

EVIDENCE OF TRUE SALVATION

A message exploring the evidences of salvation in the life of a truly born again believer

Introduction – 11 Evidences, Jonathan Edwards

- **Jonathan Edwards**
 - In the 1730's and 1740's Jonathan Edwards was a primary instrument of God in the 'Great Awakening' a revival in the English colonies in America
 - To address false conversions and defend true conversion he wrote "*A Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections*"
 - At the time it seemed as though conversions were occurring in great numbers - however, it didn't take long to realise that some of the claimed conversions were not genuine
 - While various excesses and heightened emotional experiences were common, scores of people didn't demonstrate any evidence in their lives to verify their claim to know and love Jesus Christ
 - His writing is very relevant today – when so many think that a salvation experience is one that gives you 'spiritual goose-bumps', or is a matter of ritual (be it church attendance, or ritual prayers), or ear-tingling false teachers and their false gospel
 - A Message for Today Also – think of many churches in the UK, the Word of Faith and False Fire churches, or Toronto, Lakeland and Todd Bentley
 - Edwards wrote to address how you can tell if the Holy Spirit has performed a true saving operation – how to tell if the new birth is real!
 - Edwards wrote that the principal evidence of saving grace is holy living
 - Popular teaching then asserted that, to the contrary – saying the only real evidence of true salvation is a feeling based on an experience – as is said today
 - Throughout his treatise are a series of tests to indicate whether the believer possesses eternal life – he wrote of the evidences of true salvation
- **The Essence of True Salvation**
 - Edward's 'evidences' focus on the essentials of true faith
 - The reality of relationship as compared to the lifelessness of religion
 - The inward experience of the Holy Spirit's presence
 - The attentiveness to the voice of the Lord
 - The love of our Father God
 - The desire for holiness – to be as God wants us to be
 - The heart desire to be obedient to God
 - The separation from worldly things not of God
 - A Spiritual Health Check
 - Whilst these 'Evidences' are a spiritual health check they are meant to be an encouragement
 - An Encouragement on the journey of Holy Affections...our Love for God
 - An Encouragement to Keep Going – the journey may be long and, at times difficult – but the rewards are out of this world!
 - Never get condemned – it is only the enemy who condemns
 - The Lord is Interceding for You...He is for you...He is With You...Always

- Jonathan Edwards' 'Evidences of Salvation' – there are 11 of them
 - Have you Enjoyed Fellowship with Christ and the Father?
 - Are you Sensitive to Sin?
 - Do you Obey God's Word?
 - Do you Reject this Evil World?
 - Do you Eagerly Await Christ's Return?
 - Do you see a Decreasing Pattern of Sin in Your Life?
 - Do you Love Other Christians?
 - Do you Experience Answered Prayer?
 - Do you Experience the Ministry of the Holy Spirit?
 - Do you Discern Between Spiritual Truth and Error?
 - Have you Suffered Rejection Because of Your Faith?

1. Have you Enjoyed Fellowship with Christ and the Father?

- This is an Essential Element in True Salvation
 - It is the first test John presented at the start of his first epistle

*'That which **was from the beginning**, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and **our hands have handled**, concerning the Word of life – **the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us – that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.***

1 John 1: 1-3

- Beyond Earthly Acquaintance or Experience
 - John was going beyond just the earthly acquaintance that he had with Jesus, because he had no such earthly acquaintance with the Father
 - He was enjoying communion with the Living God, the Father, and the Living Lord Jesus Christ
 - Relationship is essential to true salvation – we are meant to have a living relationship with God as Abba (Daddy) Father, and Yeshua as Lord
- It is Supernaturally Experiential – as Paul makes clear

*'I have been crucified with Christ; **it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.***

Galatians 2: 20

- Spiritual Truth is Very Experiential – it's not just a cold fact or intellectual article of creed – it's that we as believers have divine life living in us
- There is an experience to be enjoyed in knowing God intimately
- It's a life lived By Faith
- It's a life lived in the Assurance of God's Love for Us
- It is Abundant Life – as Yeshua said it would be

*'I have come **that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.***

John 10: 10b

- Yeshua didn't just talk about having eternal life - by adding that life could be abundant, He was moving into the dimension of experience

- **The Christian life is a rich life – we are meant to experience joy, peace, love, and purpose...and much more**
 - There is **comfort** (*2 Corinthians 1: 3*), there is **grace** (*1 Peter 5: 10*), there is **supply** (*Philippians 4: 19*), there is **joy and worship** (*Ephesians 5: 19*), there is **belonging** (*Romans 8: 15*), there is **access to the heavenly** (*Hebrews 4: 16*)...and still more!
- **Have We Experienced Communion with God the Father and Yeshua through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?**
 - Have we sensed His presence (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)?
 - Do we experience the Father’s love that Draws us to His Presence?

