

# Can a Christian Lose his Salvation?

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Preacher: Rev Iver Martin

[ 0 : 00 ] Turn back with me just for a short while this evening to the passage that we read, the second passage in Hebrews chapter 6. And I want to focus for a while on verses that you find between verse 4 and verse 8, where the writer says, For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the age to come.

If they then fall away, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. For land that has drunk the rain that often falls in it and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated receives a blessing from God.

But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed and its end is to be burned. Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things, things that belong to salvation.

I said last week that we would be looking at this perplexing question this evening. Is it possible for a true believer, a person who lives by faith in Jesus, to lose his or her salvation?

Now you might think, well, that's not a very encouraging theme to take on the Sunday before a communion, when you're supposed to be encouraging people who are following Jesus to sit at the Lord's table for the first time.

[ 1 : 47 ] But I know, as well as you do, that this passage is perplexing. And the chances are that if you are a believer this evening, that you've read this passage, at least I hope you have, and you've stopped at the passage and you've wondered what does it mean?

Because it does seem to indicate, at first reading, that there is a possibility of someone being a true believer, a follower of Jesus, part of the church, part of his people, to fall away after all.

What does it mean then? What does this description mean? For those who have been enlightened, those who have tasted the heavenly gift, those who have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the Word of God, and yet they then fall away to the point where it's impossible for them to be restored.

That's what the passage says. And at first reading, I guess it looks very like as if it means that it's possible to be a Christian and to ultimately lose that salvation.

So I don't believe that I'm being irresponsible in any way in taking a passage like this. It might be a passage like this or a thought like this. The very thing that's stopping you from coming to the table next Lord's Day.

[ 3 : 02 ] Many as a person has believed themselves to have committed the unforgivable sin. And you might put the two passages together, and there's every reason why we should, and conclude that perhaps, or at least if I haven't, then there's every danger that I might.

Perhaps we might be aware of our own weakness and our own liability to sin. You know yourself from the very beginning of your conversion, that you know that you haven't lived a perfect life. You've fallen and stumbled. And you feel, well, if I've fallen this number of times before, then what's the chances of me ever making it to the end? And especially in the light of a passage like this. So the question tonight is very relevant for all of us. Is, can a true Christian be, lose his salvation? Is it possible for somebody to be a genuine believer for a while, and then sometime in the future become unsaved?

From Matthew 7, for example, if I just go to one or two passages, it would appear that it's possible to be deceived into thinking that we've done things in the Lord's name. Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name?

[ 4 : 10 ] Have we not cast out demons? Those who actually preached in Jesus' name. And at the end of the day, Jesus says, depart from me because I never knew you. Now that's, again, the same theme.

And it's something which scares us and which ought to scare us. That's the whole point of it being. In the Bible, there's such a thing as a healthy and a reverent fear of the way in which God warns us. God doesn't say these things for no reason. He says for our good and for our well-being. And then in 1 John chapter 5 and verse 16, there's another intriguing, perplexing verse in which he refers to a sin that leads to death.

You can read it for yourself. And which should not even be prayed about. And then, of course, we all know the passage in Mark chapter 2 in which Jesus speaks about a sin which will not be forgiven.

And, of course, we naturally, we compare ourselves, we measure ourselves against these passages. And the first question we ask is, have I ever committed such a sin? Have I done it already?

[ 5 : 13 ] Could I, right now, have done something in the past that puts me outside of God's love and his keeping? Is it possible that I've done something to drive away the Lord and to leave me in an unsaved position?

Well, these few verses in front of us this evening are perhaps one of the most perplexing. And they cause great distress to many Christian people because they seem to suggest just what I've said. For a person to taste the heavenly gift, to be truly enlightened, to share in the Holy Spirit. And what else does that mean if a person is not truly a believer?

