

Eternal Security of the True Believer

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[0 : 00] We just completed our look last time at Romans chapter 8, verse 29 and 30, and we saw there the unbreakable chain of salvation.

! That is probably the strongest statement in the Word of God on the perseverance of the saints. Another word that has gained much traction in the last few years is preservation of the saints. I really like that because it is our sovereign God who does the preserving. As Baptists, we of course hold fiercely to the eternal security of the believer, but in the last few years, and it's somewhat unfortunate, but it was necessary to add to that phrase, and now we talk about the eternal security of the true believer.

We've had to keep having to add words. Well, God the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to write words that comment on just how strong our security happens to be.

And he inspired the Apostle John to do the same thing in the gospel that bears his name in chapters 6 and 10. But in the two verses we've been examining, verses 29 and 30, we see indisputable evidence of eternal security.

[1 : 33] And let me read it one more time. God's elect children have been predestined to eternal life, and therefore will persevere.

But those whom God predestined, He also called. And those He called, He also justified, and those He justified, He also glorified.

This amazing chain. And notice all those are in the past tense. In God's mind, they're all in the past tense, including glorified, which is our life in eternity.

By the way, that's the last topic we'll be teaching in here on salvation God's way, and we'll start that in just a few weeks. But in God's mind, they've already occurred.

That is sovereign security. God takes us from eternity past to eternity future.

[2 : 58] We go from predestined in the past to glory in the future. If God is going to cast off a number of those, it's not going to be much glory for them, is it?

But He speaks to them and us about being glorified. Now, we're going to move into the closing words of Romans chapter 8, as we consider the perseverance of the saints in the larger context of salvation God's way.

And if we look to ourselves for security, then we don't have security. I wouldn't have security at all. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are stronger than we are.

When we look to the strength of God in triunity, we can be confident. Here's what Paul has to say, beginning in verse 31 of chapter 8.

What shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?

[4 : 22] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died.

More than that, who was raised. Who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword, as it is written, for your sake we are being killed all day long.

We are guarded as sheep to be slaughtered. Knowing all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure, and your translation might say persuaded.

That's a good word. I'm persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[5 : 35] Now there's a few of you that don't know me as well as other guys, so let me just say this. We're not going to get through all this tonight. And everybody here knows that. Some theologians and expositors of the Word of God has appropriately called that section, 31 to 39, a scripture, in that portion of scripture, the hymn of security.

Because that's what it's talking about. And we're going to be going through that piece by piece. Paul gave the clearest exposition on security in verses 29 and 30.

Yet even with that, people raise objections. Even with what I just read you, people raise objections. In the verses just read, Paul will continue to defend the doctrine of security.

And based upon these truths that I just read, we will live and rejoice throughout all eternity. That's the clear message that comes through.

And the Holy Spirit begins this portion of scripture with these words. What shall we say to these things? I just love that. What shall we say to these things?

[6 : 56] These things refer to the great truths that have been revealed in Romans chapter 8. If you must spend your life on a deserted island with only one chapter of the Bible, this would certainly be on the list to consider.

This would be one of them on the list to consider. And as we go forward and consider verses 31 to 39, we see much discussion on the substitutionary atonement of Christ.

And that's only logical. It is because Christ is our substitute on the cross, we can enjoy security of the true believer in these closing verses of Romans.

We can enjoy security for eternity with Him because He is our substitute. He took our place. He completely satisfied the wrath of God toward our sins.

He is our propitiation, our appeasement, our satisfaction. Anyone who knows the New Testament as it relates to the teachings of the Apostle Paul knows that he was in a relentless battle against false teachers.

[8 : 18] And let me add a little parenthesis here. There's more false teachers on earth today than any time in history. Probably more false teachers in churches.

I didn't say necessarily true churches, but churches. And they hang a cross outside. But we are in this relentless battle against false teachers.

These are human tools of Satan. And they were always ready to exploit the doubts that many Christians or would-be Christians had concerning their security.

This was a big question for Paul. Everywhere he went. Still is a question. Paul, moved by the Holy Spirit, gives to believers in every age the assurance they desperately need.

We need assurance. We need assurance. In reality, Paul is going to examine two fundamental questions concerning the security of the true believer in these closing words of Romans chapter 8.

[9 : 28] And the first question he's going to consider here, can Satan or a human tool of Satan or a demon, also a tool of Satan, cause a true believer to lose his salvation?

A true believer. And then second question, can any circumstance cause a true believer to lose his salvation?

And that's what we're going to be looking at over the next couple of weeks. So we want to address the persons or evil angels who might threaten our security. And to accomplish this, Paul begins with a blockbuster sentence of inspired Holy Spirit truth.