2. Are you Sensitive to Sin?

- **Light and Darkness do not Coexist**
 - **One drives the other away**
 - **John declares this in his first epistle**

*‘This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that **God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.**’*

1 John 1: 5-6

- **Intellectually, light refers to biblical truth, while darkness refers to error or falsehood** (see Psalm 119: 105; Proverbs 6: 23; John 1: 4-5; John 8: 12)
- **Morally, light refers to holiness or purity, while darkness refers to sin or wrongdoing**
- **Because ‘God is Light’ ... true believers ‘Walk in the Light’**

‘But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.’

1 John 1: 7

 - **Walking...speaks of a way of living...of discipleship, nor just intellectual knowledge**
 - **Two results of Walking in the Light**
 - **Fellowship with other true believers** – we become, together, children of the Living God – part of His body, the true Church
 - **Cleansing from Sin** – Yeshua’s blood frees us from sin’s penalty, washes us clean and we are forgiven
 - **Unbelievers often deny sin in their lives – they are deceived** (*1 John 1: 8*) – sadly this can be true of some who profess to be believers

- **When Sin occurs...it is Confessed**

*‘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: 8

- **True believers have a right sense of sin**
- **If we are going to be in a relationship with God, we have to seek to be holy**
- **When sin occurs in our lives, we must know it – and it must be confessed**
 - It is a common saying, but true...‘confession is good for the soul’
 - The person who is truly saved is sensitive to the sinful realities in his or her life (see Paul’s example in *Romans 7: 14-25*)

- **We Have An Advocate**

'My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.'
1 John 2: 1

- True believers realise they don't have to sin – they are set free from its power (Romans 6: 22)
 - But when they do, they know whom to go to – to Yeshua, the believer's Advocate
 - The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin...but He never condemns
 - Yeshua is the 'Propitiation for Our Sin' – God's righteous judgement of our sin is appeased by Yeshua's shed blood – we have peace with God...a new relationship
- **Have We Become Sensitive to Sin in our Walk in the Light?**
 - Do we realize that to have true relationship with God, we have to live a Holy Life?
 - We can't walk in darkness and claim to have fellowship with Him
 - Are we willing to confess and forsake any sin in our life as we become aware of it?
 - We can Choose not to Sin – we're not fighting a battle we're obliged to lose!
 - To sin is contrary to Christ's work of Breaking the Dominion of Sin in the believer's life (read *Romans 6: 1-15*)

3. Do you Obey God's Word?

- **Keeping God's Commandments is Clear Evidence of True Salvation**

'Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.'
1 John 2: 3

- This involves not only the act of obedience but also the spirit of obedience
 - A willing, habitual safeguarding of God's Word, not just in letter but in spirit
 - It's not Legal obedience (which demands perfection or penalty) – but rather A Call to Gracious Obedience because of the penalty that Yeshua has already paid
 - Loving God – the first commandment (*Deuteronomy 6: 5*) results in Obedience
- **A Clear and Evident Contrast**

'He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.' **1 John 2: 4-5**

 - A true Christian is revealed not by Sentiment but by Obedience
 - Some who profess to be believers have 'the talk' but not 'the walk'
 - Loving the Lord means obeying His Teaching (*John 14: 23*)
 - Yeshua is the Vine – joined to Him we will bear fruit (*John 15: 5; Galatians 5: 22-23*)
 - **Obedience is Key Element in Discipleship**
 - Through Obedience the love of God is perfected in us (read *Psalm 119*)
 - The 'Great Commission' emphasises being taught to obey (*Matthew 28: 19-20*)

'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen'
Matthew 28: 19-20

- The Believer is a ‘follower’ of the Lord – walking in His footsteps
- Do We have a Heart Desire to Obey God?
 - Does our Gratitude for all that Christ has done for us lead to a desire to obey the Word of God?
 - Is the Love of the Lord the driving force of our Obedience?

