

## Lesson 24 – The Security of the Believer

**John 10:24-28** Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." <sup>25</sup>Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. <sup>26</sup>But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. <sup>27</sup>My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. <sup>28</sup>And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

Harry Ironside stated that salvation was like Noah inviting a pagan in his day to place his trust in God's Word and come in to the ark. Some view salvation like Noah offering to put a peg on the outside of the ark. "If you just hang on through the storm, you'll be saved." Salvation is not dependent on our holding on to God, but on our being securely held by and in Christ.

Watchman Nee tells about a new convert who came in deep distress to see him. "No matter how much I pray, no matter how hard I try, I simply cannot seem to be faithful to my Lord. I think I'm losing my salvation." Nee said, "Do you see this dog here? He is my dog. He is house-trained; he never makes a mess; he is obedient; he is a pure delight to me. Out in the kitchen I have a son, a baby son. He makes a mess, he throws his food around, he fouls his clothes, he is a total mess. But who is going to inherit my kingdom? Not my dog; my son is my heir. You are Jesus Christ's heir because it is for you that He died." We are Christ's heirs, not through our perfection but by means of His grace.

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The Bible teaches that once you are saved, you HAVE (present tense) ETERNAL LIFE (1 John 5:11-13). That is what Eternal Security is all about.

1. You HAVE it NOW
2. It will LAST FOREVER.

It is not dependent on you to keep it, because

1. God GAVE it to you
2. God SAID you have it
3. It is ETERNAL. That means your life will last forever.
4. If there is even the slightest chance you could lose it, then God wasn't telling you the truth, because He said it would last FOREVER. That's what the word *eternal* means.

The Biblical teaching of Eternal Security – Once Saved Always Saved – goes against the logical theological thinking of the Natural Man. Grace does not fit into the natural scheme of things. It is supernatural. It is natural to think that...

1. Good people go to Heaven and bad people go to Hell
2. Good Christians go to Heaven and bad Christians go to Hell

Although no genuine Christians believe #1 above, there are many good Christians who believe #2. Our lesson today gives the Biblical reasons why #2 is not true.

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There are many Christians today who believe you can lose your salvation if you commit too many sins – especially the “bad sins.” They are following a system of theology known as Arminianism, named after the Dutch theologian Jacob (James) Arminius who taught it, mainly as a reaction against the extreme teachings of John Calvin. Most Nazarenes, Wesleyans, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Assembly of God and Pentecostal churches believe this teaching today. There are many very good Christians who hold this view. In spite of the fact that they have some proof texts that seem to support it when taken out of context, there is abundant Biblical evidence to show that once a person is genuinely born again, they are saved forever.

Of course this promise of eternal life does not apply to a person who has not genuinely been born again. There are many people in our churches who prayed a prayer to receive Christ and were baptized, but who never genuinely repented of their sins and put their faith 100% in Jesus. These people are not born again, and the promise of eternal life does not apply to them.

In John 10:27-28, Jesus made the issue of Eternal Salvation very clear.

### 1. Who are Jesus’ sheep? – John 10:27a

Jesus wants to clarify that His promise of eternal life (eternal security) applies only to a select group of people – those who have genuinely been born again. It does not apply to those who merely claim to have been born again. – 2 Cor. 13:5

- a. Jesus sheep are a select group of people.
    - i. Some people are His sheep
    - ii. Some people are not His sheep
  - b. Nobody is one of Jesus’ sheep who didn’t *become* His sheep
  - c. Those who are not His sheep are metaphorically called *goats* – Matt. 25:31-46
  - d. How then, does a *goat* become a *sheep*?
    - i. Can the goat become a sheep by itself?
    - ii. The Only one who can transform a goat into a sheep is the One who created the goats and the sheep. It takes a miracle of God – the New Birth.
- ### 2. Characteristics of Jesus’ sheep – John 10:27b
- a. They hear His voice
    - i. Shepherds in Israel had a name for each of their sheep and called them by name.
      1. When they called a sheep by name, the sheep would know it was being called.
      2. When a sheep was called by name by someone other than the shepherd, they would not pay attention. They knew it was not the shepherd.
    - ii. Jesus’ sheep distinguish His voice from all other voices (strangers) – John 10:3-5
    - iii. His voice has a special meaning to them because they have a special relationship with Him.
  - b. He knows them
    - i. He knows they are His
    - ii. He has a special relationship with them. They belong to Him.
  - c. They follow Him
    - i. They follow Him by listening to His voice – the Bible
    - ii. They follow Him when He leads them, even though His leading is contrary to the wisdom of the world. – Luke 12:15

