

Eternal Security

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[0:00] Let's begin tonight by opening once again to John chapter 15.

! I said this morning, hopefully you caught it, that we're going to put Romans aside for tonight. I know I just aggravate Jonathan all to pieces because I'm always changing.

Things at the last moment, Jonathan has a real desire and commitment to put together a worship service, a singing portion of the worship service that helps aid in the preaching of the particular text for that service.

And I just change my mind sometimes at the last minute. Well, what I wanted to do was to spend just a little bit of time talking about an issue that is clearly there in John chapter 15.

In this analogy of the vine and the branches and the whole idea of some branches not abiding and not bearing fruit.

[1:24] And some branches abiding and bearing fruit. And that some of those branches that are not bearing fruit and abiding are taken away and cast into the fire and burned.

And those that bear fruit are pruned, cultivated so that they bear more fruit. And so the difficulty there with some is, what are we talking about here?

When we're talking about these branches, are these representative or symbolic of true believers who have, for reasons undiscussed here, undisclosed here, true branches, true believers that have now lost their salvation?

And so is that the issue here? And some would hold to that. And I don't. And instead of taking the time this morning, and I didn't need to take more time this morning, I wanted to just maybe deal with that tonight.

Verse 2 is where the trouble is, or the confusion possibly, where Jesus says, every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away.

[2:48] And every branch that bears fruit, he prunes that he may bear more fruit. And then when you get on down to verse 5, I am the vine, you are the branches.

He who abides in me and I in him bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered.

And they gather them and throw them into the fire and they are burned. And there's just no way to escape the connection there, that imagery, the connection with hell, with eternal judgment and fire. That is those branches that are not abiding in the vine, those branches that therefore are not bearing fruit, are gathered up, thrown into the fire and burned.

Alright, so, the belief by some is, that certain of the branches represent true Christians. But, that they lost their salvation.

[3:56] And, I want to give several reasons why that's just not the case here in this text. And then after we do that, I'm going to just give you several reasons from Scripture as a whole of why I believe in eternal security.

Alright? Now, number one, why this is not talking about true branches that, or true disciples that have lost their salvation.

Number one, and it's important to consider this, though it's not the entire answer. Number one, the analogy here.

This is an analogy that's given. You might call it a metaphor. The metaphor of the vine and the branches. An analogy given in the Bible is never really a very good point of Scripture upon which to support a doctrine.

And so, those who would go to that analogy and try to pull from it a doctrine of, the doctrine that you can lose your salvation, it's not a wise thing to do here.

[5:11] Because you can't necessarily go to an analogy like this, or a parable, sometimes, that Jesus may give, and try to pull from it all the details and make them represent something.

Because Jesus didn't necessarily mean for every aspect of an analogy to be taken as some point of doctrine. Now, I needed to throw that one out there, although that one may not make any sense or matter, or even matter to you.

But just know that it's a dangerous thing, a precarious thing, to go to either a parable or an analogy and to support your doctrine based upon it.

We need to go to the whole of Scripture. And I believe wholeheartedly that the conclusion that one might lose his or her salvation, that conclusion does not have any support in Scripture as a whole. Alright? That's number two. The conclusion does not have the support of Scripture as a whole. So, let's not focus on something that's a little vague, something maybe implied, or some element of an analogy and support a doctrine.

[6:31] Let's go to the whole of Scripture. And the whole of Scripture supports, I believe, eternal security. We're going to get to that a little bit later. Number three, Jesus already promised.

Now, this is important. Well, all these are important, I think. The key in on this one, Jesus already promised that He will not cast out any true disciples.

Do you know where He promised that? In John 6, 37, Jesus said, All that the Father gives me will come to me. And here's the key phrase, The one who comes to me, I will certainly not cast out.

Not cast out. So, true branches, true disciples, those who have responded in faith, come to Christ to receive His gift of eternal life.

True disciples, He will never cast out. All right, so, you can't say then that these branches were true disciples, represented true disciples that lost their salvation and were cast out because Jesus promised those who come to Him will never be cast out.

[7:44] Number four, the phrase, and here's the problem phrase or words here in the text, the phrase, In me. Verse two, do you see that?

Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He takes away. The phrase, In me, or the prepositional phrase, In me, does not refer, it's not a reference to saving union with Christ.

