

The Real Life: Confident Christianity! - 1 John 3:19-24 – 7 Dec 2014

Well, this morning, let's consider a subject on confidence and assurance. This is really from 1 John chapter 3. So, we are going to look at Christian confidence and assurance. I hope not in such an arrogant way (referring to an image on the screen of a boy in superhero costume flexing his biceps), but I think this picture does show confidence and assurance.

Being a Singaporean, you have different stresses. And one of the stresses, as a Singaporean, is when your child reaches six years old and you have to register him or her for primary one. I don't know about you, but that happened to me just a few months back. It is said to be a very stressful time for parents because every parent wants their child to go to a reputable good school. But because vacancies are limited, and people are very competitive, there's a kind of anxiety and fear that your child might not get in.

Now it is my turn to register Shawn for Primary 1. I've never really thought too much about it because I am an old boy of Rosyth Primary School. It's a pretty reputable school here in Singapore and I thought I'd just throw him into that school, don't have to worry, that's fine. But as the time drew near, my wife and I, we realize it's a bit far. It's a good school, I think, but it's rather far and you have to wake up very early and so with a lot of other factors thrown in, we decided that we should explore a school nearer our house or nearer where we stay.

The problem, however, is that, in Singapore, you can't have an application approved and another application pending. You can only have one application. So, in order to apply for the school nearer where we live, we have to give up or withdraw from the guaranteed place I have already in Rosyth. There's a saying that goes like this : one bird in the hand is worth two in the bushes. But I thought about it, wow, this traveling is going to be serious. Every day, to and fro, multiply that by two hundred days in a year. Multiply that by ten years because Shawn--six years and Matthias--four years. It's a lot, leh, and maybe we should take a risk. Well, thankfully, in a sense, you don't have to take a risk too early because the registration for P1 is over three days in this phase where we have to go for three days.

So, we thought to ourselves, this is the plan : If on day one or day 2 and the vacancies are all gone, then it is clear we don't even have to risk it. We don't have to withdraw. We will keep the place in Rosyth. So our strategy was to wait to the very last moment. The last moment is the third day at 4.30pm, precise time. So we'll wait as far as we

can to the last moment, and if it's all gone, then we don't have to try. But, if there are vacancies, depending on the probability how many left and how many people are vying for it, we may try. So we checked the website. What website? Ministry of Education website. On the first day and on the second day there are still slots available. We are quite pleased. Eh, this is unusual. It never happened before. So we thought we might have a chance. On the third day, MOE won't release the results because they only release at the end of the day, the official results. 03:26

But there's a website better than MOE website. Hah, you all know, ah? It is called kiasuparents.com and I'm sure some of you have used it before. For those who are overseas, you don't know what is 'kiasu', please google k-i-a-s-u and the definition of 'kiasu' will come out as the first result. The second result is 'kiasu parents'. That's how famous kiasuparents.com is. Anyway, kiasuparents.com they update the live results almost on a ten minute delay basis. It's very precise. Very joon (accurate).

So, my wife and I, at 3pm, we checked. There are still vacancies. Time for action. So we split up. I went to Rosyth, she went to the school of our choice. And the reason why we have to do that is because the parent has to be physically present. You can't just send an email. You've got to be there. And we split up just in case after I withdraw, no time to drive to the other place. So we split up, we got the documents ready 3pm and every two, three minutes we check the website. I think more fierce than the stock traders. Whoa, check the market see whether there are slots available or not. At 4pm, I think there were still about ten slots available. Now there were two hundred overall. It has been whittled down to ten and we thought 'hey, there's still a chance, hah, because we would get in without a need for balloting.'

4.10 went by. 4.15, 4.20. At 4.20, there was still a handful, I think five or six spaces left, real-time. We were checking at the counter as well. She was checking at the counter as well. The receptionist is a very patient lady. I think she must have been asked hundreds of times that day but she is very patient, tells us a few spaces left and at 4.20, she told me, we checked the website. And I said to her 'I think we should act now just in case too late.' So, I sent a text to her-'let's do it'. After a prayer, and I withdrew at Rosyth and she applied at the school of our choice.

