

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Christian Certainties, Part 1

Scripture: 1 John 5:13

Code: 62-40

As we prepare for the Lord's table, it is suitable and fitting for us to return to 1 John. We have come now really to the final section of this great epistle. First John chapter 5 verses 13 through 21 constitutes the conclusion of the epistle. And this section can be titled, "Christian Certainties...Christian Certainties."

If you just glance at verses 13 to 21, you will recognize the word "know" is there. Verse 13, "That you may know..." Verse 15, "If we know that He hears us, we know we have the request we've asked." If you drop down to verse 18, "We know that no one who is born of God sins." Verse 19, "We know that we are of God." Verse 20, "And we know that the Son of God has come that we might...verse 20...know Him who is true." This is all about what we know.

You will also recognize that the word "confidence" appears in verse 14, "And this is the confidence." What is in verse 13, we know. What is in verses 14 through 17 is one subject about which we can be confident. What is in verse 18 we know, what is in verse 19 we know, what is in verse 20 we know and a final warning appears in verse 21. This is about what we know. That's why I've called it Christian certainties.

Now obviously we live in a very, very uncertain world. We hear this all the time that these are very unstable times, uncertain times. We struggle against all of the uncertainties that we face. And, of course, since the terrible tragedy of 9-11 a couple of years ago, there is a new kind of uncertainty injected into our daily lives, the fear of terrorism. We are uncertain when we fly, we are uncertain when we are in public places. This introduces to us a new uncertainty. There are increasing uncertainties about walking down the street and just being in a visible place because there are bombings and there are drive-by shootings and you all know the uncertainties with which we live.

And there are some more common uncertainties. When we buy a car we are uncertain that it's going to function well and so we want a guarantee. And the manufacturer provides a guarantee, and if he didn't provide a guarantee, we wouldn't buy the car. And then fearing that we might have an accident for which we could not pay and then get sued, we hedge against that uncertainty by buying an insurance policy and spend our lives pouring a small fortune into the insurance company for something that hasn't happened. But it might. And when you go to the store to buy an appliance, you are immediately told by the sales person that you need to buy a 36-month warranty, or you need to

buy a service guarantee, which is another way of saying this is a lousy product. Something could go wrong. And many people do that. There's uncertainty about our health and so we spend thousands of dollars a year buying either insurance or buying into some kind of a medical plan to protect us from illness and accident and catastrophic issues that might come into our lives physically. There's even uncertainty of life in a family and so insurance policies are basically purchased so that should the bread winner, the husband, die there's money immediately given to the wife. Most of you women sitting out there would be far wealthier if your husband was dead than you are now...certainly many of you.

There's uncertainty with employment so we have unemployment insurance. And so it goes. I talked to a professional athlete who told me that when he negotiated his massive contract, it included the provision in the contract that in case of injury or accident that made him impossible for him to play that his complete salary would be paid for the full length of the contract, which happened to be five years, and he would receive an addition 200 percent of that contract for his injury. And they signed him, of course. There is uncertainty about fire and theft so you have a homeowner's policy. There's even uncertainty now about marrying people so we now have prenuptial agreements where partners want to hedge against somehow being extorted by the person they're marrying. And so it goes.

People are so uncertain that they will literally spend huge percentages of their money to cover all of the potential contingencies. And there are other people who will pay large amount of money to mediums, astrologers, fortune tellers to have some insight into the future, to remove some of the fearful uncertainty.

And I suppose a good question to ask an unbeliever when you talk to one is, "What are you absolutely certain of?" And, you know, the standard answer is "death and taxes." But beyond that, and death might be a good place to stop, but beyond that, sort of trite answer, what are you really certain of? You can't be certain that this planet is going to be here. The second law of thermodynamics tells us that all material universe is tending toward disorder and disruption. You can't depend upon anything material, anything physical. Can't really depend on people. There are no guarantees about how people are going to treat you in the future, even your own spouse and your own family, your parents, your children. It's very hard for an unbeliever to answer the question...what are you absolutely certain of? And if you can get that person to say, "Well, I am certain of death," you've put them in a very, very good position. Well after you've died, what then are you certain of?...poses the inevitable question about eternal life.

Well against the background of living in an uncertain world, and living basically with people who are uncertain about almost everything, the Bible is a divine revelation that is filled with absolute certainties...absolute certainties. Let me just suggest a few of them that I jotted down.

