

NLM President's Message

“Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and choosing sure; for in doing these things, you will never stumble; **11** for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.” 2 Peter 1:10-11.

Do you have assurance of your salvation?

We were on a ship with Filipino seafarers recently and I asked this question (above) to the crew. None of them put up their hand. I also asked, “have you read the bible?” No hands went up. “Do you own a bible?” No hands went up. Do you find this surprising? Well, this is the situation that we are dealing with when we visit the seafarers from the Philippines where the Catholic Church controls everything. But, strangely enough, this response *is* what we should get from them because the Catholic Church teaches that “If anyone saith that a man who is born again and justified is bound of faith to believe that he is assuredly in the number of the predestinate, let him be anathema.” The Catholic Church curses anyone who feels secure in their faith. Unbelievable!

Well, that's not all of it. They teach that “salvation is a joint effort by man and God, and as a blessing which can only be maintained through the doing of good works.”¹ So we definitely have our work cut out for us because these seafarers have a lifetime of the church feeding them this false information. And so they become slaves to works and slaves to the church and neither can truly save them.

I thank God that He has sent us to clear up this misconception about salvation. “Historical biblical theology [teaches that] salvation is all the work of God, . . . and this leads to security and assurance”² I remember evangelizing in the Philippines in 2012 and the people were desperate to have a bible and to hear the gospel. The thirst for God's Word was overwhelming and I remember one woman saying to me, “why doesn't my church teach me this?” She, and her daughter, both eagerly received Christ and a bible. And we see this thirst for God's truth on the ships as well.

Sadly though, our work is slow and laborious since the seafarers must hear the gospel over and over again until the Holy Spirit reveals the truth to them and they believe. Here are some scriptures that highlight assurance of salvation: “even unto all the **wealth of the full assurance of understanding**, unto the full knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself” Colossians 2:2b, “for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full assurance” 1 Thessalonians 1:5; “let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith” Hebrews 10:22. How can any of us have full assurance of salvation? By knowing the gospel, which gives security, which is the fact that “all who are forgiven are forgiven forever.”² Assurance then, is “the confidence that I am one of those forgiven.”² “The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance.” Isaiah 32:17.

Blessing to you all,
Grant Sandeman-Allen

¹ As quoted in “*Conflict with Rome*” by G.C Berkouwer and featured in “*Reasons People Lack Assurance*” John F MacArthur, 61-5 May 27, 1990 gty.org
² “*Reasons People Lack Assurance*” John F MacArthur, 61-5 May 27, 1990 gty.org