

# Perseverance

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Date: 02 November 2015

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[ 0 : 00 ] If we turn back again to the passage that we read in the Gospel of John chapter 10, and we can read again from verse 27.

John 10 verse 27. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. Now when you come to the end of a communion weekend, a closing service like this one is an opportunity to give thanks, an opportunity to thank God for the blessings enjoyed over a communion weekend, but it's also an opportunity to look forward, because in many ways a key aspect of a communion weekend, and indeed of the whole of the Christian life, is that yes, we look back.

We look back at what Christ has done. We look back at all that was achieved on the cross at that moment in time. We look back at everything that has been achieved in our lives. But at the same time, we look forward.

We are forward-looking as God's people, and we think ahead both in terms of what lies ahead in our lives, and also of the ultimate goal of an eternity in heaven with our Lord.

[ 1 : 37 ] So in many ways tonight, we have to have, whilst over the weekend we have had an eye looking, I'm sure you've had an eye looking back, I want us in a way tonight to have an eye looking forward.

And in particular, I want us to think about the doctrine of perseverance, or perseverance of the saints, as it is known.

One of the wonderful privileges of the Christian faith is that it's not a one-off moment when we are converted, but it's the start of a long journey, a journey where God keeps us, where God guides us, where God preserves us.

So we're going to spend a few minutes tonight thinking about perseverance. And I've given you a wee handout just to guide us through this a wee bit, and you can see our headings take the form of five questions, or if you like, four and a half questions, because the last one's not really a question. We're going to ask what is perseverance. We're going to ask why is it necessary. We're going to ask who does it. We're going to ask how is it done.

[ 2 : 45 ] And then we're going to ask now, what are the implications. So these are our headings. What, who, why, how, now, in terms of perseverance.

So let's start with what. What do we mean when we say perseverance? Well, this is where a document like the Westminster Confession of Faith is incredibly helpful. And on the back of your handout, you have a copy of chapter 17 of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

I'm sure you all have a copy of the Westminster Confession beside your bed at night. You read it all the time. It's a wonderful document, and it gives a great explanation of concepts like perseverance. So for a definition of perseverance, the first paragraph there on the back is a perfect example. They whom God hath accepted in his beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end and be eternally saved.

Basically, the doctrine of perseverance is saying that once you are saved, you are always saved. Those who have been brought into God's family, those who have been saved by the blood of Christ, cannot fall away, and they will not fall away.

[ 4 : 03 ] Once saved, always saved. That's the basic concept behind it. And it's important to note at the start that this isn't something that everybody believes. Not every person who would describe themselves as Christians would adhere to the concept of perseverance of the saints.

We often make the big distinction between those who are Calvinists and those who are Arminian. And one of the things that can be said about Arminianism, although whilst it's a very varied and complex position, one of the things that can be often said is that people are of the view that you can fall from salvation.

You can be saved, and then you can be lost. But the position of Calvinism, the position of the Westminster Confession, the position of the Free Church of Scotland, is that the saints will persevere.

And to begin with, we can identify three elements that really summarize this for us, and we've got them on the sheet there. The first is the emphasis on security.

The doctrine of perseverance gives us all an amazing, amazing level of security. Jesus highlights that in this wonderful verse 29 of chapter 10 in John's Gospel.

[ 5 : 21 ] My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. And it's a wonderful, wonderful reassurance from us, because although as Christians we've been delivered from the power of sin, the forces of evil are still trying to attack us, and to bring us down at every opportunity.

The devil would take such pleasure in causing the Lord's people to stumble. But passages like this, and verses like this, remind us of the incredible safety and security that we have.

The Bible gives the image of the devil prowling round like a lion, seeking who he may devour. And the doctrine of perseverance reminds us that God is saying, he has not got a chance.

He has got no chance of getting my sheep. And when we think of this image of God's hand, like we have in verse 29, it's easy to think of a gentle hand of a father, which in many ways is true.

God is a caring, loving, gentle father. But in many ways, that's not quite the right image to have in our minds, because in the Bible, the image of a hand speaks of power.

[ 6 : 51 ] Somebody's hand is a representation of their strength. We sang about that in Psalm 89. You have a mighty arm. Your hand is strong. Thou hast an arm that's full of power. Thy hand is great in might.

