



Be Assured!

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How better to proclaim Christ than to live life assured of our forgiveness and salvation through Him, our Lord? This study was originally printed in the Spring 2003 issue of the *Quarterly*. It has been updated now as a reminder to **Be Assured** as we prepare to Proclaim Christ ... the Lord of the Nations!

Opening: Sing or read the hymn "If You but Trust in God to Guide You" (LSB 750)

Webster's dictionary offers several definitions for assurance: certain, sure, confident, a guarantee, a promise.

Faith Talk: Share with a partner or your group a time when you felt assured. Perhaps assurance came through an event, the words of a friend, time in prayer, or words from Scripture.

People today — even Christians — yearn for assurance! It is sad that so many who know Jesus do not understand the joy of living life to the full and are not sure about where they will spend eternity. They may have doubts and wonder where God is when there are trials and tribulations. How can they gain the assurance that, because Jesus lives they have a saving God? How can they be sure of living abundantly here on earth and eternally with Him?

Be Assured! Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus! He is the ONE, the only Savior. You can count on Him because of who He is, what He has done, and what He continues to do for us. How do these verses help and assure you?

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

While there is only one way to the Father, we call this Way our Brother, our Savior Jesus.

Hebrews 10:19-23 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

We can draw near to God as His forgiven children with confidence because Jesus has shed His blood for our salvation.

Hebrews 12:1-3 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

Jesus not only founds or establishes our faith, but He made and continues to make it perfect through Word and Sacrament. With this faith we are able to “run with endurance the race set before us”.

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

We have a mediator to speak on our behalf to our Heavenly Father. Jesus knows our earthly struggles, yet He also knows the Father.

In life there may be obstacles that hinder us from living a completely assured life. In order to overcome these obstacles,, you need to **prepare your mind**. How can this be done?

1 Peter 1:13-16. Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. **14** As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, **15** but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, **16** since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

We can be ready to live as God’s children when we are mindful of His grace that He provides for us. We do this by not only living as forgiven children, but desiring to live according to His expectations laid out in His Word and especially the 10 Commandments.

Be assured! Strengthening comes through daily walks in His Word and receiving forgiveness of sins regularly through Holy Communion. Our human nature dictates the need for assistance, and help is abundant for all in God's Word! What encouragement do the following verses offer?

Joshua 1:8-9 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. **9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

We have been given God’s Word and we can take it with us everywhere. While we go, we can be strong and courageous knowing God is with us, protecting us, and giving us what we need to for our daily lives.

Matthew 7:24-25 Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. **25** And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. When we live by God’s Word we live on the rock, which is Jesus. We have a firm foundation and will not be shaken when the floods and winds and trials of life come to us.

Luke 11:28 But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” Simply, we are blessed as we hear and read God’s Word.

Acts 2:42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

For nearly 2,000 years Christians have been gathering around the Word and partaking of the Lord's Supper. We are not alone as we come to our Lord for forgiveness. In Holy Communion we are united not only with our Lord and those who stand beside us, but also with all the aints who have gone before us to praise our Jesus in Heaven. This includes the first Christians who received this Sacrament from Jesus Himself.

Faith Talk: Take a few minutes alone to consider how God's Word can "prepare your mind" to live as God's child. Then share a Bible verse that is helpful to you as you keep centered on serving the Lord of the nations.

Be assured! Your sins are forgiven! Sometimes it's difficult to realize that Jesus sacrificed His life for us...for ME! But He did! Read aloud **John 3:16**, inserting at the end "and that includes me!" What additional insights do these verses give you about God's forgiveness?

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Isaiah 43:25 I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.

Our Lord knows us. He remembers us. What he doesn't remember is our sins. When God looks at us, He sees us through Christ — righteous, pure, and holy.

Isaiah 44:22 have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.

While similar to the verse from Isaiah 43, this verse adds imagery of the clouds and mist. Just like water molecules in clouds and mist, our sins go away, they are not lasting. We can return to our Lord. He HAS redeemed us. Our sins are no more.

