***May 5, 2019***

***Today’s Lesson: “The Joy of My Salvation”***

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**From Mike:**

After over a half century of learning, struggling, and growing in Christ, it is my opinion that our greatest challenge in building a close and comfortable relationship with God is trying to understand and accept His love and forgiveness of us.He is our Holy Father—perfect, complete, and all-knowing! We are sinners! Even if every person in the world calls us “good” or “an amazing Christian,” we know we are sinners! Always have been and always will be! And then He, because He is love, paid for our sins and forgave us! He calls it grace, and we accept it, revel in it, and love Him back. BUT...we know that we are still sinners! We know that we don’t deserve that kind of love and forgiveness! Even when we study and grow in our understanding of grace—we still feel unworthy and question our own security of salvation. We still can’t help but mentally picture our spiritual life being laid out on some heavenly grade card and wondering if our F’s outnumber our A’s!

 Too many Christians suffer from the misery of insecurity. For many, hope is a wish not a possession. Maybe we have fought too many battles over the extreme doctrine of “once saved, always saved” and adopted a doctrine of “once saved, maybe saved”! In John 10, the Good Shepherd chapter, Jesus comforts his followers with the guarantee that no one can snatch one of his sheep from his sheepfold. That’s security, protection, and a promise! Of course, he never said that any sheep who wants to walk away can’t. God will never remove our freedom of choice because there is no love without choice.

 Is that just an allegory or some parable? Did God want you to think of your salvation witness as something you weren’t sure about? Nothing makes this clearer for me than John’s message in 1 John. He says over and over “You know”, meaning you can be sure! This morning we look at the key part in 1 John 1:5-10. Read it.