***Paul's Appeal for Prayer Support, No. 8
Romans 15:30-33
RO194-01***

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This morning, we continue with the subject of Paul's Appeal For Prayer Support. This is segment Number 8. We are in Romans 15:30-33.

**Peace Of God vs. Peace With God**

In Romans 15:33 Paul has said, "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen." as he has concluded the main body of his letter to the Roman Christians. Here he has commended them to the peace of God, the God who is the source of inner peace. Christians possess in their souls peace with God, which comes from that eternal fellowship of justification, eternal fellowship. I trust in Christ as Savior, He takes me into His family, and I'm in there forever. That's described in the Bible as peace with God.

Christians also possess in their souls what the Bible calls the peace of God, because there is a temporal fellowship, a fellowship in time, day-by-day fellowship. At the point of salvation, we also come into that inner circle where we are walking with the Lord. In that inner circle, when we pray, He listens. In that inner circle, we are able to produce the kind of divine good works for which He will give us rewards forever. That is described as the peace of God. Out here [in the outer circle], it is peace with God.

Now of course, we can get out of fellowship. We can come back in; we can get out of fellowship with sin. We can come back in by using 1 John 1:9, confessing that sin. This is very important.

**Humanistic Approach to Peace**

Mrs. Danish and I just returned from Galveston Island where we attended an administrator's conference of our Christian school association. Those of you who are jealous and envious will be happy to know that it was cold and it rained all the time. The only swimming we did was in the hotel pool, but it was great fun and it was very interesting to be with a few hundred administrators from everywhere and to be dealing with the subject of churches, Christian schools and legal problems that they face. One class that I sat in, the man behind me, a middle-aged man who had been in the Christian school business for a long time, said, 'Boy, it's not like it used to be in the old days where you could just minister to people and do the work of the Lord. Now you have to worry about the kinds of words you use and how you say it, and what you do and whether you spank the kid, because there's always somebody lying around in the bushes waiting to jump on you. The peace and stability is not a very great.'

One of the things, however, that I did attend there was on a group that deals with psychological and emotional problems. It's a Christian psychologists'/psychiatrists' group. It's called Rapha, which comes from the Hebrew word for "God is our healer." And one man described things that our parents do to us, five different things. I won't get into those. And all of those give us a real bad problem. So, we're very unstable in life and we don't know how to deal with life. This always keeps working on us. After it was all over, I was nice enough not to say anything during the class, but I just went up and I went up to his board and I said, "Is this a possible solution for the problems that you have described here, which perhaps are from our sin nature and which God has a way of bringing us back into stability?" And I drew this diagram for him and explained the details of it. One of his associates walked up, and the two of them looked at that, and they said, "That's fantastic. That's exactly right. Absolutely. That's exactly what's happening."

Trouble is that these guys we're talking about Freud and Jung, and Rogers, so I knew where they were coming from, and they were coming from humanistic psychology and trying to fit it into the Scriptures. I was trying to show them that God doesn't have to have the ideas of external psychiatry and psychology from Jung and Freud and all the boys up there in order for us to understand what the Bible has to say to us and how we can be stable emotionally and have peace with God and have the peace of God functioning in our lives. As I walked away, he called to me and said, "Can I use this diagram?" I said, "It's yours. Help yourself. The Lord gave it to me. Maybe you can use it." So, who knows? Maybe we'll have some good to people in those classes that I have very great reservations about their approach to solving human problems.

This is an important diagram. You should understand it and it will help you to see that once you're in the family of God, you can get out of that temporal fellowship. You can live like the dog. You can live like the devil. But you're never going to get out of this inner circle, which is the family of God, because that's an act of God, not an act of man. You can bounce in and out, but God's going to keep you in that family. It's important that you understand that. This is what Paul is saying, 'I commend you Christians in Rome to the peace of God.' Then he declares the word "Amen," to close it all off.

We did have a good time at the convention. They had 3 lawyers there. They were all Christian lawyers. One of them was named Buzzard, B u z z a r d, and he was the keynote speaker. I wondered what he was going to do with that name, because right away I saw here was an opportunity. The guy was just really great.

