

# **Blessed Assurance**

**1 John 5:13-17**

**“Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of his Spirit, washed by his blood. This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long; this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.”**

**How many of you recognize the words I just read? The words I just read comprise the first stanza of one of the most famous and popular hymns of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Church. This hymn of praise is called “Blessed Assurance.” It’s one of hundreds of hymns written by a woman named Fanny Crosby (1820-1915).**

**Life was a struggle for this godly woman because she was blind. Yet she continued to write songs of joy and peace and hope.**

**Fanny Crosby wasn't dealt the best of hands. Her blindness could have led her to be resentful and bitter, but she chose instead to rejoice? What was it that gave her joy and enabled her to write songs like "Blessed Assurance"? I believe it was her blessed assurance. Fanny Crosby WROTE songs like "Blessed Assurance" because she HAD blessed assurance in her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

**Fanny Crosby understood a very important truth, a truth that enabled her**

**– a truth that will enable us – to live above the circumstances and struggles of life. That truth is this: What happens inside us is more important than what happens to us and/or around us. Let me say that again. What happens inside us is more important than what happens to us and/or around us.**

**Joy – true happiness – is an inside job. It depends on what’s going on inside us. For you and I and all who follow Jesus, this joy comes from our personal**

**relationship with Christ and the assurance we have in him. Regardless of our circumstances and struggles, you and I can choose to be joyful because of what we have in Jesus.**

**This morning I'd like to talk about the blessed assurance of believers. I'd like to look at three things that followers of Jesus can be sure of – truths that produce joy, peace, and hope.**

**Truth #1 – Jesus gives us life. In 1 John 5:13, the Apostle John says, “I write**

**these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”**

**1 John 5:12 tells us that “He who has the Son has life.” People are often told to “get a life” (in the past, I’ve been told this). When you accept Christ as Savior and Lord you “get a life” – a new life ... an eternal life.**

**When we think of eternal life we usually think about a quantity of life, and rightly so. Eternal life IS about quantity,**

**but it's also about quality. In John 10:10,  
Jesus calls the life he gives us the full life.**

**It doesn't get any better than the life  
we get from Christ. I've tried other  
"kinds of life." I know all about other  
"life forms." Been there, done that.**

**Years ago I thought that certain things  
would give me joy, peace, and hope, but  
they didn't. I anticipated fulfillment, but  
I got disappointment. I was looking for  
the full life, but the life that I found was  
empty ... until I found Jesus.**

**Listen carefully. The life we get from Jesus is where it's at. Knowing Jesus and being like him ...that's what it's all about ... that's what'll give you the joy, peace, and hope that you're looking for.**

**Jesus gives us life ... a full life ... eternal life – that's Truth #1. Truth #2 is Jesus meets our needs. In 1 John 5:14,15 we read, “This is the assurance we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us –**

**whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of him.”**

**Jesus puts it this way in Matthew 7:7,8. He says, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”**

**One of the great truths of Scripture is that Jesus meets the needs of those who love him. In Matthew 6:33, he gives us**

**this promise. He tells us that if we seek first his kingdom and his righteousness (if we seek his will and live for him), he will make sure that we have everything we need. Isn't that good to know?**

**We need to understand that there's a difference between what we need and what we want. God never promises to give us everything we ask for in prayer. God doesn't give us all things; he gives us good things. Did you get that? I'll say it again: God doesn't give us all things; he**

**gives us good things. God responds to our prayers by giving us what's best for us.**

**In Matthew 7:9-11, Jesus says this.**

**“Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give GOOD GIFTS to those who ask him?”**

**God doesn't give us all things; he gives us**

**good things. He gives us what's best for us.**

**We can have the blessed assurance that Jesus gives us life and meets our needs. If we believe this and act like this is true [believe it AND act on it – that's the key ...know the truth and act on the truth], we will have joy, peace, and hope.**

**Truth #1 – Jesus gives us life.**

**Truth #2 – Jesus meets our needs.**

**And now Truth #3 – Jesus forgives our sin. In 1 John 5:16,17 we find these**

**words. “If anyone sees his brother  
commit a sin that does not lead to death,  
he should pray that God will give him life.**

**I refer to those whose sin does not lead to  
death. There is a sin that leads to death.**

**I am not saying that he should pray about  
that. All wrongdoing is sin, and there is  
sin that does not lead to death.”**

**Obviously there are many different  
kinds of sin. But in these verses the  
Apostle John breaks sin into two  
categories. He talks about sin that does**

**not lead to death and sin that leads to death. What's the difference? What exactly is John saying?**

**In these two important verses of Scripture John is telling us that there is certain sin that can and will be forgiven and there is certain sin that cannot and will not be forgiven. If this is true – and it is – we need to know what this sin is that cannot and will not be forgiven. What is this sin that leads to death? What is this sin that leads to eternal damnation?**

**Before we talk about the unpardonable sin, we need to understand that almost all sin can and will be forgiven. Aren't you glad to hear that? 1 John 1:9 tells us that "If we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just and WILL FORGIVE us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Aren't you glad that the God of the Bible – the only true and living God – is a forgiving God?**

