

"Let There Be Light" - The Wonderful Results of Saving Faith Pt.3

**This series was taught at North Christian Church, leading up to a marvelous series on "The Gospel, Salvation, and Sanctification". www.nccdighton.org*

Let's first do a big picture review! It's always a very good exercise to step back and look at the big picture!

We are in no rush, but we're going to enjoy this wonderful subject found in the Word of God.

We know that those who have trusted in The Lord Jesus Christ are granted eternal salvation, and they are now the "lights of the world", according to Jesus. (**Mat 5**)

Believers are analogous to the stars above, and by His divine presence in them, they are now able to shine light on the earth, on the darkness below. **Gen 1, 1Co 15**

And yet, our free will is still involved, by humbly submitting to God's purposes for us, which are found in His Word.

By relying on His Holy Spirit in us, we can serve the Lord through the good works which He predestined for us to walk in. **Eph 2:10**

How much light will you shine on the earth for others still living in darkness /deception?

OR... how much will you hide the light by living for yourself?

That's ultimately our daily choice. He's already granted us His power, and if we choose to live in it we will bring God glory, and help Him "seek and save the lost", as Jesus said!

Life is sooooo short! There's not a lot of time on this earth for any of us, and we only come this way once! So let's make the most of it by living for the Lord.

We are called by God to live for Christ, and that means living for others, as HE did in His life on earth. **John 15:13**

John 15:9-14 *"Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 "These things I have*

spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. 14 "You are My friends if you do what I command you.

And living and loving like Christ doesn't depend upon your ability or talent, but upon your volition and humility!

It depends upon your WILLINGNESS to simply be used by God one day at a time, however He desires for you.

This means all believers, regardless of intelligence or ability, can live like Christ and bring glory to God.

If, as a fallen sinner, you have trusted in Christ for eternal life, your life is no longer your own, you are now God's own possession according to His Word. Eph 1:14, 1Cor 6:19

Eph 1:13-14 *"In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you*

*were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of **God's own possession**, to the praise of His glory."*

1 Cor 6:18-20 *Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that **you are not your own**? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore **glorify God in your body**.*

God has graciously granted us the opportunity to shine His light in this world. First, His Light shines in our souls (His grace and truth; **John 1:14**), and then it pours out of us as A RAY OF HOPE in this dark world, IF we are willing.

We've also talked about **Reconciliation** as one of the wonderful invisible results of saving faith, and this key point came up...

Reconciliation (peace) was initiated by the innocent party (God). In mercy, He reached out to us sinners. And

now we can act like Christ and reach out to others, without waiting for others to "apologize" first.

In other words, just as God reached out to us while we were guilty, we reach out to others who are still against Him.

Now we too can live in the power of His love! We can transcend (rise above) it all because we are now able to live in the Light!

This is all made possible because God reconciled us to Himself through Christ.

Col 1:19-23 *"For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to **reconcile** all things to Himself, having made **peace** through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.*

*21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now **reconciled** you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach — 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard,*

which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister."

Peace was initiated by God. HE LOVED US FIRST, even though we didn't deserve peace with Him. **1John 4:10,19**

1 John 4:10 *"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*

1 John 4:19 *We love, because He first loved us.*

True love does not depend upon the worthiness of others. True love loves anyway. That's God's love!!

And we know what true love is because of His example towards us sinners!

As we've seen, because God is fully satisfied by His Son's sacrifice, true believers now have peace with God forever! They have been reconciled, once for all!

We've also seen in this series that the believer has been **Justified...**

Acts 13:38-39 *"Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. 39*

*Through him everyone who believes is **justified** from everything you could not be **justified** from by the law of Moses.*

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Whoever places their trust in Christ is justified; declared innocent by God!

Amen?!! :)

We also saw that **Redemption** is another invisible result of saving faith.

First of all, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law; which was that a sinful man was required to keep the WHOLE law if he were to satisfy God. Gal 3:10-14

Gal 3:10-14 *"For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." 11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." 12 However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM." 13 Christ*

redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us — for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE" — 14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Christ also came to redeem us from lawlessness, not only from the curse of the Law. Tit 2:11-14

Titus 2:11-14 *"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to **redeem** us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds."*

And we left off with this wonderful truth...

