

## **Can a Christian have security in salvation?**

The title of our study in this message is **Can a Christian have security in salvation?** Christianity has been divided on this topic for a long time and there could be a series of messages on this topic in order to deal with the various facets. When we struggle with this topic and related issues, the Christian life can devolve into a fearful, discouragement that robs a person of spiritual joy and health.

Let me tell you a story. There was a little boy who went to church weekly. He was sensitive to God and often felt the stirrings of the Spirit regarding his sin during the Pastor's sermons. He would often be so moved that when the invitation was given, he would go to the altar and pray fearing he was rejected by God. After a little time of crying and prayer, an adult would come up to him and ask this question: Have you prayed through? Not knowing what else to say, and feeling better because of the emotional release of crying, he would say I think so? Sadly, this scenario would happen many times. With each passing year, fear and uncertainty developed in this child's soul regarding his standing with God. This fear of being rejected by God did not begin to go away until as a college student, many people shared with him from the Bible how to be sure where you stand spiritually with God. That little boy and young man was me.

**What is involved in being saved?** We must all be on the same page with this.

1. There is knowledge and conviction of sin (John 16:8-11). No conviction, no conversion.
2. There is an understanding of the consequences of sin (Romans 6:23). Eternal separation, spiritual death is the result of not dealing with sin God's way.
3. There is a choice to repent (change of mind) regarding sin (Luke 13:3,5). Disgust with sin is needed for the beginning of transformation.
4. There is faith in Christ's substitutionary death, burial and resurrection (Romans 10:9). Jesus paid the penalty and is alive to grant us forgiveness.
5. There is a request for Christ as Savior (Romans 10:13). A prayer of faith.

When you trust Christ as Savior, some wonderful things happen that are outlined in the Bible. 1 John 5:11-13 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

Notice these things about this passage:

- If you have the Son, you have eternal life.
- If you do not have the Son, you do not have eternal life.
- You can "know" that you have eternal life.
- God wants you to know if you are in His eternal family or not.

## **Can a Christian lose his/her salvation? What is Baptist teaching?**

Church Statement of Faith – found on EBC website using the "about" tab and "Resources" and then the "Edgewood Constitution and Bi-Laws"

ETERNAL SECURITY AND ASSURANCE OF BELIEVERS (all read together) We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to sin.

What are some verses that help us come to this conclusion?

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Notice these thoughts about this passage:

- God loves you and wants you to have eternal life not eternal death (perish).
- Believing on Christ as Savior gives eternal life.
- Eternal does not mean probationary or temporary. (Reread) If we could lose our eternal salvation it wouldn't be eternal.

John 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

Notice 2 things that happen when you believe (place your faith into) in Christ:

- You have eternal life that is a present possession and is characterized as passing from one state to another – from death to life. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- You are not under judgment.

John 6:37-40 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

Notice these extremely important truths from this passage:

- If you come to Christ for salvation and meet the requirements of repentance and faith (believe), you will be accepted. Isn't this a wonderful truth!
- It is the determination of God that everyone who believes will receive salvation (present) and be raised up in the resurrection (future). God and Jesus Christ fail if this does not happen.

Romans 8:30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Notice the following:

- God justifies (a position of imputed righteousness) the believer. God accepts us just as though we have no sin.
- The past tense is used for “glorified” (a future event) to indicate we have already received it from God's perspective.

Ephesians 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

What is this telling us?

- A seal signifies we belong to God.
- Our sin grieves the Holy Spirit of God.
- The believer is still sealed during the time the Holy Spirit is grieving our sin.
- To lose one's salvation is to suggest the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit is flawed.

If you want to go much deeper than these 5 passages, there is an excellent booklet named: Eight Gospel Absurdities by John R. Rice. <https://www.swordbooks.com/eightgospelabsurdities-2.aspx>

**What about carnal Christians?** Can a Christian sin. Absolutely!

The Church Curmudgeon recently wrote this humorous statement about sin and eternal security: To whoever warmed up fish and cauliflower in the church microwave and just left it sitting in there yesterday, your salvation has been suspended pending review.