He got up and he said "My name is Buzzard. People are uncomfortable with addressing me by that name. So, they try to doll it up and they call me Mr. Buzzard, which he said always sounds to me like some rich Frenchman, some French magnet." But he said, "It's just Buzzard." He said, "I used to be a pastor." He was in the ministry as a pastor before he became a lawyer. So, you can see where the Old Sin Nature can take you in time. But he gets up there and he says, "When I was a pastor, my name was a problem to me and I'd go to the hospital to visit somebody that was sick and they'd say, 'Buzzard is here.' That didn't sit well with the poor person there in the hospital." However, he said, "After I became a lawyer, I thought it was quite an advantage, because that's the kind of a lawyer people look for, a buzzard. They felt that that worked in their favor."

But anyhow, we learned a lot of things that I think we need to incorporate in the Berean Ministry to make us a little more accurate in our legal compliances and alerted to things. One of the things that the lawyers indicated was if you call yourself a counselor, you're really exposing yourself. They talked about lawsuits that pastors have had and churches have had. Just because you use the word counselor, you now become an official therapist like a doctor prescribing medicine, you give a person advice, and it doesn't work and they come back and sue you. I was glad to hear that myself, because I hope the word counselor can soon be eliminated from church and Christian conversation and terminology, because the counseling that the people of God need are not the humanistic viewpoints and grocery lists of procedure that man can come up with. But they need the counseling that happens in this church every time this pulpit is open for instruction. It is the counseling of the Word of God that carries you through. When you know doctrine, you know what to do with your problems. So, the peace that Paul commends these Christians to is a very marvelous thing and is represented by these 2 circles.

**Appropriation of Salvation**

However, there can be no real peace in one's soul in relationship to God apart from genuine personal salvation. Satan, of course, has filled the world with many false plans of salvation which seem reasonable to mankind, but which are totally unacceptable to God. All of Satan's plans for salvation are based on some kind of human performance to earn a place in Heaven. God's plan of salvation is justification as a free gift of His grace to the lost sinner who does nothing more than believe or trust in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. Please understand that that's the only kind of salvation the Bible knows about, free grace salvation. You do nothing before to get saved; you do nothing after to keep yourself saved. It is a work of God from start to finish; that is critical! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, period, over and out. Now, all of Satan's plans contradict that.

Saving faith in the Bible is simply trust in Jesus Christ alone to save one from the Lake of Fire. And as we pointed out to you, the reformers used to use the Latin word "sola fide" to describe that. That was what the Reformation battle was all about, with Luther and Calvin and Zwingli. "Sola Fide" they would cry out, faith alone takes you into Heaven. This free grace salvation, thus, is simply an act of appropriation. Please remember that word. It's an act of appropriation of God's offer to save through Jesus Christ. Saving faith in the Bible is based on the fact that you believe that God is telling you the truth about salvation through simply trusting in His Son, who has already covered your sins on the cross. He'll take you to Heaven if you'll accept Him without the addition of your intentions to behave yourself or with your promises to live a good life. You simply accept His gift; He has covered you. God is not so foolish as to pay any attention to your promises or your good intentions, because he knows you're going to take the sin nature into the Christian life with you and you're not going to keep your promises or your good intentions. But your salvation, that you can keep because it's all of His doing, none of yours.

**Lordship Salvation vs. The Biblical Concept of Repentance**

The concept of Free Grace Salvation, we have shown you, is indicated currently by some powerful books which are presenting another kind of salvation, and that is Lordship Salvation. Lordship Salvation claims that no one can trust in Jesus Christ as Savior without also making Him Lord of one's life. So, you hear a preacher say inviting people to be saved, "Come forward, make Him Lord and Savior of your life." The Bible knows nothing about that! Lordship Salvation holds that saving faith must include a commitment to live a life of obedience to God, or it's not saving faith. The commitment of Lordship Salvation to obey God is seen, in fact, as an act of repentance separate from believing in Christ. First you repent, then you believe.