Now, there were parents gathering around at the school of our choice. They were all waiting there. I think some are like us, waiting for the very last moment. Some have already applied but, so anxious, they want to know the result first-hand. And so there were people walking, talking, pacing around. And at 4.20, I asked her how's the situation, and she says 'it's okay, not much movement'. So we submitted. Five

minutes later, she text 'oh no, a lot of people go in'. I don't know what's the definition but she says there are a lot of people go in. So it set us up for a very nail-biting finish the last ten minutes and the next few hours. So, did my son get in? (laughter from the congregation). 06:18

After the first service, everybody asked, 'did your son get in?' (Laughter). So my answer to you is : I will not tell you whether my son got in, to keep you hanging, because far more important than whether Shawn got into the school of our choice for our convenience and for the next ten years, is this question : 'Did you get in to the Kingdom of God?' (Image of a signboard showing "The Kingdom of God. Population : YOU?). It's a very important decision for us, of course for Shawn because it is about ten years of travelling daily. But this is a matter not just about convenience but about damnation and salvation. This is a question that is not just about the here and now but it is for all eternity. I think once you start to think this is for ever and ever. This question is so much more important than any other question you will face on life today. Are you sure you've got a place in the Kingdom of God? Can you be sure? Our Father, God, reveals to us his desire is that his people should not be always living in uncertainty and fear, and he wants to let us know for sure. That's why we come to 1 John chapter 3 today. It's a verse that tells us how you and I can be sure if you are part of the Kingdom of God. He says :

"By this we shall know that we are of the truth
and reassure our hearts before him;
for whenever our heart condemns us,
God is greater than our heart,
and he knows everything. (1 John 3:19-20 ESV)

Today's sermon is a short one, but it is a focused one. This is not an easy verse. When I first read it, and when I studied it, it's not easy. But I think the point is one that is important and clear. Are you sure right here, right now you're part of the Kingdom of God? Now, in a sense, even if you're not sure, but you're part of the Kingdom, ultimately you will end up in the Kingdom. You get it? Even if you're not sure you're saved but if you are really saved, you may not be sure, but still you'll be saved, because you are saved.

But the problem is for the life you live on this earth. You'll be shaky. You'll be nery. You'll not be able to do very much for God's glory. And I think it is God's desire that his children will live out that abundant life and it begins by being confident and sure about the salvation he has given to us. The verse here reveals to us this word

'reassure'. This is the theme, this is the desire that we will be assured in our hearts and the word 'reassure' here is an interesting word. It can be translated as the word 'tranquelize'. An animal that is angry, is moving, is anxious, is agitated - 'pizt' (Pastor made the sound of a tranquilizer dart being fired) - a tranquilizer shot into him, he gets tranquilized. It's a word that refers to something that is being calmed and soothed and pacified. So, God is saying this word is given so that you may understand the path to tranquility, to comfort, to assurance, to peace. It presupposes therefore that we are actually people who are trembling and fearful and anxious, to begin with. You say why? Why are we trembling and fearful and anxious, to begin with. The key is because we will stand before him. In other words, we will stand before God. And God is the reason why man fears and trembles.

Last week, I'm not sure if you remember or not, if you notice Ee Kwang was leading our worship service here. He said something. He said that we are coming to the intimidating presence of God. I don't know whether you caught that. I caught that and I was thinking to myself, biblical, not biblical, biblical.... We have to assess whether it is of the truth. And so he says it is the intimidating presence of God. I think he is right. When I understood the intimidating presence of God, I'm not thinking that God intimidates me like he's a mean and cruel and unkind God. No. But it is intimidating to come to the presence of God even though he is loving and gracious and merciful simply because he is holy and we are sinful. When this sinful man stands before the holy God, there is that intimidating presence that causes us to tremble and to fear. This is seen in the Bible many a times. Remember in Isaiah 6 where God reveals himself to Isaiah and when Isaiah saw God, this is what he said :

