

Can You Count On Eternal Life?

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[0 : 00] I'm going to read verses 1 through 10. I'll read it out loud and you follow along, receiving it as God's inspired, inerrant, infallible, clear, and sufficient word.

It's God's very own word for you. When I'm done reading, I'll say, this is the word of the Lord, and God's people respond, thanks be to God. John 17, starting at verse 1.

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.

And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, in Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world.

[1 : 08] Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you, for I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them, and have come to know in truth that I came from you.

And they have believed that you sent me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.

All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Thanks be to God. You may be seated. The Bible tells us that the grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

Let's pray. O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, would you please illumine your word to your people today?

[2 : 32] We, your people, need to hear your word. Lord, I trust that your Holy Spirit has been helping, even in the preparation. I praise you for your church through all the centuries, whom you have helped, who help us now.

And even so, Lord, I pray that if there's any words that are not from you, that it'll just fall to the ground and blow away like the dust.

We pray that your word, Lord, will not return void. That your word will accomplish in our hearts that purpose for which you have given it. May you be glorified in your people today.

Amen. Amen. Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Can you count on eternal life?

Can you count on eternal life? Mark Twain wrote, A man's character may be learned from the language he habitually uses.

[3 : 39] It's a true observation, and it's certainly true of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of John alone, Jesus speaks of life over 60 times.

This is the message he came to reveal. And in these 10 verses, he speaks of eternal life. The other two words he uses in this little cluster.

He speaks of the glory of God six times. And he speaks of this being given. The words are given. The glory is given. And eternal life is given eight times.

You see the theme of our message from Jesus today. It reveals the character not only of Jesus Christ, but of God himself. He came to give eternal life that he would be glorified in you.

That's his message. I've got three questions that I hope to walk through as we march through verse by verse here. The first one is, what is eternal life?

[4 : 46] Number two, how can eternal life be secured? And number three, who can count on eternal life? That's what I believe Jesus is teaching his disciples.

So first, what is eternal life? What is eternal life? Three observations from our text. Number one, eternal life is spiritual.

Eternal life comes from heaven. Look at verse one. When Jesus had spoken these words, that is, he was addressing his disciples.

Now he lifts his eyes to heaven. He lifts his eyes to his father who who rules over all and who is omnipresent.

But heaven refers to the spiritual realm. There's one other time. Only one. In the gospel of John, when Jesus lifts his eyes to heaven.

[5 : 45] Do you remember when it was? We were at the park, O'Brien Park downtown. It was one of our open air services and it was Easter. The sermon text was John 11.

In verse 41, Jesus commanded that they remove the stone from Lazarus's tomb. And in John 11, Jesus looks death in the face by looking into that dark tomb.

And Jesus lifted his eyes to heaven. Jesus had told his disciples in John 11. Jesus had told his disciples in John 11, verse 25. I am the resurrection and the life.

Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Now in John 17.

Our Lord Jesus is looking death in the face once again. He's looking his own death in the face. He must die.

[6 : 49] To fulfill this promise that his disciples never will. Jesus lifts his eyes to heaven.

He has just taught his disciples that they can pray to his father by praying in Jesus name. That means that when his disciples pray, we are we are lifting our prayers to heaven, to the spiritual realm, to God himself who rules over all.

So our Lord Jesus now prays. Prayer is communion with God. So here is God the Son communing with God the Father by the help of God the Holy Spirit who gives words to our utterances and what we feel deeply.

Prayer is communion with God.

Prayer is communion with God the Father by the Holy Spirit who is held by divine authority. It is God's alone to give. In John 17, Jesus prays. Father, the hour has come.

[8 : 22] Glorify your Son that your Son may glorify you. In verse 2, he says, since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.

Jesus prays, revealing that it's God, Father, Son, and Spirit who alone holds all glory.

Just as the Lord holds life and glory, he holds the word of God. And from the triune God flows life and glory and words.

And it flows through the apostles to all who will believe. The Son gives this eternal life to whomever he wills because he alone has authority to give life away.

What Jesus praises is that the Father will give eternal life by glorifying the Son. See, it's those who see the Son glorified who will receive eternal life.