4. Do You Reject this Evil World?

- What, or Who, we Love dictates our Emotions and Objectives

‘Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.’ **1 John 2: 15**

- Our Attitude towards the World reveals our Heart Love
 - What we love speaks of our deepest constraints, our most compelling emotions and goals
 - True Believers discern what the things of the world are all about

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. **1 John 2: 16**

- True Believers know This World is Passing Away

‘And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.’ **1 John 2: 17**

- Until Yeshua returns, Satan dominates this world

‘We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.’ **1 John 5: 19**

- Satan is ‘the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4: 4)
- New Life in Christ plants within us Love for God and the Things of God
- Consequently, the true believer disdains ‘the things of this world’

- The Born Again Believer is No Longer ‘Of This World’

‘I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.’ **John 17: 14-16**

- True Believers know this World is Not Their Home
 - We still move about in the World but we are not ‘Of It’
 - Because Satan is ‘the god of this world; Yeshua prayed specifically for the Father to keep us from the evil one
 - We're vulnerable to being sucked into this evil world's system now and then, but our love is toward God
 - Love of God will draw us out and redirect our focus toward heavenly priorities

- Do We Reject the World?

- Do we reject its false religions, damning ideologies, godless living, and vain pursuits?
- Do we love God – His truth, His kingdom, and all that He stands for?

5. Do You Eagerly Await Christ's Return?

- **The Glorious Hope of all True Believers is Yeshua's Return**

*'Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that **when He is revealed, we shall be like Him**, for we shall see Him as He is. And **everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself**, just as He is pure.'*

1 John 3: 2-3

- **The true Christian will have hope in their heart – a hope focused on Christ's return**
 - **Because Our Citizenship is in Heaven – we should be eagerly awaiting our Saviour's return** (*Philippians 3: 20*)
 - **That Hope will purify the life of the true believer**
- **It is a Sensible Hope leading to Sensible Living**

*'For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, **we should live soberly, righteously, and godly** in the present age, **looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ**,*

Titus 2 : 11-13

- **It's not a kind of anticipation where you are reckless with your earthly responsibilities**
 - Being so heavenly minded that you're no earthly good is a contradiction in terms for the Believer as a Witness to the Lord in this world
 - **The hope of Christ-likeness compels us to act more like Him in reaching out to others, and fulfilling all that God has set out for us to do**
- **Do We Find Ourselves Longing for the Return of Jesus Christ?**
 - Is the Hope of Yeshua's Return our great Heart Longing?
 - Are we continually 'Looking Up' rather than 'Looking Around'?

6. Do you see a Decreasing Pattern of Sin in Your Life?

- **A Decreasing Pattern of Sin is Clear Evidence of Love for the Things of God**

*'Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and **sin is lawlessness**. And you know that **He was manifested to take away our sins**, and in Him there is no sin. **Whoever abides in Him does not sin**. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. **He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous**. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. **For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil**. **Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.***

1 John 3: 4-9

- **Lawlessness conveys more than transgressing God's law**
 - **It conveys the ultimate sense of rebellion**, i.e., living as if there was no law or ignoring what laws exist
 - **'Commits sin' – the Greek verb conveys the idea of making sin a habitual practice**
 - **Unbroken patterns of sin are characteristic of the unregenerate...and of those who profess to be Christian yet who lives do not bear it out**

- **True Believers Do Not Habitually Sin**
 - **The first reason why Christians cannot practice sin is because sin is incompatible with the law of God which they love (they do not practice lawlessness)**
 - **A second reason why Christians cannot practice sin is because it is incompatible with the work of Yeshua**
 - Yeshua died to sanctify (make holy) the believer (see *2 Corinthians 5: 21; Ephesians 5: 25-27*)
 - To sin is contrary to Christ's work of breaking the dominion of sin in the believer's life (read *Romans 6: 1-15*)