"Woe is me! For I am lost;
for I am a man of unclean lips,
and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;
for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" (Isaiah 6:5 ESV)

'Woe is me! For I am lost.' He says 'I am perished'. He says, 'I'm unclean, you are holy.' Now, it's not that God was mean to Isaiah, but the sure brightness of God's holiness causes a sinful heart to tremble and cower and cry out 'woe is me'. There's a reverence that comes, there's a fear that comes, when man stands before God. When we have a vision of God, there's nothing else we could do but to bow before him in adoration and in reverence. A true vision of God results in that. So different from worship services that seem to take God flippantly and casually. Woe is me, he says. Not only Isaiah but we see in Peter : 12:20

"But when Simon Peter saw it,
he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying,
'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' (Luke 5:8 ESV)

When Peter saw it. What did he see? He sees Jesus perform a great miracle about the fishes and when he saw Jesus do it, he caught a glimpse of the divinity of Jesus Christ and the Bible tells us he fell down at Jesus' knees. He couldn't see Jesus in the face, as it were, and says, 'depart from me, I am a sinful man'. See, the awesomeness of God in his holiness is terror to the sinful heart. It's a fear that naturally comes.

"When the disciples heard this,
they fell on their faces and were terrified.
But Jesus came and touched them,
saying, 'Rise, and have no fear.'" (Matthew 17:6-7 ESV)

When the disciples saw the glory of Jesus and when they heard the father echo these words : 'This is my beloved Son'; they realized they stood in the presence of the Almighty and they were terrified. Jesus had to say to them, 'This is your natural response, but rise, and have no fear.'

"When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.
But he laid his right hand on me, saying,
'Fear not, I am the first and the last.'" (Revelation 1:17 ESV)

And then John, the apostle himself, he says, I've experienced what it means to stand before God. And, therefore, I write 1 John 3 about reassuring, tranquility and calmness and soothing and pacifying in the midst of the great God because 'I fell at his feet as though dead'. I absolutely sensed it, and felt it, and experienced it. So, this passage is about reassurance, calmness and peace and confidence before a holy God. How can I have this assurance? John goes on to say you have this assurance when you know you are of the truth.

"By this we shall know that we are of the truth
and reassure our heart before him;
for whenever our heart condemns us,
God is greater than our heart,
and he knows everything.'" (1 John 3:19-20 ESV)

Now, what do you mean by 'you are of the truth'? So far, in our 1 John study, we have been noticing John is always saying 'are you real or are you not real? Are you of the

truth or are you not of the truth?' Do you have eternal life, the Zoe, that spiritual life, or do you not have it? Are you really born again? Is God's Spirit in you? Is God's grace in your life? Is your life changed by him? That's what he means by 'are you of the truth?' Are you really a child of God? Are you really a Christian because, he says, you can have this assurance to stand before the holy God when you know you are a child who is deeply loved and graced by God. Then it begs another question. So, okay, how can I know if I'm really saved? How can I know if I'm really graced. How can I know if I really have this eternal life? Okay, John backtracks it some more by saying 'By this you will know...'. So, the logic is this: Man trembles when he stands before the holy God. But he can have assurance if he knows he has eternal life and he can know if he has eternal life 'By this'. You get that? What is this, 'By this' then? Well, it links to what is spoken of earlier in 1 John 3. Remember we embarked on this key concepts in 1 John that John regularly says, God is light (1 John 1:5 ESV). He also tells us God is love (1 John 4:16 ESV). So, God is light and God is love. If you have God's life in you, naturally, you'll be someone who is walking in the light and walking in love. So, by this, by your walking in the light, by your walking in love, you will know whether God is in you. Therefore, verse 10

'whoever does not practise righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.' (1 John 3:10 ESV)

'By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him;' (1 John 3:19 ESV)

Righteousness - walking in the light, Love - walking in love. And when you have these two marks of grace, these two evidences of the Spirit's work; then, by this, you will know you are saved, you are loved, you are God's child. He is committed to you and even though we are sinful people still, and he is absolutely holy, this love of God that is already evidenced in our lives, gives us confidence to stand before him. This is particularly important because we continue to see how he labours this point in verses 23 and 24. Again, he tells us this is his commandment. This is just two verses after :

"And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. Whoever keeps his commandments (walking in the light) abides in God, and God in him.

