

I AM A WINNER!
Standing Strong in the Hurricanes of Condemnation
(Rev. 12:7-12)

I. WELCOME / INTRO

A. Scripture Reading: (Brief summary of 12:1-6)

“And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, but they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, *for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.* For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that his time is short.”

B. Opening Prayer: For light on the Scriptures, so that we may grow in the assurance of salvation, stand strong in the hurricane of condemnation, and bring glory to the Lord through a stable, confident, joyful walk before God and man.

C. Hurricane Matthew (Slide Show)

D. The Big Question: As in the Natural, so in the Spiritual: Our text shows that the saints WILL experience hurricanes of condemnation. It's not a matter of if, but of when. How shall we overcome them? What truths and weapons has God put in our hands to help us do so? Today we'll seek to answer these questions.

E. Outline:

- Every true saint will go through hurricanes of condemnation
- It's by means of such storms that God will bring them to a deep, abiding assurance of their salvation
- The main way he does this is by opening up precious NT truths about his grace
- The saints' part in this process is to see those truths, cling to them, and boldly confess them, in season and out!

II. Every True Saint Will Go Through Hurricanes of Condemnation (Rom. 5:1-5)

A. Text: Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, *for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.*

B. Key Points

- The new birth involves a trip to the Cross, and an encounter with the living God, who is a God of Holiness, Love (for His own glory), Wrath, Justice, Judgment, (Redeeming) Love, Mercy, and Grace
- It produces a measure of assurance, but also can (and usually does) leave in its wake a residue of doubt and fear, a residue the Accuser can exploit
- Until the new believer grows in understanding and assurance of salvation, he is vulnerable to condemnation
- Our text assures us that every believer WILL battle with condemnation, and WILL overcome it
- Note: Satan condemns the saints to God, and also to their own conscience
- The example of Peter
- The example of Dean

III. It is by Means of Such Storms that God Brings the Saints to a Deep, Abiding Assurance of their Salvation (Rom. 5:1-5; Col. 2; Heb. 6)

A. God uses these hurricanes to produce in his people perseverance, proven character, and hope (i.e., confident assurance, especially about the future)

⁵ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have¹ peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and *so* rejoice in *the* hope of the glory of God.³ And not only *this*, but we also glory in *our* tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance,⁴ perseverance proven character, and proven character hope.⁵ Moreover, *such* hope does not disappoint *us*, for the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. – Rom. 5:1-2

B. Practically speaking, He does this by driving them into the Scriptures, where they learn that God desires them GROW in assurance, strength, confidence, and joy

² For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face,² that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and *attaining* to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, *resulting* in a true knowledge of God's mystery, *that is*, Christ *Himself*,³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. – Col. 2:1f

C. The Promise is real, but the Process takes time; there WILL be ups and downs.

And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence *so as to realize the full assurance of hope* until the end,¹² so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. -- Heb. 6:11-12

The London Baptist Confession on this point:

The infallible assurance of salvation is not an essential part of salvation, for a true believer may wait for a long time, and struggle with many difficulties, before he attains to it. It is not a matter of extraordinary revelation, for if he makes a right use of the means of grace, and is enabled by the Spirit to know the things that believers receive freely from God, he may well attain to it. It therefore becomes the duty of every one

to be as diligent as possible in making his calling and election sure. By doing this he will experience greater peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, greater love and thankfulness to God, and an increased strength and cheerfulness in dutiful obedience. These things are the natural outcome of the assurance of salvation, and they constitute strong evidence that assurance does not lead men into loose living.

- A good biblical picture of a man on his way to attaining the full assurance of faith: Jacob, wrestling with the Son of God

IV. The Main way God Brings the Saints to Full Assurance is by Opening up Precious NT Truths about His Grace

A. Text #1: A Narrow View

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony . . .

B. Text #2: A Wider (Trinitarian) View

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who live as foreigners and pilgrims, dispersed throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ²chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, *and* by the Spirit's work of sanctification *brought* to obedience and *the* sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: May grace and peace be multiplied to you. – 1 Peter 1:1-2

- Chosen by God the Father (Election)

⁶For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷"The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. – Dt. 7

- Redeemed by God the Son (Redemption)
- Called by God the Holy Spirit (Effectual Calling)
- MP: When we see these three mutually re-enforcing truths of God's lovingly bestowed GRACE, our assurance grows by leaps and bounds!

