

10 August 2025
(Week 50)

Assurance¹

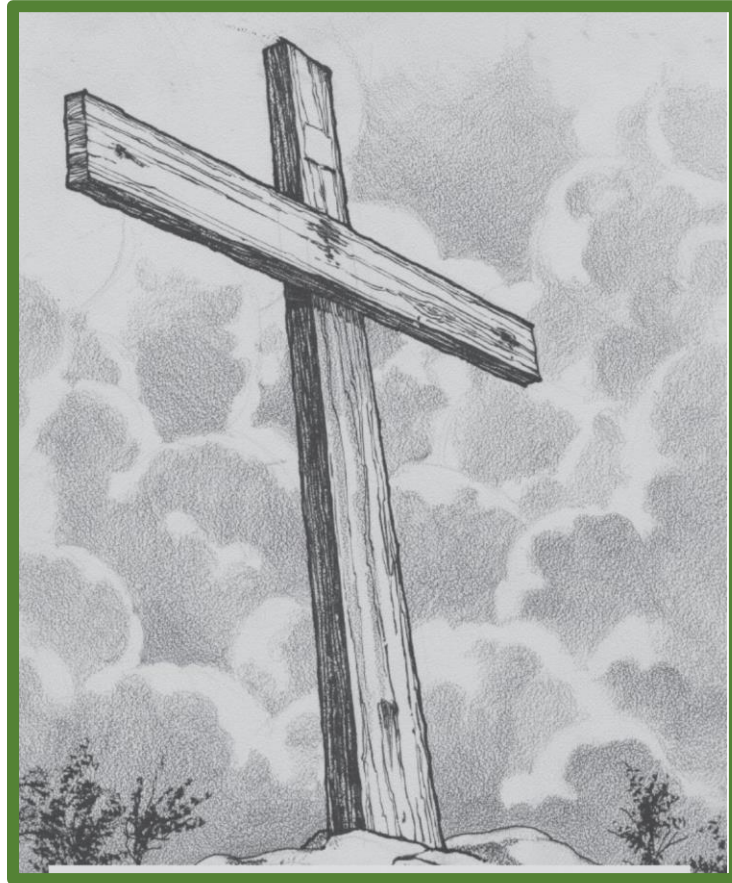
Assurance of God's Love

Lesson Text: 1st John 4:13-5:5

Black History Article Below Daily Bible Reading

Aim for Change

We will: **COMPREHEND** what is required to live in community; **SENSE** love within the community which exemplifies love and faith in God; and **CELEBRATE** the community's contribution to our formation as disciples of Jesus.



¹ Bantu, Dr. Vince L. Precepts for Living: Principles for Living in an Unhinged World (2024-2025) UMI (Urban Ministries, Inc.).

In Focus

Whenever Breana arrived to church on Sunday mornings, Brandon was in her face. He was overbearing and barely gave her space to talk to anyone else. Breana tolerated Brandon because he was a member of her Sunday School class and a fellow brother in Christ. Though Breana appeared to be kind, inside, she was fuming with anger at Brandon's inability to take what she was sure were obvious clues—verbal and otherwise—that she was uncomfortable with his attentiveness.

Breana felt guilty for being nice to Brandon and mocking him behind his back. Breana knew her behavior did not reflect Christ's teachings, which meant loving our fellow brothers and sisters in the family of God.

Breana decided to lean on the assurance of God's word and be honest and forthright with Brandon. Breana knew she needed to stop her cruel remarks about Brandon to others. The following Sunday, Breana talked to Brandon and related her discomfort. Her resentment left, replaced by a greater appreciation for Brandon. He graciously received her message and apologized for her discomfort.

If we cannot love our fellow Christians, who are visible, how can we love God who is invisible? In this week's lesson, we will learn how God's love is made real in our relationships with others. What assurance do we have from God to take the command to love fellow believers seriously?

Keep In Mind

For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous. (1st John5:1 CKJV)

Lesson Text
1st John 4:13-5:5

13 Hereby we know that we dwell in Him and He in us: because He hath given us of His Spirit.

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath for us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casted out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feared is not made perfect in love.

19 We love Him, because He first loved us.

20 If a man say, "I love God," and hated his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loveth God love his brother also.

1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone that loveth Him that begot, loveth Him also that is begotten by Him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments.