And by this we know that he abides in us,
by the Spirit whom he has given us." (1 John 3:23-24 ESV)

So, it's like a hamburger before and after John clarifies what it means to be 'By this'. And you got to know it so that you know that you are of the truth. And you got to know that you are of the truth so that you can have confidence and assurance in your salvation from which you can serve and go through the tribulations and trials of life - strong and gloriously for him. 17:41

Robert Law says,

'Of ecstatic emotions, heaven-piercing vision,
we may know nothing; but if,
in the practice of love in bearing one another's burden,
in denying ourselves to give to another's need,
we are sure of our ground,
hereby we shall tranquilize our self-accusing hearts
yea, even in the presence of God.'

He's saying our assurance is not based on some ecstatic feelings or some extraordinary vision we see but on a very clear and practical level. Do I see love in denying myself? Do I see love in bearing one another's burdens? Do I see love in the letting go of animosity and bitterness and hatred? Do I see love and, because if I do see love, I see my foundation, my ground. And when we stand before God, though my heart accuses me, I can be peaceful and calm and assured before him.

'By this we shall know that we are of the truth
and reassure our heart before him;
for whenever our heart condemns us,
God is greater than our heart,
and he knows everything.' (1 John 3:19-20 ESV)

So, this is the summary of it all : 'By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him'. By the marks of God's work in your life, you shall know and you can have confidence. Now, he goes on to say, 'for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and he knows everything.' Now this is not always unanimously agreed in the interpretation but I think this is the best approach to this second half of this verse.

The context of this whole passage is John, as a loving spiritual father, comforting and bringing assurance to the people of God based on God's Word. And so, I think, the best way to look at this text is this : when we sin (even after we are saved, after we are Christians, we still sin, don't we?) even when we sin, there is this condemnation - the heart the conscience gives to you. Your conscience accuses you. That is the function of your conscience. Your conscience will tell you when you go wrong, and when you sin. So, when we sin, our heart, our conscience accuses us, but this is what we draw comfort from. We draw comfort from the mercy of God that even though our heart accuses us, and that God sees more than what our heart accuses us of. God knows everything - even the sins we didn't see for ourselves. We appeal to his mercy that he would deal with us, not according to our sins, but according to his loving kindness in that I deserve condemnation for my sin. But God, who sees all my heart, he still loves me and he acquits me, and he forgives me. Why? Because we are of the truth, we belong to him, we are deeply loved, and he will never forsake us. Even when we are unfaithful, he remains faithful. Even when we mess up in our lives, he remains committed and loyal to us because we have his life in us. We are 'of the truth'. That's the point John is trying to make. See, this is the same logic that Paul, the apostle, applies. When you sin, there is a heart accusation that says you don't deserve salvation. 21:14

'Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies.

Who is to condemn?

Christ Jesus is the one who died --

more than that, who was raised --

who is at the right hand of God,

who indeed is interceding for us. (Romans 8:33-34 ESV)

Well, Paul says, 'Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?' The people God has chosen out of this world to belong to him. Who can bring any charge? How dare you bring any charge to God's elect. Why? Because it is God who justifies. There's a higher court than the court of your heart. There is a higher court than the court of your conscience. And that is the Supreme Court of God. He says it is God who justifies, then who is there to condemn? Christ is the one who died, more than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. The basis why God can justify us, the reason why we can stand strong in this assurance is because our salvation doesn't depend on you. It's about Jesus Christ. How dare anyone condemn you when Jesus Christ had already died and paid for you. Not only did he die and pay for you, he is raised again, and he is pleading at the right

hand of God, pleading the benefits of that salvation of his sacrifice to be applied to you constantly. No one can bring a charge against God's elect. Because Jesus is our perfect high priest, sacrifice and intercessor.