The word "carnal" literally means "fleshly." In other words, what about Christians who sin or live according to what their flesh wants versus what God wants? If they don't lose their salvation, then what does God do about their sin? Let's let Scripture answer that question.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?

Notice these thoughts:

- A carnal Christian behaves selfishly like a child and is not being spiritual.
- A carnal Christian is still an infant "in Christ."
- A Christian can be carnal and is characterized by disobedience and a lack of growth. Jealousy and strife are sins mentioned in this passage.
- Carnal Christianity creates internal sin and relational strife. Let's be practical here, sin brings problems into a Christians life.

Hebrews 12:5-11 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than

pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Notice these truths:

- The issue of discipline is that we would “share in His holiness” and develop righteousness – not be kicked out of the family. God wants us to learn to do what is right if we claim Christianity.
- Discipline is painful but comes from a loving God. God often gets our attention through pain.
- Every child of God is disciplined by God because of unrighteousness. We are all flawed in our humanity.
- Being disciplined is evidence of sonship. God takes his responsibility for our growth seriously.
- For Christians, sin is dealt with by discipline rather than condemnation.

No one but Jesus is sinless, but a carnal Christian is characterized by behavior that focuses on disobedience to God’s word and especially behavior that makes feeling good in bad ways a focal point of life. Some pretty big-name people had periods where they were carnal. Moses with his anger, King David with pride, adultery, and murder. Lot with his daughters and drunkenness, Peter with his cursing and denial. Yet each of these did not have a lifestyle of these sinful behaviors. They ultimately cared about their sinful behavior. But I wonder what conclusions we would have made about their faith if we were their contemporaries?

### **Can you live any way you wish and still go to heaven?**

John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

Notice these truths:

- “My sheep” indicates a spiritual connection to Christ.
- A Christian has a sensitivity to spiritual communication from Christ. We sense his promptings through the Holy Spirit.
- A Christian follows Christ in righteous living. Though we do this imperfectly, it is the path that we follow.

John 10:28-30 27 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.”

Notice what Jesus is saying:

- He said, “I give,” not shall give, eternal life. It is present possession.
- They will “never” perish – not they might or might not perish. This is emphatic language.
- God and Jesus are doing the holding. Salvation is wrought by God; we are just the receiver of it.

Galatians 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions,

divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

What do we glean from this?

- Sin and God's kingdom do not go together. They are incompatible.
- The word "do" means a sinful lifestyle and comes with a warning, not one of assurance that you are okay with God. If these things characterize your life – watch out! Your end is not in God's kingdom.

1 John 3:4-6, 24 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness, sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

Notice these powerful and informative truths:

- There is a difference between the act of sinning and the practice of sinning. This was written after 1 John 1:8 that says we deceive ourselves if we say we have no sin.
- To claim to be a Christian but have no effort in overcoming sin and obeying God's commands is to be deceived. Righteousness is important to God.
- Jesus did not die for our sins so we would continue to live in them. God is not cavalier about this.
- A lifestyle of sin shows no connection to Christ. Our attitude about sin says a lot about our attitude toward God.

Reasons for false professions

- Lack of repentance - We want the best of both worlds. Want to be saved but still live a flesh pleasing life.
- Wrong understanding of good works - Good works do not save you (Eph. 2:8-9). Jesus said "I never knew you" to some people who had religious activities but no true faith (Mt. 7:21-23).
- Friend or family pressure - We can experience spiritual peer pressure.
- Deception - Response to false teaching, believing in infant baptism, salvation through good works, believing religious ritual or activities gain God's acceptance of us, my parents are Christian therefore I am as well.
- Ulterior motives – Money, power, acceptance. Do you remember Judas?

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? -- unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

Notice these 4 things:

- Everyone should examine whether they are in the faith.
- If Christ is not in you, you fail the test about being in the faith.
- If Christ is in you, you will reflect that in spiritual growth and Christlikeness.
- No proof of Christlikeness should be a cause for concern regarding spiritual standing.

**If people insist they have accepted the Lord Jesus as their Savior, but they have no desire to read the Bible, learn about Jesus, go to church, pray or be prayed for, are they truly saved if they show no fruit?**

This is similar to the previous question, but let's look at some different verses for answers.