But if that's the case, if the Bible really teaches that it's possible to be a true believer in Jesus and then at some point in the future to completely lose that salvation, what about our security in Jesus? Because if tonight it was possible for me, and I have to start at myself, if it's possible for me to lose my salvation, how can I have any kind of assurance that God will keep me in days and weeks and months to come?

[ 6 : 33 ] I don't. I don't. And if everything depends on me, don't get me wrong, we'll see this in a few moments, if my salvation depends on me, I know my own weaknesses and I can't trust myself.

I've never have. How then, what assurance can there possibly be that God will actually keep me in the way he has done up until now?

What about those passages that suggest to us, no, they're more than that. They promise us that nothing, nothing, says Paul, can separate us from the love of God in Christ.

That's what he says at the end of Romans chapter 8. How can that be possible if at the same time it's possible for me to fall away to the point that I lose my salvation?

Either through something I do or through whatever in my circumstances or whatever else.

[ 7 : 33 ] We just read there in John chapter 10 these words in which Jesus says in no uncertain terms, I give them, who does he give? He gives his people, those who follow him, those who truly trust in him, eternal life and they will never perish.

Let me read it again. They will never perish. And no one will snatch them out of my hands. 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.

I and the Father are one. Now that verse seems to be absolutely clear. That whatever happens in my life, if I truly am in Jesus Christ tonight, then God will keep me and God will keep, he will maintain that security of my salvation.

Let me refer to a particular Christian doctrine. And this is where I believe that the modern world perhaps has lost out.

And that is that we don't grasp Christian doctrine to the extent that we should. And if we don't, then we miss out on vital Bible teaching. Now let me just give you this Christian doctrine and you'll forgive me for using the technical term, but it's a very important one as are other important Christian doctrines, basic important Christian.

[ 8 : 57 ] And that's this, the perseverance of the saints. Now saints are not elevated Christians. They're Christians. Saints are Christians. So we can call it the perseverance of Christians.

And that's a doctrine that says this. Listen to this. All those who are truly born again will be truly kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives.

And that only those who persevere until the end have been truly born again. Now that's the doctrine that we call the perseverance of the saints.

Now I'm going to tell you in a few moments time the rejoinder to that, the other side of it if you like. But we'll go into that in a few moments time. But that's what it is. That those who are truly born again will be truly kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians.

Now that's exactly what Jesus says. He says, no one, I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My father is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of his hand.

[10:08] In that case, what do we make of this passage? If it's true that we are secure or salvation is secure and Jesus and no one will snatch them out of my hand, then what do we make of this perplexing passage?

Well, let's look firstly at the description of the people to whom the writer is writing. Let's look at this detailed description and what he says about them.

We've already mentioned it a couple of times, a five-fold description of what these people have experienced. That's the first thing we're going to do to try and get our heads around this passage. But then we're going to ask secondly, what happens when they fall away?

What does this mean that they fall away? Verse 4, for it is impossible to restore again to repentance if they then fall away. Verse 6, what does that mean to fall away?

That's the second question we're going to ask. And then we're going to ask, well, what does repentance mean? And then we're going to look at the illustration that the writer uses to illustrate the point that he's trying to make.

[11:11] But we're also going to look at some examples that I believe the scriptures show us that illustrate exactly what this passage is talking about. Well, let's look at the description then that the writer gives.

First of all, they have once been enlightened. That's the first thing he says about them. They have once been enlightened. I'm going to go very quickly through this and then sum it up in the end. What this means is that those people who the writer is describing have a clear understanding of the gospel. And at some point in time, not just an understanding, but an agreement with the gospel. They've gone along with it. They've listened to the gospel and they've absorbed it. They've grasped it in their own hearts. It's not something that has meant nothing to them.

It's something that has moved them and has affected their minds and their understanding. Their intellect has been enlightened by the gospel. It's not nonsense to them, in other words.

[12:16] It's something that they've taken very seriously and gone along with. That's the first thing, that they have once been enlightened. But then the writer goes on to say that they have tasted three things.