1 For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous.

4 For whosoever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

5 Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

The People, Places, and Times

John: The writer of the book of 1st John is thought to be John the apostle. John, along with his brother James, was a fisherman until he was called by Jesus to join the other eleven disciples. For three years, he followed and learned from Christ. John, along with Peter and James, was a part of Jesus' inner circle. In his self-titled Gospel, he refers to himself as the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 21:20). After Pentecost, John was said to have led the church in Ephesus and eventually was exiled during the reign of Domitian to the island of Patmos. He is known as the one apostle who died a natural death, although it is also reported that he was thrown into a pot of boiling oil.

Day of Judgment: This judgment refers to the final and ultimate judgment of God. It involves the final appearance of Christ when He judges the actions of all humankind. This phrase finds its roots in the Old Testament concept of the Day of the Lord. The Hebrews believed this would be the day when God would judge the nations and vindicate His people. In the New Testament, it loses its nationalistic tone and refers to God's solemn condemnation of all evil. On that day, Christians will inherit eternal life and unbelievers the ill-fated choice of eternal damnation (hell)."

Background

The letters of John are three brief epistles. The succinctness is misleading, for they deal with insightful and significant questions about the fundamental nature of the Christian spiritual experience. The Johannine letters also provide a fascinating insight into the condition of the church at the end of the first century. Heresy played a critical and deceptive role in the church. Autonomy and church organization are reflected. The genuine nature of a committed and obedient relationship with God through Christ is strongly and affectionately depicted and commanded.

In his first epistle, John described how love is evidence of our relationship to God (1 John 4:14–21). The present assurance is so obvious that even the fear of Judgment Day is eliminated (vv. 17–18). In the final chapter, John turned to the interrelationship of love and righteousness. Those who are born of God do not find His commandments to be troublesome (5:3). The faith of the children of God gives them power to discover victory over the world that would obstruct the execution of commands (v. 4). “That faith rests in Jesus as the Son of God (v. 5). Again, accurate belief enters the picture: Jesus was fully human (v. 6) and the Spirit bears witness to the reality of Jesus (vv. 7–8). The result is a great inner confidence that God “has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son” (from v. 11, NLT). Again, the line of demarcation between the one who has life and the one who does not is made crystal clear (v. 12).

In Depth

1. Living Proof (1 John 4:13–17): All Christians receive the Holy Spirit as living proof of God’s presence in our lives. The Holy Spirit gives us power to love and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and provides assurance that we are connected to our Heavenly Father. Perfect love does not mean we love perfectly; it is a description of our Savior’s love for us. Jesus loves flawlessly because He accepts us with all our imperfections and mistakes, regardless of our gender, sex, race, marital, educational, or economic status, physical, mental, or emotional qualities, age, or cultural background. He loves us! Knowing we are loved by God diminishes our apprehension of Judgment Day, increases our need to see others saved, and supplies us freedom to love indiscriminately and do the work God called us to do. The confidence we receive in acknowledging God’s love is not arrogant. Arrogance is when we depend on and boast about our own abilities. The confidence that the Bible describes is a declaration of our relationship with Jesus and evidence of the abiding Holy Spirit within us.

2. Loving Proof (1 John 4: 18–19): The love of God eradicates all fear. If we operate from fear, it is a sign that we have not fully grasped the concept of God’s unconditional love. Many Christians function in fear and live as prisoners of anxiety, even though the Lord cannot use us when we walk in apprehension. If we fear Judgment Day, are we certain of our salvation? There needs to be a level of confidence in knowing we are saved and eternally secure with Christ.

We cannot explain why God loves us; He just does! It is human nature to want justification for our feelings and actions; however, the Bible tells us Jesus loved us before we became Christians (Romans 5:8). So if a sovereign God can love imperfect people, then who are we to refuse to love another imperfect people, then who are we to refuse to love another imperfect being? Christians have experienced the fullness of Christ's love and have testimonies of His kindness. The greatest tragedy is to hoard the love of God and miss opportunities to pour this precious gift into the lives of others.

