

Canons of Dort–5th Head:12-13 – How to strengthen your assurance of your Preservation – 2

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: The last time you saw 3 ways in which you can strengthen your assurance of your salvation.

1. By listening to the preaching of the Word of God. This increases your faith in your Savior.
2. By doing good works. Good works remind you that you are saved.
3. By dealing with doubts about your salvation. When doubts go, confidence returns.

Today you will learn of 2 more things you must do to strengthen your assurance of your preservation in Jesus. (Remember, God uses means to preserve you!)

Our headings are:

Assured Christians will not be lazy but work hard

Assured Christians will not want to flirt with sin but run from it

Our goals are: **That knowing you are saved and secured for eternity through the eternal sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, you will live and act like you are secured.**

Assured Christians will not be lazy but work hard!

Article 12: This Assurance as an Incentive to Godliness - This assurance of perseverance, however, so far from making true believers proud and carnally secure, is rather the true root of **humility, of childlike respect, of genuine godliness, of endurance in every conflict, of fervent prayers, of steadfastness in cross-bearing and in confessing the truth**, and of well-founded joy in God. Reflecting on this benefit provides an incentive to a serious and continual practice of thanksgiving and good works, as is evident from the testimonies of Scripture and the examples of the saints.

1. Our Arminian brothers argue against assurance of salvation because they think assurance of salvation will make a Christian lazy.

They believe a Christian who is saved would say: “If I am going to heaven anyway, why bother to live godly? Why bother to obey God’s law? I can live however I want!” **So Arminians created a new doctrine (one not in the Bible), teaching that if you are doubtful of your salvation, it will keep you humble.**” But the fact that you are assured of your salvation does not and must not make you boastful! And as you saw last week, **doubting is sinful! Doubting takes away glory from God.**

It is true that someone who receives a large inheritance today may or may not spend it wisely. He may waste it, he may not invest it, and he may end up broke! But that is not the same situation as one who has received a heavenly inheritance of eternal life through Jesus. That is comparing apples and oranges. Apples and oranges are both round, but there are uniquely different. In this case, **the Lord Jesus works a change in the heart of the receiver** that an earthly inheritance does not do!

2. The fact that your heart is changed and you have assurance of salvation necessarily makes you humble, respectful, godly, patient in conflict, pray, steadfast, speak the truth, have deep joy in the Lord. If you are drawing from the Vine – who is Jesus Christ - you will produce what comes from the vine. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit.

A branch never says: “I refuse to receive sap from the root!” It just receives it. That is its nature! It is totally dependent on the root! It doesn’t fight the root. It knows it needs the root. **More, after receiving the sap, it is pushed to produce fruits; it must produce fruits!**
And all doubts will be removed – doubts that you are not part of the tree! **Even the onlooker sees it!**

3. What are those fruits?

a. You will produce works worthy of your new life. (Galatians 5)

Titus 2:14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

You will work honestly. You will play fair. You won’t cheat on your homework assignments. You will speak the truth about others and to others. You will encourage the weak and the struggling.

b. You will work to purify yourself of your sins.

The one who is careless about anything God says and

refuses to produce any good works evidences an unconverted heart.

1John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God...3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

This means you must not go simply by testimony. If you are looking for a spouse make sure he not only says he is growing in the knowledge of Jesus, **but make sure you see it**. Is he ashamed when he sins? Does he confess his sins? That's speaks a lot more than a bunch of beautiful roses!

c. You will worship! You will delight to be with God's people in God's house each Lord's day and you will continue to worship in your home. **True worship is evidence of true humility**. Worship is making yourself totally under submission to one greater than you! **It is against human nature to worship the true God**. The unregenerate loves himself too much! So the one who has been changed will show it.

Psalm 116:12 What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me? 13 I will take up the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the LORD.

"Take up the cup of salvation" is a **picture of giving thanks** (worship), like the head of a household did before a meal. Enjoy it. Share it! More, **you will long for (and not miss) the Lord's Supper**...and will feel terrible if you do. **When someone is being baptized, it will be a "must be" worship.**

4. Some misuse this doctrine by using it as an excuse to live immoral lives, but that is not the fault of the doctrine.

If you misuse a prescribed cold medicine to make meth, it is your own fault and responsibility!