Numbers 32:23, "Be sure your sin will find you out." That's a certainty. Or Psalm 19:7, "The testimony of the Lord, Scripture, is sure." The Bible is certain. The consequence of sin is certain. Proverbs 11:18, "To him that sows righteousness, assure reward." Job 34:12, "God will not do wickedly." That is certain. Isaiah 53:4, "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." It is a surety that Jesus has done that. In fact, in Isaiah 55:3 it speaks of the sure mercies of the Lord. His mercies are certain. John 6:69, Peter said, "We are certain that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." John 16:30, "We are sure that You know all things." John 17:8, "They have known surely...says Jesus...that I came from You." Romans 2:2, "We are certain that the judgment of God is according to truth." Romans 4:16, "The promise of salvation is sure." Second Timothy 2:19, "The foundation of God is sure." Hebrews 6:19, "Christ is a sure anchor in the presence of God." Second Peter 1:19, "Scripture is a sure word of prophecy." Revelation 22:20 Jesus said, "Surely I come quickly." There's a few and many, many, many more.

We deal in certainties in an uncertain world. That is a problem for our uncertain world, isn't it? It is an offense to people to say that you are certain about everything. It is really an intolerable posture and position to take. But it is the truth. The Bible is a book of absolutes, it's a book of certainties. We are certain how the universe began. We are certain how it will end. We are certain why God created and how His purpose in the beginning will consummate in the end. We are certain about why people behave the way they behave. We are certain about what is right and what is wrong. We are certain about the elements that make for good human relationships. We are certain about what is necessary to go to heaven. We are certain there is a hell and certain about how people get there. We are certain about all those things. We are certain about God's promises, certain about His Son the Savior, certain about His substitutionary death, His literal resurrection, certain about His Second Coming. We are certain about all these things, absolutely certain.

Now you understand again, that is not something that is easily accepted in our society, but we are unique in a world of doubters. God has even given us a guarantee for the truth of His redemptive promise. In Ephesians 1:14 it says He's given as a pledge, that's a guarantee, of our inheritance, the Holy Spirit of promise. When you became a believer, you put your trust in Jesus Christ. Why? Because you came to the conviction and the belief that all God's promises were true. Is that right? You came to the conviction that what He said about you was true, what He said about your sin was true, what He said about the judgment you would receive was true, what He said about forgiveness, mercy and grace was true. What He said about Christ was true in the Scripture. You came to the conclusion that all of that was true and when you believed in the truth of the gospel, embracing all that God had said, you put your trust in Christ because of that belief and God promised you eternal life. And to secure that eternal life, He gave you a guarantee and the guarantee that He gave you was the Holy Spirit who immediately took up residence in your heart. And that's exactly what Paul says in Ephesians 1:14, "He is the pledge, the *arrabon*." *Arrabon* means guarantee, down payment, deposit, pledge, promise, it's even the word for engagement ring...a symbol of a pledge and a

promise. God deals in certainties. He has bound Himself by His Word to those certainties and He has guaranteed His Word in the gift of the Holy Spirit whose temple we as believers are.

And so, as we come to the end of John's epistle, John wants to reiterate for his readers and for us the certainties that are ours in Christ. With verse 12 John ended the formal argument of the book. Verse 12 summed it all up, "He who has the Son has the life, the eternal life. He who does not have the Son of God does not have the life." Remember this is a book that is intended to distinguish true Christians from false Christians. And John sums it up by saying eternal life belongs to those who have the Son, if you have the Son you have the life, if you don't have the Son you don't have the life. And then John summarizes his purpose in verse 13, "These things I've written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God in order that you may know that you have eternal life." This book was written to give you assurance.

Chapter 1 verse 4 says, "These things we write that your joy may be made complete." The only way you'll have complete joy is to have complete assurance of your salvation. Chapter 2 verse 1, "My little children, I'm writing these things to you that you may not sin. If anyone sins we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." He says I'm writing so that you may have full joy, full joy related to the fact that you always have an advocate who intercedes even when you sin so that you can know that you are saved. I want you to have joy, I want you to have holiness and confidence in His intercession and I want you consummately to have the assurance that you may know that you have eternal life. That is the most important certainty, to know you have eternal life, to be certain you have eternal life.