First of all, they've tasted the heavenly gift. Then they've tasted the goodness of the word of God. And then they've tasted the powers of the age to come.

Now notice the word that he uses. They've tasted. Now once again, at first reading, it may appear that that word tasted means that they have taken.

That they've committed themselves to. But watch the language that he uses. He doesn't actually go as far as saying that. They've tasted it. Now you know as well as I do. It's one thing to taste something.

It's a completely different thing to feed upon it. And there's a basic difference. That's very important for our understanding of this verse. When they gave Jesus the vinegar to drink when he was on the cross, he tasted it.

[13:16] But then he turned his head away. He only tasted it. That was it. And now they tell me that it's the same word that's used here. When you go into Tesco or when you go into the co-op, you very often find at one of the counters samples.

Maybe, for example, they want to try and sell you some new cheese. Cheese is always a favorite thing to taste. And they'll have a plate there and they'll invite you to come while you're doing the shopping.

And they'll have wee bits of cheese in order for you to taste it. And you'll taste it. And the whole point of doing that is so that they will entice you. And so you'll be attracted to buy the cheese. But sometimes you'll taste it and then you'll go away and you won't do a thing.

Now that's what these people did. They tasted. They tasted three things. The heavenly gift. Which means that they had some experience of it just the same way. As you have an experience of the cheese when you go into the co-op.

You have that experience. You know what it tastes like. But you've never actually committed yourself to it. You've never truly brought yourself to purchasing it.

[14:23] That's a different thing altogether. They've tasted the heavenly gift. What is the heavenly gift? Well, the heavenly gift is Jesus Christ. The gift of God is salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord. And apparently it is possible from this chapter for a person to perceive and to recognize. And to move so close to the gospel that they can taste the flavor of it.

And still be lost at the end of the day. It's possible. And then they have tasted the goodness of the word of God. What I believe that means is that the truth of the word of God.

God. These are not people who have sat in a service and they have nodded their head to every... They've shaken their head every moment and just gone out and said, I'm never going to go and hear that again.

It's a piece of nonsense. I'm an atheist. I don't believe anything of... No, no. These are people who have gone along with it. They've listened to the gospel and they've agreed that this is good.

[15:28] I'm enjoying this. I am enjoying hearing about the Bible and I want to come back. And I want to hear more about the gospel. They've tasted the goodness of the word of God.

Notice this word tasted again. Sampled it. But never actually given themselves to the word of God. Never done what Jesus has invited and commanded them to do.

To come to him and to deny themselves and to take up the cross and to follow him. They've tasted the goodness of the word of God. They've also tasted the powers of the age to come.

They know. They've experienced in some way, in some sense, that God's promises extends beyond this life to eternal life.

And it's something that has attracted them. And it's something that has stimulated their hearts and drawn them to go along with what they have heard. Drawn them into a relationship even with the church.

[16:26] The powers of the age to come. But he also tells us that they have shared in the Holy Spirit. Now again, notice his language.

He doesn't say that they have been indwelt with the Holy Spirit. But they have shared in the Holy Spirit. Now what does this word shared mean? Well it means that they have partaken in some way. But that doesn't necessarily mean that they have been, that the Holy Spirit has come into them. Jesus promises that when a person comes to faith in him, the Holy Spirit comes and dwells within that person.

And he begins a good work within them in order to sanctify them and to conform them to the image of Jesus. But these people have shared in the Holy Spirit.

Which doesn't necessarily mean a genuine Holy Spirit experience. A genuine experience of conversion. I guess it's a bit like the word that we use, follow. And indeed the Bible uses follow.

[17:27] The word follow can mean two different things. When Jesus said to Matthew, he said, follow me. What he meant by that is, commit yourself completely and exclusively to me as your savior.

But we also know the Bible uses the word follow for those who just superficially follow Jesus. Both followed him. Some followed him truly and completely. Others followed him on the outside alone. There were loads of them who wanted to see the miracles that he did. They wanted to, as long as they saw something that stimulated their wonder, they were quite happy to follow Jesus.