C. Text #3: The Widest View: The Order of Salvation and the Doctrines of Grace

*"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. *Moreover, whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. – Rom. 8:29*

MP: The Sovereign God over the entire Order of Salvation: Election, Redemption, Effectual Calling (Regeneration, Repentance, Faith, Justification, Sealing), Sanctification, Glorification

D. The Full Fruit of Seeing the Doctrines of Grace: Assurance!

1. Paul on Assurance:

“What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? “He who did not spare His own Son, but *instead* delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also, with Him, freely give us all things? “Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the One who justifies; “who *then* is the one who *can* condemn? Christ Jesus is the One who died; and more than that, *the One* who was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, *and* who also makes intercession for us. “Who *then* shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? “Just as it is written, “For Your sake we are put to death all day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.” “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. “For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, “nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. – Rom. 8:31ff

2. Horatius Bonar on Assurance through Justification

In opposition to (the Roman Catholic view), our forefathers not only maintained that a man is justified by faith, but that he ought to **know** that he is justified, and that such knowledge is the great root of a holy life. It started the man upon a happy life, because it relieved him from the burden of doubt and the gloom of uncertainty; it made his religion bright and tranquil, because it sprang so sweetly from the certainty of his reconciliation to God; it delivered him from the cruel suspense and undefined fears which the lack of assurance always carries with it. And it rescued him from every temptation to pride, presumption, and self-righteousness, because it did not arise from any good thing in himself, but drew him away from himself to Christ, from what **he** was doing to what Christ had done. Thus did it make Christ, not self, the basis and the center of his new being; it made him more and more dissatisfied with self, and all that self-contained, but more and more satisfied with Jesus and his fullness; it taught him to rest his confidence toward God, not on his satisfaction with self, not on the development of his own holiness, not on the amount of his graces and prayers and doings, but simply on the completed work of him in whom God is well pleased. – Horatius Bonar

V. The Saint’s part in this process is to SEE these truths, CLING to them, and BOLDLY CONFESS them, in season and out!

A. There is GONNA BE A FIGHT—both to attain and maintain the full assurance of faith; a fight we are predestined to Win

“And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

B. Our part (fight) in gaining the win

- SEE these truths
- CLING to these truths (when our enemies attack)

1. The World (e.g., RD vs. DC)

2. The Flesh

3. The Devil

- From time to time, we're gonna get roughed up

True believers may find that their assurance of salvation fluctuates; sometimes more, sometimes less. They may prove neglectful in preserving it, as for example if they give way to some particular sin that wounds their conscience and grieves the Spirit; or a strong temptation may suddenly spring upon them; or God may see fit to withdraw 'the light of His countenance' and cause darkness to envelop them, a course He sometimes takes even with those who fear His name. Yet, whatever happens, certain things inevitably remain with them: the new nature which is born of God, the life of faith, the love of Christ and the brethren, sincerity of heart and a conscientious sense of duty—and, by reason of these, and through the work carried on by the Spirit within them, the assurance of salvation may in due time be revived. In the meantime the same influences preserve them from utter despair. -- LBC

- **BOLDLY CONFESS** (agree with GOD on) these truths

¹⁹Therefore, brothers, since we have boldness to enter the Holiest Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way which He opened for us through the veil (that is, His flesh), ²¹and since we have a great High Priest over the house of God, ²²*let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.* ²³*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.* – Heb. 10:19

MP: Maintain healthy, biblical self-talk; AGREE with GOD, not the w, f, and d

VI. Conclusion

A. The Quest for Full Assurance is a Good Thing!

- It stabilizes our Christian walk, filling it with gratitude and gladness
- It overflows onto the brethren, moving them to attain the same
- It is winsome to the world, since unbelievers often admire confident people, and will ask questions about where that confidence comes from
- It glorifies God: “The glory of the Lord is man fully alive!” – Irenaeus

B. Herman Boone: A Guy Who Maintained a Good Confession (Reading from *Remember the Titans*)