In the Bible, the word for repentance connotes the establishing of a harmonious relationship between a sinner and a holy God. This harmonious relationship is achieved according to the Bible, by trusting in Christ for salvation. Then you come to peace within your soul. This repentance as a turning away from sin and a turning away from your rebellion against God can only be done, you see, by believing in Christ as Savior. So, you can't repent without believing in Christ; repent is one side of the coin, believing is the other. They are 2 sides of the very same coin. You cannot come to repentance unless you believe in Christ as Savior. That's how you change from death to life. It's not a separate precondition. Repentance in the Bible sense cannot be a separate act from trusting in Jesus Christ.

It is true that some unbeliever may get fed up with his rotten, sinful life and want to change his ways. In that sense he can say, "I change my mind, I want to repent," and he can change his ways from sin, but only by trusting in Christ as Savior. Otherwise, it will be a human psychological Band-Aid, and pretty soon he'll be back to his old ways.

One of the questions that I did ask the instructor of the Human Emotions Psychology Seminar was "What has been the results of your treatment that you have given?" These people go into hospitals; hospitals welcome them. They give them a whole segment, a whole unit. They say 'You run this unit.' They send people with emotional mental problems to them, and they handle it. I said, "What has been the long-range results of your work?" And he hemmed and hawed. He says, "Well, we're not sure we have good statistics on that." I said, "Well, how close would you say it is to non-Christian approach to psychology and psychiatry, which claims a permanent solving of people's problems at a rate of 5%?" He says, "Oh yeah, if they are honest, 5% or less." So, I said, "That is a true estimate, that out of 100 people that come to a psychiatrist, they are going to have 5 of them and the other 95 are going to seem to be helped, and not be helped?" He said, "Yep!" Well, I said, "Isn't it true that research has also demonstrated that people who have emotional mental problems, if you just leave them alone, 5% of them will get over it on their own?" He says, "That's right." So, I said, "Are we sure that the 5% you help are not the same 5% that would get over it on their own?" He says, "No, we don't know." "OK," I went to the next seminar. I learned what I wanted to learn as I suspected. You cannot resolve the problems of life without the Word of God and obedience to it. You can change your ways on your own, but it's only a temporary Band-Aid.

Repentance in the Bible is really part of the saved person's life. By that I mean that we are always repenting once we become believers. A sinning Christian repents of his evil ways, he expresses that evil by confessing it to God the Father. 1 John 1:9 is our basis for that. If we confess our sins to God the Father, not to your friends, not to your church, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. He will do it every time, faithful. Just, because Christ has already covered that sin. And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, the sins you forgot or that you weren't aware of, are covered by those that you do, that you do confess to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He is faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That is a great promise and on that basis you may have personal peace of God, stability on a moment by moment basis.

The Christians in Corinth, you remember, repented of the fact that they tolerated open sexual sin in their local congregation. The apostle Paul wrote to them about it. He brought them to task, the fact that this was being tolerated by some of their members and they knew it. And when they got his letter, the first letter, they changed their minds. They repented and they did something about it. In 2 Corinthians 7:8-9 Paul says, "For though I caused you sorrow by my letter [his first letter], I do not regret it; though I did regret it - for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while - I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance [Changing your ways, getting back in harmony with God]; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you may not suffer loss in anything through us."

So, it is clear that a Christian can live under such terrible conditions that he needs to repent. He's out here. The Corinthians were out here. [Referring to outer circle of Eternal Fellowship but out of the inner circle of Temporal Fellowship.] Paul said, 'Repent, folks. Get back into the inner circle where you are walking with God and His hand of blessing is upon you.' So, Christians do not live that idealistic, perfect life. The carnal Christians, you remember, in the church of Laodicea in the Book of the Revelation, Chapter 3, were told to repent and turn back to their Fellowship with God in time. You have that picture in Revelation 3:19-20, about Jesus knocking on the heart's door, asking them to repent. He's not knocking on the door of an unsaved person; these are Christians in the church of Laodicea who have stepped out of the inner circle of fellowship. So, Jesus says, "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent." The Lord is talking to believers that they need to change their mind about their sinning. In verse 20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come to him and will dine with him, and he with Me." You have this picture of eating a meal together, which in the Bible is the highest expression of fellowship and camaraderie between 2 people. You sit down and you have a meal together. Jesus says, 'I want you to tell me what you did that's wrong. I want you to admit it so that I can come in and we can sit down and have a meal together like friends instead of My having to be disciplining you and treating you as an enemy.'

