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Manifest Communion

1 John 1.1-4

Series: Blessed Assurance (Communion Series)

The Village Church

October 1, 2023

I. The Assurance

- A. There are four kinds of people in the world
 - 1. At least in terms of salvation in Jesus Christ
- B. There are those who are not saved and are sure they are not saved
 - 1. This is not a bad category to be in, by the way
 - a. If you are truly not in Jesus Christ
 - b. If you have not trusted in Christ alone for your salvation
 - c. And you know that you are not saved by Christ
 - d. That could be the first step in moving toward the Savior, of seeking the Savior
 - e. In actually finding Christ and knowing Him as Savior
- C. There are those who are not saved but are sure that they are saved
 - 1. This is a terrible category to be in – to believe without a shadow of a doubt that you are saved, that you belong to Christ, that you will be in heaven when you die
 - a. But that is not actually the case; that you are not saved, that when you die you will not be in heaven, but in fact, will be in hell
 - 2. That's the category of presumption – to presume on the grace of God
 - 3. Now some of you are thinking, that's a terrible thing for a preacher to say
 - a. That there are people who believe they are Christians, but are in fact not genuinely saved
 - b. How dare you say that, preacher!
 - 4. But that's actually what Jesus Himself said
 - a. **Matthew 7:21-23** (ESV) — 21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'
 - 5. Jesus says, there will be people like that
 - a. People who are in the church
 - b. People who are even engaged in ministry
 - c. People who call Him Lord!
 - d. Many people like that!
 - e. And yet, they are not saved, even though they think they are

- f. And Jesus will say to them, “I never knew you”
- 6. This is a terrible category to be in – a very dangerous category
 - a. How many of you think you’re saved?
 - b. How many of you are convinced that you’re saved?
 - c. I wonder how many of you who are so convinced are actually not saved
 - d. You have a false sense of security
 - e. You are deceived
 - f. Deceived by others; self-deceived
- 7. Dangerous category
 - a. If you’re in that category – you believe you’re saved and you’re not – you’re apt to take things for granted, to presume upon God
 - b. Not avail yourself of those graces which can lead you to a genuine saving relationship with Christ
- 8. So, some are not saved and know they are not saved
 - a. Others are not saved, but are convinced they are saved
- D. And then there are those who are saved, but are not sure they are saved
 - 1. This is a difficult category to be in
 - a. To be always wondering, always on edge
 - 2. It’s a fretful category to be in
 - a. Leading to anxiety – concerned from one day to another, whether Jesus will welcome you into His kingdom with “Today you will be with Me in paradise,” or “Well done, good and faithful servant”
 - b. Or “Depart from Me you who practice lawlessness”
 - 3. The psychological angst can be overwhelming in this category
 - 4. So there are those who are not saved, and know they are not saved
 - a. There are those who are not saved, and are sure they are saved
 - b. And there are those who are saved, but are not sure they are saved
- E. And then, finally, there are those who are saved, and are sure they are saved
 - 1. They understand the gospel; they have responded to the gospel
 - a. And in coming to Christ, and in understanding the gospel, they are confident in where they stand before Christ
 - 2. They fully expect to hear “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” and will in fact actually hear those words
 - a. They believe they are saved, and they are!
- F. Chart

Salvation	Assurance
Unsaved	Unsure
Unsaved	Sure
Saved	Unsure
Saved	Sure

- G. Now you might wonder, what category is the best to be in?
1. We don't want anyone to be in the unsaved category, do we?
 - a. But if they are, we want them to know they are not saved
 - b. And perhaps that might become a catalyst for them to consider the things of God, the truth of the gospel
 - c. And discover for themselves how God, in love, through His Son Jesus Christ, provided the righteousness they so desperately need
 - d. And then to discover the faith through which to trust Christ for salvation
 2. But to be in the unsaved category, but to be convinced they are saved – that's dangerous
 - a. Something must happen to capture their attention
 - b. Something to cause them to consider the state of their own soul
 - c. To test themselves to see whether they are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13.5)
 3. Some churches want those who are saved to not be sure of their salvation
 - a. They seem to want you always to be on the edge of your seats
 - b. To be constantly questioning the state of your soul
 - c. I think churches like that find it easier to manipulate people
 - d. But it's not the biblical position
 4. The biblical position is that we would want you to be saved, and to be sure that you're saved
- H. The reason we know that's the preferred, biblical position, is because of what John says in his first epistle
1. 1 John 5:13 (ESV) —
 - a. 13 I write these things to you
 - b. who believe in the name of the Son of God,
 - c. that you may know that you have eternal life.
 2. John wants you, if you are a believer, to know you are a believer, and that you have eternal life
 3. 1 John 5.13 is the purpose statement for John's first epistle
 4. John is very good about stating the purpose of his writings
 - a. We saw in our study of the gospel of John
 5. John 20:30–31 (ESV) —
 - a. 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;
 - b. 31 but these are written
 - c. so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,
 - d. and that by believing you may have life in his name.
 6. So the gospel of John was written primarily for those who have not believed
 - a. And his gospel, using the signs that he refers to, of Jesus, has written about them so you will become believers

