

## INTRODUCTION

Years ago I was gathered with a family just before conducting the funeral for a faithful man who had served the Lord for many years. I usually have a short prayer with the family before the service begins. On this particular day, I mentioned what a faithful servant this man was and that we know that he's in heaven and we know that we'll see him again someday.

There was a relative from out to town who spoke up and said, "Well, we can't know for certain we'll see him again." I said, "Yes, those of us who know the Lord have the assurance that we'll see him again." I found out later that this man belonged to a Christian denomination that doesn't believe in eternal security. He said, "We can only hope that we will be saved if we can hold on until the end." I didn't want to get into a theological debate or an argument with this man just before the funeral. It was awkward. So I just prayed with the family thanking God for His grace and mercy.

Afterward, I spoke with one of the family members who apologized for the statements of the relative. And I remember thinking, what a blessing it is for us to know for certain we are saved—we don't have to depend on a hope-so salvation. We can have a know-so salvation.

In John 10 Jesus teaches that we are part of God's flock. And once His lamb ALWAYS His lamb.

John 10:22-29: Then the Festival of Dedication took place in Jerusalem, and it was winter. Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews surrounded him and asked, "How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

"I did tell you and you don't believe," Jesus answered them. "The works that I do in my Father's name testify about me. But you don't believe because you are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

The Festival of Dedication is the same holiday our Jewish friends observe around Christmastime called Hanukkah. It is also called the Festival of Lights. It commemorated the time in 164 B.C. when the Jews reclaimed and rededicated the Temple after it had been defiled by the Greeks. While the Jews were celebrating the Festival of Lights, they didn't realize that Jesus, the Light of the world was right there in their midst.

The Jewish leaders pressured Jesus to plainly tell them if He was the Messiah. And Jesus said, "Like duh. Look at all the miracles. Are you blind? Oh, yeah, you are blind. The reason you don't recognize Me is because you aren't my sheep."

Then Jesus gave one of the most powerful statements about the eternal security of a believer. His words here give us the blessed assurance that a person can know with certainty they are truly saved. And that once you are saved, you can never lose your salvation.

Knowing for certain that you are a child of God and that you can never lose that relationship is essential for you to live a productive, confident Christian life. If the devil can keep you doubting your salvation, you will never grow into spiritual maturity.

One of the greatest engineering and construction projects of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was the Golden Gate Bridge across the San Francisco Bay. Construction began in 1933. It was a controversial project that was opposed as being too dangerous. It was predicted that at least thirty-five workmen would die during the construction. That was a typical loss for this type of construction at the time.

In the early months of construction, eleven men fell to their deaths in the water below, and the project was halted. The designers came up with a solution. They built a safety net under the work areas. It cost over \$100,000, and as a result, ten men's lives were saved when they fell into the net. To everyone's surprise, after the net was built, the project was finished under budget and ahead of schedule.

The workmen reported that the presence of the net gave them much more confidence in their work, and it led to greater efficiency.

The same can be said of the Christian life. When you KNOW you are saved, that gives you the confidence and assurance to serve the Lord with gladness. It's a great blessing to be saved. But it's a greater blessing to be saved and SURE that you're saved! Then you can work with confidence knowing that "underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deuteronomy 33:27)

Although Fanny Crosby was blind, she was a prolific poet and hymn writer. She published an astonishing 9,000 poems and hymns. Perhaps her most popular song was Blessed Assurance. Most of us know it by heart: "Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation. Purchase of God. Born of His Spirit. Washed in His blood."

I want to give you five reasons why you can have blessed assurance. All five of these reasons begin with the letter "P."

## **1. YOU CAN HAVE BLESSED ASSURANCE BECAUSE OF THE PROMISE OF GOD.**

Based upon what Jesus said in John 10, I do believe that once you are part of God's flock, you will always be a part of God's flock. The wording Jesus uses in John 10 is important. He said, "My Father who has given them to me is greater than all."