So, again you see, do Christians sin? You betcha' they do. Do Christians keep Jesus as Lord of their lives continually? They do not! Lordship Salvation is a very fallacious idea. It's wrong. A Christian does not come into the Christian life and then keep treating Jesus as Lord. Some of the times they do. And the more you grow in spiritual maturity, the more of your life He is your Lord. But He will never continually and regularly be your Lord.

A person's assurance of personal salvation cannot be based on his degree of obedience to the will of God, but to the fact that he at one point believed God's gospel offering of trusting in Jesus to make him a child of God. Lordship Salvation says, "No, it isn't that you look back and said, 'I trusted in Christ.' It is that you look at your life and you see that you're living a godly life, then you know you're going to Heaven."

But as we showed you the sinning son in the parable of the prodigal son, the prodigal son never ceased to be the child of his father. The prodigal son was very disobedient to his father's will, but he was still in the family of his father. The prodigal son returned to good standing with his father by confessing his sin to the father. The prodigal son did not have to perform some good works, as he suggested originally, in order to be accepted by his father. He found that when he came home, his father hugged him, kissed and put a new robe on and gave him a ring and had a party for him before he ever could offer to be a servant of his father. He didn't have to do anything to become the Father's son again. He never stopped being the son. He was a son way out of fellowship with his father; they weren't on good terms, but he was still the son. So too, the sinning carnal Christian comes back into temporal fellowship only with the Father, not into a family relationship, he never lost his family relationship, just his walk with the Father.

So, you see, what I'm trying to say is that the base assurance of one's salvation, whether you know you're going to Heaven or not, on the basis of what fruit you produce in your life relative to righteous living, raises the question also of how much fruit do you need to produce so that you know you have enough? Lordship Salvation focuses the believer's eyes on himself, on his lifestyle, rather than on the sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ to meet all of his temporal and eternal needs.

Looking to yourself for assurance is very subjective. And I can assure you, if you try to decide that you're going to Heaven on the basis of how much you behave yourself as a Christian, I can assure you, you are going to go to disappointment, to defeat, and ultimately to despair of the blackest kind. You cannot structure your assurance on what you do. It is only structured on your assurance of total sufficiency of the payment of Christ for your sin. That's what counts.

**An Illustration of Biblical Salvation - A Gift of God**

We can illustrate the biblical doctrine of Free Grace Salvation with the woman at the well that we read about in John 4. If you'll turn to that, John 4:13-14, Jesus comes along, and he sits down by the well. His disciples are off getting something for a meal, and he strikes up a conversation. He's in Samaria, the area where you have half-breed Jews mixed with Gentiles. The Jews hate the Samaritans. They don't have anything do with them. Here is Jesus, clearly a Jew. He not only speaks to a Samaritan, but He speaks to a Samaritan woman, which isn't done either. So here the Lord Jesus, watching this woman drawing water out of this well and He asks her for a drink. And she was surprised that He would, being a Jew, speak to her, a Samaritan, let alone a woman.

And in verse 10, "Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give Me a drink.," you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.'" She understood something very specific. What do you think she understood by that statement immediately? She understood that Jesus was telling her, 'I can give you a water that once you drink of it, you'll never have to drink water again. You'll never be thirsty again.' Why was that important to her? Because getting water in those days was hard work. You had to go to the well, fill the pot, usually carry it on your head. Immediately she had a vision, no more trudging down here to the well. So, He had her interest and she inquired about this living water.