- b. Of course, there's much in the gospel for those who are believers
 - c. But John has written his gospel so that unbelievers will become believers
- I. But John's first epistle is a bit different
 - 1. It's written for believers
 - a. So that believers will know they are believers
 - b. That those who are saved will be sure of their salvation
 - 2. So the biblical position, and certainly we want to maintain the biblical position, is that we want you to be saved
 - a. And to know you are saved
 - b. To be assured of your salvation
- J. This is communion Sunday
 - 1. It has been my practice to break from my current preaching series and preach a different series on communion Sunday
 - 2. We have recently completed the communion series on The Suffering Servant – Isaiah 53
 - a. And while we are in the midst of our study of Romans
 - b. We'll once again begin another communion series
 - 3. This one is entitled Blessed Assurance
 - a. And it is based on 1 John
 - b. Because the main purpose of 1 John is to bring believers into full assurance of their salvation
 - 4. And there is no better time and place to come to a settled assurance of your salvation than when we gather around the Lord's Table
- K. **1 John 1:1–4** (ESV) —
 - 1. 1 That which was from the beginning,
 - a. which we have heard,
 - b. which we have seen with our eyes,
 - c. which we looked upon and have touched with our hands,
 - d. concerning the word of life—
 - 2. 2 the life was made manifest,
 - a. and we have seen it,
 - b. and testify to it
 - c. and proclaim to you the eternal life,
 - d. which was with the Father
 - e. and was made manifest to us—
 - 3. 3 that which we have seen and heard
 - a. we proclaim also to you,
 - b. so that you too may have fellowship with us;
 - c. and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.
 - 4. 4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

II. **The Revelation**

- A. The first thing we notice in this passage, the first thing that sets us on our journey toward assurance, is the revelation
 - 1. That is, Jesus Christ has been revealed to John and to the apostles
- B. **1 John 1:1** (ESV) —
 - 1. 1 That which was from the beginning,
 - a. which we have heard,
 - b. which we have seen with our eyes,
 - c. which we looked upon and have touched with our hands...
- C. This One in whom we believe showed up
 - 1. He was present on this planet
 - a. He made Himself known to actual human beings
- D. And when He showed up, He spoke – and he was heard by John and his companions
 - 1. Indeed, He spoke like no other man
 - 2. **Luke 4:31–32** (ESV) —
 - a. 31 And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath,
 - b. 32 and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority.
 - 3. **John 6:68–69** (ESV) —
 - a. 68 ... You have the words of eternal life,
 - b. 69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”
- E. And not only did He speak, and the disciples listened to Him
 - 1. They also saw Him with their eyes
 - 2. “We have seen with our eyes...”
 - 3. Seen – **horao (Gk) – to see with understanding**
 - a. There are several Greek words for seeing
 - b. This was an important word for John
 - c. For it signified that kind of seeing that resulted in his conversion
 - 4. You might recall the episode when Peter and John ran to the tomb when they heard Mary’s report that the tomb was empty
 - a. John got there first; he stood at the entrance, peer into the dark enclosure, and “saw” that the body of Jesus was not there
 - b. The word for saw is a normal word for seeing, in which anything visible makes an impression on the visual equipment and registers in the brain – blepo (Gk)
 - c. Then Peter arrived, knocked John out the way, and barged into the tomb
 - d. And Peter “saw” the graveclothes lying there, and his seeing caused him to contemplate what he saw
 - e. The word used for “saw” then was theoreo (Gk), from which we get our word “theory” or “theorize”; it got him to thinking

- f. But then John goes in, and he observes the graveclothes lying there without a body in them, and the head clothes lying in a separate place by themselves, folded up
 - g. And John then sees and understands – this could only happen through a genuine resurrection
 - h. It couldn't happen if someone stole the body, or if the body came to life and wriggled out of the confines of the graveclothes like Houdini escaping from a straightjacket
 - i. This could only happen through resurrection
 - j. And the word used was *horao* (Gk) – which means to perceive with understanding
- 5. And so, “we have seen with our eyes” is the kind of seeing which generates believing
 - a. Not all seeing is believing
 - b. This kind of seeing is believing
- F. And then, Jesus was revealed to them physically, through touch
 - 1. “Which we looked upon and have touched with our hands”
 - 2. We recall Jesus appearing to the disciples following the resurrection in the Upper Room on that first Sunday, Resurrection Day
 - a. But Thomas was not there
 - 3. The disciples told Thomas about the encounter, and Thomas famously made the statement for which he is known
 - a. “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.” (John 20.25)
 - 4. Well, eight days later, there they were again, only this time Thomas was there with them
 - a. “Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.’ Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God.’” (John 20.27-28)
- G. So the first move toward full assurance is the revelation of Jesus Christ to these disciples
 - 1. Through all the primary senses
 - a. Hearing
 - b. Sight
 - c. Touch
- H. And by the way, God has seen it fitting to gather us around the Lord's Table through a similar sensory experience
 - 1. A sensory experience through which, believing in Jesus, we might be reminded of this revelation
 - 2. For in the Lord's Supper we
 - a. Hear the proclamation of the gospel
 - b. See with understanding the emblems of our Savior's death on our behalf

