

# How to Know That I'm Saved

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*A pulpit manuscript on the promise, evidence, and assurance of salvation*

**New Hope Baptist Church • Sunday, August 16, 2026**

## Primary Text

1 John 5:11-13 (KJV)

Supporting texts: John 10:27-29; Romans 8:15-16; Romans 10:9-10, 13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:8-9

## Big Idea

**We know that we are saved because God has given a trustworthy promise about His Son.** Genuine faith rests in Christ, produces a new direction, receives the Spirit's witness, and is kept by the Shepherd's hand.

## Opening: Can I Really Know?

Good morning, New Hope. Few questions reach deeper into the heart than this one: How can I know that I am saved? Not how can I look saved. Not how can I convince the people around me. Not how can I repeat the right church language. How can I know, before God, that I have eternal life?

Some people answer too quickly because they have never examined what they believe. Others cannot answer at all because they examine themselves every day but rarely look at Christ. One person has false confidence with no repentance and no faith. Another truly belongs to Jesus but lives under a cloud because feelings rise and fall. The gospel confronts false assurance, but it also comforts the trembling believer.

Perhaps you remember the exact day, hour, hymn, and place where you trusted Christ. Thank God for that memory. Perhaps you cannot name the minute, but you know there came a time when the truth of Jesus moved from information in your mind to trust in your heart. The saving power is not in how sharply we remember the moment. The saving power is in the Savior to whom we turned.

Our emotions are real, but they are not reliable judges of eternal truth. On Sunday we may feel close to God; on Monday we may feel dry. After a failure, shame may whisper that God has abandoned us. During suffering, fear may ask whether faith

was ever real. If assurance depends only on our emotional weather, we will never have steady ground.

That is why John does not say, 'These feelings have I given you.' He says, 'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life.' God wants believing people to know. Biblical assurance is not arrogant confidence in ourselves. It is humble confidence in the testimony of God.

**Tell somebody near you: God wants you to know.**

### **Point One: Assurance Begins with God's Record, Not My Feelings**

First John 5:11 says, 'And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' John begins outside of us. He does not begin with the quality of our work, the strength of our emotion, or the perfection of our behavior. He begins with the record God has given.

A record is testimony. God has testified that eternal life is His gift and that the gift is found in His Son. Salvation is not a prize hidden at the end of a religious obstacle course. It is life given through union with Jesus Christ. Verse 12 makes the line clear: 'He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.'

The first question is therefore not, 'Have I been good enough?' The answer to that question is no. Romans 3 says all have sinned. The question is not, 'Do I feel spiritual enough?' Feelings cannot carry the weight of eternity. The decisive question is: Do I have the Son? Have I entrusted myself to Jesus Christ—crucified for my sin, risen from the dead, and Lord of my life?

Faith is more than agreeing that facts about Jesus are true. A person can believe a chair exists and still refuse to sit in it. Saving faith rests the weight of the soul upon Christ. It stops presenting personal goodness as payment. It stops negotiating. It receives Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says, 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.' Grace is the source. Faith is the open hand. Christ is the object. Works are not the price. If our assurance rests on our works, then every failure will rewrite the verdict. If our assurance rests on Christ's finished work, then repentance leads us back to solid ground.

When doubt comes, do not begin by measuring the intensity of your feeling. Begin by rehearsing the record. Jesus died for sinners. Jesus rose again. Jesus receives all who come to Him. God cannot lie. The promise is stronger than the passing storm.

**Preaching response: My assurance begins with what God has said.**

## **Point Two: Saving Faith Confesses Christ and Calls Upon Him**

Romans 10:9 says, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' Verse 13 adds, 'For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' The invitation is wide—whosoever. The promise is clear—shall be saved.

To confess Jesus as Lord is not merely to pronounce a phrase. It is to agree with God about who Jesus is and to surrender our claim to rule ourselves. To believe in the heart is not intellectual perfection. It is personal reliance on the risen Christ. Calling on the Lord is the cry of a sinner who knows he cannot rescue himself.

Some people worry, 'Did I say the prayer exactly right?' There are no magic syllables. The thief on the cross did not recite a formula. He turned to Jesus in dependent faith. The publican prayed, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' Salvation rests in the mercy of Christ, not the eloquence of the sinner.

At the same time, Scripture never presents saving faith as a casual addition to an unchanged life. We do not invite Jesus to become a decoration while remaining lord of everything ourselves. Faith receives Him for who He is. Repentance and faith belong together: we turn from sin and turn toward Christ.

Maybe your testimony sounds dramatic. Maybe Christ delivered you from a visible life of destruction. Maybe your testimony sounds quiet. Maybe you were raised around the gospel and came to understand personally that you needed the Savior. The volume of the story does not determine the reality of salvation. The same blood saves every sinner. The same risen Lord answers every true call.

Ask yourself honestly: Am I trusting what Jesus did, or am I trusting my church attendance, baptism, family name, moral record, or emotional experience? Good gifts cannot replace Christ. Baptism follows faith; it does not substitute for faith. Church membership places us among God's people; it does not place Christ in the heart. Assurance belongs to the one who has the Son.