So when Jesus uses these words, he's not just saying that we are held gently in the Father's hand. He is telling us that we are under the protection of God Almighty.

In all his power, in all his strength, his hand, his powerful, strong, immense hand, is around you as God's people.

You are in his hand. You are under his protection. So there's an immense level of security in this doctrine. But perseverance is about more than just security.

It's about more than just security. And this is where we raise an important point that we're going to come back to again and again and again. Perseverance does not mean that we can have a sort of blasé attitude whereby we say, I'm saved.

[ 7 : 54 ] I can do what I like. I'm saved. I'm fine. Doesn't matter now. I'm sorted. Perseverance keeps us from that attitude because perseverance highlights the reality of our conversion.

That's the second heading there. That perseverance emphasizes that there has been a real and visible change in us. When we are converted, when we come to Christ, we are transformed.

We repent, which means we turn from going one way and we start going another way. There's a transformation in us. We go down a new path. We are a new creation. And that brings a real effect in our lives.

And it's a reminder that conversion is not the end of the story. Conversion is the start of our journey. And so we must never think that it's just a case of being, you pray a prayer and you're converted and it doesn't matter what you do anymore.

That's not biblical teaching. And that's not what the doctrine of perseverance is teaching us. And in so many ways, it's so illogical to think like that.

[ 9 : 05 ] Because the whole process of salvation has brought such a change in us. We are justified. We are adopted. We are sanctified. A massive, massive transformation has taken place in us, spiritually speaking.

And that must and will manifest itself in real life. These things are a reality. That means that they have a real effect on our lives.

Jesus highlights this when he says, My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. We follow Christ as his sheep.

There is a real change. And as a result, our lives are different. We live for him. So at our conversion, there is a change in us. And we then persevere in that new way of life. We persevere in a real change that has taken place. So we have security.

[10:03] We have reality. These two are essential in terms of understanding perseverance. But there is also the third heading there, the idea of certainty. In Christ, we have this incredible, incredible security that you are utterly and totally safe.

We have this continual reality of the fact that a change has taken place. And these two together combine to mean that there is an absolute certainty, certainty, that as God's people, we will persevere.

Perseverance speaks of certainty. And the Westminster Confession uses that language, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end. In the first paragraph on the back of your sheep.

Now, this is important to say, just to highlight two things again. This is not saying that what we do now doesn't matter. And we'll come back to that later on. But neither is it saying that we have to change in order to be saved.

It's not saying that either. But rather, it is saying that we are saved. And because of that, as a consequence of that, we have a new way of life that is real and that brings a certainty of our perseverance into the end.

[11:23] We are saved. So our salvation is secure and certain. As Matthew 24, 13 says, the one who endures to the end will be saved.

And so that means that if we are trusting in Jesus, it means we embark on a new way of life. And it means that your salvation and my salvation, if we are God's people, is utterly, utterly secure.

As Paul writes in Philippians 1, I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. And of course, conversely from that, if we are not embarking in a new way of life, if no change has taken place in our lives, then it is questionable whether we are saved at all.

John writes in his first letter, they went out from us, but they were not 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 not all of us.

Now, the Bible makes it very clear that some people can give every indication that they are saved, when in reality they are not. The parable of the sword is perhaps the clearest example of that.

[12:46] The point is that the two things go together. The security that we have in Christ brings a new way of life, brings a real change in our lives.

But we have to also note that perseverance does not mean perfection. Perseverance is taking place alongside our sanctification, and we are constantly facing a battle between the flesh and the spirit. And so we are battling with sin, but we fight that battle knowing that we cannot lose our salvation. And if you turn back over to the Westminster Confession, you see that this is highlighted in the third paragraph.

Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins and for a time continue therein, whereby they incur God's displeasure and grieve his Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

These words remind us that we will always battle with sin, and sometimes we might not be winning that battle very well. But having said that, our perseverance is secure, it is real, and it is certain.

[14:09] So that's roughly what it is. Next question, who? Who is it who does perseverance? Who is it that's involved? But I'm going to read three texts that refer to this concept of perseverance.

The first one we've already read, but I'll read it again from Philippians 1.6. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Then Jude 1.24, Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever.