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- iii. Sometimes they follow Him from far off – Matt. 26:58
- iv. A lot of people who have never followed Christ claim to be born again. Although we cannot be 100% sure who is a genuine Christian or not, God knows. A lot of times, however, we see the evidence of fruit in a person's life.

Once D.L. Moody was walking down a street in Chicago, and a drunk recognized him. He called out, "Mr. Moody, do you remember me? I'm one of your converts!"

Moody looked at him and replied, "Yes, you must be one of *my* converts, because you're certainly not one of *God's* converts."

### 3. Benefits of being Jesus' sheep – John 10:28

*Notice the 3-fold emphasis that Jesus is giving here in order to make sure that His people get it. He wants to make sure you don't miss it. He wants to make sure you see it. He wants to make sure you understand it. (Get the picture?) Even with this, it's a mystery that some Christians still don't see it.*

- a. I give unto them ETERNAL life – 1 John 2:25
  - i. Scripture is clear to say that eternal life is present reality for the believer (1 John 5:11-13). We don't get it after our physical death. We get it now.
  - ii. If eternal life is eternal, what can bring it to an end?
  - iii. How can you end eternity?
  - iv. How can you end something that is eternal?
  - v. If your life from salvation is eternal, how can you possibly end it?
  - vi. How could you possibly *lose* your eternal life without ending it?
  - vii. If you could end it, would it be eternal? Or would it be temporary?
- b. They shall NEVER PERISH
  - i. If a child of God will never perish, is it possible for him or her to perish?
  - ii. If a child of God will never perish, what can cause him or her to perish?
  - iii. If a child of God will never perish, why would anyone say they can perish?
- c. Neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand
  - i. If no one can snatch them out of Jesus' hand, who can take them out of His hand?
  - ii. If Jesus is hanging on to us, who is strong enough to make Him let go?
  - iii. Some Christians say that you can take yourself out of His hand. Jesus said NOBODY can. Are You SOMEBODY?

In this passage of Scripture, the Lord is being very emphatic to emphasize the great truth of the Eternal Salvation of the true believer in Christ. He prefaced it (v. 27) by emphasizing that the promise is only to the true believer – the person who is truly born again, as evidenced by a changed life of following Jesus. Remember, following Jesus is the RESULT of salvation, not the CAUSE of it. – Eph. 2:10; James 2:14-24

John 10:27-28 is only one of the passages of Scripture that outlines the ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER, or Once Saved Always Saved.

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Some Christians will be quick to point out that there are a number of warnings to Christians in Scripture in regards to living the Christian life. That is true, but God isn't warning that He will go back on His gift of eternal life.

Not only are we saved by God's grace (unmerited favor), but we are KEPT by His grace.

Bible	Arminianism
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Saved by Grace alone</li><li>2. Kept by Grace alone</li><li>3. Since we are saved and kept by Grace, it naturally follows that we get to Heaven by Grace alone.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Saved by Grace alone</li><li>2. Kept by Grace and works</li><li>3. Get to Heaven by Grace and works.</li></ol> <p>Once a person gets in the door, they are taught they have to hang on (works) to get to Heaven.</p>