1 John 1:8-9 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We can't stop sinning and to say that we are sinless would be a lie, but God IS faithful and forgives our sins. We are sinners, yet we are saints—through Christ's forgiveness.

Psalms 103:3-4 Who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, 4 who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

Life has pits. Life has diseases. The redemption and healing that Christ gives will be complete when we enter our eternal rest in heaven. We may have temporary "pits and diseases", but they will cease when we meet Jesus face to face and our crowned with His love and mercy.

Our Lord knows us. He has made us holy in His sight. He doesn't see our sins when He looks at us, but, rather, sees our Savior's robe of righteousness, given to us through our baptisms, and faith, given by the Holy Spirit.

Be assured! With the certainty of forgiveness comes joy! As is the rising of the sun each morning, so sure is the promise of great joy for those who depend on God's grace and mercy. Joy is one of the nine fruits listed in the "fruit basket" of the Spirit (see **Galatians 5:22-23**) But the

fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

How do these promises of joy encourage you?

Psalm 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

God leads us on the path He has set out for us. We are protected, as stated in the meaning to the First Article of the Apostle's Creed. He forgives us by His holy precious blood (2nd Article meaning), and we are kept with Christ in the one true faith (3rd Article meaning). What an amazing reason to have joy, not just here on Earth, but for eternity.

Isaiah 35:10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

When we are called to heaven, to Zion, we will be filled with joy. We have joy now, but it is not as clear as it will be. We will have no sorrow, no disease, no trials, no sighing.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

God's kingdom comes among us, just as we pray in the The Lord's Prayer. We are given food and drink, but the gifts of God are so much more than our day to day earthly needs. We are also washed clean in the blood of the Lamb and that gives peace which only the Holy Spirit can give through faith.

Faith Talk: The love of Christ is news too good to keep to ourselves. Yet, often we treat it like a secret? Share with others in your group opportunities that God has prepared for you to share His Word, but you have found it difficult to do so. Later in the study you will have time to pray for these opportunities.

Be assured! The promise of eternal life is ours. We can proclaim Christ as the Lord of the Nations to those in our family, neighborhood, and those we meet in our vocations. You can share your faith in Christ with others confidently. Read **Psalm 33: 12-13**. *Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage! The Lord looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man.* As we read these verses, which are the theme verses for our 2023 LWML Convention Bible, we are assured that we are blessed to be God's chosen people. This assurance is meant to be shared with others. Now read the following verses from Scripture and consider what we are urged to do.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

We are enabled to proclaim the excellencies of Christ. We are His light in this world.

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.

We are to be ready to tell others of God's great love for all people. Yet, we need to approach these opportunities with respect to those who we pray will see Jesus in us.

Matthew 10:32 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven,

We can find joy in knowing that Jesus goes to our Heavenly Father on our behalf and when we pray, He is praying with and for us.

Be assured! Live out your life with joy and thanksgiving! Remember that He is our God for NOW, not only a God for some far-off future life. When we live life NOW by faith in the Son of God, all is changed! All is new!

Faith Talk: Now, since you have studied the Scriptures, take time to pray privately or with a partner about situations where you can share your faith in our Lord in the future.

Closing Hymn: "I Know That My Redeemer Lives" (LSB 461)

Closing Prayer: O God of grace, You sent Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to bring life and immortality to light. We give You thanks that, by His death, He destroyed the power of death and, by His resurrection, He opened the Kingdom of heaven to all believers. Strengthen us in the confidence that because He lives, we shall live also. Let that confidence make us bold to say that neither death nor life nor things present nor things to come will be able to separate us from Your love which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Faith Walk: Be prepared to share the assurance you have in Christ with family, friends, and those you meet along life's way.

Spend time in the Word daily to keep your mind prepared to proclaim Christ.

Pray for awareness to share God's love and for the Holy Spirit to grow the seeds of faith that are planted.