The Invisible Results of Saving Faith: The believer is said to be "in Christ". Rom 8:1-4,12:3-5,16:3-10, 1Co 1:2,30,12:12-13, 2Co 5:17, Eph 2:4-10, Phil 1:1-2, Col 1:1-2, 1Pe 5:14

Christ INDWELLS the true believer, and therefore he has an eternal position "in Christ".

He was placed IN UNION with Christ at the moment of saving faith.

Rom 8:1-4 *"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

There we see believers are "in Christ Jesus".

We also see in this passage that:

By operating in the love of His Spirit, we can supernaturally fulfill the requirement of the Law in our lives, bringing glory to God without even knowing all the particulars of the Law. This is because "love never fails". 1Co 13:1-8,13

And Jesus told us that living in Love fulfills the whole Law! (as seen in the 1st and 2nd Commandments) **Mat 22:37-40**

Matt 22:37-40 *And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'* 38 *"This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'* 40 *"On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."*

This is all possible within us by the power of His Spirit, because of what Christ has accomplished for us at the Cross.

Again, the title of this series: "The Wonderful Results of Saving Faith!"

Sin has been taken out of the way, having been nailed to the Cross! **Col 2:14**

And we believers were placed **in union with Christ forever** as His own possession, and now we have the power of His love **in us** to overcome the world.

The Spirit has shown us that in a couple different ways in this series.

It all begins with a **proper perspective** of ourselves as believers!

We've been made into a **new creation**, and we DO have His power IN US, and we can do ALL things through Christ who strengthens us. **Phil 4:13**

If you've placed your trust in Christ to be saved from your sins, then that should be your perspective about your life as a whole.

By faith, we CAN transcend it all (rise above it all in our spirits), because we know we are "in Christ Jesus"!

Rom 16:3-4,7 *"Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;...*

7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Placed “in Christ”: We see the baptism of the Spirit in 1Co 12:13, by which He placed believers "in Christ", or in His body.

1 Cor 12:12-13 *“For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”*

At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit places the believer in union with Christ forever, and **that's the position of strength the believer now lives from!**

He's been given a brand new life “in Christ”. And he's called to keep on following Christ, LIVING in this new wonderful position he's been granted!

“The righteous man shall live by faith”, Rom 1:17.

In Ephesians 2, this phrase "in Christ" is used several times to describe the **position** of the believer, and even the **purpose** for his new creation.

Eph 2:4-10 *“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our*

*transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places **in Christ Jesus**, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us **in Christ Jesus**. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*

Now back to the point about the invisible results of saving faith are **intertwining** into one spiritual reality...

The word "saints" is mentioned regarding those who are "in Christ".

Saints is from the same Greek root as the word *sanctified*; which means the believer "in Christ" is also *made holy, set apart* for Christ as His own possession.

This leads us perfectly into the following:

The Invisible Results of Saving Faith: The believer in Christ has been Sanctified! Acts 26:12-18, 1Co 1:2,30,6:9-11, Heb 10:10

Having believed in Christ from the heart (**Rom 10:9-10**), the believer has been once and for all sanctified, or "set apart" for God.

For example, look at Paul's testimony in Acts 26:

Acts 26:12-18 *"While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, 13 at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. 14 "And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' 15 "And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 'But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; 17 rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an*

inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

The person who's willing to turn from the darkness to the Light for the forgiveness of his sins receives the invisible result of being "sanctified", by their repentant faith in Christ!

God sanctifies those who humble themselves before His Son.

1Cor 6:9-11 *"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.*

Notice the "unrighteous", those without Christ, live in a certain unrepentant lifestyle and they will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the believer has been made "righteous", as we have seen, and therefore he has been sanctified by God.

God came down to earth to offer peace to the worst of sinners. And the one who humbly turns from the darkness and to the Light of Christ is set apart by God (sanctified)!

If you're a believer in Christ, you are no longer what you once were!

You are now a new creature "in Christ" and your sins have been washed away and removed from you!

You have been "set apart" for God, sanctified by God as His own possession! **Eph 1:14**

You are no longer what you once were. Accept that fully, by faith, and be set free!