'For I am sure that neither death nor life,
nor angels nor rulers, nor things present
nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord.' (Romans 8:38-39)

And, therefore, Paul says 'I am sure'. The word there is persuaded, I'm convinced, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nothing in this world, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. God's love for us, in Jesus Christ, is strong and unbreakable. I may mess up and I will mess up. You will mess up, you will fail the Lord in your life. You will not be that perfect Christian, you will not. But even when I fail, Jesus never fails. His love for me is an unbreakable love. So, God, through John, through Paul, is trying to turn our attention away from ourselves. We are so natural in thinking we are saved today, we are kept saved today, because we are good. God still loves me today because I have been obedient. No. You are saved today because he is good, and because Jesus did it all. And when you understand this, when this really fills your heart, you will then be obedient. His love for you is not based on your obedience. Your obedience is really based on his love. God's love is unbreakable.

There's a monastery in Portugal, 3000 feet above ground. And the only way you can access that monastery is through a basket which is suspended by a rope. And the monks will pull the ropes and get you up into this high monastery. One day, there was an American tourist who was in this basket and he was going up, and, mid-way, together with a guide that he has, he realizes that the rope that is suspending all this - himself and his tour guide and the basket - is a little frayed, thinned out, worn out, after a lot of friction and pulling. So he asked them, 'Do you all change the ropes here?' The guide says, 'Yah, we change it regularly.' 'How often do you change it?' 'Whenever it breaks.' (laughter).

Now that's not very reassuring. But God's love never breaks. It's a strong unbreakable love. It doesn't matter the weight of sin you bring. The grace of God is greater than all our sin. We mess up big time but God cleans it up with the precious blood of His Son. Who is there to condemn? Jesus has paid it all. Now this is what John has been

saying all along. In the book of 1 John, he's not saying a Christian is someone who never sins. He says, no, of course not. Right in the beginning, we realize

'If we say we have no sin,
we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' (1 John 1:8 ESV)

He's not saying there is sinless perfection for any Christian today. No. But he's saying a Christian is someone who will grow in obedience. So, what happens when he sins, since sin, in a sense, is inevitable in our lives? He says, this is what you do: You confess your sins and you count on the faithfulness and the justice of God to cleanse you. 26:03

'If we confess our sins,
he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' (1 John 1:9 ESV)

And the reason why you can claim this promise, the reason why you can confess your sins, and expect to be forgiven, and know you are forgiven, is because you have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous :

'My little children,
I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.
But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate
with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.
He is the propitiation for our sins' (1 John 2:1-2 ESV)

By the way, if you are a true believer, hearing this unconditional, unbreakable love of God, it will not lead you, it should not lead you to say, 'Oh, that's great. I can sin all I want and I still have a place in heaven.' No, you wouldn't. If you have been touched by grace, you wouldn't have such a lighthearted approach towards sin. You see its ugliness, you see its filth, and you desire not to sin. So John is saying, 'my little children, I'm writing these things not so that you may sin'. I know you wouldn't want to, but when we do sin, if anyone does sin, this is our confidence, not in ourselves, but our advocate, our lawyer, who pleads for us. What does he plead? He doesn't plead, 'Your Majesty, this man is innocent.' No. He pleads this man is guilty. But he pleads this : 'I have paid for his sins. I am the appeasement for his sins. I am the sacrifice for his sins. And so he is chastened, deserves to be condemned. But I was judged for him, that God, you may continue to forgive him and to love him.' The song, the offering, goes :

No mortal man would dare to stand before your throne (No one)
Before the Holy One of Heaven (not the mean one or the cruel one but the Holy One)
It's only by your Blood
And it's only through your Mercy
Lord, I come....