See, what we make the mistake, how we make the mistake here is taking Paul's theology, theology taught us by Paul and we're going to get to some of that tonight when we look at the scripture as a whole.

We take Pauline theology where he uses this idea quite often, In me, or in Christ, and move that back into this analogy when it doesn't belong there because Jesus is not attempting to teach any theology about eternal security.

So the phrase, In me, is not meant to be doctrinal, a doctrinal statement here. In me here is simply a reference to those who outwardly have affiliated themselves with the vine and yet are not truly a part of the vine, not truly abiding in the vine.

[9:12] Number five, those who believe that this passage, and this is the final one, all right, this one I think is key as well. Those who believe that this passage refers to believers who have lost their salvation, they put themselves in a difficult position because it is a position that must also believe that once a person loses his or her salvation, he can never or she can never again be saved.

Have you considered that? That's glaring from the passage. And so, I don't know too many. Now there are some, I admit to you, that have a doctrine, such a doctrine, that if a person moves away, falls away, and loses salvation, that that person can never be saved again.

But most people would not argue that. And yet, if you're going to take this passage and say, here's an example where Jesus teaches that a true disciple can become fruitless, can choose either by sin or by rejection of Christ, choose to no longer abide in Christ, that that person then becomes a non-believer if you're going to take this text and support that view here, then you must also say that a true, a believer who loses his salvation can never be saved again.

Because what happens to the branch that no longer abides in the vine? It's thrown out into the fire and burned. Okay? So that takes care of the text.

Alright? Alright? And you might have different conclusions. That's alright. I'm just giving you mine. Alright? And I think they're right. But, you know, I'm just being silly.

[11:14] Being silly. Now, let's just consider tonight, the time we have left, why we should believe in eternal security. Just considering Scripture as a whole.

And I'm going to give you six reasons why. And they all begin with the letter P. Imagine that. In fact, I may add a seventh one, one that I should have added, but did not.

And I may leave that to last if we have time. Because there are many other, listen, this is not going to be an exhaustive study in the doctrine of eternal security.

Alright? I'm not attempting to do that. We would need to spend several Sundays doing that. So there may be others, and you could identify other passages in the Bible that support it.

But here we go. I am secure in my salvation because of my position. Position.

[12:18] Position. As a believer, I mean a true born-again believer, believer, in a positional sense.

Where am I? I'm in Christ. Just jot that down. That's where we are. That's our position. Our position is in Christ.

That's why I mentioned a moment ago and highlighted that word in, that preposition in, in me, there in John chapter 15 and pointed out that this is not meant to be a doctrinal teaching here.

But when we get to 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 17, Paul means to be doctrinal here. He's teaching a theology. 2 Corinthians 5, 17 says, therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new. That's our position. I mean, as you're sitting there right now and you're looking up at this knucklehead trying to preach here tonight, you're looking at someone who is standing here in Christ.

[13:38] I'm in him. I'm in him. That is, I am, the word in, the preposition is really speaking of a position, I'm in the sphere of Christ.

I am in him. I'm in Christ. I am a part, you might think of it in these terms, a part of the body of Christ. That's my position.

Like a little boy who said, the Lord holds me in the palm of his hands. And someone said, well, what if you slip through one of the fingers? He said, well, I can't do that. Why? Because I'm one of the fingers.

See, that's our position. And not only that, but our security of salvation is also not in heaven. Some have made that mistake in their beliefs.

The security is not there in heaven. You may say, well, why not? I mean, that'd be a great place to have security. But that's not where your security is, not in heaven. It's not this, that one of these days when you die or I die, if you're in Christ, that one of these days when I die in Christ and I get to heaven and I'm going to get there and shut the door behind me and go, whew, I made it.

[14:57] No, not at all. Your security is not in heaven. The angels fell from heaven. The security is not there.

Where's our security? It's in Christ, in the sphere of Christ. And how secure is that, by the way? You know the story of Noah and the ark.

I love to tell that story. And you know the story. And I might say, before I tell the story in my own unique way, I might say that according to the Bible, very clearly, Noah's ark is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The ark is a type of Christ. A type of our salvation in Christ. It's very clear from Scripture. Primarily in Peter's letters. It's a type of Christ.

And so, let me tell the story and you see if I get it right. God came to Noah one day. And he said to Noah, he said, the world has sinned.