[9 : 28] The term glorify, it can be translated as to clothe with splendor. You see what Jesus is praying. He's saying, Father, clothe me, your Son, with splendor so that those you have given me will see your glory with me clothed in splendor.

And there's no way for the people to see Jesus in his full splendor without first seeing Jesus on the cross for their sins.

That's what it means to be clothed in splendor and glory. It's the glory of sacrificial heavenly love. The Father gives the Son authority over all flesh.

That's what he says in verse 2. And the Son has received this authority from his Father. And with this authority, he gives eternal life to all he draws to himself.

So you see in this prayer, it's revealing to us that the promise is not, it's not directly Jesus talking to the church or to the disciples. This is Jesus referring to the Father of a transaction between Father and Son.

[10 : 50] It pleased God, Father, Son, and Spirit, to make a covenant of grace with fallen sinners. It pleased God. Our confession says, it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace wherein he freely offers unto sinners salvation and life.

And this is the delight we see. It's the Father being pleased to now celebrate with his own Father and Son. They're talking about this glory that they're going to share and reveal to all who will believe in them.

In 1 John 1.8, Jesus had already said that no one has ever seen God, the only God, who is at the Father's side. But God is the one who has made him known.

So eternal life is held by divine authority. It is God's alone to give. You can only know that you have eternal life if you see Christ clothed in the splendor of the cross.

This is what the Son is asking the Father to reveal. Eternal life is to know God.

[12 : 04] That's the answer to the question. What is eternal life? Jesus says in verse 3, this is eternal life. That they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

If someone asks you, what is eternal life? What does the Bible mean by eternal life? That's your answer. It means that you know God. But then opens up all the questions of the gospel.

Well, how can I know God? Who is God? Well, God is who has revealed himself to be in the Bible. But that also gives a problem because I'm a sinner. I can't know the holy God. That's right.

God had to make himself known to you. So eternal life is to be saved by the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's to know God through the finished work of his Son.

Your soul has eternal life when the Spirit causes you to believe. When the Spirit regenerates you, gives you the gift of faith. That's when you hear the shepherd's voice.

[13 : 06] You hear Jesus calling you and you follow him. That means that you have eternal life. Your eternal life has begun as you have known him. In John 10, he had taught the disciples how he calls his own sheep by name and he leads them.

In John 10, 16, he says, my sheep listen to my voice. So who is it that receives eternal life? It's those who listen to the voice of the shepherd and follow him.

Your soul comes alive. It comes alive and has eternal life. When the Spirit enlivens you to know God, to believe in Christ. Our catechism says the Holy Spirit gives to you whom God has ordained unto eternal life to make you willing and able to believe.

You know God. You know God. When you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. You know him not as a historical figure.

You know Jesus Christ as the one who freed you from your sin and misery. As that good shepherd who leads you to the green pastures and whose voice calls you to paths of life and righteousness.

[14 : 26] And if you know God through Christ, your good shepherd, then you have eternal life. That's what eternal life is in the teaching of Jesus and John.

Well, the next question. How can eternal life be secured? How can eternal life be secured? Eternal life cannot be secured by anyone who is a sinner in the line of Adam.

In John chapter 3, verse 36, Jesus said, whoever does not obey the son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

He says all who are under the curse of Adam, they have the wrath of God on their sin. And they are there under that wrath. There you remain unless the Lord regenerates you and causes you to follow his son.

And this means that you and I cannot secure eternal life for ourselves. No man can stand before God and say, God, I accomplished all the work that Adam failed to do.

[15 : 38] We sing in the gospel doxology, your perfect law exposes me. I feel my sin and desperate need. My best good works are powerless to satisfy your righteousness.

The life of heaven in the Garden of Eden, it was set before Adam and he chose to know evil instead. Adam never got access to the tree of life.

Instead, Adam brought disgrace on all the earth. He failed to accomplish the work that God gave him to do. But look at what Jesus says in verse 4.