All through the epistle he's been giving tests, tests that identify the true and the false believers. There were false teachers among these believers. There were antichrists among these believers. There were spiritual fakes and frauds and phonies and deceivers among these believers. They were insecure, as believers tend to be when they're not well taught. And so John gives tests, doctrinal tests, the test of understanding a true view of man as sinful, the test of understanding a true view of Jesus Christ, who He is and why He came. Those are the doctrinal tests. The moral tests have to do with obedience to the Law of God and to Christ and love for God and not the world and love for others. We've gone through all of those various tests. And believers who read the epistle or like us, study the epistle, come to the conclusion that they pass the test. They believe the right things about themselves as sinners. They believe the right things about Jesus Christ as Savior. They manifestly obey the Word of God, that's the direction of their life and demonstrate love for Him and love for others. John says here, "This is why I've written this, I want you to know, I want you to be certain, I want you to be confident." Of course the Roman Catholic Church says nobody can ever know if they're saved, nobody can ever know if they're going to go to heaven until after they die, which would be to completely discard this entire epistle.

By the way, the word "know" appears 39 times in this epistle. I counted them just to be sure. I think that's accurate, it might be off one or two. Thirty nine times in this epistle and seven of those times in this last section. Our faith is not a hope so, it's a know so. It's not wishful thinking, it's not pie in the sky. God has spoken and what God has spoken is true. And if we know what He has said, then we know what is true. We don't speculate. We don't hope. We are certain.

I remember years ago when I was writing a book on the Charismatic Movement, I was talking about the danger of thinking that God gives new revelation, that God speaks. And I read a book written by a charismatic leader and in it he said this, "When someone in our congregation stands up and says, 'Thus says the Lord,' we know that either he is representing what the Lord has said or he's not." Now that is not helpful. That's why we don't turn to that because there is no criteria by which to know. We know what God has put in His holy Word.

Listen to Job. Job in the patriarchal era way back before Moses, therefore before the writing of the Pentateuch, before there was any Scripture in anybody's hand, Job the righteous man says this, Job 19:25, "And as for me, I know that my Redeemer...what?...lives and that at the last He will take His stand on the earth, and even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God whom I myself shall behold and whom my eyes shall see and not another." I know my Redeemer lives, I know that He will stand on the earth in the last days and set up His eternal Kingdom, I know that after this body is dissolved I will awaken to see God with my own eyes. That's a lot to know before there was written any Scripture. I know, said Job... maybe the oldest book in the Old Testament. In chapter 42 Job answered the Lord and said, "I know that You can do all things and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted." He had a sound doctrine of eternal life, resurrection, "In my flesh shall I see God," bodily resurrection, an eternal Kingdom and he also had a sound understanding of the absolute sovereignty of God. One might say that he was a pre-Abrahamic Calvinist. He knew.

The Old Testament is filled with such statements of absolute knowledge. I wish I could take the time. Here's what the psalmist says, David in Psalm 20 verse 6, "Now I know that the Lord saves His anointed. He will answer him from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand." David says I know my God hears the prayers of those that are His and He answers...He answers. In Psalm 56 verse 9, similarly, "Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call. This I know, that God is for me." Isn't that great? I may have enemies, they may attack me, but God is on my side. "In God therefore whose Word I praise, in the Lord whose Word I praise, in God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?" And there is a confidence in God's absolute power, omnipotence.

These are just highlights. Psalm 119:75, "I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are righteous and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me." I know what You do is right and sometimes You bring suffering because You're faithful to me. Faithful? Yes faithful to bring the necessary suffering to perfect me. So the psalmist says, "That I know. You do what's right even when You allow suffering, Your purpose is to be faithful to make me what I need to be." Psalm 135:5, "For I know that the Lord is great and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the Lord pleases He does in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all depths. Anywhere in the universe I know...says the psalmist...God does whatever He wants." In Psalm 140 verse 12, "I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted and justice for the poor." I know, he's saying, that God is compassionate.

Now let me just give you a little exercise. As you read through your Bible from place to place and time to time and day to day, just see how many times you find somebody say, "I know, I know." Here's something else. Paul said, "For I know that nothing good dwells in me." That's a certainty, right? Romans 7:18, I know that. Or 2 Timothy 1:12, "I know whom I have believed and I am confident that He's able to guard what I've entrusted to Him until that day." That is I know my Lord to whom I've committed my life will keep me. I know.

So here John closes his epistle...all that's just sort of footnote.