But the following never went further than that. It never took place on the inside. It was an outside thing alone. Well, I hope that we're coming now to see that the passage perhaps is a little bit different from what we thought at first view.

And it does not necessarily mean that a person, I would put it to you tonight, that it does not mean, most emphatically does not mean, that a person who truly belongs to Jesus can lose his salvation.

[18:35] So what is the passage there for? Well, it's there as a warning. And I want to continue now and to talk about how the writer goes on to describe how those people who have had for what was for them a real experience of the gospel, how they have departed from the faith.

It tells us there in verse six, if they then fall away since they are crucifying once again the son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. Now, what does that mean for a person to fall away?

I think it's important tonight to describe, first of all, what it doesn't mean. It doesn't mean when we drift in our general enthusiasm for the gospel or our commitment to the faith.

You know as well as I do that there are good days and bad times. There are times that we feel strong in the Lord and times where we feel not so strong in the Lord.

There are times when we feel that we are drifting away from what we should be and where we should be in relation to the Lord. That is not what this passage is talking about.

[ 19 : 48 ] I think you'll find that every Christian goes through these times. That's not what this passage is describing, the person who falls away. Neither is it describing as important.

I'm not going to go into this in any detail. But it's important for me to say that it's not describing the person who in a depressive state concludes that he is not a Christian.

There are people who are prone to this kind of condition. Where in a state of depression and isolation and desolation, they may very well conclude that God has cast them off.

And God has no more place for them in his kingdom. Perhaps they're aware of their own weakness or whatever. And perhaps the whole state of depression exacerbates the whole thing and accentuates the whole thing to the point where they conclude that God cannot have any more time for me.

I've outrun the mercifulness of God. And I cannot possibly be saved. That's not the person who has been described in this chapter.

[ 20 : 59 ] I've met so many people who have come to that conclusion. And it's because of a state of depression for whatever reason. Whether it's clinical depression or whatever.

And I'm certainly not going to go into that this evening. And I think it's very important for people to encourage one another. Especially when people suffer from such a condition. For other Christians to give every encouragement to that person.

To look to Jesus and to share with them the mercy, the nature and the mercy of the mercy. And the grace of God. Isn't it important? And this is where the church needs to come in.

And this is where we need to act as a congregation and as a fellowship of God's people. To encourage one another. Particularly those who are suffering in that kind of way. To name but an example.

It's important for us to strengthen one another. And to encourage one another. And particularly those who suffer. But of course it's important also for people to go to a doctor.

[ 21 : 58 ] Because a depression is very often a medical condition. For which the medical service and the medical profession has a great deal to offer. Neither is it describing the Christian who sins or backslides for a while.

This passage is not describing a Christian who sins. There are dozens of examples in the scriptures of real people who were real Christians.

The very finest children of God. Who strayed. Slipped. Tripped. Fell. Drifted.

Ranging from Noah's drunkenness. To Abraham's lies. To Moses' disobedience. To David's adultery. To Peter's denial. Need I say more? I could go on for ages.

Describing the misdemeanors and the wrongdoings and the sinfulnesses and the backslidings of many, many of God's people in the Bible. The Bible never sanitizes the lives of those who follow God.

[ 23 : 06 ] It gives them as they were. In the detail. In the ugly detail. So that we know ourselves. The weakness of our own sinful human frame.

But that we know also that where sin abounds, grace does all the more abound. And a Christian is capable of falling into the same kind of temptation as anyone else.

Look what David said. Iniquities, he says, I must confess prevail against me. But as for our transgressions, then purge away shalt thou.

The Apostle Paul in the New Testament goes on to talk about the brother who is suddenly

overtaken by a fault. That's the way the AV puts it. The ESV says he's caught in a transgression.