Finally, in verse 13, "Jesus answered and said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water [in the well there] shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.'" This water, once you drink it, Jesus says, will become a well that keeps coming and coming and coming. To what purpose? To eternal life. Do you see the analogy? Of course, Jesus is talking about spiritual water. Of course, He's talking about salvation water. He's talking about the water of life. He's talking about trust in Him as Savior. Jesus says, 'If you drink by trusting in me for your salvation, I'll trigger something into you that will be permanent. That water that gives you life will continually flow within yourself. This was His way of saying 'You will always be saved once you're in My family.'

The woman understood that He was saying she'd never have to drink again. Verse 15, "The woman said to Him, 'Sir, give me this water so I will not be thirsty, nor come all the way here to draw.'" She did not grasp the spiritual analogy that Jesus was making. However, she did grasp the point that one drink of His water would permanently quench your thirst. She understood, thus, that she'd not have to come back to the well to get another drink. That's exactly the case. Once a person drinks of the water of eternal life that Jesus offers through faith in Himself as Savior, he never has to drink again.

That's what John 5:24-25 means when it says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. [Those are all permanent statements in the Greek language. Done! Done! Done! You drink, you’re in, you're never out again.] Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live." Jesus says, 'Those who drink are permanently in and one day their physical bodies will be resurrected.' This was not true of the water that the woman was drawing from the well. That water you had to drink again and again.

Many people today, I need not tell you, contradict the statement of the Lord Jesus about His claim that He can do something to you that will give you eternal life that can never be lost again, that He can so transform you by putting His life in you that it will continue to bubble up as the water of eternal life. There are people today who contradict Jesus Christ without batting an eyelash, saying, 'oh, yes, you can. You do something bad and you're out.' They just wish the Lord Jesus would have gotten that straight long ago. He doesn't seem to understand that if you do something sinful, you lose the saving effect of the water you have drunk. You need to drink it again.

Of course, the problem that we are all sinful, not only in our outward actions but in our thought actions, restricts the time period during which we are not sinful. If you ask those people, 'well, how much sin?', you're right back into it. 'A little sin?' 'No, a little bit more. But not too much.' Who knows where! Some people contradict the statement of Jesus by saying that one has to keep drinking the water of life by some good actions to remain saved. Yes, he'll say to you, but you have to keep doing good works to keep it.

**Jesus Is Source of Permanent Salvation**

Jesus portrays Himself as the source of a permanent salvation, of a permanent satisfaction on eternal life. John 6:35, "Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he believes in Me shall never thirst.'" What do those words mean, 'I am the bread of life'? How shall I eat this bread of life? It's obviously a symbolic comparison. I eat Him by trusting in Him as Savior. He is the water of life. How will I drink Him? I drink Him and by trusting in Him as Savior. Thus, my hunger is satiated permanently. My thirst is satiated permanently.

Notice John 6:37-40; Jesus says, "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." You have to really be out of your gourd or be rolling with one oar to think that these verses tell you that you can become a child of God, misbehave yourself in some way, and then lose your childhood standing in the family. That's exactly the opposite of what He says here. He has clearly said, 'My father has sent Me to ensure that anybody who accepts My offer of Free Grace Salvation (You do nothing, I've done it all; take My gift.), once you take it, you are permanently born into My family, and you will never be unborn. I will assure you that if you die before I come back to take you home in the rapture, you will be raised to life and your physical body will be right there as perfect as mine.' That is the promise of Free Grace Salvation. Free Grace means it doesn't depend on us at any point.

Some people claim that if anyone should stop drinking Jesus's water of life by living an ungodly life, that indicates he was never saved in the first place. Lordship Salvation claims that if someone really believes in Jesus Christ as Savior, he will never lose faith in Christ. He will never stop believing. They claim that if one professing faith in Jesus Christ loses faith in Him, that person never had saving faith and was never born-again in the first place. Is that true? If I lose faith, does that mean I was never born-again in the first place?