**Yes, God forgives. But we need to understand that his forgiveness is**

**conditional. He cannot and will not forgive the sins of those who turn their back on him and continue in their life of sin. Only those who repent and confess their sin to God will be forgiven.**

**That said let's talk about the unpardonable sin. What is this sin that leads to death?**

**Jesus answers this question for us in Matthew 12:31. He tells us that the only sin that will not be forgiven is “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.” So according to**

**Jesus the unpardonable sin, the sin that leads to death, is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. But what is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?**

**In a few minutes I will do my best to answer this question. But before I do this, I'd like to take a look at the events that led up to Christ's statement about the unpardonable sin.**

**Turn with me to Matthew 12. In Matthew 12:22 we learn that a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute**

**(he couldn't see and talk) came to Jesus.**

**Matthew 12:22 tells us that Jesus healed this man. Not only did Jesus cast the demon(s) out of this man, but Jesus also healed the man so that he could talk and see. This demonstration of power over demons, sickness, and disease proved once again that Jesus was the promised Christ, the Son of the living God.**

**Matthew 12:24 tells us that when the Pharisees (Jewish religious leaders) heard about this miraculous healing of the**

**demon-possessed man, they said, “It is only by Beelzebub [the Jews used the word “Beelzebub” to refer to Satan], the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.” Interesting explanation!**

**Clearly the Pharisees could NOT deny that Jesus had healed this man in a supernatural way. A number of people witnessed the miracle. But rather than give Jesus the credit and God the glory, the Pharisees attributed the miracle to Satan. In essence the Pharisees were**

**saying that Jesus was not of God but of the devil.**

**In Matthew 12:25-30, Jesus cleverly refutes this claim and challenges his audience to make a choice. He reminds people that either they are with him and for him OR they are against him.**

**Listen carefully. When it comes to how you feel about Jesus, there is no such thing as neutrality. Either you are with and for Jesus OR you are against Jesus. There's no sitting on the fence. To claim**

**to be neutral is the same as opposing Jesus. Either you're on team Jesus or you're not. And it's good to be on team Jesus because Jesus gives his team life, Jesus meets his team's needs, and Jesus forgives his team's sins. I hope and pray that all of you are on team Jesus – that you know Jesus and are living for him.**

**Let's get back to Christ's encounter with the religious establishment. Jesus has confronted the Pharisees and he's challenged people to make a choice. The**

**time has now come for him to talk about the unpardonable sin.**

**In Matthew 12:31,32 Jesus says, “And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man [the Christ, the Lord Jesus] will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”**

**Once again, the unpardonable sin, the sin that leads to eternal death, is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Jesus makes this clear. But what is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?**

**Does this blasphemy refer to a particular sinful act? Does one commit the unpardonable sin by giving Satan credit for something God did? In Matthew 12:24 the Pharisees did just that. But did this one sinful act result in their eternal condemnation?**

**I don't think so. I'm convinced that this particular sinful act was simply the work of individuals who had already committed the unpardonable sin. Allow me to explain.**

**It's true that in Matthew 12:24 the Pharisees refused to acknowledge the work of the Holy Spirit of God. But it's also true that this denial on their part was common practice. Time and time again, the Pharisees witnessed the work of the Holy Spirit. Time and time again, God**

**“spoke” to the Pharisees, hoping that they would turn from their sin and turn to Christ. But time and time again, the Pharisees rejected the work and witness of the Spirit. And in time, this continuous rejection of the work and witness of the Spirit led to their spiritual death.**

**By constantly rejecting the work and witness of the Holy Spirit, the Pharisees had hardened their hearts to the point where they were in a hopeless state of spiritual blindness. The Spirit of God**

**acted, but the Pharisees did not see. The Spirit of God “spoke,” but the Pharisees did not hear. The Pharisees were alive to the world, but dead to God. They had reached the point where they could no longer be saved, and in doing so they had blasphemed the Holy Spirit of God.**

**Let’s summarize. By continuously rejecting the work and witness of the Holy Spirit, by constantly turning away from God’s efforts to draw you to him, you can develop such a hard heart that**

**you can no longer be saved. When this happens you have committed the unpardonable sin. The unpardonable sin is not a particular sinful act; it's a state that one enters – a state of hopeless spiritual blindness – because of persistent unbelief.**

**Can people today commit the unpardonable sin? Can people today reach a point where they can no longer be saved? Obviously, those who die without Christ can no longer be saved. Death**

**seals our eternal destiny (see Heb. 9:27).**

**But I also believe that there are living beings, hard-hearted men and women, who can no longer be saved. These people cannot be saved because they will accept the truth about Jesus.**

**Yes, people today can be guilty of the sin that cannot and will not be forgiven – the sin that leads to death. But we must always remember that it's not our job to put people on the “unpardonable sinners list.” We don't know the condition of**

**people's hearts. Some people appear to be hard-hearted on the outside, but inwardly they are crying out to God.**

**Only God knows who is and who isn't in a hopeless state of spiritual blindness. Our job as followers of Jesus is to live a life of joy and peace and share the hope that we have in Christ with those who need him (see 1 Pet. 3:15,16).**

**Joy, peace, and hope ... three things all people want and seek ... three things you and I can have because of our**

**relationship with Christ and our blessed  
assurance in him.**