

A Certain Salvation

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Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[0 : 00] John chapter 6 verses 38 and 40 will be the text for this morning's sermon.

! I'm going to begin reading at verse 35. Would you please stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word together.! Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

But I said that you have seen me, and yet you do not believe. 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. May God add a blessing to the reading of His Word. Lord, would you please be seated. Lord, would you please be seated. You know, history is riddled with numerous examples of well-known projects that never reached their completion.

[1 : 27] Paintings, books, monuments, buildings that have never or are a long way away from ever being completed.

In most of the cases, when that is the case, they do not reach completion because either the artist or the author or the subject has died before the work could reach its completion.

Or maybe because the funding for the project that was there in the beginning ran out over the course of that project, and so without the funds to be able to finish it, the project remains incomplete to this day.

A modern example of this is the Rajjeeang Hotel in North Korea, the capital of North Korea. It's a 105-story hotel, 1,080 feet high. It's shaped like a pyramid, and it's a skyscraper.

[2 : 29] Skyscraper that originally began, was under construction beginning in 1987. 1987.

At an estimated cost of \$750 million initially before the work had to be halted in 1992 because of the fall of the Soviet Union and the economic collapse that resulted in that region of the world because of it.

Then, six years later in 1998, the work on the exterior of the hotel was once again underway and was completed in 2012, eight years ago.

It's not known how much money was put into the hotel from 1998 to 2012 to be able to do that. Lots and lots of money.

I know that they estimate today that in order to finish the inside of the hotel, it would cost somewhere around \$2 billion.

[3 : 36] And as of this day, a project that began in 1987 as a hotel, it has yet to host even one guest.

So quite literally, that hotel is a colossal waste. A colossal waste. Now, I'm sure that none of us have ever begun a project with such a great price tag attached to it.

However, I'm sure that you, like me, have undertaken a project that you have yet to finish. Or you have plans of finishing, or maybe secretly you have no plans of ever finishing that project.

If we were to go to your homes after church, and I'm speaking primarily to the men here, I'm sure we might find a car or a motorcycle or an appliance or a machine in your garage or somewhere, in your storage shed, or whatever the case may be, that you plan to fix, but it hasn't been fixed.

And it's collected a pile of dust upon it since that first moment you placed it there with the intention that I'm going to fix this thing. Ladies, maybe it's something else.

[4 : 59] Maybe it's an unfinished scrapbook. Maybe it's a room that you began to paint or had plans to paint that you never quite got around to finishing, or a room that you plan to decorate, or are in

the process of starting to decorate, but you never got around to that being completed as well.

And it could be for the same reasons. It's maybe because of lack of time. Maybe it's because of lack of money. Maybe it's a lack of desire.

Whatever the case may be, I'm sure that all of you, all of us, have projects at home that have not been finished. And I'm sure that some of you right now, or if you're sitting next to your spouse, you've had an elbow dug into your ribs a couple times, right?

Thinking about this very thing of all those projects that we had intended to complete that we never got around to doing. And I know if I was sitting next to my wife right now, my rib cage would probably be sore as well.

The point is that we often undertake projects that we don't finish, don't we? We often do that. Over the course of our lifetime, we'll get excited about a project, we'll work hard on it, but along the way, for whatever reason, we lose that excitement, and we have yet to complete those things.

[6 : 18] In these verses, however, we are blessed to encounter the finishing power of Jesus Christ. Namely, His ability to save and to keep those whom He has saved for all time.

From this text and others like it, we are presented with the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, or another way to say that is the preservation of the saints, however you want to say it. Simply put, this doctrine means that God never begins a work that He does not intend to finish. He will never run out of the resources.

He will never run out of desire that we lack, often, again, in completing those projects that we started on. Jesus tells us here that those who are called to faith in Him as Savior are saved and never will not be saved.

In verses 36 through 37, Jesus has spoken about His ability to save us, and we considered those last week. Again, a salvation of which we are incapable of doing on our own.