Now, here's the picture I want you to see. God the Father presented those who are saved to Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Last week, I used the shepherd boy, David, to help us understand the Good Shepherd, Jesus. David had a father, whose name was Jesse. So just imagine, David's

father, Jesse, giving David a flock of lambs He says, "Son, I'm giving you these sheep. They are yours. Watch over them and care for them. As long as they live, they will always be your sheep. David would know those lambs and they would know his voice and follow only him."

Now imagine God the Father saying to Jesus, "Son, I'm giving you these lambs. They are yours and I'm also giving them eternal life. They shall never perish. They will always be yours. They will recognize your voice."

Salvation is a profound mystery we cannot fully understand. When a lost sinner chooses to follow Jesus, they don't understand anything about Divine Election. It's only later that they learn that God chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world.

So the two forces of salvation, divine election and human responsibility are perfectly balanced. And what God has joined together, let no man put asunder. Once you get either one out of balance, you become unbalanced in your belief. Once God has given you to the Good Shepherd, He makes a promise that nothing can separate you from His love.

In Romans 8, the Apostle Paul nails down this promise of God. He wrote, "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)

Paul mentioned ten possible opponents that might try to separate you from God's love in Jesus. Death can't separate you, because when you die, you are escorted into the presence of God. Life can't separate you, but we are living right now in a love relationship with God by faith. There are no angelic powers, demonic powers, or human powers than can separate you from God's love. Nothing in the past or future can remove that connection, and nothing is tall enough or deep enough you hide you from God's stubborn love. God's promise is as secure as God himself. The Great British pastor, Charles Spurgeon said this about the promises of God. "God cannot go back on His Word. His promises are like checks He has written to us. All we need to do is endorse them with faith and then present them to heaven's bank for payment."

## **2. YOU CAN HAVE BLESSED ASSURANCE BECAUSE OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SPIRIT.**

There is a doctrine called the Perseverance of the Saints. It's a key point in the five points of Calvinism. It's the P in the acrostic for TULIP. I don't identify with Calvinism, and I think a better way to express eternal security is to call it the Perseverance of the Spirit. It's not up to me or to you to persevere, because the Holy Spirit who lives in us is going to persevere as He molds us into the likeness of Jesus.

Paul expressed it this way in Philippians 1, "I am sure of this, that he (that's the Holy Spirit) who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:6)

The Holy Spirit *convicts* us of sin. He *converts* us to Christ (born of the Spirit) and He will *complete* what He begins. He will finish what He starts.

Have you ever started something you couldn't finish? I have and probably so have you. But God has never started something He couldn't finish. He began a good work in you and He will persevere until the day of Jesus: That means either the day you die and meet Jesus or the day Jesus returns. Either way, He won't stop working on you.

I heard a funny story about a couple of schoolboys bragging about their dads. Jimmy said to Billy. "My dad has a list of men that he can beat up, and your dad's name is on it." Billy went home and said, "Dad, Jimmy said that his dad has a list of men he can whip up and he said your name is on it."

Billy's dad stormed over to Jimmy's house and rang the doorbell. Jimmy's dad answered the door and Billy's dad said, "My son said that you have a list of men that you think you whip and that my name is on it. Is that true?" Jimmy's daddy said, "Yes, it's true."

Billy's dad rolled up his sleeves and aid, "Well I don't think you can whip me. So, what are you going to do about it?" Jimmy's dad said, "I'll just take your name off the list."

The good news is that once your name is in the Lamb's book of Life, God will never take your name off the list. He is able to finish what He starts.

### **3. YOU CAN HAVE BLESSED ASSURANCE BECAUSE OF THE POSITION OF A BELIEVER.**

Once you are born again, God establishes you in a new position. That position can be summarized in two words: "in Christ." 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "If any person is IN CHRIST, they are a new creation." That phrase "in Christ" or "in Him" or "in the Lord" appears 164 times in the letters of Paul alone. The glorious truth of salvation is that Christ is in you and you are in Christ. The Bible says in Romans 8:1, "There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

You are in Christ and so you are safe. In Peter's second epistle, he writes that Noah and the ark is a picture of salvation. It's not just the story of a flood, it's a metaphor for our salvation. We are in Christ as Noah was in the ark.