[16:05] The people in the world have sinned so much that I cannot, I can no longer tolerate it. And I'm going to destroy the entire world of man. Except for you and your wife and your three boys, Ham, Sham, and Jephthah, and their wives.

I'm going to save you. And so, this is what I want you to do, Noah. I want you to build an ark. Big boat. And this is exactly how I want you to build it.

I'm going to give you all the specifications. And build it this size and that size out of this material and so forth and so forth. And I'm going to bring all the, you know, two of every animal. We're going to fill up the ark with two of every animal in the world.

And this is what I want you to do. And then, Noah, when you get finished building that ark, I want you to put some wooden pegs on the outside of that ark way up high, way up there.

Some wooden pegs that you can hold on to. And then, when the rain starts to fall and when the floods start to rise, I want you and your wife and your sons and their wives to climb up there and hold on to those pegs.

[17:11] And if you can hold on until the flood waters go down, then you'll be saved. Did I tell the story right?

Right. Yeah. No, not quite. Not quite. You see, listen, I would hate for my salvation to be dependent upon me because I'm not going to make it.

And I have an idea that Noah and his family would not have made it. because the truth is, it is not that we hold on to Christ.

It is that Christ holds on to us. Our security is in him. That's why, you know, I don't agree so much with the phrase perseverance of the saints.

In reality, it's perseverance of the Lord. He holds me. By the way, you might remember that God said to Noah and his family, Noah, come into the ark.

[18:27] Didn't he? You see, I think that's significant. I believe that every word is inspired. God's word.

God meant for the word to be come and not go. He said, come into the ark. He did not say go into the ark.

He said, come, because that meant that the Lord was going to be in there. I know, you know, maybe this is an oversimplification and certainly God is everywhere present and nowhere absent. He is omnipresent. But I believe it's intended for us to understand that God was in the ark. That meant he's in the ark. And so I think it's permissible to say that if the ark had gone down, then in a sense the Lord would have gone down.

If I go down, then Jesus goes down. Because I'm in him. Second, I'm secure in my salvation because of possession.

[19:37] Position number one. Second, possession. Possession. Christ is in me. Figure out how it could be both.

And yet from Scripture we understand that it is. John 14, 20. At that day you will know that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you.

Jesus is in God. I mean, just try to figure this out. Make you go mad. Jesus is in God. We are in Jesus. And Jesus is in us. And so I could say you're looking at someone standing here who is indwelt by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Who contains the Lord Jesus Christ. Because, you see, by natural birth, we become a part of God's creation, don't we? But by the second birth, by the second birth, God, in a sense, becomes a part of us.

He literally lives in you. Colossians 1, 26. The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations but now has been revealed to his saints.

[20:59] To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is what? Christ in you.

The hope of glory. Where's our hope? Christ in you. Of glory. In our ability to always obey? In our ability not to sin?

In our ability to always stay close to the Lord? No, it's in Christ. Because Christ is in you. All right, third, I'm secure in my salvation because of promise.

promise. Promise. John 5, 24. Most assuredly I say to you, he who hears my word and believes in him who sent me has everlasting life and shall not come into judgment but has passed from death into life.

Did you catch that? has. Everlasting life. Has.

[22:20] Passed from death into life. Need to pay close attention to the words and especially verbs. Every word of God's word means something.

Obviously. And what we have there in the text is a verb that is present tense. That means right now. It's an active thing. That's something that's done. It's action that's taken. And is in the technical sense an indicative verb.

What does that mean? Among other things, it means continuous action. continuous action. So, see, have everlasting life.

We have it. It is something that you have the minute you're born again. The minute you believe. Not will get. But have.

[23:25] Right now. That is the promise of God. If you could have eternal life. Let's just think of this logically. And sometimes it's alright to think rationally and logically about this.

Because it is the word of God that used the term eternal life. And so if you could have eternal life and then lose it, whatever you had, it wasn't eternal.

If you could have eternal life, say, for ten years and then lose it, then you didn't have eternal life. You had ten year life. You could have five, just pick however long, maybe fifty years, maybe you could hold out fifty years and then fall.