Our Lord Jesus came to earth to secure eternal life for you by accomplishing the mission. He says in verse 4, I glorify you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

As Jesus is praying this, looking to heaven. It's Thursday night. Around 3 p.m. on Friday, the next day, less than 24 hours away.

[16 : 51] Our Lord Jesus would say that same word again. Accomplished. It can be translated as finished. Jesus looks with faith that the same God who has caused him to live a sinless life will sustain him to the very last breath as he hangs on the cross.

He can say it now. I have already accomplished the work you gave me to do. And he will say it again from the cross. It is accomplished. In Luke 22, verse 29 and 30.

The Lord Jesus refers to this agreement or this covenant between father and son. The term is covenant. Jesus says, I covenant to you, disciples, as my father covenanted to me a kingdom that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.

See, the Lord Jesus giving these promises to his disciples. I am covenanting with you as my father covenanted with me. Those disciples are remembering these words of Jesus and they're getting a peek now into that that inner Trinitarian dialogue between father and son.

And the next day, though they wouldn't understand it until they had the help of the Holy Spirit, they could sing like we do in our hymn now. Behold the man upon the cross, my sin upon his shoulders.

[18 : 24] Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers. It was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished. His dying breath has brought me life.

I know that it is finished. Our Lord Jesus Christ says, I accomplished all the work you gave me to do.

He's saying, I kept the moral law of God perfectly, personally and perpetually. Jesus Christ loved his father fully.

Jesus Christ loved his neighbor as himself. That's why we can now sing through his finished work. There is one who lived for me.

His life, my only victory. His death forever sealed in time. That I am his and he is mine. That's what our Lord Jesus Christ came to do.

[19 : 31] He came to secure eternal life for you, his people, by accomplishing the mission of God. How can eternal life be secured?

It can only be secured because Jesus was promised this by the father. In verse five, we see the father's reward that will be given to his obedient son.

Look at verse five. Jesus says, now, Lord, now, father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

I've accomplished the work. Now, glorify me. We saw in Sunday school, Titus chapter one, verse two. Our hope is a hope of eternal life, which God promised before the ages began.

Jesus says that glory I had with you even before anything was created. That's the hope now. That's the hope I want to give to my church, that they will be part of the glory that father, son and Holy Spirit shared even before the foundations of the world.

[20 : 49] The covenant of grace that we receive from Christ as our Lord, according to our confession, it's worded this way. This covenant of grace, that's what we receive from Christ.

But this covenant, it is founded on an eternal covenant transaction that was between the father and the son about the redemption of the elect.

Our hope in receiving grace from God is founded upon this eternal transaction between the father and the son, as Titus said, before the ages began.

Jesus says, now, father, glorify me with that glory I had at the beginning. We just sang in the glory of Patry as it was in the beginning, so it shall be forever. See, the beginning and the end of all of redemptive history is the glory of God.

That's what Christ is longing for. The glory of God is the cosmic telos. It's the cosmic direction, the cosmic end of all things.

[21 : 54] It's God's glory and our good to glorify God and enjoy him forever. Scottish pastor Ian Hamilton recently made that comment.

How last things come before first things. A way to put it in theological terms is eschatology precedes protology.

What he means is where everything is headed. That's the last things. It's the glory of God in the son. That comes before that helps us make sense of everything, even back in the garden.

What was the purpose of the garden and all of creation? It was the last things. It was the final glory of God in his son. We get this from many places.

One of those is Romans 8 verse 29. This is familiar, but listen for that truth. For those whom God foreknew, that's before the ages began, he also predestined.

[22 : 54] What did he predestined for? To be conformed to the image of his son. In order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

This is what it is all for. It's for the glory of God. Shared with those he saves. Our Lord Jesus Christ secured eternal life in heaven for you.

Because the father promised that was his reward. That's how eternal life can be secured. Under Adam's curse, we read in Romans 5.

No mere mortal man can say to the father, look at my life and glorify me. Our Lord Jesus Christ, though he lacked nothing, he merited eternal life for you by his work.

He secured access for sinners to that tree of eternal life. As it was in the beginning. But now, the glory of God is revealed, enjoyed, and shared.

[24 : 10] He's asking for him, the son, to receive that glory again. But it doesn't stop there. Let your eyes go to the very end of our passage. Look at verse 10. Jesus says, I am glorified in them.

In my disciples. In my church. Your life. You are part of bringing this glory that is due to Christ. That's how he is glorified.

That's how the father glorifies the son. It is in you. So we've seen what eternal life is. We've just seen how eternal life can be secured.

The last question is, who can count on eternal life? Who can count on eternal life? If our Lord Jesus Christ has manifested the father to you, this means that the father gave you to the son.

This means you are one that he has given. Look at verse six. Jesus says, I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world.

[25 : 24] This is good news. If you see God in Christ. No living soul has the potential to access eternal life. The fall was far too great for that.

In John chapter six, verse 65, Jesus said, I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the father. So now we have to wrestle with that question.

Whom does God grant to know him? Jesus says, those who were already God's eternally yours, they were in verse six.

You gave them to me out of the world. And those are the ones to whom I have manifested you. What good news this is.

If our Lord Jesus Christ has manifested the father to you, this means that the father gave you to him. Who can count on eternal life?

[26 : 29] If the father gave you to the son, then you can count on eternal life. Our Lord Jesus Christ gives eternal life to the souls which the father gave him.

He had already said this once in verse two. You can take your eyes back to verse two. You give eternal life to all who were given him. On these glorious truths pack into John 17.

It's so tightly woven. Charles Spurgeon's comment is simply this. Nothing happens in redemptive history apart from divine determination and decree.

We shall never be able to escape from the doctrine of divine predestination. The doctrine that God has for ordained certain people unto eternal life.

It starts and ends with God's grace. Jesus makes it very clear. Eternal life is not a blessing that some choose.

[27 : 33] It is a gift Christ gives. And he gives it to all who were given him by the father. The son gives eternal life to those who were the fathers and those whom the father gave to him.

So if the father, if the son has manifested the father to you, this means you were given to him. And that means you have eternal life. You can count on it.

Who can count on eternal life? Well, if you hear Christ's voice and follow him, then you belong to him. This is what he says in verses six through nine.

Jesus says that you were elect by the father. That means God chose to reveal himself to you before time began. As crazy as it is for our minds to try to understand that.

So your election. That comes as a gift of God's grace. And it's to those the father gave him out of the world. It is not universal.

[28 : 39] And verse six, he says, you gave them to me and they have kept your word. Verse seven. They know that everything that you have given me is from you. Your election is definite.

Regeneration is also definite. That means you were dead in sin and trespasses. But then God breathed life and causes you to believe. So regeneration is definite. It's not universal.

Look at verse eight. For I have given them the words that you gave me. They believed me that you sent me. Who is it that believes?

None can believe unless the father causes them and draws them to the son. And those are the ones that the spirit blows on like a wind. And he draws whomever he will.

Regeneration is definite. Knowledge of God, therefore, is also definite. Knowledge of God is not universal. It's those who hear the shepherd's voice that he brings.

[29 : 43] And they're the ones who know God. And John 10 again in verse 14. He said, I am the good shepherd. Listen, he says, I know my own and my own know me.

As the father knows me and I know him. I know my sheep and I call my sheep by name. Knowledge of God is definite.

And we see in this chapter in verse nine as well that the prayer of Jesus Christ as the great high priest in heaven. Now, his prayer is definite.

He says it's not for the whole world. Look at verse nine. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.

The next day, Jesus will pay for the atonement of sins. An atonement of sins is definite.

[30 : 43] It is not universal. He lays down his life. For his sheep. I was trying to imagine an illustration because this is this is so glorious.

It's what words can even be used as an analogy. What came to mind was like. How many times for baby is inside of a tummy, the whole family is talking to the baby, using the baby's name, singing to the baby while they're still in the womb.

So then picture that that child then maybe as a two year old and in a room with a bunch of crying two year olds. But an older brother comes in and the voice of the older brother starts singing.

God is so good. And that little two year old now knows that voice. That's my big brother. And that's the song I've been hearing since I was in the womb.

