

# Let us Talk about Assurance

By Henry Mahan

**Bible Text:** 1 John 3:14

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If you will open your Bibles with me to the book of 1 John I am going to read a text for this message, 1 John chapter three, 1 John three verse 14, 1 John 3:14. “We know...we know that we have passed from death...from death unto life. We know that we have passed from death unto life.”

Now with deep sincerity I declare publicly that I do not want to be guilty of presumption in regard to my relationship with the living God. God deliver us from presuming and I fear that many do this. I fear that many preachers hide in the ministry, church officers hide in their offices, teachers, people who have attended church and been faithful to the covenant of their church or to the standards of their church hide in these outward deeds. I fear many do. I don't want to be guilty of presumption by laying claim to something in reality I do not have, to hope that I do not have. I want to guard against this. The Word of God is filled with warnings to false professors. It says, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be found in you...” That is written to the professing Christians, to church members, to professing believers, to people like you and me. Paul said, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be found in you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.”

He says in Hebrews 4:1 which I read this morning, “Let us therefore fear... Let us, right here from pulpit to pew, let us fear lets a promise being left to us of these good things to come, this rest in Christ Jesus, that we fall short of it.”

He said in 2 Corinthians 13:5, “Examine yourselves,” that is writing to the Church, “whether you be in the faith. Know ye not your own selves how that Christ is in you or you are reprobate?”

And Peter said, “Give diligence, great concern to make your calling and election sure. If you do this you will never fail.”

The Bible is full of warnings. And our Lord said, “Many, many, many, not a few but many will say to me in that day, ‘Why, Lord, we preached in your name. We did many wonderful works, cast out devils.’

‘I never knew you.’”

So this troubles me and I think about it often. I don't want to preach in such a fashion that I give not to myself or to any of my hearers any reason to presume, to grow indifferent and careless in regard to their relationship with God. I want us to give diligence, diligence. I want us to strive to enter in. I want us to lay hold of Christ, to take the kingdom of God by violence and force.

And yet I don't want to rob myself or you of the joy and the peace and the rest that comes from knowing Christ. There is a balance there that is difficult to reach. But the Word of God is filled not only with warnings to false professors, but it is filled with precious promises to believers. It is filled with comfort and hope for believers. I...the Scripture says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He that believeth on the Son hath life and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life. These things are written unto you that you might believe on the name of the Son of God and believing you might have life." That is what it says.

This is the record God hath given us. He hasn't sold it to us. He has given us eternal life. "God hath given us eternal life and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son of God hath life. And we know that the Son has come and given us an understanding that we may know him that is true. And this is the true God and this is eternal life."

But here is what causes us to get unbalanced I believe. We are preaching to a religious world that is filled with false hope based on a system of works. Now that is what causes us to maybe neglect the people of God, the true children of God. Maybe that is what leads us to rob them of that rest and assurance and confidence and that blessed treasure of resting in Christ because we are preaching and we know it. We are preaching to a religious world filled with false hope based upon works of the flesh. And yet we must not rob the people of God of that blessed treasure which is assurance of an interest in Christ and the blessings of peace and joy and rest that go with that assurance.

Let me just quote some of these Scriptures. And I do want you to turn to 2 Samuel 23, but David said with all confidence, "The Lord is my shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through a valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil. He is with me. His rod and staff comfort me. My cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord." David spoke with an assurance, with a confidence, with a firm hope.

And then in 2 Samuel 23 these be the last words of David. He says in verse five, "Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure. This is my salvation and this is all my desire although he make it not to grow."

Job talked like that. He said, "I know that my redeemer liveth. I know that he liveth and I know he will stand on this earth and though worms...after my skin worms destroy this body, in my flesh I will see the Lord."

And then the apostle Peter, the apostle Peter spoke very strongly. He said...the Lord Jesus said, "Do you love me?"

He said, "Lord, you know I love you. You know I love you. You know everything and you know I love you."

And then over here in book of 1 John over 26 times in the book of 1 John, John uses the word "know, know." And I have chosen as my text here verse 14, 1 John three, "We know, we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren, because we love the brethren."