If a person receives the gift, then there are no strings attached or it is not a gift. What Jesus offered to this woman was a gift of God. He said, 'What I have is a gift of God. Once a gift is bestowed on a person, it is his for good.' That's the nature of a gift. That's why the Bible calls it a gift. If the Samaritan woman of Sychar accepted Jesus as gift, it's going to be hers forever, and nothing she can do will cause her to lose that gift. Inward spiritual transformation produces an unending inward fountain of the water of eternal life in her. We call that regeneration. God never gives salvation with strings attached so that He can take it back again.

**Another Example of Biblical Salvation**

Another example of this principle is Nicodemus, John 3. Here, the same principle is related, the irreversible possession of eternal life. This is illustrated here as a birth experience. John 3:3, "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" Jesus uses a birth comparison. Have you ever asked yourself why did He compare salvation to the birth process? He did it because He was trying to convey, (In part, what is obvious to everybody in which immediately Nicodemus grasped.) you can't reverse the birth process, Nicodemus said, 'How can I get back in my mother's womb to be born again so I can go to Heaven?' He was thinking of it on an earthly term. It's amazing how Christians miss this.

I was sitting one time with a family, and they were part of a denomination that did not believe in the security of the believer. And this man was a member of their family, he had come with his wife visiting, and he was the head of their Pastor's Association of this denomination. He was a bigwig. When they introduced me, he wanted to spot me theologically. He wanted to know where I fit in. I said, "Well, I would probably say basically I was in the tradition of John Calvin." "Oh," he said, "I suppose you believe in once saved, always saved?" We were sitting around the table; his wife was sitting there and other people. I said, "Yes, and I think that that's illustrated in part by the fact that Jesus compared salvation to the birth process to convey to us that it can never be reversed." You know how you see when something hits people inside and they start? His wife did a double take. I could just see over her eyes this confusion because she was saying 'Yeah, that is a problem, isn't it? Why would he talk about being born if you can get unborn? That's not a good comparison.' She didn't say it, and her husband dropped it, much to my disappointment. I was gearing up for a happy evening, but the sucker backed off and left me standing there alone, so that was the end of the discussion. But here was an obvious conclusion for you to draw.

God compares salvation to being born, and that's what He did here. Birth is an irreversible one-time event. And furthermore, it is so permanent, this birth process, you know, that John 5:28-29, says that that body that God gave you at your birth is going to be resurrected. And God says 'I don't care whether you're Christian or not, everybody's body is going to be brought to life. Some of you are going to be put into the Lake of Fire in those bodies. Some of you are going to be put into Heaven in those bodies. All these birthed bodies are going to be raised to life. All those aborted bodies are going to be brought to life. All those stillborn bodies will be brought to life again. Everybody's going to be brought back to life. It's an irreversible process.' So, even if a born-again believer were to decide that he no longer believes the gospel, he could not reverse his genuine spiritual birth into the family of God.

Please notice what 2 Timothy 2:13 says on that. Can I stop believing in Christ as Savior and reverse my destiny? 2 Timothy 2:13, Paul says, "If we [and he's been talking about Christians, Timothy and himself and the believers. If we believers] are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself." If we become faithless, if we lose our faith in Jesus Christ, He remains faithful to us; He cannot deny Himself. What does that mean? God has given us His faithful promise to save those who trust in His Son. And that promise is not dependent upon the recipient's faithfulness to God in return; it is only dependent upon God's faithfulness to His own word. So, even if we were to decide we no longer believe in the gospel, God remains faithful to save us since we are already in His family. We appropriate salvation as an act of faith in Christ; but our salvation does not depend on our faith in that transection. We could doubt our status in Christ and still go to Heaven. The Lord Jesus guarantees certain things to us and being in a family of God permanently is one of them.

I remember a dramatic illustration of this years ago. There was a lady in our church who had a husband who was very antagonistic to spiritual things. The thing that was interesting about this man is I had occasion to talk with him, is that he had once been a very zealous fundamentalist Christian. He was out there witnessing, knocking on doors, passing out tracts. Now he had abandoned it all. He said to me, I just don't believe in Jesus Christ at all. I said, "How did that happen?" He said, "Well, I had some brothers, my father and my brothers. They didn't believe." As we discussed this, their argument convinced me!" Now, the woman's question is, "What's his condition?" I wouldn't know and I couldn't tell. But I did know, I could tell her that if he were genuinely born-again, God's going to take him into Heaven, kicking and screaming, if necessary, but he's going to come in. Once saved you're going in because you cannot get back out of the family.