He says, If God is for us, who can be against us? I mean, guys, that will preach on Sunday morning. If God's for us, who's going to be against us successfully?

Actually, God's on our team. God's in our corner. Actually, we're in the corner. He's out fighting for us. If you didn't know any other verse of Scripture as it relates to security, I think that would be enough right there.

[10 : 53] If that's all we had, I'd feel secure. If God's for me, who's against me? That matters. If we knew anything about the Greek language, we would know that that little word if there in the original, and I'm not even going to try to pronounce it, but we would know that it translates from a Greek particle, whatever that is, meaning that it is a fulfilled condition and not just a possibility.

So the English translator should have written, Because God is for us. Now, we can get our hands on that, can't we?

Because God is for us, who can be against us? If Satan, demons, or false teachers are going to rob any one of us from our salvation, they have to be greater than God Himself.

It reminds me of a vigorous discussion I had with a friend of mine over the sovereignty of God. And he said, you know, I hear you talk about the sovereignty of God, I almost believe it. To which I said, if you find one molecule in this universe over which Christ is not sovereign, build an altar to it, put it on the altar and bow before it every morning.

Because that molecule is more powerful than Christ. But you're not going to find that molecule. It's not going to happen. God is the one who gives salvation.

[12 : 33] God is the one who sustains salvation forever. God's the one who promises we are eternally secure. However, let us consider a verse of Scripture also found in Romans chapter 8.

And we've looked at this previously. Verse 1. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. That's powerful.

We're not under condemnation. There's no condemnation reserved for those who are in Christ Jesus. He took our condemnation, nailed it to a cross. Who is there out here that can reverse this truth and take us from no condemnation to condemnation?

And I will tell you who can do that. Anyone you can identify who's stronger than God. If you find anyone stronger than God, Satan, demons, humans, then that would be a possibility.

But we're not going to find anyone stronger than God, are we? I like, don't answer this, you might be embarrassed. I like to ask people sometimes, what's the opposite of God? And boy, people want to jump in and say, Satan.

[13 : 51] No. God has no opposite. He stands alone. There is no opposite. And people say, yeah, but Satan's going to run hell. No.

Satan's going to be the lowest creature in there. Crying out. Is there forgiveness for me? And I have people tell me all the time, unbelievers say, yeah, but I'm going to have a great time.

I'm going to have a lot of buddies in hell. No. You're going to be all alone. You're going to be all alone. And there's going to be some words in your ears. I never knew you, depart from me, you worker of iniquity.

Let us consider here the second person of the Trinity. He is our Savior. He's our Redeemer, Sustainer, Creator.

How powerful is He to keep us saved? Well, let me read this. Colossians chapter 1. He is the image of the invisible God.

[14 : 50] You want to see God the Father? Look at Jesus. He said, I and the Father are one. He is the image. Hebrews says the exact representation.

He is the image of the invisible God. The firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things. And I love this. And in Him all things hold together.

Now, don't get confused by that reference to Christ as the firstborn of all creation. We know Christ had no beginning.

He had a beginning in Bethlehem when He took upon Himself humanity. But His divinity, He's eternal. Co-equal, co-eternal with God the Father, God the Holy Spirit.

[15 : 57] We know that He's eternal. He is not born except in the sense of that incarnation. That passage means He is the preeminent one. He's first. And He's preeminent.

Through an exercise of immense, unmeasurable divine power, the Lord Jesus created everything there is in the universe.

He spoke it into existence. It's fitting that He did that. He's the Word, right? How do you speak? Words. This encompassed everything we could see and things we cannot see.

Are there such things? Well, yeah. Electrons, neutrons, atomic particles, galaxies far, far away that George Lucas stole from me. There's all kinds of things we can't see.

And in this exercise of unimaginable power, He holds everything together. How does He do that?

[16 : 59] Well, the power of His Word. He holds it together. Dark matter. A few years ago, physicists came up with a theory that they've pretty well proven now, and they didn't know what to call it.

And so they call it dark matter. Dark matter. Dark matter. And they claim that while we cannot see it, it composes approximately 85% of the universe.

So what is dark matter? It is the glue that holds everything together in the universe. It is what keeps electrons from flying away from their host atom.

It is what keeps galaxies from throwing off stars and planets. It's why the Earth doesn't go sailing off, and we'd be killed instantly, of course.

It's why the Moon doesn't say, well, I think I'm going to go circle another planet for a while. It's all held together. And they couldn't come up with a name for it, so they called it dark matter.