Now there are three things that I want to examine here and I think it is going to help us. I think it is going to help us a great deal to understand some things and also those who really know Christ and love Christ and have a saving interest in Christ, I believe you are going out of here with a stronger confidence and assurance than you have ever had before. There are three things I want us to look at.

First of all, we know that we were dead. He said, "We have passed from death." So we know we were dead. What does it mean to be spiritually dead?

Secondly, I am going to deal with this. We know that we have undergone a change. A change has taken place.

And then, thirdly, how do we know that that change has taken place? What are some of the evidences?

Well, the first question is this. The first matter I want to deal with is this. John says, "We know that we passed from death." Now this is one of the most difficult things in the world to define and that is spiritual death. But I am not talking about physical death. John says, "We have passed from death to life." We were dead spiritually. I know now...I didn't...when I was dead spiritually I didn't know it. But I know now that I was dead spiritually and I know what spiritual death consists of. I know there are people who are dead spiritually who do not know they are dead spiritually. In fact, if they knew they were dead spiritually they wouldn't be dead.

Now I am not talking about a physical death, I am not talking about a mental death. And, please, I am not even talking about religious death. I am talking about spiritual death. And I was dead spiritually. I was very much alive to the world. I was very much alive to self. I was very much alive to materialism and I was very much alive to religion, to religion. I was very much alive to a conscience. I was very much alive to a religious tradition, but I was dead spiritually, dead spiritually.

Now here is what it means to be dead spiritually. I am going to give you these things. You listen carefully to them. A man is dead spiritually who has no true knowledge of the attributes and character of the living God. That is exactly right. He is dead spiritually.

Turn to Romans chapter 10. Now listen to me. In the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans our Lord...the apostle Paul is speaking here of a very religious nation, for a very religious people. And he says here in Romans chapter 10, "My brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. I bear them record. They have a zeal of God. They have an interest in God. They have an enthusiasm for God, but not according to knowledge, for their ignorant of God's holiness." And that is what it means to be dead spiritually.

First of all it means to be ignorant of God's holiness. Now a man can be dead spiritually and have a god. A man can be dead spiritually and have a zeal for God, an interest in God, an enthusiasm for God. In fact, most everybody does because almighty God has given every man that comes into this world some light and conscience. That's right, mentally and emotionally this world is religious.

He said to the Pharisees, he said, "You neither know me nor my Father."

In Psalm 50 David wrote, "You thought I was altogether such a one as yourself." A man may be very religious. He may have a zeal for God and an interest and enthusiasm for God and yet not have a true knowledge of God and the man who does not have a true knowledge of God, Tom, is dead spiritually. He is alive mentally. He is alive emotionally. He is alive physically. He is alive traditionally. He is alive religiously. He is alive morally respecting the standards of men. He cares about his character. He cares about his reputation. He cares about what men think about him. He even thinks about heaven and hell, but if he doesn't know God in his true character he is dead spiritually. Now that's so.

And then, secondly, the man who is dead spiritually is without a true knowledge of sin. No we have an awareness...I had an awareness of right and wrong. There is not anybody in the world that doesn't have an awareness of right and wrong and some knowledge of what is right and what is wrong.

Turn to Romans two and let me show you that, Romans chapter two. And, my friends, this is the very area where most religionists are missing it. You will never know what happened on the cross until you find out what happened in the garden. You will never have, like John says, a need for Christ until you are convinced of what sin is, what sin is, not just what the act of sin consists of, but what sin is. And a man who doesn't know what sin is he doesn't know it because he is dead spiritually. He is acutely alive religiously, emotionally, mentally, materially and all these other ways, but dead spiritually. When the light went out in the soul we lost a revelation of God's glory and a knowledge of ourselves.

In Romans two it says here, listen to it, in verse 14. “When the Gentiles,” that’s...who is the Gentiles? Pagans. Pagans. They didn’t have a tabernacle or a priest or an atonement or anything. He is talking about the heathen. “When the heathen which have not the law,” they don’t have these things of God, “when they do by nature the things contained in the law,” that is they know it is wrong to kill a fellow. A heathen Hottentot in the pagan...in the darkness of Africa knows it is wrong to kill somebody. Who told him it was wrong? He has a conscience God gave him. He is not dead in that fashion. He knows it is wrong. Go on. “They are a law unto themselves and they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness in their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.”