Many years later, I met this man again. He had flopped back over completely. He was a religious fanatic now. He was all for the Lord. He was very zealous. He's out there witnessing, he's passing out tracts, and he's happy in the Lord. I said, "What happened?" He said, "I realized I was wrong. I was saved to begin with. I continue to be saved. I realized that my change of mind was wrong. My father and my brothers were wrong. I was right to begin with because God's word is right." He made a total change. Now, had he ever left the family of God? No. What had he left? He was wandering out here in this carnality area for years [referring to being out of Temporal Fellowship]. Boy, did he waste time, time to store treasures in Heaven. Finally, he popped back in and now his life started to count for eternity.

**God's Promises to Those He Saves**

There are certain things which God promises those He saves. He tells you that if you are born-again, He actually gives you God's quality of life, which is eternal life. In John 6:47 He says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life." Isn't that simple? So, one of the things God says, 'I'll give you a quality of life which is eternal, I will give you God's eternal life that will now reside within you once you trust in Christ as Savior.' Will somebody please define for me eternal life? Six months, 3 weeks, 2 days? What does the word eternal mean? Do you see how absolutely dumb it is to talk about God giving you eternal life and then saying you can lose it? It wasn't eternal then. Obviously, it wasn't God's life. If God gives you His life, it's eternal, it continues.

The second thing that He promises is that as God's children, we will never come into judgment for our sins. John 5:24, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life." You will never stand before God to be judged for your sins. You will never stand before God's throne and for them to switch that big TV screen that they have in Heaven on in order for all of us to stand there and watch the portrayal of your sins. I know that's a great disappointment to some of you, but that is not the way it's going to be. God is saying 'once your sins are under the blood of Christ, they are gone. He has forgotten them. They don't even have any records on them. They wiped them out of the computer. There are no longer on record. We are justified. We are just as if we had never sinned.' So, as God's children, you are never going to be judged for any sin.

Now, so you don't get too upset, I will remind you that as a sinning child, and we'll get to this, you will be disciplined by God. As a sinning child of God, you can go so far out of fellowship, staying out of the inner circle, that God finally says, 'OK, you have passed the point of no return. There's no purpose for Me to let you breathe anymore on this earth. I'm jerking you out, taking you to Heaven.' And He'll take you to Heaven. That's called a sin-unto-death in the Bible. But you do go to Heaven.

There's a third thing that God assures us as His children, that is that we will be resurrected. John 6:39-40, "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day." They will have eternal life.

**Christ Cannot Deny Himself But Christian Faith Can Be Undermined**

Jesus Christ cannot renege on His promises to His believers. He cannot deny Himself. God's truth remains true whether we believe it at some point in time or not. The overthrow of your faith as a Christian, or your confidence in God's word, of course is an ever-present possibility. Christians can become spiritual casualties, but they are still saved. This is what Paul was warning his young friend Timothy about, that Christians can become spiritual casualties. 1 Timothy 1:18-19, Paul says, "This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected [some Christians have rejected] and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith." What does he mean, that they're now going to hell? No! He says these Christians have suffered shipwreck in regard to the faith. [continuing in 1 Timothy 1:20] "Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme." These 2 Christian men were saying things and teaching things that Paul says is blasphemous and they have made shipwreck of their walk with God and of the walk of other people. But they have not made shipwreck of their salvation.

In 2 Timothy 2:17-19, it speaks of 2 men who are teaching false doctrine about the resurrection. 2 Timothy 2:17-19, "and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth [not men who never had the truth, Christian men who have strayed from sound doctrine,] saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus they upset the faith of some. Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness.'" Paul says these men are wrong, the resurrection is not past, but they are again creating havoc with the confidence of some Christians.