[7 : 33] And now in verses 38 through 40, He speaks of His ability to keep us saved, never losing any of those who have been called, who have turned to Him in faith in Christ as their Savior.

In verse 37, Jesus said, again, All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. Now in the original Greek in which this Scripture was written in, that statement contains a double negative.

Umeh. Never, never. And so what Jesus quite literally is saying here is that whoever comes to me I will never, never cast out or drive away.

Jesus promised to lose none of those who do come. He states here His resolve according to the Father's will to keep them, preventing anyone or anything from taking them or removing them from His hand.

And so here's the main idea for this morning's sermon. Those who are saved have their salvation forever, forever preserved by Christ.

[8 : 53] From predestination to glorification, believers will persevere because of God's saving work. Before we continue, let's pray.

Lord God, we thank You for Your Word. Again, we're thankful for this time that we have right now. Lord, we pray that You would give us clarity as we hear and as we think through what You've said. God, we pray that You would help us to take this truth and apply it to our lives, that You would be glorified in them. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Now, most of us know people who have made a profession of faith in Christ and who have perhaps even displayed a strong faith involving their inclusion or they're getting deeply involved into the ministries of the church that they're going to or the lives of those who attended that church, but for some reason along the way they renounced or later recanted the faith that they claimed to have in Jesus Christ.

And when that happens, it raises the question of whether a person can lose their salvation. Now, we know that many Christians in many Christian denominations who we often partner with in various ministries, they do believe that you can lose your salvation.

As a matter of fact, I grew up attending a denomination that believed that very same thing. Those who believe that you can lose your salvation, they'll point to Scripture verses like Hebrews 6 or Paul's concern expressed for the believers in 1 Corinthians 9.27 about their becoming disqualified.

[10 : 37] Some also look to the Old Testament and they look at Saul. Remember, the first king of Israel who seemed at some point to be in God's grace, but later was not. And so this is something that not all Christians agree upon.

However, I think if we look at what God's Word says, it's clear. And so that's what we'll be doing today. Now, we do know that as a Southern Baptist church, this is one of our core doctrines that links us all together.

We do believe that God preserves a person's salvation. And now you may have heard it said this way in our SBC circles, which is once saved, always saved.

Okay? Speaking of the same thing. Preservation of the saints, once saved, always saved. The doctrine teaches that if you have saving faith in Christ that's genuine, you'll never lose it.

And if you lose it, again, it's because you never truly had it in the first place. And that's what Scripture says.

[11 : 47] Explicitly, it states that truth in 1 John 2:19. Some believers had experienced some who had claimed to be teachers, who had claimed to be followers of Christ, but who departed.

And so John there says, they went out from us, describing them, but they were never 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 are all not of us. Again, we see in Jesus' parable of the soils. Remember that parable where in Luke 8, 5-8, He gives us a picture of different soils and the seed that is the gospel that fell in these different areas and that in some places, in one place it grew and it multiplied, in other places for various reasons, that gospel seed never took root. And again, it's speaking to, Jesus there is talking about the genuineness of our salvation. That those for whom the gospel has truly, it has taken root in their heart, they will never go out from us. The doctrine of perseverance or preservation, and to make it easier, I like preservation better, so I'm just going to say preservation, okay?

[13 : 06] The doctrine of preservation does not rest upon our ability to persevere. And that's why I like preservation better. Because when we hear persevere, it feels like it's something I need to do, but this is more of a preservation.

It's what God does. Because again, it rests upon God's ability and His promise to do what He says that He will do. Look at Romans 8, 8 verses 29 through 30, where again, we see this doctrine presented to us clearly.

It says there, for those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in the order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.

And those whom He predestined, He called. Those whom He called, He justified. And those whom He justified, He also glorified. So you see there, each believer who's been saved by God's grace moves from one category to the next, and to the next, and to the end, right?

