


LOOKING UP

November/December 2022



*"...look up, and lift
up your heads."
Lk. 21:24*

Can We Be Sure?

BY PASTOR JASON SALMI

Many of us grew up with the idea that we should not be overly confident in our salvation. That this would be prideful or presumptuous. And, after all, the Bible does give clear warnings to believers not to fall away from the faith...which implies that it is possible to fall away from the faith. So, instead there has been a hopeful (sometimes fearful) attitude of "wait and see." Or, "I'll know I've made it after I've made it. There'll be time for

celebration then, but I don't want to count my chickens before they've hatched."

It is absolutely true that the Bible warns believers to hold fast to the faith. Among many other places we could point to, Colossians 1:22-23 contains a conditional statement: "in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard..." So then we can ask the question; is it possible (or even right) to have absolute and complete confidence in our

cont. on pg 2

Regular Schedule

Sunday

9:45 AM Sunday School
11:00 AM Worship service

Holy Communion

2nd & 4th Sunday of the month

Meal

2nd Sunday of the month

Board Meeting

7:00 PM 1st Tuesday
of the month

Ladies Bible Study

10:00 AM Wednesdays

Youth Group

TBA

Friday Night Bible Study

7:00 PM Location TBA

salvation without falling into pride or presumption? In his letter to the church in Philippi, Paul shows us how this is possible. "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6) You see, your salvation is not your own work. You did not begin the work of salvation in yourself, God did. And you would be helpless to bring it to completion on the day when you stand before the Judge of the living and the dead. God does that part also. We only pay lip service to Paul's declaration that our faith is not our own, but is a gift which has been given to us by God (Eph. 2:8), if we view it as a gift which has been freely given to us, but which is then somehow within our ability to retain. If God did not begin the good work (faith) in us, we would not be saved. But also, if God did not maintain that good work in us, we would not be saved.

It is because he knew this to be true that, as he was very near to the end of his life, Paul was able to write these words to Timothy: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:7-8) He is not speaking with pride or presumption when he says, "I have fought...I have finished..." because he knows that he has only done these things because God, in Christ, has been holding him the whole time. With that, he is able to declare, not only the certainty that he will receive a crown of righteousness, but that everyone who believes in Jesus will also receive one. And that, dear Believer, includes you.

May the Lord our God grant you joy and peace as you look forward with anticipation to the eternal reward that Jesus has prepared for you.

Looking Ahead

November 22nd

Red Cross Blood Drive

December 7th

Christmas Program Practice
Church decorating

December 11th

Christmas Program

December 24th

Christmas Eve Song Service

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Mt. 28:19-20

Vancouver Apostolic Lutheran Church

2103 NE 68th Street
Vancouver, WA 98665

Church (360) 693-2620
Pastor Jason Salmi (360) 342-7317