As he closes his epistle, he uses the word "know" seven times, six of the seven it's *oida*, a form of *oida* which is a reference to absolute knowledge, not something learned by experience, positive absolute knowledge known not by our experience but by divine revelation. So here we are as Christians living in a world of absolute certainties. This is the great crescendo of this magnificent epistle. You pass the test, you pass the doctrinal test, you pass the moral tests, you are the real Christians and you know.

Now he's going to close with five things we know. I'll give you one tonight. It's a good one. Be content. That leaves four for next time. Number one, we know we have eternal life. We know we have eternal life.

Look at verse 13, "These things I've written to you..." What do you mean, John? What things? The whole letter...the whole letter. How do I know that? Well, there are a number of indications. One, he shifts from the third person in verse 12, "He who has the Son has the life. He who does not have the Son of God does not have the life," to the first person, "These things I have written," which indicates that this isn't in the flow of thought, he's not simply saying, "What I've just said in the prior verse," but rather there's a shift all together out of the third person of speaking to them to a self-proclamation of his purpose. Plus, "These things I've written to you that you may know" introduces all that is about to follow, all of which is the conclusion, all of which is about what we know. So clearly this literally refers to the whole epistle which then launches him into all the things that we who do have the Son know for

certain. This is also good parallel to the gospel of John. When John wrote his gospel, 21 chapters, he came down into chapter 20, the end of the chapter, the last verse of chapter 20 and he said this, "These things have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and that believing you may have life in His name." That sweeps back over the whole of the gospel of John. Everything from chapter 1, "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God. All things were made by Him, without Him was not anything made that was made," all the way down, "The Word became flesh," and then all through those 20 chapters everything so far has been written that you may believe. All the "I am" sections, all the miracles of Jesus that are recorded in the gospel of John, all intended that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you may have life, eternal life in His name. The gospel of John was written, follow me, the gospel of John was written so that people might believe and be saved. The epistle of John was written so that the saved might know they're saved. The gospel of John has a message of salvation. The epistle of John has a message of assurance.

And so, the parallels as he gets close to the end of the gospel, he says this has all been written that you might believe. And here as he gets near the end, this has all been written that you who believe might know that you have eternal life. The first one was to bring you to belief. And this one is to eliminate any lingering doubt. How wonderful it is to know this. As I said earlier, it must be sad to be a Roman Catholic, must be sad to live your whole life caught up in a system and the more devout you are, the more you give to that system and be told incessantly and constantly that one thing you can never ever know is where you're going to go when you die. Talk about frustration. Talk about disappointment. Talk about beleaguered people. I can't imagine anything worse than going all the way through your life with some kind of loyalty to that system, never ever knowing or even being able to know whether you've qualified to go to heaven. We can know.

People who have no interest in religion, or very minimal interest in religion, generally say, "Well I hope I'm going to heaven, I think I might be good enough." You know, that's a question you really ought to have some certainty on because eternity lasts a long time. I mean, just kind of going around and taking a cavalier approach in life, "Well, I think I'm going to heaven, I think, you know, when things all sort of wind down I'll probably be good enough to get there." You know, you need to do a little better than that because of what is at stake. Can you know? Of course. John says that's why I wrote this epistle. Measure yourself against the tests. Do you believe in Jesus Christ? Do you understand your own sinful condition? Are you manifesting day in and day out the evidence of a transformed life by virtue of your love for God, your love for others, your hatred toward the world? And by manifestation of your obedience? If that's the case, if you pass the test verse 13 says, "You may know that you have eternal life." You may now know that you have eternal life. When I die I'm going to heaven. And people say to me, when you die are you sure you're going to heaven? Absolutely! Absolutely!

I always think about what Larry King said to me off the air. He said, "Do you have any fear of death?"

I said, "I have no fear of death."

He said, "You don't have any fear of death?"

I said, "Well, you know, I have a normal antipathy toward pain and so I would like to minimize my pain in dying. That's just kind of a normal thing. But death itself? No, I don't have any fear of death."

And he said, "Well how is it that you have no fear of death?"

I said, "Because I know exactly where I'm going to go. I know exactly where I'm going to go. I'm going to go to heaven."

"And you're sure you're going to go to heaven?"

"Absolutely sure."

And, of course, he said to me, "I wish I had that faith."