Then you had fifty year life, but you did not have eternal life. But someone will sometimes object, they'll say, but listen, pastor, eternal life, that's something you get when you die.

die. Oh no, you don't. We've already covered that ground, haven't we? You get eternal life when you believe. Let me give you another passage, 1 John 5, 13.

[24 : 35] These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. Know that you have it.

Have it. Now how do we know, how do I know that I'm secure in Christ? Position, possession, promise, and fourth, power.

Power. Whose power? Certainly not mine. John chapter 10, let's just turn to that one. Maybe because I didn't print it in my notes, okay?

But I want you to look at it. John chapter 10, verse 27. We covered some of this ground a few weeks ago, but look at verse 27.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give them, what? Eternal life.

[25 : 45] That means forever, doesn't it? Eternal life. I give them eternal life, life that lasts forever. And they shall, what?

Never perish. Neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand. Anyone. No one will.

My father who has given them to me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of my father's hand. I and my father are one.

This is tremendous power. Power. There is no power, no power that can take the child of God out of God's hand.

No power. Romans 8, 38, for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, including you.

[26 : 56] shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Can you think of anyone, anything powerfully enough to separate you from the love of God?

Someone might say the devil can do it. Not anybody in this room would say that. But let's just take that as a point of argument that the devil could do it.

Well, if the devil could, then he would. And if he could and didn't in your case, then you'd get to heaven by his grace.

2 Timothy 1, 12 also. For I know whom I have believed and persuaded committed that he is able to keep what I've committed to him until that day.

That is the end of the day, end of the time. Until glory. Now, who is able to keep?

[28 : 11] God is able to keep. God is able to do. He certainly is going to do. And so we are secure in our salvation because of his power.

Number five, we are secure in our salvation because of purpose. Purpose. Because God did not save me because he didn't have anything better to do.

Silly, isn't it? But also, more seriously, God did not save me because I needed him to. God did not save me so that I might escape hell.

Salvation is not some grand fire insurance. God saved me because he had a purpose in mine. Now, I'm learning and have learned some of that purpose here.

And I would suggest to you that the purpose goes way beyond this life. God saved me because of his purpose. Philippians 1-6. I mean, these are just so well-known.

[29 : 19] These passages are well-known. What Paul said, being confident of this very thing. What was Paul so confident about? He said that he who has begun a good work in me or in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

God did. We know that passage backward and forward. Who started the work according to that passage? Who started it? God did.

I didn't start it. God started it. And who will finish it? God will.

God will. Is that his purpose? Yeah. And what God starts, he finishes. Not all of us can say that, can we?

God can. God always finishes what he starts. His purpose. And the specifics of his purpose for saving you and saving me is way beyond anything we might experience here.

[30:37] Position, possession, promise, power, purpose, and let's just do one more. I am secure in my salvation because of prayers.

Prayers. Whose prayers? My prayers? My prayer. You know, that's one prayer I do not have to pray. That God would allow me to keep my salvation.

I'm not talking about our prayers. We, of course, are talking about the prayers of the Lord Jesus Christ. You remember the story of Lazarus? I'm talking about Mary and Martha's brother.

I'm sure you do. And in the 11th chapter of John is where we find that story. We're not going to turn to it, but I want to point out one aspect of it. At some point we find Jesus standing there at the grave of Lazarus, there at the tomb.

Lazarus is dead and he's inside the tomb. And the Bible says that Jesus prays. He prays to the Father. And this is what he prayed. He said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me.

[31:53] And I know that you always hear me. I don't know if you've ever considered the significance of that statement, that prayer.

Now he used the word heard me in the sense of hearing and answering. That's the idea here. I mean you could argue that God hears all of our prayers because he hears all things, but I could argue with you that God does not hear all your prayers.

We love to center on and focus on the passages that deal with the promises that God will hear our prayers, but there are promises that he will not hear.

If you regard sin in your heart, I will not hear you, he said. But here's Jesus talking, he says, you always hear me, always hear. And I can confess, and you should too, that God does not always hear and answer my prayers.

But Jesus' prayers are always heard. Now, what's the point here? The point is, wouldn't it be great if he was praying for us? Is he?

[33:05] Yes. Yes, he prays for you and for me. In that great prayer, high priestly prayer, John chapter 17, verse 11, the Bible says, now I am, this is Jesus praying, says, now I am no longer in the world, but these, speaking of his disciples, immediate disciples, these are in the world.