[18:06] But there is a name for it. Holding the universe together, the name is Christ Jesus. He is holding it all together. So can Satan or demons or unbelievers take away our salvation?

Well, in the words of Kevin McAllister in Home Alone, I don't think so. I don't think so. Let us consider some great truths from the book of Psalms, inspired words of God.

Psalm 27.1 The Lord is my light and my salvation. Okay, you've got two things there, don't you? Light and salvation.

Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? David's words fit hand in glove with those of the Apostle Paul.

Psalm 46. God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble. You ever in trouble?

[19:20] God's our strength and refuge. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved in the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at the swelling.

The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress. Years ago on our farm, we got hit by a tornado. Took pieces of our house.

Took our barns. I went and invited all my neighbors to hurry over. And a couple of them took me up on. They were not believers. And then it hit.

And we're all in there. And I could hear. Well, actually, one neighbor came late. And I opened the door. And his eyes were about that big. And he said, that tornado is in your front yard. And he jumped into the cellar without the stairs.

But he left his two boys in his truck. And I had to go up and get them. I'm getting hit by hail. And I bring them down. I never told him about that. You know why? He wouldn't believe me.

[20:24] He thinks he carried them to that cellar. But anyway, I threw that in for free. But we're getting... And I turned to my wife. Because we had these unbelievers in there.

And I said, I don't know if we have a house or not. But we got Jesus and State Farm. And that's all you need. And we came out.

And there it was. We also have some very strong words from Isaiah. Or as the British say, Isaiah. In chapter 40.

Verse 22 and beyond. It is he who sits above the circle of the earth. You know, we didn't realize the earth wasn't flat until just a few hundred years ago.

Why didn't they read the Bible? He hung the sphere on nothing. And the circle of the earth. And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them like a tent to dwell in, who brings princes to nothing and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.

[21:29] Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him, says the Holy One? Lift up your eyes on high and see who created these things.

He who brings out their host by number, that's the stars, calling them by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power, not one is missing.

Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord and my right is discarded by my God? Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary. His understanding is unsearchable.

[22:29] Wow. With power like that, if God is for us, who could be against us? And what do we care if He's for us? We should note in verse 31 that God does not specify any individual group that might be victorious in depriving us of our salvation.

So let's consider a list of potential persons. Can other people steal our salvation? It's hard to imagine, but in Paul's day and during his public minister, there was just such a group of people.

They were called the Judaizers. They held to and taught one of the most horrible heresies in all of history. They told Jews and recent converts to Christianity, most of whom came out of Judaism, all of them, that to be saved or maintain your salvation, that they had to strictly observe certain parts of the Mosaic Law.

That was what they taught them. It was all centered on men. Any man wanting to be saved had to be circumcised. If you weren't circumcised, you couldn't come to Christ and be saved.

This issue was the purpose of the Jerusalem Council, which is discussed in the book of Acts. Your homework, by the way, this week is to read Acts 15, 1-29.

[24 : 03] And I will reveal to you the results of the Council. After hearing the issue, they ruled that no Christian is under the ritual law of the Mosaic Covenant.

Not under it. Paul also had to battle the Judaizers in the book of Galatians. Here's what he wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For freedom, Christ has set us free.

Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery. Look, I, Paul, says to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you.

I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obliged to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ. You who would be justified by the law.

You have fallen from grace. For through the Spirit by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

[25 : 21] A group that teaches that you can lose your salvation is the Roman Catholic Church.

They're big on that. They claim that people lose their salvation if they commit one of the mortal sins.

And I look those up. And there's tender ears in here like Derek and others. We want to be careful, but to the Roman Catholics, taking contraception or abortion, can't go to heaven.

Skip that one. Next, immodesty. Wearing leggings and short shorts. Real short shorts. Skip the next one.

In marriage, anything unnatural. They didn't define natural, but any act that's men with men, women with women. Chronic failure to raise your kids in the Catholic Church.

Greatly harming someone's reputation. Missing mass on Sunday without good reason. Or performing unnecessary work on Sunday. Denying your workers a fair wage.

[26 : 36] Getting drunk on alcohol or high on drugs. Taking the name of Jesus in vain. Denying the Catholic faith, including any involvement in the occult.

Probably include Baptists in that. Skipping Friday penance. And receiving holy communion with any of the above sins on your heart.

The church at Rome says, if you commit one of these sins, you will lose your salvation. They also claim that the Roman church has the power to grant or revoke grace.

None of this has any foundation in Scripture. In fact, that's on the level of heretical. I find it interesting they didn't say anything about priests who engage in activities, illicit immoral acts with children under their care.