The brother who is caught in a transgression. And once again, the church, the duty of the church is to gather around that person. And to encourage that person.

[ 24 : 10 ] And to restore him into a right relationship once again. In which he is brought to see the mercy and the grace of God. And brought to see also that when a Christian sins, it's misery.

It's utter misery. There's a sense of isolation and emptiness and darkness, isn't there? When you know that you've strayed from the place where you ought to be.

You know what it is to walk with the Lord and to be close to the Lord. You know what it is to hear his word and to do service to him.

And yet you know that when you stray, that it never brings you the happiness that you thought it would. It doesn't bring you any pleasure at all. It brings you only a sense of darkness and loss.

But that's not the person who's being described in this passage. But if it doesn't mean any of these things, then what does it mean? Well, I believe that there's a lot of similarity between what has been described in this passage.

[ 25 : 19 ] And the children of Israel, as they made their way through the wilderness. And you'll find references to this. I don't have time to give you them just now. You'll find references to this in other parts of the letter to the Hebrews.

And some people say that the people to whom the writer was writing were converted Jews. Or Jews who had come to listen to the gospel. But who were taking a lot of their baggage with them. And they had this idea that somehow or other the best time in Jewish history was the time when Moses was leading them through the wilderness.

And they wanted to, in a way, go back to that. Well, says the writer, he says, well, don't believe that for a moment. So there's every reason to suppose that what he's describing is the way in which the children of Israel wandered from all through the desert in the 40 years.

Now, what did they have in the desert? They had the light of God. The pillar of cloud that led them.

And the pillar of fire that led them by night. That was the glory of God.

Every one of those two million people saw for themselves with their own eyes the glory of God. And by seeing the glory of God, they were, in a sense, actually looking at God himself.

[ 26 : 33 ] He was that close to them. He had made himself visible to them. Now, how privileged is that? For you to be part of a people who actually sees the glory of God.

Not only that, they heard his voice. Not only that, they were made to see that what he said was the truth. They were his people. His covenant people. He pledged himself to them.

They were part of this great connection that there was, this great relationship between God and his people. They were enlightened. Opposed to every other nation in the world who worshipped false gods.

They were the only nation in the world that worshipped the true, the living and the true God. What a privilege that was. To actually listen to the voice of God. Whether it was through Moses or whether it was to see.

What a privilege. But then they tasted the goodness of the word of God. What was the Ten Commandments? But the word of God. God's message was to them. As my people, they tasted of the word of God.

[ 27 : 37 ] They tasted of the powers of the days to come. The promise of God to lead them through into the promised land. And they tasted also of the heavenly gift.

What was the manna? We talked about that a few weeks ago. We saw how significant the manna was and how it reflected the generosity and the goodness and the grace of God making provision for his people every day.

These very people. They went out every morning and they tasted this wonderful food that God had provided for them. And every time they picked it up, it was a reflection of the grace of God in answered prayer.

And yet, some of them, the more they experienced of God's presence and his reality and his truth, the more resentful they became.

And the more they hated God. Isn't that extraordinary? You expect to find hatred for God amongst the Philistines or the Ammonites or the Syrians.

[ 28 : 44 ] But you don't expect to find it amongst people in whom God manifested himself. He revealed himself. He left them with absolutely no reason whatsoever to resent him.

He showed them his love and his commitment to them. And they were part of that relationship.

Remember the promise that they made in Exodus chapter 24 when Moses renewed the covenant before them.

And they all made a promise. As one voice, they said, everything that you are saying to us, we will do. That was the promise. So here is some form of commitment to the Lord.

And yet, at the end of the day, many of these people, they fell out. Not because, not because they backslid for a while. But because they ended up hating God.

And being filled with nothing but resentment for him. And the more they saw him, the more they listened to him, the more aware they became of his truth amongst them.

[ 29 : 51 ] The more distasteful he became to them. I can't understand that. But that's what the passage, I believe, is talking about. The same happened in Jesus' day with the Pharisees.