And then 1 Corinthians 1.7, so that you are not lacking in any gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is faithful by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Now these three verses all talk about perseverance.

[ 15 : 14 ] And they all have one thing in common. Who is the one who is doing the perseverance in these verses? It's God. God is the subject of the verbs.

God is the one who has begun a good work and who will bring it to completion. God is the one who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless. God is the one who will sustain you to the end.

He is the one who is faithful. And the emphasis of these texts and of the biblical words of the Bible are that perseverance is God's work.

And again, if we find out the middle paragraph on the back, the confession emphasizes this. The perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election following from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit and the seed of God within them and the nature of the covenant of grace from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

It's a great reminder that we are not relying on ourselves. We are wholly reliant on God.

Perseverance is a work of God's grace.

[ 16 : 33 ] But at the same time, we have to remember the very important and the very significant point that in the work of perseverance, we are not entirely passive.

When it comes to something like justification, you can say that God is active and we are passive because God in many ways is making a declaration or a judgment about us in terms of justification. We are declared to be righteous rather than being unrighteous and in many ways you've got nothing to do with that. It's something that God does. He is the one who does it and we are wholly passive.

God is active, we are passive. It's something like justification, we refer to it as something that's forensic. It's like something that's to do with a law court. It's a declaration made about us.

Perseverance is not quite the same as that because yes, we have an objective level of security that comes from God alone but alongside that there is the subjective reality of the change that takes place in our lives.

When we are converted the change that takes place affects the way we live. And the point that I wanted to make here is that in terms of perseverance we are not saying that God does our work and we benefit from it.

[ 17 : 59 ] We are saying that God does our work and we are it. We are the work. It's not that God it's not that we are here and God is here and he does our work somewhere else that we benefit from.

God is working directly on us. He is working and we are the work. As Ephesians 2.10 says we are his workmanship created in Jesus Christ for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

God now dwells in us we are united to God in Christ and God is working in us and through us and bringing a real change in our lives. So perseverance yes is God's work but we are that work.

God is the worker we are the workmanship as it says on your sheet there. And this is all highlighted beautifully by the image that Jesus gives of a shepherd and his sheep.

This illustrates what we're trying to say here. When you think of a shepherd a shepherd does not work does not primarily work on things for the sheep.

[ 19 : 10 ] His priority is not to build pens or to manufacture food or to design new sheep trailers. That's not what a shepherd does. His focus is not to work on things for the sheep.

A shepherd works directly on the sheep. He leads the sheep. He feeds the sheep. He protects the sheep. He watches over them all.

And so we are not simply recipients of God's work. We are God's work. You are God's handiwork. He is working on you.

Working through you. And that means that we will persevere therein to the end. It's an amazing thought to think of us being God's workmanship.

So that's the who. What is it? It's security, reality, certainty. Who is it? It's God working in and through us. He is the worker. We are the workmanship.

[ 20 : 09 ] Now, what about the next question? Why? Why is perseverance necessary? Why does it take place? Well, this is a fascinating question to ask.

Because if you think about all the different stages of salvation, there are various things that we can identify in terms of Christ's saving work in us.

Various things that happen to us. We are effectually called. We are regenerated. We are justified. We are adopted. We are sanctified.

These are what we would call the order of salvation. These things all fit together perfectly, demonstrating the breadth of what Christ does for us. All of these things happen to us.

We're effectually called. We're regenerated. We're justified. We're adopted. We're sanctified. Now, all of these things are necessary because of what is wrong with us.

[ 21 : 08 ] We are effectually called because of our inability to save ourselves. We are regenerated because we are spiritually dead. We are justified because we are guilty sinners. We are adopted because we are alienated from God and we need to be brought into his family.

We are sanctified because sin was dominating us and still dwells within us and we need to be set apart from that and conformed to the image of Christ.

All of these things take place because something is wrong with us. But the doctrine of perseverance is different because it is telling us that there is no something right with us if we are God's people.

How is it that we persevere? Why is it that we persevere? Because we have been saved by grace.

Because all these other steps are a reality. Because you've been justified and adopted and regenerated and are in the process of being sanctified tells you that there is something now right with you and therefore you will persevere therein to the end.