Christian confidence really is not like the young boy who feels oh so proud about himself. A picture of Christian confidence is someone who bows at the foot of the cross. (Image shown on screen of a man with outstretched arms at the foot of a big cross). The reason why I can approach the light even though I have darkness and sins in my life is because in between, is the precious blood of the Lamb, is the cross of Jesus my Savior, my propitiation, my appeasement, my sacrifice. So, my friends, this is our confidence, not in who we are, but in what Christ has done. Some of you today feel that you can never forgive yourself, isn't it? You are struggling with assurance of salvation : 'Am I really saved? Does God really forgive me?'

My friends, look today, not at you yourself but look at Jesus Christ. You can't say, 'Oh that is such a terrible sin. I can never forgive myself.' The Higher Court has already declared : I have forgiven you in Jesus Christ. So don't look to yourself. That would cause you distress. But look to Christ who paid it all. It is desire of God, today, for you to live in that confidence and assurance not so that you may be, in a sense, dragged around by the devil to say you are condemned, you will not serve God, you're not loved and he brings you down this slippery slope where you can never get out of that depression. Your eyes have to be turned away, upwards, and to look and see him there - our perfect righteousness, Jesus Christ.

And so, every day, when you sin (and you don't feel good when you sin), you are convicted when you sin. But every day when we do sin, we rejoice in the lavish grace and love of God. We rejoice that today I stand because of God's amazing grace. No other religion tells you this, no other faith tells you this : that God could love us so unconditionally, not only on the day we were saved but for ever after that. Jesus Christ has paid it all. He remains faithful even when we are not. And the outflow of this confidence with God is that you have power in prayer. So beautiful, when John writes this. He says, well, you struggle, you're not sure, but when you have this assurance - whatever we ask, we receive from him. He's saying that power in prayer flows from deep assurance and confidence in God.

"Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us,
we have confidence before God;

and whatever we ask we receive from him,
because we keep his commandments
and do what pleases him." (1 John 3:21-22 ESV)

I suppose there are some people who today don't pray because they're always wondering, 'Am I accepted by God today? How did I do? Is God angry with me and will not listen to me?' He says, 'Look to Jesus, my Son. Find your confidence in him, and come boldly to the throne of grace. Stand in grace. Realize that I love you. I'm deeply committed to you and even when you are not loyal to me, when you are unfaithful to me, I'm still for you. And from this assurance not only does He give you blessings and answers in prayer as you obey him, and your wills are aligned with his, but I think it helps you through your trials and tribulations of life. As you go through hardship, you know that through it all he, your father, still loves you. It gives you strength to serve. It's very hard to serve God through difficult times when you doubt his love. It is vital for you as you pursue holiness and righteousness in life. It is the foundation of everything. So, I say to you, this is an important reality. Don't ask me Shawn's school because far more important than that, 'Are you in the Kingdom of God and are you sure about it?' Look to the unwavering love of God. 32:22

I end with this illustration: I hear this from my fellow-pastor friend. He shared about his son, a ten-year-old boy, who suffered from gastric flu. He was unwell. He was feverish. He couldn't sleep for a few days. And, one day, as he was sitting together with his son in the living room, his son began to cry. He looked at the son and immediately recognize that it's probably his stomach pain acting up, and as a man, as a father, he wanted to teach his son to be more macho, 'Hey, don't be so sissy, lah. Like that little bit also cry. Come on, be a man. Man up. Move on.' So he was a little bit harsh and the son began to cry even more. And that got him even more angry, and he went on and on.