Here was Jesus in front of everyone. And the extraordinary miracles. The power with which he was able to make a blind person see. To raise the dead.

To open the ears of the deaf. To walk on the water. To change water into wine. And yet, despite all of that display of God's power.

The Pharisees became more and more and more hardened again. Do you remember in John chapter 11 what happened when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead? In front of everyone.

Lazarus come out.

Four days he had been in the tomb. In front of everyone. Roll away the stone. He said, Lazarus came out. Walking out. With grave clothes. And many of them believed in Jesus.

[ 30 : 53 ] Of course, I hope we would all believe in Jesus. What further proof do we need? That Jesus is the Son of God. And you know what some of them did? They plotted to kill him and to put him to death.

Can you understand that? I don't understand it. It reminds me of the corruption of our human hearts. And our basic hatred and resentment against God.

That's what the basic problem is. And that's the problem tonight. The problem tonight is that there's a conflict. Between me and God. And the obstacle is a battle of the wills.

The question is whether I tonight am prepared to surrender and to submit to God's will and God's way and God's salvation. Or whether I'm going to dig my heels in and say, no, I want my way.

It was always the case. Except the difference here is that these people had for a while gone along with the gospel. And from the outside at least it appeared that they were absorbing it.

[ 32 : 05 ] And had received it. And had tasted it. But now, says the writer, there's a great danger. A great danger. That if you fall away, like the people in Israel.

If you grow in your resentment to the truth. That you'll place yourself in a location where you will never come back.

That's the danger. Now you notice how he quickly goes on to say, but I'm sure. He says, though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved.

We feel sure of better things. He quickly comes on and he comes on to the positive. But that's after giving the warning. And this passage is a warning.

To every one of us tonight. Every one of us. To ask ourselves. Am I a follower of Jesus Christ? And if so, how do I know I'm a follower of Jesus Christ?

[ 33 : 07 ] On what basis do I believe that I'm a Christian tonight? Because I'm a minister? Not a chance. Because I'm an elder?

I hope not. Because I'm a member? No. I hope I never ever trust my salvation to my being a member. Being a member of a church.

Sitting at the Lord's table never saved anyone. Because I give to the church? Because I listen to the gospel? No. Because I once gave my heart to the Lord Jesus at a rally 30 years ago?

That makes me a Christian? No, it doesn't. It doesn't. What makes me a Christian tonight is the grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And if tonight I am trusting anyone or anything else other than only Jesus Christ and his death on the cross, then I have every reason to be concerned.

[ 34 : 09 ] The only assurance I have tonight that I belong to Jesus is Calvary. And the death of the Son of God by which he became sin for me.

And by which he took my sin upon himself and became guilty for my sin. And by which my sin was completely removed.

And in whom I look and I gaze and I trust completely. Not because I have done anything for him at all. But only and exclusively because of what he has done for me.

That's the only basis there is. The only hope I have. The only way in which I can say tonight that I am a Christian. Because the Son of God loved me and gave himself for me.

And so tonight I would like to encourage you tonight. I would like to encourage those who have never taken that first step. To come to Jesus and to trust in him as your own personal saviour and Lord.

[ 35 : 22 ] And perhaps for the first time you've seen. As I believe that God brings us to that first time. You've seen what it was that Jesus did.

When he laid down his life at Calvary. His death is everything. We get nowhere without his death. His death is the only way. And that's why it's so special to us.

That's why it's the highlight of God's people. To sit at the Lord's table and to remember his death. Like by eating the emblems that represent to us his death.

His broken body and his shed blood. That's what's so important to us about that. And I want to ask those of you who have come to Jesus. Not to be persuaded not to sit at the table.

But to ask again. Well who am I trusting in? Oh well you say. Well after what we've heard tonight. Maybe I've only tasted the heavenly gift. And shared in the Holy Spirit.

