV) —
- a. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.
28. Do you love His appearing?
- a. I hope so!
 - b. It is the source of great encouragement

- c. Giving us great assurance and confidence that “God works all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose” (**Romans 8.28**)
 - 29. The first motivation for our confidence is our anticipation of the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ
- C. **The Family Resemblance**
 - 1. The second motivation in these verses is the family resemblance that comes to those who are believers in Jesus
 - 2. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, God, by His Holy Spirit, is working in you to transform you into the image of the Son
 - a. So that you actually resemble the Son
 - b. Not physically, of course
 - c. But in character, in disposition, in desires, in lifestyle
 - 3. **1 John 2:29** (ESV) —
 - a. 29 If you know that he is righteous,
 - b. you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.
 - 4. Do you know that Jesus Christ is righteous?
 - a. Of course, He alone is righteous!
 - 5. Well, that means that if you know He is righteous, anyone who grows in the character of Jesus Christ is related to Him
 - a. “Everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him” (**1 John 2.29**)
 - 6. We all know people who resemble their parents
 - a. We see it all the time – like when your children visit
 - b. We look twice and see you in them!
 - c. We say, “Well, you can’t deny him!” or “You can’t deny her!”
 - 7. Now we all know that’s not usually the case with adoptive parents and their children
 - 8. But that’s what’s amazing about the family of God
 - a. We are adopted children!
 - b. We have been adopted into the family of God through faith in Jesus Christ
 - c. Having been born again by the Spirit of God
 - 9. And by golly, we start to look more and more like that family
 - a. Not physically, but spiritually, morally, in our desires, inclinations, and dispositions!

IV. Conclusion

- A. So now, little children...
 - 1. Abide in him,
 - a. So that when he appears
 - 2. We may have confidence
 - a. And not shrink from him in shame at his coming.
- B. If you know that he is righteous,

1. You may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness
 - a. has been born of him
- C. There is no better place to affirm our confidence in Christ than at the Lord's Table
 1. For Christ established this supper as the place where He reminds us of His love
 2. Indeed, the love of the Father in sending His Son
 - a. The love of the Son in taking upon Himself the just penalty for the sins of all those who would ever believe in Him
 - b. And the love of the Spirit, who convicted us of our sin, who drew us to God through His gentle influences, who regenerated us – gave to us the new birth, and who indwells us, working in us that which transforms us from glory to glory
 3. The love of the Triune God
- D. And this supper also reminds us of His coming
 1. One of the dimensions of our participation in the supper that we should always have in mind
 2. **1 Corinthians 11:26** (ESV) — 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death **until he comes**.
- E. Do you believe in Jesus?
 1. Do you trust Jesus alone for your eternal salvation?
 - a. Trusting in no one and nothing else for your salvation?
 2. Are all the things that you would put on your resume – your ancestry, your occupation, your successes, your religion, your supposed good works –
 - a. Do you count all those things, as Paul did, as rubbish?
 3. Only Jesus – the righteous One – is worthy of our trust
 - a. Worthy of our worship
 - b. Worthy of our adoration
 - c. Worthy of glory
- F. If you're still on the fence about this Jesus
 1. If you're not yet ready to cast yourself on His mercy and receive Him as your Savior
 - a. Then all these assurances are for nought
 - b. And any confidence that you have is a false confidence
- G. But if you do indeed trust Jesus alone as your Savior
 1. Then you can have confidence when he appears
 - a. And you can be sure that you are more and more bearing His family resemblance
 2. And you are invited to this table
 - a. Where Christ promises His spiritual presence as we receive the emblems of His death