It says that those who are called will be justified. Nobody's lost. Those called will be moved into that next category of being justified. Those who are justified will be glorified.

[14 : 19] And on the way to glorification, we see too that God is ever working in our lives to conform us increasingly into the image of Jesus Christ through the process of sanctification.

God is not able and will not leave a project unfinished. Those who are saved have their salvation preserved by Christ. From predestination to glorification, believers will be, will be preserved because of God's saving work.

Now, how can we be absolutely certain of this? Well, I believe that in these verses, Jesus provides us with three assurances regarding the certainty of your salvation.

And here's why this is important. For you as a believer, it's important in knowing that Christ has certainly saved you and that He will certainly keep you, that you should not ever fear that the most precious thing that you have received from Him, your salvation, is something that you will ever lose, something that He will ever take away, or something that will ever be defaulted on.

It erases any doubt that you could ever wander eternally from the fold of God. He who has saved you has promised to keep you and to raise you up on the last day.

[15 : 47] In a world of uncertainty, right? 2020, the year of uncertainty. I know we're all ready for it to be over and who knows what 2021 is going to be like, but let's pray.

The certainty of God's promises are so sweet and they're so good to us, especially during uncertain times. Because we can turn to Him, we can turn to His Word, and we can be recipients of His truth and have that certainty that comes from our Lord and Savior.

What about as an unbeliever? Why is this so important? Well, quite simply, it's because salvation is only through Jesus Christ. Trusting in your good works.

Trusting in your basically being a good person. Thinking that they are sufficient to save you. The Bible says otherwise that they are not. That to be saved, you must believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

And so today, if you're an unbeliever listening to this, that certainly has been and is my prayer for you. That you will hear God's Word and that you will be called and be saved.

[16:58] So the first assurance regarding the certainty of our salvation, the one I'm going to spend the most of my time on this morning is this. A believer's salvation is certain because Christ has come.

A believer's salvation is certain because Christ has come. How can we know this is certain? Well, first of all, we can know it's certain because Christ has come. In verse 38, he says again, for I have come down from heaven and not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

And so, this is so important because Christ has come, we can be saved. God lowered himself to his rebellious children.

God became a man so that men could become children of God. The eternal Word of God took on flesh and willingly died to provide eternal life for those who were spiritually dead.

The King of Kings became a slave. The Sovereign Lord of all exchanged a crown of glory in heaven for a crown of thorns on earth. The righteous judge died a criminal's death, hoisted upon a cross between two thieves.

[18:12] There, our perfect and holy Lord who knew no sin became it so that He could be the sinner's defender. the righteous judge was executed in the place of sinners, thereby becoming their only hope because He is their only Savior.

When Jesus says that He came down, He says, not to do my will, but the will of Him who sent me. And so, we could read that and we could think that there are two wills at play here and wherever there are two wills at play, there's always the potential that those wills could clash.

But that isn't the case in what Jesus is saying here. Jesus is stating again to His Jewish audience, those who have followed Him over after He's miraculously fed them, He's stating to them that if they are questioning His authority, His being the Christ, that if they are opposing Him, that truthfully, they are opposing God the Father.

Because as He said, He and the Father are one. And we'll get there eventually in John 10.30. In other places, again, He's stated that His will is totally in sync with the Father's will.

We've been here. John 4.34. Again, it says there, Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work. John 5.19.

[19:43] So Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing on His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

And then later, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus is in great agony. The fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy that Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief was at hand.

Though truly those words were descriptive of His whole entire earthly life. But here in the Garden of Gethsemane, we see them coming to a climax as there Jesus prayed.

In the early morning hours, on the day of His crucifixion, He prayed to the Father. Matthew 26.39. It says that going a little further, He fell on His face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.

Not as I, nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will. And so when we read that text and we think about Jesus' will is in sync with the Father's will, we wonder what's going on here.

[21:13] I think one of the questions that I've asked before is why is Jesus in such agony at this moment? Why would He pray, if possible, that He might drink of the cup?

