

Catechetical Sermon, January 18th, 2026

Canons of Dort, Head 5, articles 9-11: “Assurance of Faith”

Scripture Lesson: 1 Peter 1:1-8

Lesson Aim	To understand two things: First, that assurance of faith is a struggle, ordinarily, for Christians in this life and second, that God by the power of his Holy Spirit, sustains our faith.
Steps to Learning	Read the Canons of Dort, Head 5, articles 9-11 and 1 Peter 1:1-8. Also discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
Discuss	<p>Assurance of faith involves true faith. What comprises true faith? True faith includes three elements: Knowledge of God, his Christ and salvation, assent to this knowledge and a hearty faith in Christ.</p> <p>Article 11 of head five of the Canons of Dort describes the kind of struggles Christians can have in this life. What are these struggles? We can struggle with doubts such as doubting our election. We can also, at times, doubt the validity of the Christian religion. We can also doubt that we are saved when we fall into sins that we can't seem to avoid. Trials can also create doubt in our hearts; we can ask why God would bring such trials into our lives when we are Christians.</p> <p>Our hope is in God and his power to sustain our faith. How does the occasion of 1 Peter's words help us to understand the struggle with assurance that his readers had? Peter is writing to Jewish and Gentile Christians in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) who were struggling with their faith. They experienced much persecution because they refused to participate in pagan rituals including worshipping false gods. In many cases, these Christians lost everything and were rejected from society. Naturally, they wondered if God cared and if it was worth living for Christ!</p> <p>What did Peter write that encouraged these discouraged Christians? He begins by stating that these Christians were elected by God to be saved and to know him through Christ. Also, he taught them that God the Father caused them to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ! Furthermore, Peter tells them that the final end of their salvation is to an inheritance that is imperishable and unfading, kept in heaven for them. In addition, the trials they were facing were not random but functioned to test the genuineness of their faith.</p>
Bible Reading	Genesis 44-50 (Reading the great stories of the Old Testament)