And I come to you, Holy Father, keep, keep through your name those whom you have given me, that they may be one as we are.

Now, who's he praying for? Be careful. At this point, he's not talking about you or me. Talk about his disciples. And in a sense, he's saying, it's time for me to go.

And I'm no longer in the world in the sense that very shortly, I'm going to be gone from here in the sense of my incarnation. But these, my disciples that you've given to me, they're still going to be here.

And so my prayer for them, Holy Father, is that you would keep them, keep them, secure them. Now, we already understand that God the Father always hears and answers Jesus' prayers.

[34:26] This is a prayer that's going to be answered. But then, we would say, I'm not one of the immediate disciples, so what about me? Well, if you know anything about the prayer, then you would want to immediately go to verse 20 of John chapter 17 and listen to this part of the prayer.

I do not pray for these alone, he said, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they all may be one.

All. Who? His disciples and all those who will believe because of their word, that they all may be one, as you Father in me and I in you, that they also may be one in us.

And so he's praying the same prayer. Is he not? The same prayer he prayed for his disciples, that you would keep them, that we would be one. He's praying the same for you, for you, for you, all those of you here tonight who are born again, believers and followers in Christ.

That's real security. Jesus is praying. See? He's saying, I'm praying for all those who will believe in me. And do you know what Jesus is doing right now?

[35:51] We don't have to guess about it. Hebrews 7, 25. Therefore, he is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through him.

That is an incredible promise in and of itself. But he goes on, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

That's the unfinished work of Christ. That he is making intercession for us. But now, having said all of that, of course, someone will invariably say, well, I hear all that, but preacher, I know someone

who once was a Christian, Christian, but he's not anymore.

Do you mean to tell me, preacher, that the man who was a drunkard, who's living in adultery, who curses and swears and blasphemes the name of the Lord, and used to be a Baptist deacon, are you telling me that that man's going to heaven?

No, I'm not. Likely, that man's going to hell. Not because he was saved and lost it, but because he never was saved to begin with.

[37 : 13] 1 John 2, 19 tells us very clearly, they went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, this is what would have happened.

They would have continued with us, but they went out that they might be made manifest. There is something revealed about them, that none of them were of us.

The departing from the faith to getting off into sin and getting away from the Lord and falling away, apostatizing in a sense, was not proof that they were saved and lost the salvation.

It is the manifestation that they never were of Christ, never were saved. I think I've shared this with you before, but one of my favorite things Adrian Rogers used to say, he would say, remember this, the faith that fizzles before the finish had a flaw from the first.

Can you say that with me? The faith, no, I'm like, that's the idea. But, but, but, but, you know, you'll say, I know he was saved.

[38 : 25] No, you don't. You just think he was. And Jesus said in Matthew 7, 22, many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, done many wonders in your name, and then I will declare to them, I never knew you.

Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness. I never knew. Not I knew you, and then I didn't know you, because you lost your salvation.

He said, I never knew. Never knew. So, there you have it. And there are certainly many, many others we could talk about tonight from Scripture, and if you come up with some, you can share them with me, but I already know them.

But, when it comes to eternal security, the whole notion of it, the doctrine of it, we need to just consider what God's word says as a whole, and consider what our salvation is to begin with.

It's something God did. We might add the word, the P word, predestination. Ephesians 1, 5. Predestined to be sons.

[39 : 58] That's because in God's sovereign electing purpose, He chose to save you. Your salvation is not dependent upon you or me.

It's God. And something that is all God, you can never do to lose. Does that mean then that we can just go out and sin all we want to? Of course you know it doesn't mean that.

I think some have the notion that that's what Baptists believe. And if some Baptists are giving that impression, then shame on them. We don't have a license to sin.

Again, we're not just sinning all we want to, like the two guys who were talking, and one guy said to the other guy, he said, you know, you're one of those Southern Baptists. You believe in eternal security. Once saved, always saved.

That means you can go out and sin all you want to. And he said, that's right. I can go out and sin all I want to. I just don't want to. That's the idea. If you're truly, truly saved and God lives in you, the person of the Holy Spirit, then your life is forever changed, forever changed.

[41 : 19] You're not going to depart. You're going to sin, and we all sin. You'll never fall away, never fall out of Jesus because you're secure.

You're secure.