[ 36 : 17 ] And tasted the goodness of the word of God. Let me ask you this question. What does Jesus mean to you? If Jesus means everything to you.

Then you come and sit at the Lord's table. You may say. Well how can I trust myself in the future? How do I know that I won't fall away at some point in time? How do I know what's going to happen to me next week?

And what attitude I'm going to have next week? Or in years to come. You don't. Let me tell you something. I don't either. I don't know what my future is going to be. We have to trust in God every day.

The Bible tells us not to be looking too much into the future. The future belongs to God. But I know this. That the same Lord who saved me. And brought me out of darkness.

And forgave my sin. Is the same Lord who will lead me day by day. And keep me and watch over me. I'm not saying that I won't do things. Which are an offense to him. And which may bring about misery in my case.

[ 37 : 27 ] And I'm not saying that at all. But I'm saying that the same Lord will make me walk in the paths of righteousness. He restores my soul.

And makes me to walk in the paths of righteousness. You know there's a variety of ways in which the Lord makes us come back to him.

Sometimes he does it through the Lord's people. I was telling the children a few weeks ago. Forgive me for being personal. I was telling the children about how I climbed Ben Nevis during the summer holidays.

What I didn't tell them is that there were several points along the way. Where I was ready to go. That was it as far as I was concerned. Ready to give up.

But there was somebody at my side who told me I was not going to give up. And you know what came to me there. That's the work of the church. Church.

[ 38 : 32 ] Our privilege is to go to one another. And to know one another well enough to be able to say to them. You keep on. You're not going back. You're not going back.

And through that forceful, prayerful, loving encouragement. Speaking the truth in love.

I believe we can provoke one another. And help one another. And give them the assurance and the guidance that they need. That's one way in which God operates.

God operates through our circumstances as well. For he restores my soul. And makes me to walk in the paths of righteousness. Let me tell you.

I was going to tell you at the very beginning. I described to you the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. And I said that those who God had saved are kept by his power.

[ 39 : 27 ] But the confession of faith. Which again we should all be directed to. And which we should all be familiar with. Here's what it says. Nevertheless. Nevertheless. They may.

This is Christians. God's people. Through temptation. Or their own corruption and neglect. 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. And have their hearts hardened.

And their consciences wounded. Hurt and scandalize others. And bring temporal judgments upon themselves. That's what I mean by misery. And yet.

Despite all of that. The Lord has promised that nothing. Shall separate us. From the love of God. In Christ Jesus.

[ 40 : 26 ] Now you take hold of that love tonight. Whoever you are. If you haven't come to faith. Take hold of that love. And accept the gift of God. Turn away from everything that's futile and empty.

And everything that's going to come to nothing. And trust in Jesus. If you've already done so. Take hold of that love. And come back to the Lord. He's asking you.

And commanding you. And inviting you. To come and enjoy. And to take part in his fellowship.

Once again. And to throw yourself into his kingdom. And don't hold back.

It's all or nothing. Isn't it? It's all or nothing. Let it be all tonight. And come and give him your life.

Your soul. Your all. And come and make that known.

By sitting at his table. Let's pray. Our gracious and eternal God. We pray that you will.

[ 41 : 27 ] Keep us from superficiality. That you will keep us from a form of religion. A form of faith. Something that. Makes all the right moves.

And yet is empty on the inside. We pray oh Lord. That our inside will be full of Jesus. And Lord if we have strayed. And drifted.

If we have sinned. Lord we come back. Confessing. Our sin. And asking that you will forgive us.

Graciously forgive us. But at the same time oh Lord.

We pray that you will lead us. And that you will give us a hatred. Of everything that is sinful. And we pray that you will. Show us your mercy once again.

And your power and your strength. And Lord we pray that as we sit. And days to come if it be your will. At the table next Lord's day. That we may experience.

[ 42 : 22 ] The love of God in Jesus Christ. In what we do. Forgive our sin we pray. In Jesus name. Amen.