- **True Believers Pursue Holiness**
 - **Believers are 'Born of the Spirit' – the Holy Spirit whose work in us is Sanctification**
 - **There may still be sin in the life of the true believer**
 - **The allure of the World is still there...and our unredeemed Flesh ...and the attack of the Enemy of our soul (the world, the flesh and the devil)**
 - **The More we pursue those Holy Affections of Loving God, the Less we will Sin**
 - **Sin as a Life Pattern is incompatible with salvation – believers have a New Pattern**
 - **Yeshua's work – by the Holy Spirit and the Word – is a Refining Work of Holiness**
 - He was manifested to destroy the works of the evil one – in eternity & in us now!
 - **Don't doubt your salvation because you can't seem to break a sinful or unwise habit**
 - **Lawlessness (Greek: *anomia*) literally means 'living as if there were no law'**
 - **A person who rejects God's authority doesn't care what God thinks about his habits and is obviously not a Christian**
 - **A Christian, however, has a drastically different way of relating to God**
 - He or she is no longer a slave to sin but has offered himself or herself as a servant to the Lord (*Romans 6: 14, 17-18*)
 - A true Christian can still sin, and may even do so frequently, but sinning frequently (while continually responding in confession and repentance) is not the same as shamelessly and unrepentantly practicing sin
 - In 1 John, we see that a true believer can do the first but not the second
 - **The true believer need not doubt, despite still committing sins, because they 'abide in Him' (1 John 3: 6) and are clothed in the righteousness of Yeshua**
 - **There is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus (*Romans 8: 1*)**
 - **God has – because of Yeshua's shed blood – declared us righteous, by faith through grace**

'Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' **Romans 5: 1-2**

'Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.' **Romans 8: 33**

- **Yeshua is at the right had of the Father and intercedes for us**

'Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.' **Romans 8: 34**

- **The Seed of Yeshua in the Heart of the Believer**
 - **The believer has been Born Anew by the Holy Spirit**
 - **The Seed He plants is a new nature, a new life principle, a new disposition**
 - **The Believer is justified by faith (*Romans 5: 1*)**
 - **Holiness is both a goal and a journey for every believer**

- **Do We See Victory over Sin in our life?**
 - Do we see the growth of righteous motives, righteous desires, righteous words, and righteous deeds?
 - Are we not all we ought to be, but certainly not what we used to be?

7. Do You Love Other Christians?

- **Fellowship with God leads to Love for Fellow Believers**
 - **Loving ones fellow believers is a definitive mark of the true Christian**

'In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.'
1 John 3: 10

- **It is evidence of our relationship with God** – we are His children...part of His family...with fellow brothers and sisters
- **Loving ones fellow believers is a definitive mark of walking in the light**

'He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.'
1 John 2: 9-11

- **To be in fellowship with the Lord is to experience and to express love**
 - **Because the Lord loves our brothers and sisters, His love in us should naturally lead to love for our brothers and sisters**
 - **It is a key difference between human families (where the flesh controls) and our spiritual family (where God's love is the driving force)**
 - **Loving fellow Christians comes naturally to the believer** – as Paul said to the church in Thessalonica – see *1 Thessalonians 4: 9-10*
 - **We are taught, Paul says, by God to love our brothers and sisters** – quite naturally...through the Holy Spirit within us
 - **Paul urges them to increasingly love each other more and more!**
 - **Such love indicates spiritual well-being**
 - **Without it we are walking in darkness** – we don't know where we are going
 - **Loving our fellow believers shows there is no cause for stumbling in us**
 - **Love for Fellow Believers is Part of Our New Nature**
 - **This Love is Instinctive, Implicit and Inherent**
 - **It is the natural result of God's love to us and in us**
- 'Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.'*
Romans 5: 5
- **We don't need to be Taught this Love** - it should be the natural overflow from our relationship with God
 - **The first mentioned 'fruit of the Spirit; is love!!!**
- **Love for Fellow Believers is a Witness to the World**

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
John 13: 34-35

- **Loving One Another is a New Commandment**
 - It is a commandment we can obey because of the Holy Spirit within
 - It is not a matter of 'law keeping' but of 'sanctification'
 - It is a test of divine life

'We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.' **1 John 3: 14-15**

- **Loving One Another is a Witness**
 - A witness of our Relationship with God
 - A witness of the Impact of God's Love in Our Lives

'Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.' **Acts 2: 44-47**

- It was evident in the early church
 - It was love went beyond mere feeling to encompass dutiful responsibility, sacrificial care and service, and sensitive concern
 - It demonstrated unity – with each other and with the Lord
 - It was a witness to the people around them
 - It is in stark contrast to the self-centred approach of the unsaved
- **Christian Love is Sacrificial**
 - **The Father's Love is Sacrificial**

'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' **John 3: 16**

- The Greek word translated 'loved' is *agapaō*, it is sacrificial love which involves faithfulness, commitment, and an act of the will
- **Christian Love is like the Father's Love ...Sacrificial**

'By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' **1 John 3: 16**

- The Greek word translated 'love' is *agapē* ...sacrificial love
- John sets a very high standard for our love for each other
- We can't 'work up' this love within us...it flows from God by His Spirit in us

- **Love of our Brothers and Sisters is Practical and Reassuring to our Soul**

'My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.' **1 John 3: 18-19**

- **Our love won't be perfect – but it's our heart attitude and our deeds that will please our Lord**
- **Jonathan Edwards' comments** "John warned that your heart or conscience might try to incriminate you and make you doubt. The fallen flesh has the capability to play games

with your mind. Satan, the accuser of the brethren, may seek to exploit that tendency. In whatever your heart condemns you, you can be assured if you see love in your life.”

