

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE

(LESSON 28)

THE SECURITY OF THE CHRISTIAN

(PART ONE)

The Scriptures clearly indicate that the position of an individual who has been saved by the grace of God is very secure. The security of such an individual is bound up with the sovereignty of God, the unchangeableness of His purpose, and the constancy of His good pleasure. This security is based upon Christ's finished, perfect work upon the cross, not upon the merit of any individual. **It is the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ and not the faithfulness of the saved individual that guarantees this security.**

The matter of the security of a genuine Christian's position in Jesus Christ is of great importance because it touches on that person's view of the all-sufficient work of Jesus Christ on the Cross and the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit within him or her. The purpose of this study is to consider the doctrine of the security of the Christian, and to support the doctrine from the Scriptures.

It is necessary to address the subject of the security of the saved individual for several reasons. Firstly, it is obvious that a great number of professing Christians are of the opinion that a saved individual can easily lose his or her salvation. Many persons are so persuaded because they were exposed to such a view at an impressionable period in their lives and they have never searched the Scriptures themselves to ascertain whether or not such a position is supported by the Word of the Lord.

Secondly, it is necessary to address the subject of the security of the Christian's position in Christ because it has serious implications in respect of his or her walk with the Lord and witness to others. Saved persons who believe that they can easily lose their salvation, have allowed themselves to be separated from the conviction that they are saved by **grace alone** through **faith alone** in **Christ alone** and are of the opinion that their own works have become an integral part of their salvation or lack thereof.

When an individual rejects the doctrine of the Christian's security in Christ, he or she possesses little or no assurance of salvation because the person who believes that his or her position in Christ is not secure can never be completely sure that he or she is presently saved or will ultimately be saved. Such persons have no guarantee that their sins have been forgiven because they are not certain as to whether Jesus Christ paid the price on Calvary's Cross for all their sins, past, present and future or only for the sins they committed before they were saved. In such a scenario, the doctrine of salvation by **faith alone** is at stake because persons who reject the doctrine of the security of the Christian, believe that their salvation is accomplished by faith plus works.

How can a person genuinely rejoice in the God of their salvation if there are doubts in his or her mind as to whether or not God will continue to deal graciously with him or her and complete the work which He has begun in his or her soul? How can an individual sincerely thank God for delivering them from the wrath to come if it is possible that they may yet be cast into Hell?

One of the most devastating effects of a rejection of the Christian's security in Christ is the undermining of the love of God for His elect. The view that a saved person can easily forfeit their salvation is based upon the premise that God's love is conditional upon the behaviour of the individual and not on His oath and His covenant.

Finally, a rejection of the security of the saved individual results in an inability to focus on God consistently.

Persons who believe that their position in Christ is not secure are forced to focus more upon themselves and their own actions in order to secure their salvation than on the “finished work of Calvary” planned and directed by God, the “*author and finisher*” of their faith.

The question we must ask when we are studying the doctrine of the security of the Christian is, “What does the Bible clearly teach, and how can we properly harmonize the more unclear passages that may seem to contradict the clearer passages?” We will now consider the Scriptural evidence relative to this important subject.

1 John 5:13 indicates that God earnestly desires that His children know that they are secure in Him: “*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*”

In the first 12 verses of chapter, John argues that those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ have eternal life and will demonstrate that this is so by keeping the commandments of God. In other words, their lives will consistently testify to the fact that they are saved. God does not want for any of His children to be confused as to whether or not they belong to Him today, but tomorrow may be on their way to the lake of fire. Instead, God desires for the Christian to know where he or she stands for all eternity. In **Hebrews 10:22-23** we read, “*Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)*”

The **New Living Translation** renders the verses as follows: “*let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water. Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.*”

God wants His elect to have assurance of their position in Christ because of Christ’s work on the Cross and His own faithfulness, not because of any work of their own.

Let us examine some passages which speak directly to the issue of the security of our position in Christ.