### Other Scriptural References to our Eternal Security in Christ:

1. The words *eternal life*, and *everlasting life* appear 44 times in the New Testament. Each one of those statements testifies the fact that the life that God has given believers will never end, because life that is *eternal* is, by definition, *ETERNAL*. Period.
2. He *will* (not *might*) complete the work He began in us – Phil. 1:6
  - a. If God said He will complete the work He began in us, will He change His mind and go against His Word?
3. We are kept by the power of God – 1 Pet. 1:5
4. Believers *shall not* come into condemnation – John 5:24
5. Jesus didn't lose any of His people during His personal earthly ministry – John 17:11-12
  - a. What about Judas?
    - i. He was the "son of perdition," and never a son of God – John 17:12
    - ii. He was a devil – John 6:70
6. Who shall separate us from the love of God? – Rom 8:35, 38-39
7. We are preserved by the Lord – Jude 1
8. He is able to keep us from falling. – Jude 24
9. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from ALL sin – 1 John 1:7
  - a. The scope of His cleansing from sin
    - i. Past sins – the sins we committed before we were saved
    - ii. Present sins – any sins you might be tempted to commit now.
    - iii. Future sins – any sins that you might commit in the future
  - b. The importance of cleansing from future sins
    - i. If we weren't cleansed from future sins the moment we were saved, we would have to get saved again and again – every day – in order to get to Heaven.
    - ii. If we weren't cleansed from all future sins, we would have to pray that our death would not take place after one of our sins, but that it would take place quickly after one of our salvation experiences.
    - iii. Just like Calvinism, it boils down to Salvation by Luck when you take it to its logical conclusion –
      1. Calvinism – you're one of the lucky ones who got picked
      2. Arminianism – you're lucky if you don't die right after you sin.
10. The blessed truth of Predestination – Rom. 8:29-30

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- a. Before the foundation of the world He *foreknew* who would be saved – Rom. 8:29
  - b. On that basis, he *predestined* us to go all the way – Rom 8:29
    - i. He predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son – Rom. 8:29
    - ii. He is working in us to bring us toward conformity in this life – Phil. 2:5
    - iii. The job will be completed when we get to Heaven – 1 John 3:2
11. Heaven is a “done deal” – Rom. 8:29-30
- a. The fact that we will be glorified (in Heaven) is in the *past tense*.
  - b. God sees us as if we are already in Heaven.
  - c. Even the Arminians don’t believe that a Christian in Heaven can lose his or her salvation and slide down into Hell.

Christians who believe you can lose your salvation are taught that their doctrine helps insure that Christians continue to live for God and don’t backslide into sin. They think it is a deterrent to sin, and they think that we teach that you can sin all you want to and still go to Heaven. In a sense that’s true. However, you cannot be a believer in sin without suffering dire consequences.

Although Christians can never go to Hell for their sins, they can never sin without consequences.

The Chastisement of the sinning believer:

The main passages of Scripture dealing with God’s chastisement of believers are:

1. Heb. 12:5-14
  2. 1 Cor. 11:29-32
  3. Rev. 3:19
1. The word *punish* or *punishment* appears 9 times in the New Testament. The word *chastise* or *chasten* appears 11 times.
    - a. *Punishment* is the word God uses to describe what He is doing to unbelievers when He sends them to Hell. The word for *Punishment* means to prune, torment, get revenge. God never says He will punish believers – even if they sin.
    - b. *Chastise* is the word God uses to describe what He is doing to believers when they sin. The word for *Chastise* means to tutor by disciplinary correction. God does not say He will chastise unbelievers. He only chastises believers.
  2. Why does God chasten believers?
    - a. To correct us when we have unconfessed sin in our lives
    - b. To help us learn that it doesn’t pay to disobey Him.
  3. He chastises us because He loves us – Heb. 12:; Rev. 3:19

The Chastisement of God is a completely different study. I’ve included a brief overview here because:

1. Eternal Security tells us what God *doesn’t* do to us when we sin.
2. Chastisement tells us what God *does* do to us when we sin.
3. It is impossible to understand God’s *Chastisement* of the believer without understanding the *Eternal Security of the Believer*.

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We used to sing a great hymn in church that describes the security we have in Christ:

### SECURITY

More secure is no one ever  
Than the loved ones of the Savior;  
Not yon star, on high abiding,  
Nor the bird in home nest hiding.

God His own doth tend and nourish,  
In His holy courts they flourish;  
Like a father kind He spares them,  
In His loving arms He bears them.

Neither life nor death can ever  
From the Lord His children sever;  
For His love and deep compassion  
Comforts them in tribulation.

Little flock, to joy then yield thee!  
Jacob's God will ever shield thee;  
Rest secure with this Defender,  
At His will all foes surrender.

What He takes or what He gives us  
Shows the Father's love so precious;  
We may trust His purpose wholly –  
'Tis His children's welfare solely.