- **Do We Love our Fellow Believers?**
 - Is our heart attitude showing the same ‘agape’ love we have received?
 - Is our love in demonstrated in words and deeds?

8. Do you Experience Answered Prayer?

- **Relationship in Prayer is a Source of Confidence and Assurance**

*‘And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. ‘ **1 John 3: 22***

- **You know you’re a true believer if God answers your prayers**
 - This flows out of Abiding in Yeshua – belonging to Him

*‘If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.’ **John 15: 7***

- **John links answered prayer to keeping His commandments – its relationship!**
 - Obedience pleases the Father and He longs to bless us

- **God always answers prayers that are According to His will.**

*‘Now this is the **confidence that we have in Him**, that **if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us**. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, **we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.**’ **1 John 5: 14-15***

- **Knowing God’s Will is the Key to Prayer**
 - Through Obedience believers know the Fathers Will
 - We have Two Witnesses to Guide us – His Word and the Holy Spirit
- **True Disciples discern the Lord’s Will – its relationship!**
 - Believers tailor their prayers according to His will
 - If we are Unsure of God’s Will...we only have to ask and He will tell us!
 - The answers that result for such prayer bring about confidence and assurance

- **God is More Eager to answer the prayers of His children than we are to Ask**
 - It pleases the Father when We Ask for What He Desires

*‘The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. **He will fulfil the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them.***

Psalm 145: 18-19

- He is near – our prayers are part our close and loving relationship
- He will fulfil our desires...desires born of our relationship and obedience
- **Yeshua is our Example**

*Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, **the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner**. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and **He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.**”*

John 5: 19-20

- **He will do so Much More Than we ever Ask Him to do**
 - Think of the blessings and assurance we miss out on!

- **Prayer is an Essential Spiritual Discipline**
 - **Some believers struggle with being assured of their salvation because they have scant experience concerning answered prayers**
 - That comes from a skimpy prayer life!
 - **Prayer Experiences**
 - **Praying for an unbeliever and seeing that person come to Christ**
 - **Praying for someone in great distress and seeing God turn the situation around into blessing and joy**
 - **Seeking God about a void in our lives and seeing Him fill it**
 - **Praying for forgiveness in a clear conscience and receiving it**
 - **Asking God to enable us to present His truth to an individual or group and experiencing His grace to do so with great clarity**
 - **Seeking power in proclaiming the gospel and experiencing it**
 - **Asking that God would help us lead someone to the Saviour, and He does**
 - **Seeking contentment in the midst of trying circumstances and experienced God's peace as a result**
 - **Asking the Lord to help us to know Him better and experiencing greater intimacy with Him after going through some hard lessons**
 - **These are all indications that we belong to Him...and He to us!!!!**
- **Do We Experience Answered Prayer?**
 - Have we had our prayers answered?
 - Is that a pattern of life for us?
 - If so, we can be assured we have eternal life

9. Do you Experience the Ministry of the Holy Spirit?

- **The Holy Spirit is the Root of our Abiding**

'By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world.'
1 John 4: 13-14

 - **The abiding presence of the Holy Spirit within us is the root of our abiding in Yeshua (the True Vine)**
 - **The Holy Spirit testifies truth to us – He is The Spirit of Truth**
 - Apart from the Holy Spirit, we wouldn't know Yeshua (*John 15: 26*)
 - Apart from the Holy Spirit we wouldn't confess Him as Saviour and Lord
 - **Our New Birth was a work of the Spirit –'born again' means 'born from above' (Greek: *gennaō anōthen*) – we are born of the Spirit (*John 3: 5-6*)**
- **The Holy Spirit Assures Us we are Sons & Daughters of God**

'And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.'
Galatians 4: 16-17

 - **The Holy Spirit is 'The Spirit of His Son'**
 - **Just as Yeshua was God's Son – by the Spirit, we know God as Father (Abba)**
 - **Not only are we Sons and Daughters...but we are Heirs, through Yeshua...heirs of salvation...heirs of eternal life...heirs of a heavenly kingdom**

'The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.' **Romans 8: 16-17**

- Praise and Worship – springing up from within – are a sign of our intimacy with the Father and the Son
- Testimony to Others about the Lord is another outworking of our being children of God – the Spirit gives us that desire to share the blessing we have received

• The Holy Spirit within is Our Teacher and Guide

'But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.'

1 John 2: 27

- It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to understand God's Word – He brings depth of spiritual understanding – it's a continual process (see 1 Corinthians 2: 10-12)
- The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth – and reveals to us the spiritual realities behind what is happening in the world, now and future

'However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.' **John 16: 13**

• The Holy Spirit Sanctifies Us – to be Our Lord's Spotless Bride

- The Fruits of the Spirit are the outworking of the inner sanctification (making holy) work of the Holy Spirit (**Galatians 5: 23-24**)
 - These fruit are attitudes – they are spiritual graces
- Subduing the Flesh and Allowing the Holy Spirit to do His Work in us is an act of will on our part – we must allow Him free rein (reign) and not quench Him or resist Him
- The Holy Spirit fits us for our destiny

'as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.' **Ephesians 5: 25b-27**

- Washed by the water (Holy Spirit) with the Word (Scripture)
- A Glorious Church – Greek: *ekklēsia*, meaning called out ones
- Holy and Without Blemish – a spotless bride
- Sanctification is a process – a continual ongoing work
 - So reject the enemy's condemnations...there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (**Romans 8: 1**)
 - Cooperate with the Holy Spirit in His sanctifying work
 - We are Getting Ready for a Glorious Future

'But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.' **2 Corinthians 3: 18**

- In the twinkling of an eye...we shall all be changed!
- It is why we pursue holiness

- **Do We Experience the Ministry of the Holy Spirit?**

- Do we know His Testimony within of Our Abiding in Yeshua?
- Do we know His Assurance Within that we are Sons & Daughters of God?
- Do we experience His Teaching and Guidance?
- Do we experience His Sanctifying Work in our Lives?

10. Do you Discern Between Spiritual Truth and Error?

- **We are Instructed to ‘Test the Spirits’**

- **In this tenth test of determining the presence of saving faith, John in his epistle actually uses the word test:**

*‘Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.’ **1 John 4: 1***

- **Every false religious system in the world and every false teacher violates this test – the spirit at work is not of God.**
- **We Have Two Witnesses (a biblical standard for truth)**
 - **The Holy Spirit within us is our teacher and guide – if we are attentive to Him, He will tell us whether what we hear or see is of God**

*‘However, when He, **the Spirit of truth**, has come, He **will guide you into all truth**; for **He will not speak on His own authority**, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. **He will glorify Me**, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.’ **John 16: 13-14***

- **God’s Word is truth and is there to teach us true doctrine and correct error and unrighteousness**

*‘**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**’ **2 Timothy 3: 16***

- **Marks of False Religion and False Teaching**

- **We are Disquieted** – it does not witness with the Holy Spirit Within
- **Scripture is Contradicted** – ignoring the context of verses or ignoring other relevant scripture...false teachers always do this
- **The Father and/or Yeshua are Not Glorified** – false teachers always promote themselves...humility is a significant mark of a godly teacher
- **You feel a Failure and are Not Edified** – God’s truth will correct but not condemn...and it will build you up in your soul, toward the Lord
- **Your Focus is taken off of Yeshua** – false teaching diverts attention away from Yeshua or promotes a false view of Yeshua
- **The Holy Spirit becomes the Focus** – even Yeshua never focussed on the Holy Spirit nor did He ever pray to Him! (see *John 14: 16, 26*)

- **The Marks of ‘AntiChrist’**

- **Biblically, ‘Antichrist’ is a Spirit Not A Person**

- **Only once does scripture mention ‘the Antichrist’ and even this has to be understood in context (*1 John 2: 18*)**
 - **Many original Greek texts omit the word ‘the’**
 - **John refers in that verse to ‘many antichrists’**

*'Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that **the Antichrist is coming**, even now **many antichrists have come**, by which we know that it is the last hour.'*

1 John 2: 18

- **There are indeed many spirits of antichrist in the world** – they have been there right from the Garden of Eden, and since the early days of the church – and we sense them in great number today
- **It would be more biblically correct to refer to the final future world leader in the Tribulation as 'the Coming World Leader' or 'the Final World Leader'**
- **Or to speak of him using Biblical titles:**
 - Seed of the Serpent *Genesis 3: 15*
 - Idol Shepherd *Zechariah 11: 16-17*
 - Little Horn *Daniel 7: 8-11, 21-26; 8: 9-12, 23-25*
 - Prince that shall come *Daniel 9: 26*
 - Wilful King *Daniel 11: 36*
 - The Beast from the Pit *Revelation 11: 7*
 - The Beast from the Sea *Revelation 13: 1-10*
 - Lawless One *2 Thessalonians 2: 8*
 - Man of Sin ' Son of Perdition *2 Thessalonians 2: 3*
 - One come in his own name *John 5: 43*
- **Meaning of 'Antichrist'**
 - **The Greek word is 'antichristos'**
 - **It comes from two root words: from 'anti', meaning 'opposite' or 'instead'; and from 'Christos', meaning 'anointed one'...that is Messiah**
 - **Thus 'antichrist' is a pseudo- Christ spirit – a false or fake spirit, imitating and masquerading as the true Christ**
- **'Antichrist' Denies Yeshua's Humanity**

*'By this you know the Spirit of God: **every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.'***

1 John 4: 2-3

- **This is repeated in 2 John 1: 7**
- **Yeshua's humanity is essential to salvation... a kinsman redeemer was needed**
- **Any hint that Yeshua was not fully man or had special spiritual help (other than that which is available to us through prayer, the Spirit or the Word) is false**
- **Atheists and Agnostics often seek to dispute Yeshua coming in human form – yet there is much contemporary evidence of Him**
 - Most people live their lives today in total ignorance of God incarnate
- **'Antichrist' Denies Yeshua's Divinity**

*'Who is **a liar** but he who **denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.'***

1 John 2: 22-23

- **Any hint that Yeshua was not fully God or was simply an angel or some sort of spirit being is at variance with scripture**
- **The scriptures teach that man was without help – incapable of being holy and righteous – it was necessary that 'God will provide for Himself the lamb' (*Genesis 22: 8*)**

- **Think Biblically**
 - **Godly Scepticism**
 - **For the sake of your spiritual life and health, don't believe everything you hear, see, and read**
 - **Test the Spirits behind what you hear and read (1 John 4: 1)**
 - **This requires the ability to think biblically**
 - The Greek text implies conducting a rigorous, ongoing examination of whatever and whomever you expose yourself to
 - Why go to all that trouble? "Because many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1)
 - The church has embraced many Trojan horses filled with false prophets!
 - **Satan is a Liar and Deceiver**
 - **He Uses People who Appear to be Good Teachers to lure people away from the truth of God and into destructive error**
 - **Today's church is in a particularly severe state of confusion because of its:**
 - Weak Doctrine and Relativistic Thinking (Greek not Hebraic)
 - Worldly Methodology
 - Inaccurate Interpretation of Scripture (many heretical bible translations)
 - Lax Internal Discipline
 - Spiritual immaturity
 - **Spiritual Discernment**
 - **Sorely Needed in these days** – because of many false teachings in the church
 - **It is the Skill of Separating Divine Truth from Error**

'Test all things; hold fast what is good.'

1 Thessalonians 5: 21

- **John said to test for two things:**
 - Confession of the divine Lord (1 John 4: 2-3)
 - Commitment to the divine Word (1 John 4: 4-6)
- **Cultish Teaching & Behaviour – there is a pattern**
 - Christian Science, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, and the like attack the person of Christ and then postulate a substitute or addition to the Bible (such as Science and Health with Keys to the Scriptures, The Book of Mormon, or The Pearl of Great Price)
- **True Believers won't believe such lies.**
- **True Believers have a resident truth teacher in the person of the Holy Spirit**

'But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.'

1 John 2: 27

- You don't have to be a seminary graduate or an expert on cults and world religions to distinguish truth from error – **listen to the voice of the Spirit and check teaching out with God's Word**

- **Do We Discern between Spiritual Truth and Error?**
 - Do we 'Test the Spirits' with the Holy Spirit and God's Word?
 - Are we sensitive to the marks of false religion and false teaching?
 - Do we watch out for 'the spirit of antichrist'?
 - Do we think biblically and have godly scepticism?