Which leads to another question, and that is, what is in the cup that is so distressing to Jesus as He contemplated the reality that He would soon drink it?

You know, as excruciating as the cross was, and those who died on crosses experienced a terrible, terrible death, Jesus' reference to the cup points us to something that is much more and eternally agonizing than how excruciating death on a cross was.

And so we look to Scripture in both the Old and in the New Testament, this cup, as a metaphor, is often used to describe the wrath of God.

We look back in the Old Testament in one of those places where that is the case in Psalm 75, 8.

There it says, For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup with foaming wine well mixed, and He pours

out from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs.

[22 : 34] And then in Revelation 14, 9-10, a New Testament example. It says, So it was not the physical agony that Jesus so dreaded and agonized over again as horrible as that was.

Rather, it's a spiritual agony. It's here He foresees that He would drink to its last bitter drop the cup of God's wrath.

The wrath that we who have believed deserved. For every sinner whom Jesus died, He took God's eternal wrath and stood in their place.

He took millions and millions of people's wrath. The wrath that was to be meted out upon them for their sins.

millions of hells. So stressed was He in considering that He would drink this cup and every last drop in it.

[24 : 18] The cup of God's wrath that He sweat drops of blood. Now I'm sure that you, like me, you've been distressed.

You've been in agony. You've experienced pain. You've experienced heartbreak. But I don't think any of you has experienced, and not to downplay your agony in any way, I don't think any of you have been so stressed that the blood vessels in your forehead burst and you were bleeding sweat. That's what's going on with Jesus here. Then Luke records in chapter 22 that God sent an angel to strengthen Him in that moment.

So again, after Jesus spoke His agonizing prayers, yet still committed Himself to the will of the Father to carry out His eternal redemptive plan, we wonder, I wonder, that if perhaps that angel had not come, would Jesus have bled to death?

He was sweating over what He was about to become, over what He was about to endure. So intense was the anguish that perhaps without that ministering spirit, He would have bled to death thinking about what He would become.

[25 : 46] Now theoretically, God can do whatever He wants, but He had already stated. He had already stated and put Himself on record in His Word as saying that salvation will come through blood sacrifice.

That without the shedding of blood, there's no forgiveness of sins. God won't go back on His Word. He's not inconsistent with His promises. So we know what's on Jesus' mind.

It's the cup. The cup filled with divine wrath. And Jesus being holy as God is holy must abhor sin.

And so knowing that He was about to become sin and take the place of sinners and be crushed for their sins, His response is necessary in revealing to us the severity of our sin.

And His taking the cup of God's wrath and drinking every last drop. And again, this is exactly what He determined to do.

[26 : 53] He concludes that prayer by saying, yet not I will, but what you will. Their wills are in sync. And He said all along, I only do what the Father tells me, shows me, desires of me.

And when I see what the Father does, that's what I do. I follow His direction. No conflict of wills here. As He said, when He was 12 years old, a boy in the temple, remember?

And Mary and Joseph went to find Him and they questioned Him about where He's been and what He's been doing and His reply was simple, I must be about my Father's business. And so Jesus always was about His Father's business.

He had to come. He had to come to live that sinless life that we could be imputed or that it could be credited to our account.

He had to come and drink the wrath, that cup of wrath that was filled again to the brim with the sins that we've committed by taking our place as our substitute, being crushed for our transgressions, that we who turned to Him in faith would be forgiven because He truly and literally died for our sins, suffering in our place, taking our punishment, and giving us eternal life.

[28 : 12] And so, know this, that if you're saved, your salvation is certain because Christ has come. Christ has come.

He has lived sinlessly. He has endured your punishment. He has died. He has risen. He has ascended to heaven where He sits at the right hand of the Father.

And what does He do? He intercedes on your behalf. As we speak. Secondly, how can we know our salvation is certain?