And alongside that perseverance is related to the character of God. And this is a point that the confession brings out beautifully especially in the second paragraph on the back there.

[ 22 : 25 ] if you notice about halfway down it says that perseverance is flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father.

Now if you are asking the question will I be kept what about all the mistakes that I make what about all the things that I do that are wrong what about all my failures what about all the weaknesses that I have what about all the things that I am ashamed of.

Notice what this is saying here that your perseverance does not depend on any of these things it depends upon the free and unchangeable love of God the Father. Now that reminds us that God does not change God does not fail and God does not get things wrong.

That includes his work in you. John 6 38 emphasizes this for I have come down from heaven not to do my 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.

This verse is talking about your perseverance as a Christian and it is saying that your perseverance is the will of God. Now we have to stop and let that sink in because the will of God is a strong thing.

[ 24 : 03 ] The will of God is immensely strong. God has saved you if you put your trust in Jesus Christ. That means that your preservation and your perseverance is his will and that means that it is utterly certain.

God is a God who doesn't change. God is a God who keeps covenant. God is a God who never ever fails in carrying out his purposes. That means that your salvation is his will and purpose and therefore because of the unchangeable character of God it is impossible for you not to persevere in your faith because we are not relying on ourselves.

We are relying on him. and that's where we find our encouragement and our assurance. But the confession goes on to say a little bit more in that paragraph because it then highlights the fact that perseverance is related to the work of Christ and to the perfection of that work.

The next phrase says upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ. Christ. Now over a communion weekend you have been thinking about everything that Christ accomplished on the cross and when we think of the cross we should be thinking of big theology because a huge amount took place and a huge amount was accomplished on the cross on our behalf.

Christ there completed a perfect work whereby your sin was expiated, whereby God's wrath was propitiated and turned away, whereby we who were alienated have been ransomed and redeemed and reconciled to God.

[ 25 : 49 ] Those of us who are under the bondage of sin have been freed by it. Christ has won a victory for us that we could never ever win for ourselves. Christ has done an absolutely perfect work.

And not only that, Christ is continually interceding for us as the confession mentions there so that his perfection is being applied to us.

Therefore it's no wonder that Hebrews 7.25 says he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

The perfection of what Christ has accomplished means that our perseverance, your perseverance, is unstoppable.

Christ's work cannot be under. Christ's work cannot be compromised. Christ's work cannot be effective. That means that the benefits that we enjoy, that you enjoy, if you are a Christian, are unbreakable and unstoppable.

[ 26 : 55 ] That's why you can persevere and you can know that you will persevere. So we see the character of God, we see the perfection of Christ's work, but the confession wonderfully brings it to the full picture of the Trinity by emphasizing the role of the Spirit.

The next phrase in the second paragraph on the side, upon the efficacy and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit and the seed of God within them.

When we are saved, when we are converted, God comes and dwells in us by his Spirit. He comes and dwells in us. That means that we are now the dwelling place of God. We are, if you like, the temple of the Holy Spirit, as Paul says, we are the place where God by his Spirit dwells.

John 14, verse 16, And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him.

You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. And so when we are converted, the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in our hearts.

[ 28 : 08 ] And once the Spirit does that, he doesn't stop doing it. The Spirit does not stop dwelling within his people. And therefore, our perseverance is absolutely certain.

And so when it comes to the doctrine of perseverance of the saints, we do not persevere because we are sinful, we don't persevere because we are guilty, we don't persevere because we are alienated, or because we are in bondage perseverance is not because of what is wrong with us. Perseverance is because of what is now right with us through Jesus Christ, because of the security, the reality, and the certainty of everything that he has done.

So that's why we need perseverance, and why perseverance works, because of what is right with us through Christ. second last question, well in many ways it's the last question because the last one's not really a question.

How? How does perseverance work? How is it going to continue? How is it going to work itself out in terms of your life and mine?

[ 29 : 20 ] Well first of all we have to emphasize how perseverance doesn't work because there are two dangerous mistakes to make that are mentioned there on your sheet.

the first one is what we call antinomianism which basically means antinomianism is the word for law.

So antinomianism is like basically saying it doesn't matter what we do. I'm converted, I don't need to listen to God's law, it doesn't matter if I sin, it doesn't matter if I do anything, I'm saved by grace therefore no matter how much I sin, it doesn't matter what I do, I can do what I like.