Assured Christians will not want to Flirt with Sin but run from it

Article 13: Assurance No Inducement to Carelessness - Neither does the renewed confidence of perseverance **produce immorality or lack of concern for godliness** in those put back on their feet after a lapse, but it produces a **much greater concern to observe carefully** the ways of the Lord which were prepared in advance. They observe these ways in order that by walking in them they may maintain the assurance of their perseverance, lest, by their abuse of God's goodness, the face of the gracious God (for the godly, looking upon God's face is sweeter than life, but its withdrawal is more bitter than death) turn away from them again, with the result that they fall into greater anguish of **spirit**.

1. The fact you are assured of your preservation in Jesus Christ (or of being restored when you backslide) does not encourage you to be immoral or flirt with sin.

2. Our Arminians brothers argue that assurance of preservation by God's gracious hand encourages you to flirt with sins.

They think the Christian who believes in preservation of the saints will be licentious – be loose- in his behavior. **They think you will steal more, or tell lies more, or commit adultery more because you know you will go to God and he will forgive you.**

But **Arminians don't understand the powerful work of God** – that when God works in your heart you **will submit** to him more and more, and better and better. Christians are not like the one who wastes his father's inheritance! **If you use your assurance of restoration as an excuse to sin, you don't understand what salvation is!**

Let me illustrate this. If you were careless and did not tighten the nuts on your car wheel and your wheel almost falls off, are you likely to do it again? Wouldn't you be even more careful the next time – maybe double-checking to make sure you didn't make the same mistake again? Or if you shut the car door on your finger...do you usually do it twice? Even a child who has put his hand on a stove doesn't want to do it twice! Similarly, the restored child of God, who understands his salvation – how precious and wonderful it is, will be even more careful to walk in God's way and will feel ashamed when he falls!

3. Look at evidences of this from Scripture– a practical one and a instructive one.

Consider King David: Look what David said after his restoration from backsliding!

Psalm 32:3 When I kept silent, **my bones grew old** Through my groaning all the day long. When he didn't repent, it hurt badly! He was in pain! He was in shame! Can you imagine David doing this again? And look at what he did after he was restored.

Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit. 13 **Then I will teach transgressors Your ways**, and sinners shall be converted to You.

He showed evidence of his restoration! He started to do good works! He didn't flirt with that sin anymore. Also, the Apostle Paul understood that the person who was restored leads a better life!

2Corinthians 7:10 For godly **sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation**, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

4. Why would the child of God not flirt with sin?

The assured child of God will not flirt with sin because he is afraid of God abandoning him – moving his gracious face away from him.

When God's face is on you, it is a benediction.

Numbers 6:24 "The LORD bless you and keep you; 25 **The LORD make His face shine upon you**, And be gracious to you; 26 The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace."

On the contrary, when God's face is turned from you, it is cold, lonely, and painful.

Wasn't this the most painful thing in Jesus' life when he was on the cross? Didn't he say: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" No one wants God to turn away from him!

This why the Psalmist used this same language as he repented from his backslidden state:

Psalm 80:3 Restore us, O God; **Cause Your face to shine**, And we shall be saved! 7 Restore us, O God of hosts; **Cause Your face to shine**, And we shall be saved! 19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; **Cause Your face to shine**, And we shall be saved!

Conclusion:

Assured, secured Christians who were saved by Christ **will not want be lazy** or **flirt with sin**, but they will want to **use the means of grace to strengthen their assurance**. They will want their souls to be nourished with the sap of the Word and Sacrament! And they will flee sins and sinful situations that pull them away from the Lord! Assured, secured Christians will love this doctrine!

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Doesn't Christ assurance of your eternal salvation make you love God more? So show it. You show it by your work. What works? Worship! Worship with passion and truth! Work! This means understanding and obeying the ten commands...in thought, words, and actions!

2. Knowing that God rescues you when you fall into sin – and again, only because of Christ's suffering, doesn't that make you stop flirting with trouble? Don't burn your hand on the stove a 2nd time.

3. Help our Arminian brothers to see the error of their doctrine and how they are robbing themselves of the joy that the assurance of salvation brings.

4. Can you understand how hopeless the life of the non-Christian is? No wonder you see people panic when Covid-19 strikes. Your job is to take this message of hope to them. And if you can't go, send!

Finally, if you are not a Christian, you are without hope! But hope is a gift of God...a gift that he offers to anyone who will call on him and ask him for it. It is a free gift to you, but it didn't come free. It came through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross who fully paid for the sins of the world.