The son really couldn't take it and left the living room, went to the kitchen and spoke with Mummy. The husband felt a little bit left out of the party. Mother and son talk, talk, talk. And, after a while, the son left the kitchen and went to the room, his own room. So my friend went to his wife and asked, 'Hey, what's wrong?' The wife says, 'Well, your son is going to his room now to do his devotions, to read the bible. 'Yah but, but, but, why did he cry?' 'Well, he said he didn't cry because he had stomach pain. He also didn't cry because you scolded him. But he cried because he has been praying to God for the past few days that God will hear his prayer and heal him. But God has not answered him at all. He feels that God is distant. He feels that God is not with him. He does not feel that God loves him and he's sad because of that.'

The father, upon hearing that, felt really bad and he also went to pray. And this is how he prayed. He actually said these words, 'Come on, lah, God, come on lah. Why, why can't you just hear this little boy's prayer? He doesn't know very much right? I mean, you can heal him. That's not a problem for you to heal him. And healing him and hearing him this time won't spoil him. So God, why don't you do it? Come on, lah.' And he began to be a little bit upset actually, and bitter against God.

After some time, the younger son dashed out of the boys' room and said, 'Daddy, Mummy, Kor-Kor (elder brother) is crying again. This time crying even louder.' Whoa, the father is like 'oh, no, this is bad'. He went to the room and he saw his son crying and crying, wailing and he was crying so bad he couldn't even talk. He just kept crying. Couldn't say anything. The bible was open beside him on the bed and the boy, as he cried, pointed his finger at one verse in the bible - Hebrews 10:22 in NLT version. And he pointed to these words 'fully trusting him'.

'let us go right into the presence of God
with sincere hearts fully trusting him.
For our guilty consciences have been
sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean.' (Hebrews 10:22 NLT)

In his devotional reading, he was convicted that he was doubting his God who loves him so much - a God who is willing to wash our sins away, a God who is absolutely loyal to us. A little boy going through the hardships of life can know the deep devotion of God for him. Would you today know God's deep conviction and loyalty towards you? My friends, you can be sure today, and God wants you to be sure. He wants you to know 'I-love-you.' 36:06

Let's bow for a word of prayer together. God, our God, is absolutely devoted to us. Would you today be devoted to him? His devotion is not like anything in this world. His devotion is strong even when we mess up, even when we sin, even when we fail him because his devotion to us is not based on our behavior, it's not based on our merits. There is none. But it's based entirely on the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, His Son. Maybe today you are doubting God's love for you. You came this morning with a bitter heart, angry heart. You say, how could you do this to me, God? Would you today look to the cross of Jesus Christ and see his unflinching love for you?

Maybe today you are struggling with assurance, and you've always been saying to yourself, I just can't forgive myself. Would you look up today and say the Supreme Court has declared you justified? And let your life not be lived in self-dependence or

self-justification, but on God-dependence and God-justification. Maybe some of you today are here for the first time. I say to you, you need to come to Jesus because only Jesus saves. He gave his life to save you from your sin. Only Jesus saves. Would you repent and believe in Jesus alone? You say, 'can I come and believe in Jesus? I do not know how to come. I do not know if he will accept me if I should come.' I remind you of the words in the bible we have just read. This is his commandment that we should believe on His Son. It's not that you are invited to come. The bible says you are commanded to come, and this is such an assurance. He wants you to come, he commands you to come and you can come to Jesus this morning. So, would you turn from your sin, from trying to save yourself and look to Jesus Christ who finished salvation's work on the cross? If you are here, today, and you do not know Jesus, may today be a beautiful life-changing relationship that blossoms in your life.

Father, we thank You for this morning as we consider these things in our hearts. We pray that you will have mercy upon us that, by your love, you will draw us back to yourself again. Draw us near to your heart, to know your love that we will not be tossed to and fro in this world, but we'll live with that conscious enjoyment of your amazing grace. I pray today for my friends who may be here for the first time. Lord, would you bless them that they may come to know Jesus as well. Bid them come. Draw them by your Spirit. Bless them with new life. We thank you, again, for who you are. Lord, you are a God who is to be feared, and a God who is to be loved because you loved us and gave your Son for us. So bless this time, bless your church, bless your people, we pray all this now in Jesus' name. Amen.