It's a sort of reckless approach. to salvation. Basically saying I'm saved, so what? That's not how perseverance works.

Perseverance does not mean that we do what we like. And so if we have that kind of attitude then it, as we said, raises questions over the genuineness of our faith.

[ 30 : 22 ] Because our faith should bring a real change. Our faith is not a dead faith. Our faith is an alive, a living faith that leads us on to works, that leads us on to a new way of life.

So it's not antinomianism, that's why there's a big X beside it on your sheet. But then the other extreme is also possible where we can make the mistake of thinking that perseverance is about legalism.

And legalism, if you like, is the opposite of antinomianism. Antinomianism says it doesn't matter if I keep the law or not, makes no difference. Legalism says you've got to keep the law or you won't be

saved.

You've got to do it. It's about what you do. You've got to make sure that you don't break any commandments. And this is an equally dangerous mistake.

Because the reason that's dangerous is because the minute we start thinking legalistically we are starting to say that our perseverance depends on our own efforts.

[ 31 : 26 ] that's the great danger of legalism. It's saying it's about what I do. I'm doing it. I'm keeping these things. I'm doing this and I'm not doing that. And it's taking the focus off God and putting the focus on us.

And that is not true of the Christian faith and it's not true of perseverance. We are not saved because we persevere. We persevere because we are saved.

And we must make sure that we have that approach. in our minds. We don't persevere in our own strength. We do so in complete reliance on the one who now dwells in us.

So you can see you've got a cross there on these two things. It's not about antinomianism and it's not about legalism. But of course you can see that the answer is there. How does perseverance work? It works by grace.

And this is hinted at in the confession where it talks about the fact that it's not about our own free will. It's not by our strength. It's not about us. And the passage in the confession there on chapter 2 points us away from ourselves and points us directly to God.

[ 32 : 31 ] It's God who works in us, God who helps us, God who leads us. Perseverance is a work of God's grace.

But the work of God's grace is done through means. God works these things out through means. And therefore we have to make use of these means of grace. And what are the means of grace that we should make use of as we persevere?

Well, if we go back to John chapter 10, we see the answer. John 10 27, it says, Where are the means of grace in this verse?

Well, first of all, it says, my sheep hear my voice, reminding us that we need to hear God speaking to us.

[ 33 : 45 ] And the place where we do that is through his word. We need to hear God's word. And that's why preaching has such an important role in our church and that's why our own personal Bible reading is essential in our Christian lives.

We need to hear the shepherd's voice. And then it says that my sheep follow me. And again, this reminds us of the importance of following the Lord, of obeying the instruction that he gives to us. Christ gives us so much wonderful instruction for our lives through his word. And it's utter foolishness to ignore all that. We should be following him.

We should be listening to the clear, gentle, wonderful instruction that he gives to us. His word is a guide for us in our lives.

But notice also that Jesus here is speaking about my sheep and he's speaking in terms of a flock, in terms of sheep, plural, which again points us towards the collective fellowship of the people of God, another incredibly important means of grace.

[ 34 : 54 ] Perseverance is not about going alone. It's not about thinking I can do everything by myself and I'll be fine. A key part of perseverance is being with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, being in the collective fellowship of God's people.

And of course the sheep have to stay close to the shepherd. They must follow him. And of course the way we do that is through prayer. The Lord is near to all who call upon him and by praying to God it draws us close to him and it keeps us close to him.

So we persevere by relying on God and by making use of the means and the privileges that he has so graciously given to us. So we're nearly there and it's just about time to finish.

What is perseverance? Well it's a reminder of the security, the reality and the certainty of our salvation. Who is it that does it? God does it but he's working in you and in me as his workmanship as God's people.

Why is it necessary? Not because of everything that's wrong with us but because of what is actually now right with us through Jesus Christ. How does it work? Not antinomism, not legalism, but a work of God's grace and therefore we must make use of the means of grace.

[ 36 : 09 ] But last of all we have to ask now, what are the implications of all this? Why is this important? why should we be thinking about perseverance?

How can we apply it to ourselves? Well, there are two things I want to say here as you can see on the sheet. The first is that perseverance gives us an incredible motivation to live as God's people. And what better way to finish a communion weekend than to leave with a motivation to serve God and to live tomorrow and the next day and the next day as God's people.