11. Have you Suffered Rejection Because of Your Faith?

- A Painful Test
 - The World Hates the Righteous

‘Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.’ 1 John 3: 13

- Cain hated and murdered Abel ‘Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous.’ (1 John 3: 12)
- Christian Witness and Testimony are a Threat to the Worldly and their Values and Lifestyle

‘For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.’ 1 Peter 4: 3-4

- The Worldly regard the Christian as “the scum of the world, the dregs of all things” (1 Corinthians 4: 13)
- Suffering comes in Many Ways
 - Animosity
 - Hostility
 - Rejection
 - Bitterness
 - Alienation
 - Ostracism
 - Prejudice
 - Outright persecution
 - And many more...

- Don’t Be Alarmed by Rejection and Persecution
 - Yeshua Told Us the World would Hate Us

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.” John 15: 18-21

- Rejection and Persecution from the World is Clear Proof that you belong to the Lord
- Rejection has a Spiritual Root
 - In one sense it is not really personal
 - The rejection has a spiritual root – the worldly are under Satan’s thumb
 - Though you may suffer – it is because you are Yeshua’s disciple...it is ‘for His Name’s Sake’
 - The Demonic are Terrified by the Lord (Matthew 8: 29) and His Presence in you
- Rejection is Proof of Salvation

‘Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and not in any way terrified by

your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.' **Philippians 1: 27-28**

- Worldly Rejection comes because of 'conduct worthy of the gospel of Christ'

- **Rejoicing in Suffering**

- **The Privilege of Suffering for Yeshua's Sake – see *Philippians 1: 29***

- A Learned part of Christian living – not easy
 - It is not Natural...it is Supernatural

- **Rejoicing in a Living Hope & Kept By the Power of God (*1 Peter 1: 3-5*)**

'In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,' **1 Peter 1: 20-21**

- In Trials we need to rejoice in our hope
 - In Trials we must trust that we will be sustained by the power of God

- **Rejoicing because of Sufferings 'Fringe Benefits'**

- **Suffering produces Endurance, Character, and Hope**

'And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.' **Romans 5: 3-5**

- **Hope – the end result – does not disappoint**

- **The Lord's Calling and Commendation**

'For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:' **1 Peter 2: 20-21**

- How precious it is to know God's favour when we suffer
 - In Suffering...Remember – the Lord never leaves you nor forsakes you

'Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."' **Hebrews 13: 5**

- This is Quoted from *Genesis 28: 15; Deuteronomy 31: 6, 31: 8; Joshua 1: 5; 1 Chronicles 28: 20*

- **A Crown Awaits**

- **A Crown of Life awaits for those who have endured through trials or suffered for His sake – see *James 1: 12; Revelation 2: 10***

'Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.'

James 1: 12

- 'Temptation' in this verse means 'trial' or 'being put to proof'

'Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.'

Revelation 2: 10

- 'Unto death' means all of your life...to its end (physically)
 - **The Hope – which is sure and certain – is Eternal Life with the Lord**

- **Do We Suffer Rejection Because of Our Faith?**
 - Do we experience the world's hatred?
 - Do we take it personally or recognise it is for the Lord's sake?
 - Are we alarmed at suffering or do we rejoice?
 - Have we learned to look for the fringe benefits and end results of enduring suffering?

Closing Comments

- **The apostle John gave all the tests that he did in order to give the true believer a biblical basis for confidence**
- **A Review of his 'spiritual inventory'**
 - Do you enjoy fellowship with God and Christ?
 - Are you sensitive to sin in your life?
 - Do you obey the Scriptures?
 - Do you reject this evil world?
 - Do you love Christ and eagerly await His return?
 - Do you see a decreasing pattern of sin in your life?
 - Do you love other Christians?
 - Do you receive answers to your prayers?
 - Do you experience the ministry of the Holy Spirit?
 - Can you discern between spiritual truth and error?
 - Have you suffered on account of your faith in Christ?
- **If you pass those tests, you can have confidence before God**
 - We are on a spiritual journey – guided by the Word and the Spirit
 - We have not yet arrived – we all have things yet to learn and master
 - So don't worry if you're not yet perfect!!
 - Just keep 'Walking in the Light'
- **John writes of these Evidences to Encourage**

'These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.' **1 John 5: 13**

 - There is no reason for you to go through your spiritual experience feeling discouraged, though thousands of Christians do
 - Please don't be one of them!