3. Lasting Proof (4:20–5:5): John's emphasis on loving others is nowhere more clearly reflected than in this passage of Scripture. We are lying if we say we love God but hate our brothers and sisters in Christ. Many Bible teachers skate over these verses because they are too direct. Yet, these verses force us to examine our actions. How can we claim to love the invisible Lord and still be seen to hate the visible inhabitants of His kingdom? We cannot love God apart from loving one another. How we treat each other is in direct correlation with how much we love God. This principle should alter the way we view the body of Christ. Our love for God confirms our love for others; if we love the Father, we must love our siblings. This sounds simple; however, it is not always an easy task. Still, loving others is not an option; it is a commandment. The commandments of God are not burdensome when we rely on the Holy Spirit to love through us. The world is full of evil, yet we have total victory when we believe in the name of Jesus and trust God to fight our battles for us.

Liberating Lesson

Society teaches us to love conditionally. Some people live in fear of rejection from those who claim to love them. This is not real love. One of the most remarkable attributes of God is His ability to love unconditionally and completely. No matter what we face in life, God's love is everlasting, and nothing can separate us from His love! Not only do we have God's promise of love but also the promise of eternal life. With this kind of reassurance, what keeps us from loving others?

Application for Activation

The Lord has high regard for the community of believers, and we should, too. All we can do is learn to love and obey God's command. Pray and ask God to reveal where you can extend love to someone in the family of God. After God shows you, act! Write in a journal about how the incident impacted your life and share your experience with the class.

Take Aways

Closing Prayer

Daily Bible Reading
Christian Season:
Regular
Season Color: Green



Monday: 1st Thessalonians 4-5, Proverbs 22

Tuesday: 2nd Thessalonians 1-3, Proverbs 23

Wednesday: 1st Timothy 1-6, Proverbs 24

Thursday: 2nd Timothy 1-4, Proverbs 25

Friday: Titus 1-3, Proverbs 26

Saturday: Philemon, Proverbs 27

Sunday: Hebrews 3-4, Proverbs 28

NOT PART OF THE LESSON
Information Purposes Only
Black History Began in Africa
Protestant Reformation.²



The Protestant **Reformation** (1517-1648) refers to the widespread religious, cultural, and social upheaval of 16th-century **Europe** that broke the hold of the **medieval Church**, allowing for the development of personal interpretations of the Christian message and leading to the development of modern nation-states. Some others suggest 1517-1685, from the dissent of **Martin Luther** to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

By the 15th century, corruption in the Church was widespread and devout believers sought to rectify this. The refusal of the Church to address these criticisms led to the schisms that would establish Protestant Christian sects which developed into denominations such as Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anglicanism, and others.

The Bible was only available in Latin, which congregations could not read – and the Christian Mass was also recited in Latin . The inaccessibility of church

² https://www.worldhistory.org/Protestant_Reformation/

teachings, coupled with the obvious display of luxury and comfort by the clergy, also led to reform movements.

On 31 October 1517, Luther posted a series of arguments, *Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences*, later famously known as his *Ninety-Five Theses*. According to tradition, Luther nailed these to the door of the Wittenberg church. They were copied by Luther's friends and supporters, and thanks to the invention of the printing press, they quickly spread throughout Germany and, arrived in other countries, including **England** and France, in 1519.

Martin Luther, a German monk, objected to the sale of indulgencesⁱ. Martin Luther stands at center of the reformation, and his works, charisma, and intelligence sparked a movement he never intended and, no doubt, he could not have imagined. Luther claimed, if **God** ordained purgatory, the pope had no authority to shorten one's stay there and, if the pope did have such authority, he should alleviate the souls suffering there by freeing them without payment.

In challenging the sale of indulgences, Luther challenged the authority of the pope and the hierarchy of the Church. Citing Romans 1:17 (which reads, in part, "the just shall live by faith") Luther claimed there should be no intermediary between the individual believer and God and scripture alone should dictate the Christian Walk, not the precepts of the Church.

In 1520, Pope Leo X, tired of sending emissaries to reason with Luther, threatened him with excommunication unless he recanted. Luther publicly burned the edict (known as a papal bull) at Wittenberg and was excommunicated in 1521, meaning that, according to church doctrine, he no longer was in a state of grace with God and should be shunned by believers.

Luther was declared an outlaw and could be legally killed, but Frederick III had him taken in a fake kidnapping and hid him in Wartburg Castle where Luther would write some of his best-known works, including translation of the Bible to German, it became a bestseller!

ⁱ an indulgence is a remission of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven. Historically, abuses related to the sale of indulgences were a major catalyst for the Protestant Reformation.