Yes, we had an awareness of right and wrong. We had our standards. We had our system of morality. But we had no awareness, no real knowledge of the principle and nature of sin as it relates to God. That is the problem. And a man who does not have an understanding of sin—his sin, not the world’s sin, not other people’s, his sin in relation to God—is dead spiritually. I don’t care how much morality he has or lack of it. I don’t care how much he knows about standards and character and reputation and laws and dos and don’ts.

The Pharisee is a perfect example. “I thank you, Lord, I am not like other men. I fast. I tithe. I give alms. I don’t commit adultery. I am not an extortioners. I am not unjust. I am not like that publican.” But he was dead spiritually. He did not know sin. He neither knew God nor sin.

I hope you are seeing what I am saying. This is what it is to be dead spiritually. It says, “You hath he quickened who were dead.” We have passed from death, spiritual death. A man who is spiritually alive knows God. A man who is spiritually alive has an awareness and an understanding and a discernment of sin.

Thirdly, we were without a hunger and thirst for his holiness. Any man that is satisfied with his own holiness is dead spiritually. Any man who is satisfied with his fig leaf apron of righteousness is dead spiritually. He is dead. He don’t feel the heat. He doesn’t feel the cold. He doesn’t feel the search light of God’s wrath. He doesn’t feel the sovereign holy eyes of God. He doesn’t feel naked. He feels comfortable.

Any man who is satisfied with the filthy rags of his own righteousness is dead. He is dead spiritually. He would be ashamed of his rags if he wasn’t dead. He would ashamed to claim, “Look at me all dressed up.”

You are not dressed up. Everybody that can see knows he is not dressed up. Everybody who is not dumb knows he is not dressed up. Everybody is blind thinks he is dressed up because they are dressed just like him.

Do you see what I am saying? We didn’t hunger for God’s holiness. We went about to establish our own righteousness. We were filled with praise for our works and praise for

our deeds and praise for our goodness. And we heavily criticized everybody that wasn't as good as we were. Dead.

Any time I hear a man bragging about his holiness I say, "Dead." Any time I hear a man talking about his goodness I say, "Dead." If he wasn't dead he would feel a draft. If he wasn't dead he would feel the heat. If he wasn't dead he would see God's angry. He would see God's frown if he wasn't dead, but he dead. Oh, he is alive physically. He is alive mentally. He is alive religiously. He is playing religion. He is playing Church. He has got aspirations for heaven. He has got fears of hell. He is going about to establish his own righteousness, but he has no hunger and thirst for God's holiness. He is dead.

Do you see what I am saying? He is dead. You were dead.

And, we, fourthly, were with out true repentance. Oh, we had earthly sorrow. We cared about our reputations, very much cared about our reputations. We were without true repentance. We were without godly sorrow. We were without faith. We had traditional faith. We had faith in our creeds and faith in our catechisms and faith in our traditions. But we had no knowledge of the true redemptive work of Christ.

How can God be just and justifier? A dead man don't care. How can almighty God be holy and put away the sins of unholy people? That didn't interest or concern me. I had my profession of religion. I had my traditions. I had my little early sorrow and my traditional faith. What did I care for true heart felt repentance? What did I care for mourning of heart? What did I care for weeping before God? What did I care for falling before the altar of God? What did I care for the cleansing blood? What did I care for the redeeming sacrifice? What care I for the righteousness of God and the holiness of God whether it satisfied or not? I am bound for the Promised Land. I don't care how I get there.

Dead. Dead.

A man that is not caring for the holiness of God is dead. A man that does not care for the justice and righteousness of God is dead. A man who does not care whether the law is honored or satisfied is dead because he doesn't see that the whole universe is in jeopardy if God ceases to be God.

If God saved one sinner at the expense of his perfect holiness the whole universe is in jeopardy. If God almighty lets one sin go unpunished his justice is denied and his throne is tainted and we are done for and angels and creatures and everybody else is done for. It is a wipeout.

Fifthly, we were without prayer.

"Oh, no. I prayed."

