

**CHINA MISSION
NEWSLETTER**

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KAOHSIUNG – 1 June 2021

Dear brethren:

Our heavenly Father does not desire for His children to dwell in doubt and fear. Nevertheless, doubting the depth of God's grace and mercy against the soiled tapestry of their lives, many are robbed of the assurance of salvation. In some of my more recent teaching, I have attempted to address this need.

Fortunately, we do not need to attain to the sinless perfection of our Lord and Savior in order to be assured of His calling and choosing us. The apostle John expressed this point most inescapably:

8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. -1 John 1:8-10

John is writing to brethren, not alien sinners, and is addressing sin subsequent to their having been cleansed of all sin in baptism. That being said, the ensuing verses preclude any thought that John is granting them free rein with their sinful passions. On the contrary, he directly states:

1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. 1 John 2:1-2

Note that he is "writing these things to you so that you may not sin." How so? Without an "Advocate with the Father," and without "the propitiation for our sins," just one sin subsequent to baptism would doom us to hell, thus leaving us with no incentive to try to do better next time. Repentance and any further resistance to temptation would be useless leaving us powerless over the temporal pleasures of sin. We cannot sin with abandon; we must press on to higher ground.

3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: 6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. -1 John 2:3-6

Even without sinless perfection, John says we can know that we possess eternal life. "13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). But the question arises as to how can we know that we have not been "severed from Christ" and have not "fallen from grace" as had happened to some of the Galatians (Galatians 5:4). Peter addresses this question in an interesting fashion. Please take the time to read 2 Peter 1: 1-11. Beginning in v.5, Peter lists seven qualities to which he exhorts us to apply all diligence, each virtue providing a matrix for the next. The life in Christ is a maturing work in progress. If we see progress, we are still on the path. Consider these comforting words:

8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. 2 Peter 1:8-11

Your servant in Christ,

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