**Preaching response: I am trusting Jesus, not my ability to save myself.**

## Point Three: A Changed Direction Gives Evidence of New Life

Second Corinthians 5:17 says, 'Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' Scripture points us to Christ as the basis of salvation, and then it points to transformation as evidence that His life is at work.

Evidence is not the same as the foundation. Fruit does not make a tree alive; a living tree produces fruit. We are not saved because we successfully changed ourselves. We begin to change because God has made us alive. This protects us from two errors: trusting works to save us, and claiming salvation while making peace with a life that rejects Christ.

A changed life does not mean sinless perfection. First John was written to believers, and John says that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. But he also says that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse. The mark of new life is not that we never stumble; it is that we cannot be finally comfortable staying away from God.

Before salvation, sin may have been our home. After salvation, sin becomes a battleground. The Holy Spirit troubles what once seemed normal. We begin to desire the Word, prayer, worship, obedience, and fellowship—even when those desires are weak and contested. We grow in love for God's people. We feel conviction when we wound others. We learn to confess, repair, and return.

Do not inspect fruit with a microscope every hour. Growth is often clearer across seasons than across moments. Look for direction, not perfection. Is there a growing willingness to obey Jesus? A quicker return after failure? A deeper grief over sin because it dishonors the One you love? A real, if imperfect, love for believers? These do not purchase salvation. They testify that grace is at work.

There is also a warning here. If a person claims Christ but has no concern for His word, no repentance, no love, and no desire for change, Scripture calls for honest examination—not religious reassurance. The answer is not to manufacture visible behavior. The answer is to come truly to Christ.

**Preaching response: New life gives me a new direction.**

## Point Four: The Spirit Bears Witness, and the Shepherd Holds His Sheep

Romans 8:15 says believers have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, 'Abba, Father.' Verse 16 says, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' The Holy Spirit does not merely make us aware of rules. He creates the relationship of adoption.

The Spirit's witness is not always a dramatic sensation. He works through the Word He inspired. He makes Christ precious. He awakens the cry of dependence toward the Father. He convicts us and draws us back. He produces love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control over time.

Our assurance has an inward witness, but it also has an almighty Keeper. Jesus says in John 10:27, 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.' Then He says, 'I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.'

Notice who is holding whom. The sheep belong in the Shepherd's hand. Our grip can feel weak. His hand is not weak. We may pass through valleys, temptation, confusion, grief, and spiritual dryness. But the security of salvation rests finally in the character and power of Christ.

This promise does not encourage careless wandering. Sheep hear and follow the Shepherd. Security produces devotion, not indifference. Because He holds us, we get up when we fall. Because He loves us, we want to hear His voice. Because salvation is secure in Him, obedience becomes grateful response rather than anxious payment.

When the accuser points to a confessed failure, answer with the cross. When fear says you are alone, answer with adoption. When feelings change, answer with the written promise. When the path is dark, listen for the Shepherd's voice in Scripture and keep following the light He gives.

**Preaching response: My Shepherd knows me, leads me, and holds me.**

## Conclusion and Invitation: Know Where Your Confidence Rests

How can I know that I am saved? I know because God has given a record: eternal life is in His Son. I know because I have turned from self-trust and called upon Jesus Christ. I see evidence in a new direction of repentance, obedience, and love. I receive

the Spirit's witness of adoption. And I rest in the promise that the Shepherd holds His sheep.

Do not place confidence in a flawless life—you do not have one. Do not place confidence merely in a date written in a Bible. The date may mark a precious beginning, but Christ is the Savior. Do not place confidence in how loudly you shouted or how deeply you cried. Place confidence in the crucified and risen Son of God.

If you are asking this morning, 'Have I ever truly trusted Him?' you do not need to remain in uncertainty. The gospel invitation is present tense. Turn to Christ now. Confess Him as Lord. Believe that God raised Him from the dead. Call upon His name. He does not reject the one who comes.

If you are a believer tortured by recurring doubt, bring the doubt into the light. Examine yourself honestly, but do not stare at yourself until Christ disappears from view. Read the record again. Talk with a mature pastor or believer. Obey the next clear command. Assurance grows as faith looks to Christ and walks with Christ.

If you have been relying on church activity without new birth, today is a day for honesty. Religion can make us familiar with the language of salvation while leaving the heart untouched. Do not defend an old profession if there is no present trust in Jesus. Come to Him.

John says these things were written so believers may know. Not guess. Not pretend. Know. The lighthouse does not remove every wave; it tells the sailor where the shore is. The written promise of God gives the soul a fixed light in changing weather.

Pray with me: Lord Jesus, I confess that I cannot save myself. I believe You died for my sins and rose again. I turn from sin and place my trust in You. Give me the assurance that rests in Your promise, the evidence of a changed life, the witness of Your Spirit, and the confidence that Your hand will hold me. Help me follow Your voice. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Pulpit Quick Reference

- God's record is stronger than changing feelings.
- Saving faith confesses and calls upon Jesus Christ.
- A changed direction is evidence, not the price, of salvation.
- The Spirit bears witness, and the Shepherd holds His sheep.
- Invitation: Place your confidence in Christ today.