You know the story. God said, "Noah there's going to be a flood and I'm going to destroy the earth. But I'm going to save you and Mrs. Noah, and I'm going to save your three sons and their wives. So Noah, build an ark. And when it's built, take eight pegs of wood and drive in the side of the ark. And when the flood comes, each you grab hold of one of those wooden pegs, and if you can hold on during the flood you'll be saved. Is that the way it happened? Don't say "amen."

Of course not. But that's the way some people understand salvation. It reminds me of the man at the funeral who say things like, "If I can just HOLD ON until the end I'll be saved."

Not one of them would have made it. God brought them into the ark. In Genesis 7:1 God said, "Come into the ark." And then it says that God shut them in. God shut the door to keep Noah in and to keep the flood waters out.

When Noah was in the ark he was safe from the waters of God's judgment. In the same way, a believer is IN Christ and we are eternally shielded from the judgment against sin. Now Christians aren't perfect, but we are forgiven. While Noah was in the ark, he might have stumbled in the ark, but he couldn't stumble out of the ark. There are times in the Christian life where you may stumble and fall, but you don't lose your salvation.

In Colossians 3 Paul presents a powerful image of how safe you are in Christ. He wrote, "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." (Colossians 3:2-3) You didn't die physically, you died to selfish desires and God gave us a promise of double security. Imagine a small lockbox—that represents Christ. Now your life is safe within that lockbox—you are in Christ. But then that lockbox is hidden away inside the most secure safe the world has ever known. You are in Christ, and Christ is in God, so you are safe and secure hidden with Christ in God. The great Greek scholar, A.T. Robertson commented on this verse this way: "So here we are in Christ who is in God, and no burglar, not even Satan himself, can break through this double level of security to separate us from the love of God in Christ."

#### **4. YOU CAN HAVE BLESSED ASSURANCE BECAUSE OF THE PRAYER OF JESUS.**

What we often call the Lord's Prayer should better be called the Model Prayer. Jesus was teaching the disciples how to pray when He led them to pray, "Our Father who art in Heaven; hallowed be thy name." That's the model prayer. Jesus would have never actually prayed that exact prayer, because as the sinless Son of God He would never have needed to pray, "Forgive us our sins."

But in John 17 we come to the high priestly prayer of Jesus—it's the real Lord's prayer. It is the prayer Jesus prayed the night before He went to the cross. That night He prayed for the disciples and everyone who would believe because of their testimony, that means us. He was praying for us that night. He prayed for many things, but in verse 24 He mentioned those of us who had been given to Him by His Father. Jesus prayed, "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they will see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the world's foundation." (John 17:24)

Jesus prayed that we would always be with Him. He was praying for our salvation. And God always answers the prayers of Jesus. Not only did Jesus pray for us on that night two thousand years ago, He is praying for us right now. The Bible says, "Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, since he always lives to intercede for them." (Hebrews 7:25) I have a savior who is praying for me right now. Moment by moment, day by day, year by year. He ever LIVES to make intercession for me.

So, the only way I can lose my salvation would be for someone to get Jesus to stop praying for me. And the only way you could get Jesus to stop praying for me would be for you to go to Heaven—and once you're in heaven, you wouldn't want to ask Jesus to stop praying for me. We are as eternally safe as the prayers of Jesus.

## **5. YOU CAN HAVE BLESSED ASSURANCE BECAUSE OF THE POWER OF GOD.**

The security of our salvation isn't up to us holding on to God. He's holding on to us. Jesus spoke about one of the most powerful forces in the Universe. He spoke about his Father's hand. He said, Jesus said, "My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." (John 10:29) God's hand is powerful. In Isaiah 48 God said, "I laid the foundation of the world with my hand; and with my right hand I spread out the heavens."