- c. And we touch the elements themselves, tasting that which represents the body and blood of our Lord
- 3. And in believing, we say with Thomas, “My Lord and my God”

III. The One Revealed

- A. Next in our text we see the One revealed
- B. 1 John 1:1–2 (ESV) —
 - 1. 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands,
 - 2. concerning the word of life—
 - 3. 2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it...
- C. The One revealed, of course, is Jesus Christ
 - 1. “Concerning the word of life...”
 - a. That is, the message of life
 - 2. And the life is in reference to Jesus Christ
 - a. “The life was made manifest, and we have seen it”
- D. Remember to prologue to John’s gospel
 - 1. John 1:1–4 (ESV) —
 - a. 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 - b. 2 He was in the beginning with God.
 - c. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.
 - d. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
- E. The Life was made manifest
 - 1. It was this Jesus
 - a. The One who was in the beginning with God
 - b. Who was God
- F. It is one thing to have heard, seen and touched Jesus
 - 1. But quite another to have heard, seen and touched the incarnate Son of God
 - 2. That’s who Jesus was, and is!
 - 3. He, the incarnate Son of God, is the One revealed

IV. The Proclamation

- A. This Jesus is the One proclaimed
- B. 1 John 1:2–3 (ESV) —
 - 1. 2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it
 - 2. and proclaim to you the eternal life,
 - a. which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—
 - 3. 3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you...
- C. The proclamation of the Lord Jesus Christ is central to true belief
 - 1. And central, then, to the full assurance of faith
 - 2. Romans 10:14 (ESV) —

- a. 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?
 - b. And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?
 - c. And how are they to hear without someone preaching?
 - 3. The preaching, the proclamation, of Jesus Christ is the only way anyone ever comes to faith in Him
 - a. And the only way to have assurance
- D. In fact, proclamation is integral to our participation in the Lord's Supper
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 11:26 (ESV) —
 - a. 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
 - 2. You see, you also are involved in preaching
 - a. As you take these elements, receive the bread, take the cup
 - b. Recognize the body and blood of our Lord
 - c. You become the preacher for those moments!

V. The Fellowship

- A. Then there is the fellowship
 - 1. Fellowship is what the Lord's Supper is ultimately about!
 - a. That's why we call it communion
- B. 1 John 1:3 (ESV) —
 - 1. 3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you,
 - a. so that you too may have fellowship with us;
 - b. and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.
- C. That is true communion
 - 1. We take the Lord's Supper together
 - a. Because when we remember and proclaim the Lord's death in our place, we discover in our union with Him, we have union with each other
 - 2. That's another reason to be here when you are able
 - a. To be with one another
 - b. To have fellowship with one another
- D. But also, that this communion, this fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus
 - 1. There is, in these moments, a real sense of the presence of the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit
 - 2. Yes, these elements are in themselves just emblems, just representations of the body and blood of Jesus
 - a. And yet, Jesus Himself promises His presence in this observance
 - b. His real, spiritual presence, by the Holy Spirit
 - c. Who is the Spirit of Christ
- E. The proclamation is not mere words, mere sonic vibrations in time and space

1. It is calling us to experience the manifest presence of our Savior in these moments
 - a. The true fellowship with the Triune God
2. And it is in these moments that our assurance of our union with Christ is heightened and grows

VI. **The Joy**

- A. And finally, notice the joy that flows from these manifest moments of communion
- B. **1 John 1:4** (ESV) —
 1. 4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.
- C. There is nothing about which we might be more joyful than to contemplate the revelation of Our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ
 1. Through hearing, seeing, and touching
 2. Proclaimed through the preaching of the gospel
 3. In union with the Father and the Son with true believers
- D. And then to experience the spiritual manifest presence of our Savior as we partake in fellowship together of the Supper
 1. Seeing, touching, tasting the emblems of our Savior's death on our behalf
 2. Hearing the gospel proclaimed
- E. May our joy be complete as well