

Bryan Station Baptist Church

INDEPENDENT

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MISSIONARY

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

"Preaching The Same Truth We Preached Before Kentucky Was A State"

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HOW MAY I KNOW THAT I HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:13).

Would you like to have eternal life? Do you know for sure that you have eternal life? John wrote his gospel so that sinners might know how to get eternal life (John 20:31), and he wrote this first epistle to believers so that they might know they have eternal life. The clear implication is that one may have eternal life and not know it--he might have his doubts about it. This could not be a very happy life. Eternal life is so important that the present life is worthless without it, and the one who has it could not be very happy if he is not certain he has it.

A man once remarked that he did not see how even God could make eternity interesting enough so that a man would want to live forever. But eternal life is something more than mere eternal existence. What the Bible calls eternal life is a condition of eternal existence. The lost will have eternal existence, but it will be existence in a dead and lost state as a moral being. The lost person will not want to exist forever, but he will have to exist forever. He cannot wish himself into nonentity.



Location: 3.3 miles out Bryan Station Road. Right on Briar Hill Road.

- Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
- Worship Service 11:00 a.m.
- Evening Service 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting 7:30 p.m.

Air-Conditioned

Nursery Provided

Pastor Alfred M. Gormley
Ph. 299-1430 347 Sierra Drive

Lexington, Ky. 40505

John presents a number of simple tests by which we can know that we have passed from death unto life.

1. The test of faith. In I John 5:1 we read, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ

is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." The man who has been born again has no other faith or hope of salvation except in Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, the one anointed of God to do the saving work. The person born of God sees nothing but unworthiness in himself, and all his hope of forgiveness of sin and final entrance into heaven is the finished work of Christ upon the cross. He can join the mighty chorus and sing: "I broke God's law, He came between; I'm depending on Him to save."

The believer may have his fears and doubts, but they are always in himself and not in Jesus Christ. He might wonder at times whether he really has faith or not. But if you should ask him whether he might trust something else than Christ, he would reply a vigorous "No."

A woman was once talking to a pastor about church membership. And she said, "I have always done what is right." Anybody who feels that way is not a conscious sinner, and nobody but a conscious sinner can have faith in Jesus Christ.

But can such faith be evidence of eternal life? Might not anyone who hears the gospel develop within himself, apart from the Holy Spirit, such a belief? No, for that would be contrary to nature. Human nature has been ruined by sin and the natural man is incapable of receiving spiritual truth. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14). Therefore, apart from a work of grace wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, no one ever comes to a spiritual perception of his own helplessness and of the excellence and beauty of gospel truth. Faith is the gift of God.

There may be a counterfeit faith in the unrenewed man in which he may have orthodox views and experience a stirring of the emotions. But the man of counterfeit faith has no root in himself and in times of testing, falls away. But whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ--whoever believes savingly--has been born of God.

2. The test of consciousness of sin. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:8-10).

To have fellowship with God and other believers means to be walking in the light. And to be in the light means we are conscious of the sin-principle in us. Only the heirs of eternal life--only those who walk in the light--really know and feel their depravity, those in the darkness of unregeneracy are inclined to deny their sinfulness. It is a sign of darkness for one to say that he has always done what is right.

A ready confession of sinfulness coupled with sincere trust in the Lord Jesus Christ is a mark of a saved state. To feel that sin

is bitter and that Christ is precious is to meet this test of eternal life. Abraham felt before God that he was but dust and ashes. "And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27). Job, with deep feeling said, "I am vile" (40:4), and "I abhor myself" (42:6). Do you ever feel like Paul when he said, "O wretched man that I am!" (Romans 7:24)? Do you agree with C. H. Spurgeon who said: "In the very best of men, there is an infernal and well-nigh depth of depravity.

3. The life tested by love. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (I John 4:7). "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (I John 3:14).

There is a natural love that members of the same family have for one another. There is some kind of love that people have for members of the same club or party. But this is not the love the Bible talks about as a sign of regeneration. Love that is a mark of regeneration has for its object God and the people of God. The same grace that teaches us to love God also teaches us to love the children of God. "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (I Thess.4:9). This is the instinct of the born again person. Just as the mother loves her child because it is her child, so the believer loves his brother because he is his brother in Christ. The Christian loves his enemy because he is commanded to love him, but he is inwardly taught to love his brother in Christ.

If you are conscious of a love for the people of God that makes you want to be with them and have fellowship with them in the gospel of Christ, then you may be certain you have eternal life.

The test of love is obedience to God's commands. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:2,3). To obey God--to keep his commandments gladly and without murmuring--is evidence of love to Him. To think of His commandments as irksome or grievous is to be lacking in love. It is love that makes church going a delight, and love will make many other commandments of God a pleasure to keep. Anybody can see that love makes any kind of work easy. Going to the lake is not irksome or grievous to people who love to fish. Keeping a dog and gun is not grievous to the man who likes to hunt. A man can get physically tired of doing what he loves to do, but love will keep him at the task with a minimum of rest. Love for wife or husband, for parent or children, will keep a person going day and night when the object of love is sick or in need.

Love for God is the only thing that will keep a person steady and faithful in His service. John says of some that they went out from us because they were not of us--they had not been born from

is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." The man who has been born again has no other faith or hope of salvation except in Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, the one anointed of God to do the saving work. The person born of God sees nothing but unworthiness in himself, and all his hope of forgiveness of sin and final entrance into heaven is the finished work of Christ upon the cross. He can join the mighty chorus and sing: "I broke God's law, He came between; I'm depending on Him to save."

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above--they did not have the love of God in their hearts.

4. Test of works. "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him" (I John 2:29). Works do not save but are fruits of salvation. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). Every born again person has some good works. Where there is life there are evidences of life. Dead things do not work.

— By the late C. D. Cole