Well that faith comes by hearing the message of Jesus Christ. These Christians to whom John wrote had been shaken by false teachers. They had been shaken by antichrists. They were insecure. They had therefore lost their confidence in ongoing forgiveness. They had lost their joy. And so John has gone back and said, "Look, examine yourself. If you're walking in the light, as He is in the light, then you're in the fellowship. If you're confessing your sin, then you're the one to whom He's forgiving."

Look at your life, if you're obeying the commands of Christ, if you're loving God, loving others and not loving the world, if you're confessing Jesus as God, if you're practicing righteousness, if you're experiencing the internal confident witness of the Holy Spirit, then you can be sure. You can be sure. And so the first certainty is that we have eternal life.

Now I don't need to spend a great amount of time defining for you what eternal life is. In the simplest sense, eternal life means living forever with God...it means forever with God in His glorious wonderful heaven. I mean, that's what it means. But there's a lot more to it. For example, go down to verse 20, the last statement. It speaks of Jesus Christ, "This is the true God and eternal life." So eternal life is living forever with God, listen to this, possessing the very life of God that was possessed by Christ Himself. We enter into the very life of God. In some ways we inherit His perfect sinless, holy,

righteous life without becoming God. I guess you could say, I don't know it's a good illustration, it's like we're a light bulb, we contain His life like a lightbulb contains light. The bulb isn't light, the light comes into the bulb and illuminates it. So His life will be transmitted to us. It's already been transmitted to us, although the light doesn't shine very brightly because the bulb is still dark. It's not pure crystal transparency because it's darkened by our fallen flesh in which we still live.

I guess you could put it this way. The light is on but what the world sees is dim. Some day when we leave this mortal flesh and enter into the glorious manifestation of the children of God, we will become absolutely transparent, crystal clear bulbs through which the power of eternal life will flow to radiate throughout all eternity. In John 17, that great High Priestly prayer that Jesus prayed and the third verse, He says, "And this is eternal life that they may know You, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom You sent." That's exactly what we read in chapter 5 verse 20. God and Christ are the eternal life. They are the power of eternal life. And to say that we will have eternal life is simply to say that we will literally have the life of God in us, it's already true, it's just not fully manifest because that life is incarcerated in the darkness of our still fallen flesh. We already possess that life, that's why we love God, that's why we love others. That's why we don't love the world, that's why we have a longing and a heart to obey. That's why we desire righteousness and hate sin because that life is already in us. It is the very life of God. Another way to see it is that the Spirit of God dwells in us and therefore that presence of God is in us as the Spirit of God is in us, as the Spirit of Christ is in us, as God is in us, as Christ is in us, the whole essential nature of the Trinity has taken up residence in our lives. It is a massive miracle, the world doesn't yet see it, as Romans 8 says, they can't see us yet because we haven't had that unveiling, that glorious manifestation awaits the resurrection. And in the meantime we struggle with the dark covering that makes the light that is in us so hard to see.

This is not about a duration of life. It is about a quality of life, a kind of life we have now and will forever have the life of God in us, holy and pure and righteous and good and content and satisfied and fulfilled. Eternal life is a life that lacks nothing, wants nothing, seeks nothing, misses nothing, desires nothing other than what it has. God's life in us, we already have it, that's what he says, that you may know that you have eternal life. It's just an incredible thing to think about, isn't it? But it's what we have. And that we can be certain about. If you believe in the name of the Son of God, if you believe savingly so that it is manifest in not only your doctrine but your conduct, you can know that you have eternal life. And eternal life does last forever because God lasts forever.

Where did we get this eternal life? Well I just read you verse 20, from Jesus Christ, this is the true God and eternal life. God sent His Son into the world that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. That's exactly what verse 13 says. "If you believe in the name of the Son of God, you may know that you have eternal life." All God's life is in Christ and all of Christ's life is in us. It is frankly an astonishing reality. We do not await our eternal life, we have it now, although it is not

yet fully manifest.

Turn, in closing, to Ephesians 3 then we'll come to the Lord's table, but this is a good passage to wrap up my thoughts. In Ephesians 3 verse 14, Paul says, "I bow my knees before the Father." He's praying here for us, "Bowing before the Father from whom every family in heaven and earth derives its name." And he's praying to Him that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with power through the Spirit in the inner man. I pray, he says, for believers who already have the Holy Spirit, who already have the life, the eternal life, I pray that they may be strengthened by the indwelling Spirit. Then in verse 17, "I pray that Christ may settle in their hearts." In other words, their lives will be pure enough for Christ to settle down and be at home. "That they would be rooted and grounded in love." I want the Spirit to work on their hearts. I want Christ to clean up things and then find a place to rest in them. I want them to be grounded in love. Why? In other words, I want them to understand they're the temple of the Holy Spirit who strengthens them, I want them to know that they are the house in which Christ dwells who cleanses them. I want then to understand the reality that God lives in them.