MARK 13:20-22

“*And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect’s sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.*”

JOHN 3:18

“*He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*”

New Living Translation

“*There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son.*”

JOHN 5:24

“*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*”

New Living Translation: “*I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.*”

It will be noted that this verse speaks of eternal life as a present possession. John says that the person who hears Jesus' words and believes on the One who sent Him "*hath everlasting life.*" He does not say that we shall have everlasting life when we die, or when the resurrection morning comes. John mentions two things here which are the evidences and results of having everlasting life, not conditions for receiving everlasting life. The hearing ear and the believing heart are the **consequences** of having eternal life and not the **qualifications** for obtaining it. If it is possible for a Christian to lose their salvation and thus forfeit eternal life, does that not suggest that eternal life is no longer **eternal**? In **John 3:16**, we read, "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" Now if it is possible to have that life and then lose it, was it really eternal? How can you lose something that is supposed to be yours eternally? Is it not reasonable to suppose that if God is eternal, the life that He gives to us is as eternal as He is? And if this is indeed so, then is it not reasonable to argue that there cannot be a termination of eternal life any more than there can be a termination of God Himself.

John then, adds that the individual who has eternal life "*shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*" This statement guarantees the future. There is no condemnation for the children of God because their condemnation fell upon their Substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ. They have passed from the realm of death which is the realm of condemnation into the realm of life which is the realm of assurance. Those who have been saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone shall never be in danger of God's condemnation, but God's grace and power keep them secure and saved. The words "*is passed*" are in the perfect tense in Greek, which speaks of an action occurring in the past which has present results. The Christian is not passing out of death into life. The process has already been completed.

JOHN 6:37-40

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

New Living Translation

"However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them. For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will. And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. For it is my Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day."

JOHN 10:24-30

"Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

New Living Translation

“The people surrounded him and asked, ‘How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.’ Jesus replied, ‘I have already told you, and you don’t believe me. The proof is the work I do in my Father’s name. But you don’t believe me because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one.”

It is critical to note that the whole focus of **John 10** is not on the sheep and what they do, but rather the focus is on the shepherd and what He does. The focus is on Christ’s work for us and not on our work for Christ or for ourselves. There are persons who contend that while it is true that God holds unto us, it is also true that we hold on to Him. Is this really the case? Do sheep have hands? Can they grasp anything? Sheep have hooves! They do not have an ability to hold onto anything. They must be held! So, to introduce into this passage an argument that God must do His part and we must do our path, both of us holding on to each other, is not only false, but is an insult to God.

ROMANS 5:7-21

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

17 For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

19 For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

New Living Translation

7 Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good.

8 But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.
9 And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation.
10 For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son.
11 So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.
12 When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.
13 Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. But it was not counted as sin because there was not yet any law to break.
14 Still, everyone died — from the time of Adam to the time of Moses — even those who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. Now Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come.
15 But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ.
16 And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins.
17 For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.
18 Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone.
19 Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.
20 God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant.
21 So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

HEBREWS 7:22-25

"By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

New Living Translation

"Because of this oath, Jesus is the one who guarantees this better covenant with God. There were many priests under the old system, for death prevented them from remaining in office. But because Jesus lives forever, his priesthood lasts forever. Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf."

HEBREWS 10:14-18

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:
12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering **he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.**

15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

New Living Translation

11 Under the old covenant, the priest stands and ministers before the altar day after day, offering the same sacrifices again and again, which can never take away sins.

12 But our High Priest offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God's right hand.

13 There he waits until his enemies are humbled and made a footstool under his feet.

14 For by that one offering **he forever made perfect those who are being made holy.**

15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies that this is so. For he says,

16 "This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."

17 Then he says, "I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds."

18 And when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices.

1 PETER 1:3-5

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

New Living Translation

"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance — an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see."

1 JOHN 2:18-19

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

New Living Translation

"Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the last hour has come. These people left our churches, but they never really belonged with us; otherwise they would have stayed with us. When they left, it proved that they did not belong with us."

We will continue to explore this intriguing subject in our next Lesson.