That didn't make the list. Another question that comes up often is can Christian people put themselves out of God's salvation by committing heinous sin that nullifies God's grace?

[27 : 44] Now we do know there are Christian denominations that teach losing your salvation. I've had some great discussions with dear friends of mine, Wesleyan brothers, and they are brothers in Christ.

Usually I get them to admit that it takes a very serious sin to lose your salvation. Spitting on the sidewalk, throwing trash out of your car, spitting your gum out, that's not going to do it.

Those sins are not serious enough. So I get them to admit it's got to be really a serious sin. And I ask them, what about violating the two greatest commandments? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with their whole heart, with their whole soul, with thy whole mind, with thy whole strength, and thou shalt love your neighbor as yourself.

What if you violate that 24 hours a day your whole life? Is that enough? And they don't want to go there. No one has ever fulfilled completely those two commandments save for Jesus.

Does that mean we're all candidates for losing our salvation? No. It means we're all in need of a Savior who has fulfilled those commandments.

[28 : 56] Dr. Sproul, the late Dr. Sproul, said every second we live on this earth we live at needing Jesus because we have not fulfilled the two greatest commandments. Titus tells us we were saved by an act of mercy from God.

He saved us not because of works done by us in righteousness but according to His own mercy. That's undeserved mercy.

We did not deserve to be saved. We did not earn our salvation. Titus tells us, actually Paul tells Titus, God was merciful.

And if we're going to lose our salvation, does that mean that God would not have to become unmerciful? If you're saved by mercy, if you're going to lose it, is that an act of unmercy? What about people who claim they are saved and then walk away into a lifestyle of unbelief? Well, there's two possible answers to that from Scripture. 1 John 2:19, they went out from us, but they were not of us.

[30 : 04] For if they'd been of us, they would have continued with us, but they went out that it might become plain that they are all not of us. Mike and Jerry and others of us here, we know there's a lot of people that walked out of this church.

James, Paul, Johnny, there's a lot of people that walked out of here. And it's not that they, well, we're going to join another church. I mean, they just, I remember that one lady left because she wanted to take line dancing on Sunday morning.

One guy left because we frowned on drinking beer and he wanted to buy beer and he walked out. Real scriptural reasons.

James 5. My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sin.

The death there, spoken of, is eternal death. Separation from God. Well, the question is, is it possible for a person truly saved to put himself out of God's salvation?

[31 : 16] Again, the operative words, truly saved. We're not dealing with someone that is a false believer, a pretender. This person has really been saved, chosen before the foundation of the world.

His name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life from eternity. That's who we're talking about. Can that person put himself out? Is it possible for that person to depart from the faith and be forever lost?

First of all, show me someone that's all that that I just read. You know, chosen, saved, Lamb's Book of Life, all that. Why would they want to depart from the faith?

That's what I would want to know. Why would you want to depart? We may be buffeted around and bruised and bloodied and bowed, but you know, when those things happen, that brings us closer to the Lord to seek relief and shelter and protection.

Remember that great passage in John 10, we've already studied it. My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me.

[32 : 40] There's some action in there, isn't there? The sheep of Christ hear His voice and they follow Him and on Jesus' part, He says, I know them.

I know them. He always tells unbelievers, I never knew you. And Jesus goes on, He says, and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

Pretty powerful. 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.

And I left out verse 30 where Jesus says, I and the Father are one. But Jesus says there, no one's able to snatch them out of My hands or the Father's hands covering Jesus' hands.

I had one friend who believed in conditional salvation. I said, when you read John 3, 16, God so loved the world that He gave conditional life.

[33 : 52] Is that how you read? Oh, no, no. But I had this friend, he says, I believe you can jump out and you can lose your salvation. Maybe that person can jump out of the hand of Christ and the Father.

My first question to him, why would you want to? Why do you want to jump out? And additionally, there is not one verse of Scripture that tells us of any follower of Christ doing that.

and I say it cannot and will not happen. You know, I said last time, if anyone ever deserved, I guess, other than me, to lose their salvation, it was King David and his priest with Bathsheba.

And you remember when Nathan the prophet went to him and finally the light bulb came on and David got down in the dirt? He's the king. Laid down in the dirt and said, I've sinned against God.

And he said, God has not taken away your salvation. But, Ed Suss used to call that billy goat religion.

[35 : 04] He butted them all over the place. But, and he got four-fold judgment. I mean, daughter raped by a son, son killed another son.

I mean, it was, it was bad. Couldn't build the temple that fell to Solomon. No verse of Scripture says we can jump out.

No verse of Scripture says a true believer will ever want to jump out. Take care. Thank you.