So verse 18, "They may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God." Paul says this would take a long time to sort of unpack here. Paul says I want you to understand the Spirit is in you and the Spirit is strengthening you. I want you to understand the Son is in you and the Son is cleansing you to make you a home in which He can settle down and be at rest. And I want you to comprehend the length and breadth and height and depth and to understand this immense love of Christ which is beyond comprehension so that you may also recognize the fullness of God. He's trying to take us from glory to glory to glory from level to level to level to expand our comprehension. And in the end what he is saying is the whole Trinity is in you, the whole Trinity dwells in you. All that the Spirit is there to strengthen you, all that Christ is is there to cleanse you and to purify you, all that God is is there to feel you with His fullness. I just pray that you can understand that. Don't go around wondering needlessly who you are and how you stand before God, get a grip on this unimaginable, incomprehensible privilege of possessing eternal life.

Then in verses 20 and 21 he launches into a doxology of praise. "Now to Him who is able to do exceeding, abundantly beyond all that we ask or think." Well that's God, isn't it? God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit, "Now to the one who can not only do what we can think, He can do what we can ask, not only what we ask or think but all we ask or think not just all we ask or think but beyond all we ask or think, not just beyond it all but abundantly beyond it all. And not just abundantly beyond it all, but exceeding abundantly beyond it all. I mean, the terms are just grandiose. You say, "That's some kind of power. Wow!" To Him who is able to do exceeding, abundantly beyond all that we ask, or think, according to the power, you would expect him to say that is in Him, but he says,

"The power that works...what?...within us." It's just absolutely staggering. "To Him be the glory in the church," that's us, "and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."

Get a grip on the reality of eternal life. It is that the Trinity lives in you, you possess the very life of God. It is clouded and covered by the sin in your unredeemed flesh so that the world cannot fully see what we are. There will come a day in the next world, in the next life when we are liberated from this flesh, the great redemption of the body and then the power and the glory of eternal life will come through us unhindered, unrestricted, unrestrained, unclouded but it's already there. It is that power of the Trinity that works within us. It works to our salvation. It works to our sanctification. It works to our endurance, our ministry, our usefulness, our service, our evangelism. It works to the benefit of our prayer life. Everything we do is a reflection of that power.

And why did God do this? Why did He give us this power now? Verse 21, "In order that He might receive glory in the church and that Christ might be glorified to all generations." So that the world could see the power of Christ even if cloudy in the amazing power expressed in the church. We are then possessors already of this eternal life. If you believe in the name of the Son of God, that is you believe Him to be who He said He was and believe Him to have done what He said He did, if you believe the gospel you may know that you now possess eternal life.

Father, we come now to the time around Your table realizing that that eternal life was only made possible because of the sacrifice that Jesus rendered on the cross. You gave Your only begotten Son as a sacrifice for sin, to die our death so that we might receive Your life. This is the great gift of which we have sung so magnificently tonight to which we give testimony here in this table. We recognize the bread as the symbol of our Lord's body given for us, the cup as a symbol of our Lord's blood shed for us. He became sin for us who knew no sin that we might be the righteousness of God in Him. He died the just for the unjust. He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities and the chastening for our peace was laid on Him and by His stripes we are healed. This eternal life which we now possess which will last forever is a gift that You've given us because of what Christ did. He died that we might live. He died on this earth that we might live in heaven. He died as a man that we might live as glorified saints. And so we come again to celebrate His death. And You've told us, don't take lightly of these elements, examine your heart, make sure there's no sin between you and God, there's nothing that shouldn't be there. Confess it lest you treat this in a trivial fashion and bring about chastening and judgment. Nothing is more serious than coming to this table where we thank You for sending Your Son to die, bearing the full weight of Your judgment on our sins. Deliver us, Lord, from any love of any sin, holding on to anything that would cause us to be hypocritical in coming to this table. Cleanse us now, we pray in Your Son's name. Amen.

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