2 Cor. 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Notice the following:

- To be in Christ is to be on a path that is different than your life before Christ.
- The self-life (the old) is replaced with the Christ-life (the new). If there is no new life and activity, then something is wrong with a person's profession.

Hebrews 12:14 Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Let's see some truths:

- There is effort to living at peace with people. Boy isn't that true. Many temptations and actions to sin are accompanied by distress and agitation.
- There is effort to living a righteous (holy) life. We have a selfish nature that makes righteous living a challenge.
- If holiness is not important to you, you will not see the Lord.

Let's look at a story in Matthew 13:24-30 The tares among the wheat.

He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."'"

Observations about this passage

- The tares and the wheat are the lost and the saved.
- Tares look similar to wheat – but they are not wheat. This is true especially when the stalk is young.
- Jesus is saying that there will be people who look like Christians in some ways, but in the end, they are not and they will be suffer separation.

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

What does this verse tell us?

- The context of this passage is antichrists (people who ultimately are against Christ). It is not talking about “the” antichrist but all those who act like him.
- Some religious people are not saved. There are false teachers and those whom they deceive.
- True faith in Christ has a quality of continuance. If God does the miracle of the new birth in a person’s life, there will be a lasting connection of gratitude.

### **Does an overemphasis on grace lead to a license for immorality (see Jude 4)?**

Jude 4 For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus.

The short answer to this question is no, because it is not an overemphasis on grace, but rather a perversion of grace that leads to immorality. God’s grace, correctly taught, leads to freedom from sin not freedom to sin.

Look at the following verses.

Titus 2:11-12 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.

Notice these truths:

- The presence of God’s grace brings the opportunity of salvation to all. Aren’t you glad about that?
- God’s grace focuses on renouncing sinful behavior. God helps us to see, beyond our own ability, how destructive sin is.
- God’s grace gives aid to righteous living. God’s help through grace is to accomplish righteousness in us.

Romans 5:21 So that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

What is this saying about grace?

- God’s grace and our righteousness are inseparable.
- God’s grace directs us toward Jesus and eternal life.

Romans 6:14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

Notice these 2 concepts:

- Sin seeks to dominate us.

- Grace helps to free us from the domination of sin.

Believing in grace and eternal security is not granting a license to sin. In fact, people prove that they are not God's children when they live in a continuous state of wickedness.

### **How does a Christian stop being backslidden?**

- Renounce your sin (Proverbs 28:13) Deal relentlessly with your sin. 1 John 1:9 Agree with God about your sin and its consequences, abandon the sin, turn to God's way.
- Reckon and Yield (Romans 6:11) – by faith you consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God
- Resist temptation God's way (1 Corinthians 10:13) Our way is often to rationalize.
- Realign your affections to eternal issues (Colossians 3:1-8) You do what you love.
- Replace and Renew (Ephesians 4:22-24) Deal with the habits and patterns of your life.
- Reflect on the Word (Psalm 119:9-11) God's Word is necessary to defeat sin.
- Request help from God and others (Proverbs 15:22) Going it alone is a recipe for disaster and defeat.

Galatians 5:16 says ...walk in the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. This verse does not say we will not have desires of the flesh, but rather we will not fulfill them if we are emphasizing the ways of the Spirit.

### **Next Steps**

1. Be worried for your soul if you do not care about living righteously. Notice I did not say living perfectly. The Bible is full of warnings about living in sin and disobedience to God. If there is no battle, you are in a bad place.
2. Rest in God's promises if you have repented and put your faith in Christ as Savior for forgiveness and eternal life.
3. Make knowing Christ and following Him the focal point of your life. There is no one more important. Salvation is just the beginning. We need to abide in Christ for victorious Christian living. There are enemies to this goal that are relentless.
4. Live as you are alive to Christ, not dominated by sin. Don't have a victim mentality if you are a child of God. God can help you overcome but you need to do your part.
5. Gather, Grow, Give, Go! This is not a trite saying. It is a blueprint for spiritual vitality and direction.