Sure you did. We prayed formally just like everybody else, just like the athlete I heard the other day on television. He said, "I want to thank the good Lord for letting me win."

Well, when he lost I didn't hear him thanking the good Lord for letting him loose. No, I didn't. I didn't hear him thanking the good Lord for in his blessed providence sending him some affliction. No, sir. We pray just like everybody else. We prayed about materialism because we are materialistic. We prayed about health and wealth and all these other things. We prayed when things were going our way and then we found fault with God's providence when they didn't. We didn't have the spirit of thanksgiving. We prayed formally. We thought we were heard for our much speaking. We thought we were heard for the way we formed our prayers and said our beautiful prayers. We knew nothing about groanings which cannot be uttered. We knew nothing about laying before God. We knew nothing about insufficiency. We knew nothing about prayers of the heart, intercession of the Holy Spirit. We always knew what to ask for. We always knew what to say.

Dead. Dead.

And then, in the sixth place, we were without a genuine love for him, a genuine love. I am not talking about a feigned love. I am not talking about a smile on the outside and hatred in the heart. I am not talking about a warm handclasp while they heart devises mischief. I am talking about a genuine love for Christ and a genuine love for his gospel and a genuine love for his people and a genuine love for his glory. Our interest was making it to heaven not being with Christ. Our interest was making it over yonder, not sharing his eternal glory.

And then in the seventh...Dead. And then in the seventh place we were filled with pride, oh, reeking with it. Pride of race, pride of place, pride of face and pride of grace. We knew nothing about that Scripture that says, "Who maketh thee to differ? What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" We knew nothing of that Scripture that says, "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above." We were filled with malice, self righteousness, covetousness, idolatry, all these works of darkness. Oh, on the outside we appeared beautiful to men. On the outside we were like a whited sepulchre with the mown grass and the planted flowers. But on the inside God saw rottenness, filthy, dirty bones, dead men's bones, corruption. We were dead, rotten and corrupt. That is what it is to be dead spiritually.

And I say unto you that definition will hold wherever you want to apply it, wherever you want to apply it. And people whom we think to be least dead are the deadest. When a man is dead in sin he does not know. A man is dead physically he knows it. If a man is dead mentally he knows it. He knows he can't think. He knows he is senile. He knows he has got hardening of the arteries and not thinking. He knows it. But a man will be dead spiritually and brag on how much he lives.

I say unto you this...and this is the thing that makes this so difficult for us to discern. We look on the outward appearance. That is what it says on our bulletin board. We look on

the outward countenance. God looks on the heart. And that is where the deadness is. It is within. It is within. And a man who does not have a knowledge of the glory of God, of the nature of sin, of the righteousness of Christ is dead because, you see, this is spiritual knowledge. This is spiritual understanding. This is spiritual life. And these things can only be known as a man is given life spiritually, as God turns on the light.

Now I will say this to you and I know a lot of folks that have a little bit of trouble with this, especially a lot of preachers. They come to a knowledge of these things. They say they have and they go back to that time back there years ago when they lay in Arminianism and free-will-ism and semi-pelagianism and knew nothing of these things. They didn't preach them, didn't believe them, didn't tell their church about it. But they were still saved back then. No they weren't. They were dead. They were dead. Isn't that right, Sid? They were dead. I was dead till I heard the gospel and God gave me sight. I was dead. Till I heard the gospel and God gave me ears I was dead. Till I heard the gospel and God gave me life I was dead.

I was alive physically, traditionally, religiously and mentally and emotionally and all these other things, but I was dead spiritually. Dead.

If you are not dead you know these things. If you are not dead you breathe. If you are not dead you see. If you are not dead you hear. If you are not dead you speak. If you don't hear, speak, breathe, you are dead. And a man who does not hear God and see God and love God is dead spiritually. He is dead to God. That is what I am saying.

All right. Here is the second thing. We have undergone a change. It says, "We have passed." We know this. We know we have passed from death, spiritual death to life, to life.

And let me tell you something. When our Lord stood there by the grave of Lazarus, he said, "Roll away the stone." Lazarus was dead. He had been dead four days. They said, "He stinketh." Lifeless, he stinketh.