Wherever we are, whatever job we have, whatever contacts we have, whatever circumstances we are in our lives, we are living these lives as the people of God, as his redeemed people.

And so we have such a motivation to serve him. And it reminds us that the change that has taken place in us is a reality. Everything that Christ has accomplished on the cross, all the wonderful details of theology where we think about regeneration and justification and adoption and sanctification, these all apply to you if you are a Christian.

[ 37 : 26 ] And that means that you can live in a new way. You can serve God. You can worship him. You can glorify him.

You can do great, great, great things for God. God. Because if you are a Christian, you are no longer defined by what is wrong with you. You are defined by what is right with you.

And so that means that we can live for God. God has transformed us so that we can serve. And that means that we can live today, tomorrow, and every day for his glory.

It's not about us or our weaknesses. it's about everything that he has accomplished. So it gives us motivation, but it also gives us incredible, incredible assurance.

As we seek to serve God, if you're a Christian, I'm sure that you are just like every other Christian and like me, whereby you look at yourself and you are instantly discouraged.

[ 38 : 40 ] You look at yourself and you see the failings that are in you. And as we seek to serve God, we are constantly, constantly battling with sin.

We are constantly struggling with it. But in our battle with sin, we have to remember that your conflict with sin is not a sign that you aren't saved.

it's a sign that you are. The whole reason there's a conflict is because a change has taken place, because a transformation has taken place, because God has taken you out of the realm of sin and put you in the realm of his saved people.

And so therefore we are now in conflict with all the forces of evil. And that means that at times for us it can be incredibly hard. And at times we will fall. At times we will struggle.

And at times we will look at ourselves and we will think I am so far from what I should be. Maybe you feel like that.

[ 39 : 47 ] Sometimes it's very easy to feel like that at a communion weekend when we're examining ourselves. We think I am so far from what I should be. And you go to the Bible you'll find people just like you. People like Peter, like David, like Naomi, like many others who slipped up.

And this is why as you seek to battle on you must remember the doctrine of perseverance. And remember everything that has led up to the fact that you are now in the realm of those who persevere.

Perseverance is if you like the end point of a long path which began with effectual calling and regeneration and justification and adoption it continues on with sanctification and means that you as God's people are now in this category the ones who persevere.

And everything that has gone past is true of you. And all the benefits that Christ has accomplished are true of you. Everything that he achieved on the cross is true of you if you put your faith in Jesus Christ.

And this is where assurance is found. assurance is not found in feelings. Assurance is found in theology.

[ 41 : 11 ] Assurance is found in reading and learning and knowing what the Bible says is true of you. And that's where we find our comfort.

If you want reassurance don't go to your feelings. Go to systematic theology. you will persevere because everything that Christ has accomplished is true of you.

And so it's a great motivation to us but it's also a great assurance for us. I want to close with one final thought.

Adam and Eve were in paradise. Perfection. Wonderful. Beautiful. It was paradise. But they were able to fall and they did.

The angels were in heaven and yet some of them were able to fall and some of them did. But you are not in Eden and you are not in heaven.

[ 42 : 26 ] You are in Christ if you are a Christian. You are in Christ and that means that your salvation is unstoppable.

That means that your safety is unbreakable. That means that your perseverance is guaranteed. what a wonderful wonderful saviour we have.

Amen. Let us pray. Lord our God we thank you so much for the comfort that we get through learning what your word teaches.

And we pray oh Lord that we would grow in our knowledge of Christ's saving work on our behalf and that we would grow in our understanding of all the benefits that arise from it.

We thank you so much Lord that we stand before you not as those who depend on ourselves but as those who are being kept kept through the perfect finished work of Christ kept because of your own unchangeable character kept because your spirit now dwells in us.

[ 43 : 44 ] And we thank you so much for these things. And we pray oh Lord that every one of us would know this security that is only found in Christ and that we would know that this is what the gospel offers to us.

That every one of us Lord would have a firm faith in Jesus Christ knowing that if we trust in him we shall persevere to the end. We thank you for these things and we pray that it would lead us to serve and glorify you every day of our lives.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen.