

Perserverance of the Saints

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning, everyone. Please have a seat. I got a little bit of briefings to give you. If you are new here, you're actually joining us in our study of Ephesians.

We've been actually studying this first section on salvation, where Paul has written this hymn, this hymn where he is excited. He's excited, and he actually creates this praise for these wonderful truths of salvation in which we've been elected by God, we've been adopted by God, we've been redeemed by Jesus, we've had our sins forgiven, and we've been sealed by the Holy Spirit and branded to us an inheritance.

So today I wanted to talk a little bit more about this, extrapolating what is a theological principle called the perseverance of the saints. And it goes along with the idea of what it is to be branded by God, to know what it is, the kind of faith that he gives us.

If you notice in the back of your bulletins, it's a little bit different, but there's a section right underneath the memory verse. There's these verses. So I had these verses printed here ahead of time, because I'm going to be referring to many different verses, and I wanted you guys to have these so you can look them up at home.

I'm praying that some of them will speak to you, you will feel the security of understanding these truths. Last Sunday we dealt with the idea that if salvation is not guaranteed, it kind of loses its shine.

[1 : 5 0] If we are told that we are to give everything for Christ, and yet Christ might not hold us, Christ might not keep us, it's an unsteady place to be.

The reality is, salvation is of God, and if it was up to us to keep it, we'd lose it.

So there's a value that God has placed in salvation, and if we are not secure, we can feel unstable like I mentioned.

If salvation were not secure, salvation would not be our joy, our confidence, our assurance, our rest, our comfort, or our hope.

Instead, without security, it would be the doubt of our salvation, the fear of our salvation, the anxiety of our salvation, or the worry of our salvation.

[2 : 5 6] The reality is, we are dealt, or we face indwelling sin, and in a sinful world, if Adam could sin, so we can too.

So if it was up to us to lose, we'd lose it. So with something so precious of salvation, we need a guarantee.

And this is exactly what God gives us through the Holy Spirit in Ephesians. So just take a look at with me, Ephesians 1, verse 11, tells us clearly, in Him, we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him, who works all things according to the counsel of His will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory.

In Him, you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of His glory.

At the moment of belief in the gospel, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit. There's not a testing period, there's not a trial period, that once you believe, put your faith in Jesus Christ, we are sealed, we are branded by God as His eternally.

[4 : 3 6] God saves us, God keeps us, and thereby, God gets all the glory. God saves us, and I'll explain why in this sermon, and that is called the doctrine or the teaching which we see in the Bible as the perseverance of the saints.

Each of these statements brings out an incredible truth that we find in the Bible, but sometimes they create more issues. But what I'm trying to communicate to you today is this inherent truth.

True believers will persevere in faith until God comes to glorify us. Amen? That once God elects us, once Christ redeems us, once we believe in the gospel, the Spirit seals us and He seals us forever. So if you're familiar, there's this thing called the Westminster Confession of Faith. I don't know if you're familiar with it, but in the mid-1600s, a few Christian men kind of came together and they wrote out this document.

And they were trying to codify what Scripture said. And it's kind of like our statement of faith. If you want to know our statement of faith, you go online and it kind of tells you the basic beliefs that we at Squamish Baptists believe in.

[6 : 20] So they kind of put together this document explaining some of these great scriptural truths. They said, in this, you could read a statement about what they believe about the Bible, what they believe about the Trinity, what they believe about creation.

But at section 17, they talk about the perseverance of the faith. And they wrote this statement. And it says this. It says, They whom God has 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.

This is what they believe that the Bible taught. This is what we believe, what the Bible teaches, and obviously so do I.

Why is this really good news? I think the reality is, at one time or another, we ask ourselves, am I really saved?

Right? There's that time. You're struggling. You don't feel it, right? You feel far from God, and you start wondering, am I really a Christian?

[7 : 46] Right? And there's not even a sin going on. But there's just this distance, this emotional distance. And sometimes you might decide to pray the prayer all over again, right?

Sometimes you'll get on the knees, and you'll confess, Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior, all over again. For others, it's because we have had sin. We've been struggling, usually in an area of sin, that seems to have victory over us.

And we struggle. Lord, I'm sinning. I'm stuck in this sin. Am I really saved? And you will confess, Jesus, I love you. I believe in you. But I'm struggling in this area.

And sometimes we look over at others, whether it be our friends, family members. And we see that they're living this spiritual life that just seems different from ours. Whether they just seem to have more faith, or more blessings, it doesn't matter.

But we just start to ask, why is their faith so different than mine? Then we start to question, right? We go to that place. Am I really saved?

[8 : 56] Well, today I want to take a look at the words of Jesus Christ. We're going to go through several verses together. And I believe this will help us better understand what our salvation is, how to live it, and what God intends for us.

So this morning, we're going to actually look at four different facts or truths about this teaching that I pray will benefit you, encourage you, and help you live out.

So turn to the Gospel of John. That's where the majority of my verses I'm going to take. We're going to flip around. I'm going to read them. I'm not going to do a great exposition, but I'm going to do an extrapolation of truths from all these verses.

But I want to read them to you so you would know exactly what I'm talking about, what I'm referring to. So the first one, you guys all know John 3.16, right?

It's one of the first verses you commit in Sunday school. For God so loved the world that he gave us his only son that whosoever, I still say believeth in him, right?

[10 : 06] King James Version, right? Whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. We're going to learn that eternal life starts there with that promise when we believe, not after the trial period of 10, 15, 20, 50, 80 years of living on this world.

But there's this guarantee that comes. And in verse 18, he says, whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God.

Turn with me to John 5.24. John 5.24. It says, truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who has sent me has eternal life.

He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. The truth that Jesus is teaching there is upon that belief in me.

You have passed from death to life. John 6.37. Another incredible truth. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out.

[11 : 26] John 10.27-29. It says, 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.

Again, John 4.13. Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. Paul will add to Jesus' teaching.

1 Corinthians 1.8.9. He says, 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.

1 Thessalonians 5. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, he who calls you is faithful, he will surely do it.

[12 : 46] If God's called you to him, he will keep you faithful. That is the underlying truth of these verses that we're reading here. If God is faithful to call you into salvation, he will be faithful to preserve you until salvation is complete.

Carl read from John 15 where it simply says, true believers stay, abide, and remain in him. Not because of any great faith that we have, but by the strength of Jesus Christ.

Amen? Because the same God who calls us is the same God who justifies us, which means he makes us righteous. He's the same God who sanctifies us, which means to keep us holy, is the same God who glorifies us, who welcomes us into his kingdom.

As the Westminster Confession of Faith affirms, saving faith will not fail. Now, right now there should be a few questions that are percolating in your mind and I want to be able to do these today. Alright? I want to deal with some of these questions. The first thing, the teaching of the perseverance doesn't mean is that you and I are perfect.

[14 : 15] Get that? The Bible nowhere teaches that you and I are perfect. I think we've already figured that out somewhere along the way, right? The fact of the matter is we will fail.

Some of us will severely fail. Some of us will severely repeatedly fail.

But do we completely fail? Not at all. You see, when we say that we persevere, it does not mean that we are going to be perfect.

The fact is we live in a perfect world, a fallen world, and there is still sin in us. It resides in us. It's like it's doing guerrilla warfare in us.

We know those struggles. Whether it be anger, whether it be lust, sometimes it's a struggle to tell the truth and to be honest with ourselves about who we are, some of us will stumble into grievous sin, and some will continue in grievous sin for a time.

[15 : 36] And this can result in various consequences here on earth.

Our sins might lead to broken relationships. Our sins might lead to physical harm. Our sins might lead to financial ruin.

Our sins might lead to loss of family and a very distant relationship from God. We will grieve the spirit.

We will have consciences that do not work like they should. We will even hurt others and bring temporary judgment on ourselves.

But, if there's a real faith in which we've been transformed by, we will persevere in faith, but not without failure.

[16 : 46] So the first truth we need to understand is we will not be perfect. The second truth we need to understand here is this does not mean perseverance of the saints, does not mean that anyone and everyone who accepts Jesus can therefore live any which way they want.

You get that? Doesn't mean there's this guarantee. I can accept Jesus Christ as my savior. Hey man, I got heaven. I'm now going to live the way I want to and I'm going to enjoy this world and really all its misery that it has to offer.

Right? It doesn't mean that. It's not enough to have a superficial faith. It's not enough to have a quote unquote good feeling about Jesus.

It's not enough to make a momentary commitment to Christ. Why I believe perseverance of the saints is a much better term than eternal security because it's not that we are not eternally secure

but it means that true faith will persevere to the end.

It will persevere. John 8:32 says if you abide or remain in my word you are truly my disciples. Notice he doesn't say if you abide in my word you will be my disciples.

[18:08] He actually says you truly are my disciples. Right? There's no condition here. It's a statement of fact that Jesus Christ is telling them. True believers continue in faith and don't act like non-believers.

And the reason is because believers are indwelt and sealed by the Holy Spirit. If we're indwelt by the Holy Spirit that has to mean something.

Right? To have the Holy Spirit indwelt in me has to produce something. As one author on the subject says a person who has accepted Jesus, made a decision for Jesus, prayed a prayer for Jesus, but goes on to live a sinful pattern and live with no fear of hell because they think they are eternally secure is diluted.

That means we have to be careful when we use the words eternal security. How do you know you're saved? It's because of the indwelling Holy Spirit when you sin.

You know what you do? You groan. You groan. You might be trapped in that sin, but it's a war. It's a battle. The Spirit wrestles with this.

[19:32] You feel it. You don't sleep. When you meet someone, your head is down. You feel that shame. That's a good thing, you know? That's the Holy Spirit that dwells within you is making you uncomfortable and trying to draw you back to that pure relationship with Jesus Christ.

And if you want to know if you have a fake faith or a real faith, the true test chapter I believe is Galatians chapter 5. Simply states there's fruits of the flesh and fruits of the Spirit.

You want to know whether you're in the flesh or the Spirit? Read the test. It'll tell you. Fact is, as believers in Jesus Christ, we are secure.

A believer may sin seriously, a believer may sin repeatedly, but ultimately a believer will abandon himself and abandon the sin and follow Christ.

John in 1 John 3:10 says, But this is evident who are the children of God. And who are the children of the devil? Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

[20:52] No true believer will shun holiness and embrace sin altogether. Not someone who is born of God. God. Now this is the reason why.

Ephesians 2:8 and 9 simply states, For by grace you have been saved through faith and not of yourselves.

It is a gift of God. If I was to tell you that God is going to give you a temporary faith, what would you feel about that, right?

Hey, I'm going to give you this faith that changes the world, but you only have it for a month. Would you be willing to give up everything to follow Jesus for that faith that's just going to last you a month?

Probably not, right? You're going to count the cost. I've got this friend, he is a car collector, he collects mostly vintage type cars, he fixes them up, resells them, and he looks for deals all over the world, whether it's Japan, Germany, all over, so he always asks me if I ever in my travels, if I find a car that's really cool, let him know.

[22:09] So one time I'm down in Texas, and we come to this warehouse, and it's this massive sale. This is the kind of place that you find that nice Cadillac that was driven by your grandmother that only has like 6,000 miles on it, but it's like 20 years old.

This is what they have, right? So I come across this Rolls Royce, and I take a picture of it, and they only want 20,000 for it, right? For a nice Rolls Royce. So I take a picture, I get on the phone, I call him, and I tell him, he says, I'll tell you what, before you buy it for me, give me an hour, right?

So he calls me back in an hour, and I'm waiting, I'm ready to make the purchase for him, and he says, don't buy it. And I go, why? Look, it's 20,000, it looks like a great deal.

He goes, the hubcap sell for 2,000 each, right? If I start driving that, and anything goes wrong with that car, I'm hooped, right? So he had to count the cost before making that investment, and that's what Jesus Christ asked us to do, count the cost.

So he doesn't give us this temporary faith, he gives us this supernatural faith, and I want to define for you the difference between human faith and temper and supernatural faith.

[23 : 25] The reality is, you and I live by human faith. Every single day, we live by human faith. You go to a restaurant, you order a meal, you eat it.

Some of you who travel sometimes wonder, do I really know what I just ate, right? But you're trusting the menu, you're trusting the chef, the kitchen, to be cleaned, you don't get to inspect everything about it.

In fact, you have no idea. They poured some liquid in your glass, you drink it, they tell you what it is, but you don't really know that's all an act of faith.

You turn on your faucet at home, fill your glass, drink it. You really have no idea what's in those pipes, but you take it as an act of faith.

Some of you, when you came here this morning, you got into your car, you turned the key, and you were actually turning on an engine that set off anywhere between four and eight explosions that propelled your vehicle here, right?

[24 : 49] That is an act of faith. Some of you have been to the doctor. You're literally saying, doctor, put me to sleep, cut me open and fix me up.

You really don't know your doctor very well, and chances are, it's a surgeon, right? It's not that doctor you go visit, you're taking his word that this surgeon knows what he's doing, right?

The fact of the matter is we live by faith all the time. And it's called an educated faith.

It's called trained human faith. Why? Because we've been around long enough to know that car engines just don't blow up, right? We've been around long enough to know that doctors usually take the right thing out, right?

Sometimes there's sad stories, but by and large, that is the faith that we go to a hospital with.

You've been around long enough that you can go eat at Boston Pizza and be okay that you're eating that food.

[26 : 01] And the drink, the water that you drink from your tap is not going to make you sick. This is called an educated and trained human faith.

But the reality is when you come to placing your faith in Jesus Christ, it's a whole other story.

I'll tell you why. You literally have to deny yourself, you have to abandon yourself for someone you've never seen, you've never talked to.

Someone who has never spoken to you. Someone you have never experienced. And the reality is you cannot know or experience until you come to that place of complete abandonment.

That's crazy, right? It's not normal. there is no human faith or experience that we have that helps us.

[27 : 12] What kind of faith is it? It's supernatural faith, right? That's a faith that is not generated in herself. That is a faith that is generated by God through the Spirit.

And it requires God to give us something. And it's a gift. It's a gift of faith. And there's only one kind of gift of faith that God gives and it's a faith that endures.

That's it. There is no temporary faith. It is an enduring faith. That's what he promises to give us. The reality is you could not muster up on your own enough faith to be saved.

You know that? You can't. And you could not muster enough up of your own faith to stay saved.

And the fact is if you were to depend on your own faith, get this, it would fail you when God doesn't do what you want him to do.

You know that? When God doesn't do what you expect him to, your faith doesn't grow. It shrinks.

when God didn't take care of your life in the way you thought he should, when you had your many disappointments, tragedies, and sorrows in life, your faith would diminish.

[28 : 42] Your own human faith would constantly be weaker, weaker, and weaker for some of you for every single day of your life. and you would begin to call all kind of things into question because your experience would not be sustaining.

The fact of the matter is, it is a gift of faith, a supernatural faith that God gives us. It's a faith that endures so that we can believe when everything else around us isn't working.

Amen? There's times, I know, we've been through tragedy, life can be hard, we want to give it up. Why bother God? It hurts.

The fact of the matter is, human faith doesn't take martyrs all the way to the stake. Human faith does not take believers to the guillotine.

human faith does not cause someone to give up everything for Jesus Christ. The only type of faith that helps us endure is a faith that is beyond us and is a faith that is supernatural.

[30 : 12] So, security in Christ then is tied to a persevering faith that endures to the end. any idea of salvation that leaves out security is a distortion of truth.

Any idea of security that leaves out perseverance is a distortion of truth. My friends, the good news is you cannot have salvation without security.

You can't have eternal life if it's not eternal. and you can't have a secure salvation without a persevering faith.

Doesn't mean we're perfect. We will fall into sin. We will grieve the Holy Spirit at times. And it's not enough just to pray a prayer at one time and think that I can live the way I want to for the rest of my life.

And I want to show you this incredible testimony which attests to everything I'm talking about. Turn with me to 1 Peter. 1 Peter.

[31 : 26] And I want to leave you here. It's 1 Peter chapter 1. We're going to start in verse 3 and we're going to go through verse 9.

It says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.

Now get this verse 5. Who by God's power are being guarded, some of your versions say protected, through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed to the last time.

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while if necessary you have been grieved by various trials so that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

[33 : 16] You see, this matter of security of being guarded is tied to an enduring faith. This passage is loaded.

But you want to even know what's more amazing about this passage? Who wrote it? Peter, right? If I was to ask you guys who your favorite apostle is, a lot of people say Peter.

And the number one reason they say Peter is because we can relate to him. You know why? Because Peter was a major screw-up. He was.

He was. Right? He followed Jesus from the very start of his early ministry. He was the first guy to call, right?

And he messed up a lot. And you go through scripture and we see Jesus patiently loving, correcting Peter as he goes. He rushes in to chop off ears, right?

[34 : 24] He denies Christ three times. He's being bullied by 14-year-old girls. I'll be honest with you, I don't know too many men bullied by 14-year-old girls, right?

In the end, he's actually very similar to Judas. He's denied him to everyone.

In fact, at the very end, Jesus Christ commands the disciples to go wait for me in the hills. What does Peter do? Says nothing to that. He actually goes back to fishing. Even Jesus' last commands to him, he disobeys.

In fact, earlier, when Jesus asked them who he is, Peter's actually trying to prevent Jesus from going to the cross.

You know that? Peter's trying to prevent him. And Jesus says, get thee behind me, Satan. How many of you guys have had God tell you that, right? That you've been compared to Satan?

[35 : 26] Right? You would think that's the end of the line for you. But he isn't. God meets him.

They're fishing. He says, Peter, do you love me? Peter, do you love me? Peter, do you love me?

And he says, yes, yes, yes. Yes. In fact, Peter, after this, writing this glorious letter, testifying to the truth of enduring faith, would go on to be martyred, hung upside down, on a cross, because he felt it was unworthy to be placed on a cross like Jesus Christ.

take it from someone who knows. Peter is proof that a true believer can stumble.

He can stumble seriously. He can deny Christ. fail, fail seriously, be weak, cowardly, but because he has been given protection by an enduring faith produced in his heart by the sovereign work of God, he never fails completely.

[37 : 08] As I said last week, if your salvation was up to you, you would never be saved.

If keeping your salvation was up to you, you would never be saved. Your human faith can't save you, your human faith can't keep you.

Therefore, you need a faith that is not human. You need a faith that is beyond this world. You need a faith that is supernatural and supernatural faith only comes from God.

You need a faith to believe the gospel in the beginning came from God and is an enduring faith that always believes. Now, you might be saying, wait a minute, isn't scripture full of warnings about people not to fall away?

Hebrews 6, 4, 1 Timothy chapter 1. Those people who have been delivered over to Satan to learn not to blaspheme, aren't these warnings?

[38 : 27] Yes, they are warnings, but these are warnings to false believers. Those warnings are to people who were uncommitted. Those were warnings to people who came close to the gospel, had it understood, had a superficial understanding, but not a true faith.

Because why? True faith endures. Amen? It's very crucial for us to understand that the doctrine of the preservation of the saints does not mean that we simply pray a prayer or accept Jesus or make a decision for Jesus in some emotional experience.

The reality is if they have really come to Christ, there will be in them an enduring faith that will be characterized by a love for righteousness, a love for God, a love for Jesus, and a hatred of sin.

It will not be perfection, but it will indicate direction in the way of righteousness. Please pray with me.