Well, according to this verse in 39, a believer's salvation is certain because Christ will preserve them. A believer's salvation is certain because Christ will preserve them.

Again, I'll read verse 39. Jesus says, 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. Christ's ability to keep our salvation to preserve it is a truth that, again, Scripture clearly and emphatically declares.

[29 : 15] The Apostle Paul who knew this truth writes of God's power to keep and preserve His salvation to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1.12. There he says, but I am not ashamed for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard until that day what He has entrusted to me.

This verse is telling us that when we believe in Jesus Christ for our salvation, we are trusting that God will keep that deposit secure forever.

My grandfather died, oh, maybe about 20 years ago. And I love that man. He's a great man, great father, great grandfather.

father. They were from Baltimore, Maryland where my grandmother still lives in their house today that he built half of it. He served during World War II. I used to love to hear him tell me about that experience and others.

I love the man. He either grew up during the Great Depression or was a product of it. I think that he grew up in it. I don't have my years clear.

[30 : 29] You can correct me later on. But I know that it had an effect on him because when he died, me and my father, I think maybe my cousin and my grandmother went down into his workshop and I mean, he could do everything.

Carpentry, electrical, plumbing, everything. And so he had tools all over the place. He had cans of nails and screws and bolts and nuts of all different sizes.

And then my grandmother said, let me show you something. And she would pull out these cans of nails and screws and buried down within them that she would pull out was, guess what? Some of you know, money.

\$10 bills, \$20 bills, you know. I don't know how much he had stashed down there, but why did he do that? Well, for some of you who lived during that time or had parents who did, you know that during that time you learned to distrust the banks because they invested all that money that you gave to them and trusted to them, which is what banks do.

We understand how banks make money, right? And then the stock market crashed. And so you went to withdraw your deposit and guess what? It wasn't there. So they learned to hide their money in all different kinds of places.

[31 : 44] But such is not the same with God. What we have entrusted in Him, our faith in Christ to Him, we will not have that investment ever defaulted upon.

Can't happen. And Scripture again serves as a surety to those of us who have faith in Christ that that will be guarded and well preserved and so we have no fear that that will ever be lost.

Be comforted by what Scripture says. Romans 8.35 There again the Apostle Paul says, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

And he continues on in verses 37 and 39. No, he says in answer, In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure.

I am sure. He doesn't think, you know, I'm presuming or I think I'm about 99% certain. He says, I am sure 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 of creation if you could think of it if I didn't mention it nor anything else will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[33 : 14] So, though yes, we are saved, we understand in this life until that day the sin nature remains that we are warring against, that we are fighting against with the help of God's Spirit we are being sanctified and we are becoming more like Christ.

But, we understand still that even that cannot separate our salvation from us. Now, we must understand this is where people have gotten this doctrine wrong or when they hear Baptists say once saved always saved they take it to mean this is a free pass to sin.

You know, well, I came down that aisle I got in that baptismal tub I said that prayer and so me and the man upstairs we're good. Right? We know that that's not how salvation works.

The Bible tells us that you'll know them by their fruits. And a person who has truly been saved is a new creation. They've been given the Spirit. They're not looking for a free pass to sin and live their

life wildly and recklessly however they want.

They know the sin that Christ has saved them from and the love of Christ that compels them that urges them to be in His Word to abide in His Word and to be obedient to Him that they would give Him glory with the life that He's given them to live.

[34 : 35] We want to be like Jesus. but perhaps you're still not convinced about the fact that the salvation thing can be preserved it can be guarded and if that's the case for you let's look at Peter the disciple of Jesus Christ Peter an apostle Peter who was instrumental in preaching that day the Pentecost when the church was founded and came together if you remember Peter Peter was a very bold man if anything wasn't he?

And sometimes Peter got it totally right. You know there's that moment when Jesus was walking on the water and they were afraid it was a ghost and all the other guys were cowering in the boat and when Peter recognized they called out to Jesus he said it was Him Peter had the guts to say invite me out on the water I want to walk to you and he did and then we know what happened and he got caught up which he often does with other things and he sank and Jesus picked him up and carried him back to the boat right?