The Bible does not guarantee the Christian faith cannot be undermined. It does guarantee that your salvation cannot be lost in spite of your own spiritual breakdown. God knows those who are His. The Lord Jesus knows those who are in His family. John 10:14 tells us that, 2 Timothy 2:19 [also].

Please do not be dissuaded when you see some Christian falling into reversion. Some Christian that you had a great deal of confidence in, and he zips back into sinning. He does something terrible. That doesn't mean that salvation is not true. That doesn't mean that all the promises of God are not true. That doesn't mean that this person is lost. You can lose your faith and your confidence in God, and you are still His child.

You know who the great example of that is? Turn to Luke 7:18, Luke 7:18 John the Baptist. Here is a real man of God. Was John the Baptist saved? Was John the Baptist going to Heaven? Was John the Baptist a true godly born-again witness of God when he pointed to Jesus at the baptism of Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." Is there anybody here who wants to say John the Baptist was not born again? I want to show you something about this great born-again man of God. Luke 7:18, "And the disciples of John reported to him about all these things. [That is the things that Jesus had been engaged in and the resistance that had risen to Jesus. Then continuing to Luke 7:19,] And summoning two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord, saying, 'Are you the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?'"

Now you tell me what that is saying about John the Baptist! He's been preaching about Jesus for some time, he announced His coming, he is the one that Isaiah predicted would come as the forerunner to announce the Messiah has arrived, and John has confidently pointed to his cousin Jesus and said, "Here is the God-man. He is the one who will die for the sins of the world." And all of a sudden, things are going bad: John is in prison, things are coming apart, people are attacking Jesus, they're rejecting Him. John's having second thoughts about this man that he trusts for salvation. Has John the Baptist lost his faith? You betcha' he did. Did he lose his salvation? Not on your life. He sends them to Jesus and says, 'Are you the one or did we make a mistake?'

Luke 7:20-28, "And when the men had come to Him, they said, 'John the Baptist has sent us to You saying, "Are you the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?"' At that very time He cured many people of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He granted sight to many who were blind. [This is Jesus.] And He answered and said to them, 'Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me.' And when the messengers of John had left, He began to speak to the multitudes about John, 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are splendidly clothed and live in luxury are found in royal palaces. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and one who is more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, "BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER BEFORE YOUR FACE, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU." I say to you, among those born of women, there is no greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.'" Does that sound like a description of a lost soul? Does that sound like Jesus talking about a man who obviously has lost his faith in Christ but who is now on his way to the Lake of Fire? Obviously not.

So, take courage when you have some doubts, when you wonder about yourself, when you wonder about some of these things in Scripture, when you lose a little confidence about your walk with the Lord and how you stand and how true all this is. Go back to Paul's statement: "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that that which I have committed to Him against that day, He is able to keep." That's the confidence. He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. What have I committed? I've committed my soul. I've committed myself to Him on the confidence of His death to cover me without my doing anything to earn it or keep it. That's Free Grace Salvation. Lordship Salvation is a totally mis-guided concept. You will not find it in Scripture.

In school, you learn to think logically to prove something is right or wrong by what is called setting up a syllogism. You have a major premise. You have a minor premise. You draw a conclusion. If one of those is wrong, the conclusion is false. Here's what Lordship Salvation syllogism goes like. It has a major premise - we are justified by faith alone, Sola Fide. True? Quite right. Minor premise - faith inevitably produces a life of good works and godliness. Conclusion - we can determine our salvation status therefore by our works and lifestyle. That's not true! Why is this conclusion false? Because the minor premise is false. This is not true. This is not scriptural. Faith does not inevitably produce a life of good works and godliness. Should it? Yes. Is that what God expects? Yes. Is that what all the Scriptures call upon us to do for our own well-being in terms of our eternal rewards? You betcha'. But this is a false syllogism. It does not declare the truth. It comes to a false conclusion.

Some of you are uncomfortable about the Book of James. You have some questions about James saying that faith without works is dead. What does that mean? I'm glad you asked. And if you'll come back next week, we will deal with James. That's the big problem.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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