



I know I am a Costco member. When I go to the shop, I scan my card and the screen says "Welcome George Kawalek." Because of all this, I am assured of my Costco membership. But I don't have a Christian card. I kinda know when I was converted, but I'm not 100% sure. But that's ok! When I walk into church people know my name. I'm a church member, sure. I was baptised, sure. I'm a pastor, sure. But, sadly, I have seen far too many baptized and pastors walk away from the faith. So the question is, How can we know we are saved? We read from the book of Revelation that God holds the Lamb's Book Of Life where there are all the names of those who believe in the atoning work of Christ and depend upon His righteousness for salvation. But we can't see it right now. So how can we know that we are saved? How can we know through those dark nights of the soul or in a hospital bed, moments away from death? John's answer is in 1 John 4:13,

"This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit". John says assurance of salvation is possible today! At some point, or many points, Satan is going to have a pop at your assurance. So if you don't know if you are in Christ and him in you, you can end up in a mentally isolated place. So let us hear and heed the words of John and leave with deep, sweet, enduring assurance of our union with Christ. If you are not a follower of Jesus, may the Lord grant you conviction of sin that leads to repentance and faith in Christ. Let's trust the Holy Spirit to work within us, through his word and beyond my words.

1. Abiding In Christ In our verse for today, John says, "By this we know that we abide in him and he in us." (ESV) If you are a follower of Jesus, a Christian, you are united with Christ. You are saved, born again. But our union with Christ is a long and glorious truth. In Ephesians 1:3, Paul writes "For He [God the Father] chose us in Him [Jesus] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight." So our union with Christ has its source in our election by the father. Out of the Father's great mercy and love he chose us and so sees us as belonging to Christ; as being in Christ. Meaning that whatever Christ would do and achieve, would be done and achieved in us. Our union with Christ is then made possible by the atoning death of Jesus. So Christ came, and for those elected by the Father across the centuries and millennia, all that Jesus did is ours if our faith is in him alone. It is glorious because it also means that all we've done is Christ's! All our sin, all our shameful acts, all the mess and filth that is ours, is Christ's and we bear it no more! "God made you alive with Christ. He forgives all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross." (Col 2:13) In addition to this, as Christ died, so too did God see us as dying. Paul says in Romans 6, "For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with." When Christ rose God sees us as rising with Him too!! Paul writes, "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus." (Eph 2:6) Our union in Christ is then seen in its fulness at Christ's return, his glorification and an eternity spent in worship, delight, joy and wonder of him. Glory! It is important to see the almighty weight of glorious truth that is captured in those 8 words! "We live in him and he in us," Living and abiding in Christ is a long and glorious truth. If you are a believer today, it means you are a new creation! Our union with Christ is magnificent. Words simply fail. But what do I do if I forget that I am or doubt that I am in union with Christ?

The Work Of The Spirit The second half of this verse is about how we know who we are. "He has given us his Spirit" We struggle with things that we can't see or touch. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, one and invisible. In chapter 4:1-6. John is warning us not to believe every spirit. "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 'This is how you

can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God." John's warning is not to believe every spirit because only the Spirit of God acknowledges Jesus as the Christ. The Holy Spirit, brings about belief. In verses 7-12 John is speaking about loving one another. "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God... No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us" Love comes from God and those born of God will, therefore, show this Godly love. The belief of a follower and the love of a follower of Jesus, are because the Holy Spirit is dwelling within us. (v13) Only by the Spirit can we, confess our belief in the deity of Jesus (4:1-3). Only by the Spirit can we, love. (4:12). This is only possible by the Spirit, because by nature we are unbelieving and unloving. Belief in Christ is supernatural. This is why even the best rationale and argument for believing in Christ's finished work on the cross, will not automatically save people. You could be the best speaker in the world, having answers to every question with sound arguments as to why all have sinned and must believe in Christ for their salvation but that will not automatically save people. Belief is supernatural, it is the work of the Spirit. However that does not remove our responsibility to share the gospel. The same is applied to parenting. As a parent, we must be sharing the gospel with our children. Modelling what it means to be satisfied in Jesus and having joy in Him. Reading the Bible with them, engaging them and answering their questions. But alongside that, we must also pray for the Spirit to grant them supernatural belief and love! I know that unbelievers know how to love. But love that is sacrificial and costly, that loves the unloving and the unlovable is uniquely of God. By nature we are selfish and self-interested, so when 'loving' gets hard, we exit! True love when it costs everything is the work of the Spirit. "If we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us" (v4) A love like God's is produced in us. We can truly love the unlovable. This is how we can hear of Christians loving the very people who murdered their family members or abused them. This kind of love is supernatural and is a manifestation of the Spirit in you. Our new nature, is the nature of Christ in us. So belief and love are evidences of the Spirit's indwelling. Belief and love are the testimony of our new hearts. The Spirit bears the fruit of belief and the fruit of love, fruit produced by a tree is of the same nature as the tree and that tree is Christ.

Assurance does not mean perfection or complacency You will most likely have seasons of life where you feel spiritually dry, but know this, living and abiding is not temporal shelter that we dip in and out of. It is permanent. Assurance does not mean perfection. Where we don't live according to our new nature, by the grace of God, we are to repent and return. Nor does Assurance mean complacency. It does not mean a state of bliss where you can put your spiritual feet up and kick back until Christ returns or calls you home. That is not the correct response to the joyful peace of assurance. There should be growth in our faith and our love as the Lord sanctifies us over time. At conversion, we are a new creation but there is still work to be done, sin to be slain, still truth to be grasped, and still fruit to be born; all by the grace of God. Over the years and decades there ought to be visible, grace-born growth in our love and our belief. If we are regenerate, born-again disciples of Jesus, may we feel deep, sweet and enduring assurance.

But if you are not a follower of Jesus, I don't want you to have false assurance. I want you to know that you are in a spiritually disastrous place. I want you to repent of your sin whilst it is today, to come before the Lord in repentance and ask Him to grant you repentance, forgiveness and faith in Jesus's atoning work on the cross.

If you are a Christian, may you have assurance that will spur you forward to enjoy and delight in God as you to learn more about him, knowing that you have nothing to earn; to worship him fully, knowing that you have nothing to prove. To run to him quickly, knowing that he is yours and you are his. Confess to him openly, knowing that you are secure and sealed. Rejoice in him deeply, knowing that he is your greatest treasure.