We also know that Peter got it extremely right in one moment when Jesus was quizzing his disciples who do people say that I am? And they were telling and then he says but who do you say that I am? And Peter says you are the Christ the Son of the Living God and Jesus you know A plus Peter you nailed it but then moments later right Peter thinks that he can rebuke Jesus in almost that same conversation you're not going to die may it never be F Peter who are you to tell Christ the Son of God what to do so Peter was always in that kind of a situation you remember as Jesus is preparing his disciples for the fact that he's going to be crucified remember again Peter gets in his face no Lord forbid it Lord it won't happen Lord I won't let it happen Lord and what does Jesus tell him?

for the rooster crows you will deny me three times and I think when Peter heard those words he thought no way would I ever deny Jesus but as we know that's exactly what happened he denied Jesus Christ he denied him but even as he denied him that third time with cursing Jesus Christ was not far from him looking to him seeing him and then when Christ was crucified when he rose three days later when eventually he appeared to Peter again remember you're out fishing you remember what Peter's response was bold Peter jumps out of the boat he's excited to see Jesus again and how does Jesus respond to him?

imagine somebody has denied you denied you cursed you probably be upset at the very least but how does Jesus treat him?

[37 : 58] he recommissions him for the work that he has for him to do forgiving him encouraging him Peter I need you Peter you're going to lead my church Peter you denied me but I'll never deny you or cast you out you know you may think that you've sinned too much that you could have lost your salvation but have you ever gone that far as Peter to deny him even with cursing and if that's the case for you if you feel that's the case for you let me tell you that you today child of God are not far from him he's got his eye on you he sees you wandering he'll bring you back as I know he did for me he will keep you he will keep you to the end and he will raise you on the last day thank God for that and so

Philippians 1 6 is a verse that I need and I love among many others and again I am sure of this Paul says not you know I think this is true this could be true 50-50 I think I might have this right no he says I am sure of this that he who began a good work in you you the believer he who began a good work in you when you were saved he will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ he will bring it to completion he'll bring it to completion you know at this point sometimes preachers will say things like well my time is up I have so much more to say and they do so to make it sound like they really have more to say but they really don't have anything else to say!

have been working really hard throughout the week but I promise you that there is so much more that could be said about this very thing but we're going to move on to point number three and get through that one quickly and then we'll come to an end here third how can we know our salvation is certain a believer's salvation is certain because they have trusted in Christ it's certain because they have trusted in Christ verse 40 again Jesus says 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 do you have faith in a God who is able to do all that he has planned able to save able to keep you from falling or failing look to him look into his word see that because Christ has come because he is

able to keep you that there is no power greater than him and therefore there is no power capable of separating you from his love from the salvation that you've received from him you've trusted in him his life his death his resurrection you are saved have you looked to him though have you looked to him do you see that

Jesus is your only hope for salvation that he is the only one capable of saving you from your sins that he has gulped down the cup of God's wrath that he endured the just punishment for your sins that he has taken your sin away in order to give you his righteousness come to him as we close there's a couple of questions that I think it's it's!

necessary for us to consider having heard of the word I encourage you to take those questions this handout stick it in your Bible come back to it later this afternoon later this week and really think over and pray over these things first question and I'm not going to supply you with the answers this morning okay you do this on your time with the Lord during your personal devotion time First why and trust that he will preserve your salvation why was that so important to him why does he have that message littered throughout his word why does he want you to know and trust that he will preserve your salvation think about it and pray about it I think you'll be encouraged during that time as you think about that question and the second one how should knowing that Christ will keep you and raise you on the last day affect the way you live today how should it affect the way you live today and knowing that

[42 : 40] Christ has saved you and knowing that he will raise you up on that last day how should you be living right now Thank you.