Gal 5:1 *It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*

Eph 1:13-14 *"In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory."*

What AMAZING GRACE that God would do this for us, once for all!!

When God sees us believers, He sees the perfection and purity of His Son, because He SANCTIFIED us and brought us into union with Christ!

If you're a believer, you can no longer "die in your sins" (Joh 8), as will happen to unbelievers because they remain unrighteous without Christ.

And this is why we must continue to spread the Good News of His Gospel!

John 8:23-24 *"And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. (remember the imagery of the light shining down onto the dark earth) 24 "Therefore I said to you that **you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.**"*

When a person rejects Christ and His payment for their sins, they will have to stand before God **on their own merits**, and that will not go well for anyone because without Christ they are still "in their sins"!!

But if you're someone who has repented towards God (**Acts 20:21**) and trusted in the Lord Jesus to be saved, you have been rescued from sin and its judgment, by the grace of God!

The Bible says believers have been made "holy" by God; which means to be "set apart", or **sanctified**.

Heb 10:10 *"By this will we **have been sanctified** through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."*

Notice it says believers **HAVE BEEN** sanctified, in the past tense.

We also see a good example of this in **1Corinthians**, which also gives us a glimpse into the true believer vs. the pretender.

This is where we begin to see the **VISIBLE** results of saving faith... and if those results aren't there **AT ALL** in one's life, the Bible tells us there may not have been saving faith to begin with!

First, let's notice in **1Cor 1** the **DESCRIPTION** of the sanctified believer, not only that he is sanctified...

... in other words, what does a true believer look like, spiritually speaking?

1 Cor 1:1-9 *"Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, 2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who **have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling**, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, 6 even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, 7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, **awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ**, 8 who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."*

First, please notice in vs. 2, this letter was written to those in Corinth who *"have been sanctified in Christ Jesus"*, in the past tense.

So, we can conclude this letter is written to a church with mostly believers in it.

But we also see in this passage, the sanctification of the believer APPEARS IN HIS LIFE somehow, over time.

Why is that? - **Because sanctification is a work of God, and God's work can only produce good fruit.**

In this passage, we see the CHARACTERISTICS of the sanctified ones include "*the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you*",...

... and that the true believer's attitude is "*awaiting eagerly*" the 2nd coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's a definite, biblical characteristic that believers have, throughout the Word of God!

There's a glimpse into the VISIBLE results of saving faith.

Then, after Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that they *have been sanctified*, he gets into their flaws and how they argue over foolish things.

But then, once again, Paul reminds them of how **God accomplished their sanctification**, among other wonderful results of saving faith...

1Cor 1:30-31 "*But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and*

sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

The Lord Jesus Christ has granted believers all these things by grace!

And this is why the believer can ONLY boast in the Lord!...

... because it's THE LORD who has accomplished all these wonderful results in him and for him.

They are solely and completely from God, by grace. Our only participation is having faith!

And let me remind you that Paul boldly says all of this about the Corinthian believers, who often fell into various types of carnality!

The Bible reveals that even after salvation we all still sin at times, until the day we die.

And especially for new believers, we must be patient, because it takes time to learn the ways and commands of God.

In **1Cor 3**, Paul starts instructing and admonishing them for acting fleshly.

Notice that "being sanctified" "in Christ" does not mean believers cannot act fleshly, and at times fall into loose living, or self-righteousness, or maybe even both!

This is a humble reminder that we all sin and fail, even after our salvation.

BUT it's the true believer's heart that has been changed. And therefore, his attitude towards sin has changed.

One key distinction between a believer and an unbeliever is his ATTITUDE towards sin. (what's the desire of his heart?, Rom 7)

Again, we will still sin at times, giving in to the temptations of the flesh. That's the ongoing battle mentioned in **Gal 5**.

But, for those who have been sanctified, their overall desire is for God and His ways!

And when true believers sin, they have a repentant heart, motivated by the "good conscience" they've been given in Christ Jesus. **1Ti 1:5,19**

Paul is trying to help the young Corinthians "grow up" in Christ and to walk like spiritual men.

And he reminds them along the way about their position in Christ, having been sanctified.