And our Lord said, "Lazarus, come forward." And old Lazarus walked out of the grave. He is alive. He is alive. He is alive to the sunshine. He is alive to the cooling breeze. He is alive to the touch of his loved ones. He is alive to the taste of food. He is alive to the feeling of the cold or the heat. He is alive. He is sensitive. He is alive. He was dead and now he is alive.

And that is what John said. "I know I was dead and now I am alive." How do I know?

Number one, I am sensitive and I see and I touch and I feel and I have a knowledge of the living God. I have been brought out of my dark, physical, religious, traditional grave and I have been brought out into the sunshine of his presence. I see his sovereignty.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "Eternal life is to know thee, the only true God." Eternal life.



Now listen to me. Turn...I want to show you that in John chapter 17, John 17. If you have some doubts about what I am saying, a man who doesn't know God is dead. He may know the Catechism or the doctrine. He may know the law. He may know all these things, but he is dead if he doesn't know God, I mean God as he is revealed in his Word.

John 17:3 our Lord said, "This is life eternal. This is life."

Eternal life, my friend, when the Bible uses that term is not how long it is going to last. That is not what he is talking about. Everybody is going to live forever, even folks in hell, everlasting death, everlasting destruction. But life eternal is spiritual life. It is the life of God.

And this is the life of God, "That they might know thee, the only true God." I know God. I know God is sovereign. I know God is holy. He hath come and given us an understanding, a knowledge of God.

They said, "David, where is your God?"

He said, "Our God is in the heavens. He hath done whatsoever he pleased. Whatsoever the Lord pleased that did he in heaven, earth and the seas and all of these places."

I know his sovereignty, his justice, his righteousness, his holiness, his love, his truth, his beauty, his glory. Lazarus came out into the sunshine, into the light of God's character. And that is when a man lives, when he comes to know God. Dead men worship dead gods. He said, "They make gods that are like those that make them." That's certain, but when a man lives spiritually he knows God.

Secondly, we have a...I know we live. I know we have passed from death unto life because we have a scriptural and spiritual knowledge of sin.

Turn to Romans seven, Romans seven. Romans chapter seven, listen to Paul. Romans chapter seven, verse seven. "What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law."

Now wait a minute. This was a man who was 40 years old or older. This was a man who was raised in a religious home. Mother and Daddy were Jews. He was circumcised when he was eight days old. He was purified. He was all these other things were done for him according to Levitical law. He went to school with the greatest religious teacher of his day, Gamaliel. He grew up to be the most religious man of his day. He was known as an educated intellectual theologian. He killed for what he believed. He was a religionist. He was moral. He said, "Concerning the law I was blameless."

And yet here he says, "Listen. I didn't even know sin. I didn't know sin."

Wait a minute, Paul. You knew the law.

“But I didn’t know sin.”

Well, you knew it was wrong to kill.

“But I didn’t know sin.”

It was wrong to commit adultery.

“But I didn’t know sin.”

You knew it was wrong to lie.

“But I didn’t know sin.”

What in the world is he talking about?

He said, “I had not known lust except the law said, ‘Thou shalt not covet.’ But sin taking occasion by the commandment wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. Without the law that sin was dormant and I was dead with it. But,” he says in verse nine, “I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came sin revived and myself died.”

Old Paul, Saul of Tarsus died. The old nature died. “I came alive to God. I saw what sin was.”

And then he goes down here and tells us what it is. He said in verse 14, listen. “We know the law is spiritual, but I am carnal.”

So here is this religious man now coming to a knowledge of sin. I am carnal.

Verse 15. “For what I do I don’t agree with and what I would do that do I not. What I hate that do I.

Look at verse 18. “I know in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.”

You mean this is the same man talking? The same man. The same man that was such a Pharisee and such a self righteous man, the same man that said, “I don’t have any sin. I am perfect. I am holy.” Here he is talking about, “In my flesh dwelleth no good thing.”

He is alive now. He was dead. He was a religious dead man. And now God gave him life and he sees what sin is.

Verse 19. “The good that I would I do not. The evil I would not do that is what I do.”

Verse 24. “Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body, the body of this death.”

“What are you saying, preacher?”