Years ago, I illustrated this truth by putting a quarter inside my fist. Then I asked a little boy to come on stage and try to remove the quarter from my hand. Of course, he couldn't do it because I am stronger than him. And I would quote where Jesus said, "My father is greater (stronger) than all and no man is able to snatch them from my Father's hand."

That illustration is helpful, but it isn't complete. Because there are plenty of strong guys who could pry open my fingers and snatch away the quarter. And then the other day, I was rereading another verse in Isaiah and God gave me a different idea. Forget the quarter. Because in Isaiah 49:16 God says, "Look, I have engraved your name in the palm of my Hand." Once we belong to God, there's nothing to snatch away, because we are part of Body of Christ. I'm engraved on Hand!

Peter failed the Lord at times, but he came to understand that it wasn't up to him to try to guard his salvation. God was guarding his salvation, and it is the same power that is guarding our salvation.

Peter wrote, "Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. You are being guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1:3-5)

So it's not a matter of us holding onto God, it's a matter of God holding onto us. Jesus said that His sheep hear His voice, and we know Him and He gives us eternal life; we shall never perish. The Father has given us to Jesus and nobody can pluck us from the Father's hand.

## **CONCLUSION**

So can a Christian truly be saved and then lose their salvation? Just show me one example. I don't think you can find one. It's like this. How many of you have ever seen a falling star? We may call it a falling star, but we know it is actually a meteorite burning up in our atmosphere. Stars don't fall. How many of you think you've seen a Christian who lost their salvation? It's

the same was a falling star. That person wasn't a Christian. Because once a lamb ALWAYS a lamb.

This eternal security is what allows us to live with confidence in the finished work of Christ. One of my favorite songs is "In Christ Alone." It was written by a British songwriter by the name of Keith Getty. Most people love the verse that says, "There is the ground His body lay. Light of the world by darkness slain. Then bursting forth in glorious day; Up from the grave He rose again." I love that verse. But my very favorite verse is the final verse which says: "No guilt in life, no fear in death, This is the power of Christ in me. From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny. No power of hell, no scheme of man, Can ever pluck me from His hand. Till He returns or calls me home. Here in the power of Christ I'll stand!"

## OUTLINE

### YOU CAN HAVE BLESSED ASSURANCE BECAUSE OF:

#### 1. THE PROMISE OF GOD.

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." *Romans 8:38-39*

#### 2. THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SPIRIT.

"I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." *Philippians 1:6*

#### 3. THE POSITION OF A BELIEVER.

"There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." *Romans 8:1*

"Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." *Colossians 3:2-3*

#### 4. THE PRAYER OF JESUS.

Jesus prayed, "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they will see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the world's foundation." *John 17:24*

"Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, since he always lives to intercede for them." *Hebrews 7:25*

#### 5. THE POWER OF GOD.

Jesus said, "My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." *John 10:29*

"Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. You are being guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time." *1 Peter 1:3-5*



— MESSAGE DISCLAIMER —

These messages are offered for your personal edification and enrichment. I have used many sources, and I have always attempted to cite any exact quotations and/or use material that is not under copyright. Any failure to cite a quote is simply an oversight on my part.

If you are a preacher or teacher, I encourage you to use this material stimulate your own Spirit-driven preparation—*it is never intended as a substitute for your own study of Scripture.*

If you borrow the majority of a message or outline, it is good scholarship (not to mention the right thing to do) to cite the source. If you are teaching, you may simply preface your remarks by saying something like: **“Some (or “much” as the case may be) of the ideas I’m sharing in this message came from a message by Pastor David Dykes in Texas.”** This simple citation also applies to any work you may publish, too, as I routinely publish my material in books that are protected by copyright.

This careful effort on your part may prevent any criticism that may be directed toward you. I trust you will find that additional study beyond this material will benefit both you and your listeners.

For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes



*David O. Dykes, Pastor  
Green Acres Baptist Church  
Tyler, Texas*

---