But then, we get to **1Cor 5** where sin turns into evil.

It's one thing to sin after salvation; we all do that and will do that, giving in to the flesh at times.

But it's another thing to compound sin into evil, not repenting from it, and even boasting in it!

The so-called "believer" who boasts in his sin and isn't repentant should examine his own heart and even his own faith!

In **1Cor 5**, we see the man that has his father's wife. And Paul calls him a "so-called brother", which many Bible scholars see as **Paul questioning the genuineness of that man's saving faith.**

1 Cor 5:1-5 *"It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. 2 You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead,*

so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.

*3 For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, **so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.***

(There's our first sign that Paul is questioning this man's salvation. Please notice, he's not saying he lost his salvation, which cannot happen to a true believer, but Paul is questioning **if he ever had saving faith in the first place**, even though this man is in their church.)

*6 Your **boasting** is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? (Boasting in sin leavens the whole lump, making it unclean. Boasting allowed sin to spread to the whole church.)*

7 Clean out the old leaven (sin in context) so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. (You, true believers, are

unleavened! You are freed from sin, because Christ has been sacrificed!)

8 Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (let's live in our position in Christ, let's live in the righteousness He gave us, the new man, etc...)

*9 I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; 10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any **so-called brother** if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler — not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? 13 But those who are outside, God judges. REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES."*

Here we see an UNREPENTANT LIFESTYLE TOWARDS SIN, which makes Paul question this man's salvation.

And this agrees with what both John and James say in their letters to the Church.

If someone willingly lives in a LIFESTYLE of sin and is NOT REPENTANT, what does that say about their heart towards God?

Hasn't the heart of a true believer been changed by God, according to Holy Scripture?

If sin doesn't bother one's conscience, then maybe his heart was never changed to begin with, thus this man is called a "so-called brother".

So, Paul called out this man and this church, not simply because of the sin, but because they were unrepentant and even boastful about it!

That's where sin becomes evil; and it may even be a sign of unbelief.

Again, we know throughout the Bible that believers will sin at times.

But the point is that an unrepentant heart is a sign of unbelief.

We know that David is called "a man after God's own heart", **Act 13:22**, and yet he sinned horribly at times in his life, including adultery and murder!

But what revealed David was a man after God's own heart?

David's greatest sins were over a short period of his life, but not only was his overall lifestyle for God, he also repented when he recognized his sin.

David lamented and turned back to God, as he wrote about in **Psa 32** and **Psa 51**.

Granted, for a time David remained silent in his sin, having to be rebuked by the prophet Nathan, in **2Sam 12**.

But David never boasted in his sin, as someone with an unchanged heart can do, as we saw in **1Cor 5:1-13**.

Ultimately, David did repent, and that's a sign of a true believer. He knew in his heart that he answered to the Lord.

We will all sin at times, but the heart of a believer is seen in his repentant attitude and his overall desire for the things of God.

For example, the same apostle Paul who judged the "so-called brother" in **1Cor 5** is the same man who struggled with his own sin in **Romans 7**.

Even though he failed at times, Paul's genuine faith in the Lord is revealed in his **DESIRE** to do the things of God.

Read **Romans 7** as a good illustration of **the heart** of God's own children, despite their failures.

Now, **what might we say about a man who refuses to repent, and even boasts about his sin?**

We might rightly wonder whether he was truly saved in the first place, as the Apostle Paul questioned the salvation of the man in **1Cor 5**.

If the Lord Jesus Christ changes a man's heart, then his heart cannot go on boasting about sin that His Lord paid for.

The true believer is convicted in his soul when he realizes how he has sinned against God.

He is sorrowful and laments, as David's heart did in the Psalms.

Sin is not something the true believer can rest in, without his conscience being affected.

If a man can be "at rest" in his sin, and even boast in it, it's a sign that he may have the old heart, not a new heart from Christ!

Again, this is also because the believer has been given a "good conscience", which is influenced and led by the Holy Spirit who's in him.

The baptism of the Spirit occurs in the person who "*with the heart believes*" in Christ, resulting in righteousness!