I am saying that I believe we pass from death unto life when we have an understanding, a discernment, some knowledge of who God is and when God the Holy Ghost through his Word gives us some conception or understanding of what sin is. Sin is a principle. It is a nature. It is a body of death. It is an old man that lives in all of us by birth and by nature and by practice. It is that old nature that makes even our goodness to be sin. It makes even our thoughts of righteousness to be evil. It permeates. It is like leaven. It leaveneth the whole lump. It contaminates everything that we touch and everything that we say and everything that we think and everything that we do. That is the reason Paul...he said, “In my flesh dwelleth no good thing, no good, no good. Oh, wretched man that I am, wretched.” That man’s alive. He is sensitive.

You take a dead man and stick him with a pin, he doesn’t move. But you take a man who is alive and stick him, he feels it. And the believer is alive. He feels every offense. He feels every [?] and he feels every act of ill conduct. He feels it. He feels it because he knows it is sin.

And then, thirdly, we pass from death unto life because we have a spiritual, scriptural knowledge of the law of God and of our own inability.

Turn to Romans three, Romans chapter three. Listen to this in Romans three verse 19. Dead men can’t interpret God’s law nor their conduct in the light of God’s law. Romans chapter three verse 19. “We know this. We know this, that what things soever the law saith, the holy law of God, it saith to those who are under the law.” And I am talking about the whole Word of God, the whole word of God. That every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God.

That man is alive. He is alive. He sees the holiness of the law. He sees his own inability. And he sees the law is just in charging him with guilt. “Therefore,” this man that lives has come to this conclusion. “By the deeds of the law, by the works of the flesh there shall no flesh be justified in God’s sight. For by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

And then in the fourth place we have passed from death because we know who God is. We are growing in that. I’ll show you that in just a moment. We know who God is. We know what we are. We are made sensitive and alive to his holiness, to his beauty, to his glory, to his majesty, his majesty. We have that mechanical...the good Lord or the man upstairs or the superstar or these uncomplimentary titles that men give to God.

We speak softly. We speak reverently. We speak with an air or a note of glory. We feel our wretchedness and our sin. We are sensitive to the arctic breeze of our own evil. We are sensitive to the burning heat of God’s law. We are sensitive to our thoughts and deeds and words and offenses. We are sensitive to the nature of sin. We long to be done with it. We are sensitive to his holy law, to his righteousness. We can’t attain thereunto. We want nothing.

“You who would be under the law. Don’t you hear the law?”

Dead men don’t hear it, but living men hear it. And when they hear it they back off. When they hear it they blush.

And then, fourthly, we have a spiritual, scriptural knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I will tell you this. A dead man will never praise the Lord Jesus. He never will, but a living man, oh, I tell you. He knows who he is. He knows what he did. He knows why he did it, that God may be just and justifier. He knows where Christ is now. And he talks with the apostle Paul like this. Turn to Philippians three. This is a living man speaking, Philippians chapter three. Look, if you will at...beginning with verse seven. He talked about his religious background. He said, “Those things were gain to me one time, gain to me, but I counted them loss for Christ. Doubtless I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things. I do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in him not having mine own righteousness.”

Let me tell you something. Dead men have no appetite. Men who are spiritually alive have an appetite for Christ and they hunger and they thirst, they hunger and they thirst. And this is the children’s bread. And this is the children’s drink. And his body and his blood are the children’s meat and drink and living men hunger. Yes, sir, they do. I run into folks that have no spiritual appetite. They are dead. They are dead. They care not for the preaching of the Word. They care not for the teaching of the Word. They care not for the fellowship of the saints. They care not for the sharing and exhorting one another. They care not. They have no hunger and thirst, dead, dead.

Boy, I tell you, dead men don’t eat. You go to the funeral home where they are embalming bodies back there and they have no Coke machines and they have no snack bars. That’s right. You go to a golf course out here they have Coke machines and snack bars. They’ve got hungry folk. And you show me a man that doesn’t hunger and thirst for the things of God, he is dead. He is dead as a hammer. I don’t care what he...he is not dead religiously. No, sir. I agree with you. No, sir. He is dead spiritually, though.