I wasn't even alive, but I know that loving voice. God is so good. God is so good. That's what Jesus is singing over all the earth.

[31 : 59] Whoever has an ear, let him hear and let them come to Jesus. Our Lord Jesus Christ gives eternal life to all his elect.

All those for whom he died. He purchased them. They are his. They are his reward. And he will be glorified in them.

So, dear friend, dear brother, dear sister, can you count on eternal life? I hope you next with the next part here can be encouraged and find true assurance of your salvation.

Not in anything of yourself, but on the promise made between the father and the son. That's the focus of John 17. That's what I hope you leave here thinking about. The promise of the God, the father to God, the son applied to you in your life right now in time and space on this world out of the world.

He's called you and that that will be the grounds of your assurance. In verse 10, Jesus says, all mine are yours and yours are mine and I am glorified in them.

[33 : 18] So you can count on eternal life. If you belong body and soul in life and in death to our faithful savior, Jesus Christ, as our catechism says, you can count on eternal life.

If you rest in the promises of the father to the son in that eternal covenant of redemption made in eternity. You can count on eternal life because the father promised the son his full spirit.

Isaiah 11, 12 says that the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. My son, my Messiah, the spirit of wisdom, understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

You can count on eternal life because the father promised that he would be his ever present support. Jesus Christ took on flesh to accomplish the work his father gave him to do.

Trusting in that promise said in Psalm 46, verse one, he could pray knowing these words from his father. Son, I am your refuge and strength.

[34 : 30] I am your ever present help in trouble. You can count on eternal life because the father promised the son his full spirit in Isaiah.

I'm sorry, I already did that one. On to the next one. OK, the father promised the son that he would satisfy the travail of his soul.

He would satisfy it. Not only would he be a support and strength, but it would be rewarded. In Isaiah 53, 11, he says out of the anguish of his soul, he shall be satisfied.

The righteous one, my servant, shall make many to be accounted righteous and he shall bear their iniquities. You can count on eternal life because the father promised that he would deliver his son from death and exalt him to his right hand.

This is what we celebrate now in the words of Ephesians 120. He raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places. That's why we can now count on eternal life.

[35 : 42] You can count on eternal life because the father promised that he would have the Holy Spirit and he would give that Holy Spirit poured out like water on whomever he wills.

Jesus said this to his disciples in John 14, 16. I will ask the father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever. Even the spirit of truth.

You can count on eternal life because the father promised to purify a bride for his son. Daniel 11, 35, got a vision of this and he described that bride as being refined, purified and made white.

See, Jesus says in verse 10 of our sermon text, all mine are yours and yours are mine and I am glorified in them.

Matthew Henry commented, none can know their election, but by their conformity to Christ. All those who are chosen are chosen to sanctification.

[36 : 51] He is glorifying you. Someone described sanctification as the seed and glorification is the flower. It's in process now, but you can count on eternal life if he is increasingly conforming you and bringing glory to his son now in your life one day fully.

And we long for that day. You can count on eternal life because the father promised to give his son all of those who belong to him and that none of them should be lost.

There will be multitudes who will partake in his redemption and in his messianic kingdom. Isaiah 49, 6 says it is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and bring back the preserved of Israel.

That's too light for the work you've done. The father says to the son, I will make you a light for the nations that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.

Jonathan Edwards summed it all up this way. The father created the world to prepare a bride for his son.

[38 : 10] The same glory he had in the beginning he will have in the end. But what's more is you have his bride with him to share it and enjoy it.

He took on flesh forevermore to unite all of his creatures who he redeemed and purchased to be with him forevermore. This is the great love of the father.

You can count on eternal life because he will be glorified in you who belong to him. So stake your whole eternity as a man named Horatius Bonaro upon a life you did not live upon a death you did not die.

Stake your whole eternity on Jesus Christ. Only by resting in Christ's life, death and resurrection.

Can you count on eternal life? Let's pray. Father, I pray that you will give this gift of assurance in the mission accomplished by Jesus.

[39 : 38] The promise is given by the father to the son that you will be glorified in your people. We pray. Amen.