1Co 12:13, Rom 10:9-10

This believer then possesses the Spirit of God, and a good conscience influenced by Him. **1Pe 3:21, 1Ti 1:5,19**

1 Peter 3:21 "*Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you — not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience — through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,*"

1 Tim 1:5 "*But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*"

1 Tim 1:19 "*keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.*"

There we see how a believer in the Lord Jesus as his Savior is CHANGED by God.

There's a wonderful result to saving faith!

Again, the believer David did some horrible things in moments of weakness, but his salvation was never questioned in Holy Scripture...

... and in fact, he would be called "*a man after God's own heart*".

The Bible teaches that the salvation of a person is in question if he continually lives in sin without a clash of conscience. (read 1Co 5, 1 John, James)

In fact, the Apostle John said the difference between believer and unbeliever was "obvious" in **1Jo 3**.

1 John 3:4-10 *Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. 5 You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. 6 No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. 8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the*

*beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. 10 **By this it is evident** who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.*

**The question is: Where is the boastful person's heart?
Was it ever with Christ in the first place?**

Maybe this is why Paul tells us all to examine and test our own faith...

***2 Cor 13:5** "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you — unless, of course, you fail the test?"*

What's questioned here is that Jesus Christ **may not be in you** if you "fail the test"! That's a salvation issue, not a spiritual maturity issue!

As we've just learned, **the genuine believer is indwelled by Christ Jesus**. It's a biblical truth that His Spirit lives inside the true believer (i.e.- **Joh 14:20, Rom 8:20, 2Cor 13:5, Gal 2:20, Col 1:27**).

Notice also, Paul says examine YOURSELF, not others.

But we can encourage others to examine their own faith, as Paul did here, especially if their lifestyle is not a godly one.

And some people may find, upon honest examination of their faith, that Christ is missing...

... and maybe they've been playing a religious game all along.

And it's between each person and the Lord!

This is a perfect transition to some of the VISIBLE results of saving faith, which includes that a LACK of these results indicates a lack of saving faith.

The wonderful results of saving faith include the visible "miracles" that occur in the lives of believers; changed hearts that result in changed lives, which are totally the supernatural work of God in the believer.

And if God saves someone, by grace, He also promises to sanctify them, by grace!

Therefore, His work will be completed in the life of a believer, by grace, Phil 1:6, 2:13.

Phil 1:6 *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ*

Phil 2:13 *for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

Therefore, we can conclude that some good fruits will become apparent in the believer's life.

This is the analogy that Christ Himself used in the Gospels.

For example, we cannot see the **roots** of a tree, which is analogous to the **invisible** results of saving faith,...

... but we can see the **fruit** of a tree above the ground, which are the **visible** results of saving faith.

And the quality of the fruit **reveals** to us whether the roots are good, or not.

The visible results of saving faith are signs that the Light of Christ is in someone. They shine forth because they have trusted in Christ as their Lord and Savior, and are therefore changed by the Spirit of God! 2Cor 4:6-7

2 Cor 4:6-7 *For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves.

There's a picture of the supernatural work of God in the believer!

Let's also read a familiar passage with a beautiful message,...

... and in light of our recent studies, let me know if notice anything different that stands out to you...

Ps 103:8-18 *"The Lord is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. 9 He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*

11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from

us. 13 Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.

14 For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust. 15 As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. 16 When the wind has passed over it, it is no more, And its place acknowledges it no longer.

17 But the lovingkindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children, 18 To those who keep His covenant And remember His precepts to do them."

What do you see, that maybe was never as clear to you as it is now?

I can speak for myself, that whenever I went to this wonderful passage I always rejoiced in the fact that the Lord doesn't remember our sins anymore!

Wonderful, and amen!

But... WHO has the Lord done all this for?

What is the characteristic of the person that will see His lovingkindness and grace?

The one who "fears" the Lord (mentioned here 3 times; describing the type of persons who receive His lovingkindness).

And to the one who obeys Him and does His precepts, as in vs. 18.

Why isn't the word "believer" used here? Why instead is a description given?

Because this is the description of the true believer... he is one who fears God and obeys Him.

In other words, that's simply what a believer does, and we can tell in this passage the Spirit is describing a believer.

In vs. 13, *"as a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him."*

In other words, His children will properly fear and respect Him as their God and Father.

This is what true believers do; and being saved by faith in Jesus Christ they have fear, awe, and respect for Him as the Lord.

This is one of the **characteristics** of the life that is now "in Christ". This is one of the visible signs that someone has received saving faith from the Lord.

The true believer has Fear of the Lord. Psa 103, Mal 3:16-18, Ecc 12:13-14, Isa 50:10, 2Cor 7:1, Eph 5:21, Phil 2:12-13

And proper fear of the Lord goes hand in hand with the repentant heart of a believer (there's something for us all to dwell on).

His heart has been changed by God.

Mal 3:16-18 *"Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who esteem His name. 17 "They will be Mine," says the Lord of hosts, "on the day that I prepare My own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." 18 So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him."*

This passage directly tells us that the righteous/saved person serves God, and the wicked/unsaved do not serve Him. (reminds us of **1Jo 3:10**)

Fear for God is a consistent characteristic of a believer, often stated plainly in the Word of God.

And this DOESN'T mean we must earn our salvation, may it never be! We are saved by grace through faith in Christ!

This simply means those who trust in Christ will have this type of life manifested.

Please remember, we're talking about EVIDENCES of true saving faith.

Even though there are growth stages in the believer's life, notice how plainly "fear" is stated here as a sign of true believers...

... as in **Mal 3:17**, the Lord will spare them (the ones who fear Him) and make them His own possession.

This clearly speaks of the results of someone being saved.

The true believer will have proper fear of the Lord, for one reason only, because their heart has been changed by Christ.

And then, even after someone becomes saved, fear for the Lord continues in the heart of the believer.

"Why?", you might ask.

Judgment even begins with the house of God (believers),
1Pe 4:17.

If God's discipline is upon all believers at one time or another, for our own benefit, **should we not rightly fear Him, as we would fear our good father who's willing to discipline us when necessary?**

Here's a wonderful passage that reveals God's loving discipline towards those who belong to Him:

Heb 12:3-11 *Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. 4 In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?*

"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."

7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not

discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. 11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

This is a good picture of the faithfulness of God towards His children.

I had a pastor friend who once said to me: "I'm not doing that, because the Lord will kick my butt." :)

He had a good and true fear of His heavenly Father, who would "kick his butt" out of love, and it would hurt!

Every good father disciplines his children to correct them and lead them to a better way for them.

Even though we know the tremendous grace of God extended to us, we should not take lightly the discipline of the Lord!

In fact, God's discipline is another sign of His grace towards His adopted children.

Because we are under grace, that doesn't take away the need for proper fear and reverence for God.

We must have balance, and believers WILL have fear for the Lord, as the Word tells us.

Isa 50:10 *"Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God."*

Fearing the Lord is like the attitude of repentance; it's there when someone is ready to trust the Lord Jesus to be saved, and it continues in the heart of the true believer.

Isa 50 is largely prophecies about those who would attack the Messiah and reject Him, but it tells us the way of escape is to fear the Lord and trust in Him for the light of life!

2 Cor 7:1 *"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."*

As the believer continues in God's plan, the way to mature in holiness is also having righteous fear of God.

Part of the process of our sanctification is having proper fear of God.

Here the Greek word for fear is "phobos", meaning fear, terror, reverence.

Eph 5:21 *"and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."*

Here again we see "phobos", which might best be translated "reverence" here.

Reverence bows down in awe, as before a mighty King. It does not take God lightly or get too casually familiar with Him. Reverence includes a healthy fear, which accompanied all those who ever saw God!

Think of all the OT and NT believers that "saw" God or the angel of the Lord and they fell flat on their faces in fear and awe!

They simply could not stand in the glory of His presence.

And that, my friends, is a picture of fear for the Lord. This was not simply 'respect', as we know it today.

Phil 2:12-13 *"So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."*

This passage is addressed to believers, and it does not mean to work FOR your salvation, but to work it out, or to participate in bringing it to completion for your life, as we saw in **2Co 7:1** *"perfecting holiness in the fear of God"*.

In vs. 13, God is at work in you to complete His purpose for you, and He WILL for those who have trusted in His precious Son.