So spiritual people have a spiritual hunger for Christ. They never get enough of his gospel. They never get enough of his glory. They never get enough of his gospel truth. They are always panting after the living God. They are hungry, hungry and thirsty.

And then we know we have passed from death unto life because we believe the gospel like the Eunuch said, “I believe Jesus is the Christ.”

And then we know we have passed from death unto life because the breath of prayer. Do you know what John Newton said prayer is? Prayer is the breath of a child of God. He said, “I would just as soon expect a dead man to live...a natural man to live without breathing as a spiritual man to live without praying.” I am not talking about organized

prayer totally. I am talking about when the heart stays in communion with God, when the heart is in communication with God.

And that's what...that's prayer, praying without ceasing, praying continually, glorying in his grace, glorying in his love, glorying in his mercy. We are alive. We pray. That is what our Lord said to Ananias. He said, "Down there in a street called straight is a man called Saul of Tarsus."

And old Ananias said, "Lord, I have heard about him. Oh, he is an enemy of the gospel."

"No," the Lord said, "Behold, he what? He prayeth. He is alive." He is praying. He is not saying his prays. He is praying. He is not having a little talk with Jesus. He is praying. There is a difference. He is praying.

I'm sure he wasn't saying a word where they could hear him down in the next room, but I tell you his heart was communing with God. He was praying.

We have passed from death unto life. Do you want to hear those just briefly? Because we have a spiritual knowledge of God. Eternal life is to know God, who he is. We have a spiritual, scriptural understanding of sin, what it is and how it lives in us and what a conflict we have with it, what a monster it is, how adverse to God it is. And we see it in things that nobody else sees it in. Now the world's conception of sin is, "Touch not, taste not, handle not." It has to do with the flesh, to awaken believer's concept is a spiritual concept. That is exactly right. He knows what sin is. And then he has a knowledge of God's holy law and his inability before that law. He has a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in his redeeming grace, in his redeeming work, in his redeeming person and his redeeming glory and how God must be just and justifier and how the work of Christ is essential if you are alive.

Only a man spiritually alive can enter into substitution, substitution. Do you know what substitution is? If you can't enter into substitution you are dead, for that is the very life of God's gospel. That is the very heart of God's gospel. That is the very center core of God's gospel is Christ did it in my place. All that God's holiness and righteousness and justice required, to fulfill that Christ became a man and obeyed the law and died for me. Don't you get weary of that. That is what I am going to claim when I walk through the gates of whatever they are. I am going to say, "Christ died for me."

Like old John Jasper the black preacher. They said, "When you get to heaven suppose somebody stops you at the door like they do down here at the restaurants and the railroad cars and the depots and all these places and stop you black men and say, 'What right have you got to be here?' What are you going to say, John Jasper?"

He said, "I am going to say, 'I ain't got no right to be here. I am not here on my rights. I am here on the righteousness of another.'" And he said, "They are going to open it wide and say, 'Come in. Come in. If you are here on his righteousness come on in.'"

Last of all let's look at our text one more glance, one more glance. We know we have passed from death to life because we love. We love. Who do we love?

Now, brethren, I'm going to tell you something. You can feign righteousness and you can feign all these other things, but this is a heart experience and a heart attitude and a heart condition that you can't feign. Old Satan cannot imitate love. He can imitate an outward righteousness. He can imitate prayer. He can imitate...but he can't make you love what you hate. He can't do it.

So I am saying this right now. I have evidence that I am saved because I say with Peter, "Lord, you know I love you as you are for yourself."

I wouldn't have God any other way. I hear people say, "Well, the God of election is a monster." I wouldn't have him any other way. "The God of sovereign... I couldn't worship a God like that."

I know, you are dead. But I tell you. If you ever get eyes to see his beauty and glory that's the only kind of God you can worship. Who wants a peanut God? Who wants a God that has no hands but your hands? I might as well not have a God if this is all he has got. Who wants a God who has no feet but your feet? Boy, mine are in bad shape. Who wants a God that can't walk into the heavenlies? I can't be walking up there.

Oh, I love him just like...I love his Word. I flat love the Word. I was sitting there listening to Charlie read it a while ago and I thought...it's good evidence that I know the Lord.