

Can I Know for Sure I'm Saved?

Selected Passages

Series "Reset"

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This is going to be an awesome day. Let me share with you right up top here what's going to happen immediately after the message today. We already have several people that want to follow Jesus in what we call "believer's baptism". And we have scheduled their baptism for the end of the service today.

- These are people that have either trusted in Jesus for salvation recently – many are students from Freedom weekend that weren't able to be baptized last weekend.
- There are others that trusted in Christ previously, but have never followed in this important act of obedience and they desire to, and this is finally an opportunity for them to express publicly what they believe personally.
- And then, there are others who are being baptized who grew up in a faith where perhaps they were sprinkled as a child or even baptized by immersion as child, but they really didn't understand what they were doing at the time. They were baptized because their parents wanted them to be, or all their friends were doing it, and they have come to a true saving faith since then, and want to (as we say) get their baptism on the right side of their salvation.

And so, we are going to see many people be baptized today and I'm telling you this up front in the message, because I believe there are many in the room that when I describe those being baptized, you may fit in one of those three categories – and we want to give you – YES, you an opportunity to be baptized with these that have already signed up!

We call this a "spontaneous baptism", and at the end of the message, if you know you need to profess Christ publicly, we're going to ask you to go "all in" and be baptized today.

You may be thinking, I'm not prepared...or I didn't bring cloths...or I want my loved ones to see me baptized!

Well, that's why I'm giving you a heads up. Text your loved ones and tell them to tune into our live service because you have a surprise for them at the end...we have cloths for you shorts and t-shirt that we baptize in, AND we're all going home right after, so you can go from the baptism to the car.

Look, it's Super Bowl Sunday and we are about to see something SUPER happen in this service today!

So, if you are here and know you need to be baptized or through the message today, sense God calling you to be baptized, be obedient to that still, small voice on the inside – that’s the Spirit of God. I assure you the Devil is not saying, “You should be baptized!”. You come forward at the end of the message at the invitation and let us with all of heaven celebrate what’s taking place in your life today. THIS is going to be awesome.

Now, we’re continuing in our RESET series today and the “must-answer” question we’re dealing with fits perfectly with our spontaneous baptism today.

It’s the title of the message and a question we’ve got to answer. Here it is? **Can I Know for Sure I’m Saved?**

Did you know that God WANTS you to have an assurance of salvation. He in no way wants you to be going through life wondering:

- “Am I really saved?”
- “Am I sure my sins have been forgiven and that I have a relationship with God?”
- Do I know for certain that when I die, I’m going to spend eternity with Christ?”

God wants you to be certain of your salvation – many passages in scripture teach this. We’ll look at some of those today, and many are found in the book of 1 John.

1 John 5:11-13 – “And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. ¹

I don’t know of a more important question that each of us must answer and settle once and for all in our own minds and hearts than this question.

The famous evangelist of the mid 1800’s **D.L. Moody** said this: **“I have never met anyone anywhere who was of any good to the cause of Christ who did not have the assurance of their salvation.”**

And I agree!

- If we don’t have an assurance of salvation, we’ll live in a constant state of fear wondering whether or not we are really saved...and that fear can paralyze us and prevent us from ever moving forward spiritually...

- If we don't have an assurance of salvation, it will hinder the joy that comes from knowing Christ – we'll never really walk in and relish the “abundant life” that Jesus promises us...
- If we don't have an assurance of salvation, NO WAY will we live by faith! If the foundation of our faith isn't settled, we'll never grow or build on it...

Eternal security is THAT important!

Illus. Growing up a doubter - Now, on a personal note, I know what it is to struggle with doubting your salvation. I trusted Jesus as an 11-year-old boy. I grew up in the church. My earliest memories are from the church.

And with this being my testimony, I always struggled with am I truly saved or is this just something I grew up in. Did I really mean it when I asked Jesus into my heart? Did I know fully what I was doing? Did he hear me? Did it really take?

We'd have different evangelists and preachers come to the church and they'd preach a great sermon and say something at the end like, “Do you know that you know that you know that you know that you are saved?”

And I would think, “I did until you put it like that!” And I must have said what we call the “Sinner's Prayer” – I must have asked Jesus into my heart – well, if I did it once, I did it a hundred times, and I can remember as a high school student really wrestling with my doubt...so much so that when God called me to ministry, I vividly remember thinking, “You know some churches have student ministers, associate ministers, senior adult ministers. Just let me be the “Minister to Doubters” because I've been there! I know what it's like to wonder and doubt whether or not I'm saved or question whether or not I could lose my salvation.

? – Has anyone ever been there? I know it's NOT just me. So, let's look at it. We can KNOW for sure we are saved! How?

1. Understand the gift of God in salvation

Salvation is the Lord's. It belongs to him and is GIVEN to people, NOT earned or achieved. Another way we could say this is that salvation is a gift of grace.

Eph. 2:8-9 – “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Grace is the unearned, unmerited favor of God. If you could work for your salvation...if you could do something that could earn you salvation, it would nullify the grace of God.

And God is NOT going to allow that because then it wouldn't be a gift. God gets credit for salvation and no one else!

Illus. Jump rope - I've often shared it like this with someone before. If God put in the scripture that if you could jump rope 10 times in a row and not ever mess up and then you would have salvation, what would you do?

You'd jump rope 10 times in a row, not mess up, and then go off and share with someone what you did in order to get salvation! You'd say, "Look at what I just did to get salvation!" And God is NOT going to share his glory with anyone else especially when it comes to salvation.

Salvation is a grace gift from God. Listen to:

2 Tim. 1:9a – "(God) who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace..."

Understanding the gift of God in salvation is important because if our salvation is NOT gained by something that we "DO" - which by the way, this is how ALL other religions work – they are based on the action of the individual:

- Does our good outweigh our bad?
- Did we say enough prayers?
- Did we appease God by performing the rituals?
- Are we measuring up?

That's religion. Salvation in Christ is about a relationship with God that is offered to us by grace. And if it's not gained or achieved by anything we can do, it stands to reason that it could not be lost by something we do or don't do.

In other words, what is received by grace through faith, can't be removed by works or a lack thereof.

Now, some of you are thinking, I get the grace thing...I know I can't do anything to gain it. But perhaps what you are wondering is, "If God can freely give it, can't he freely take it away?"

Well, let's walk this out? What could possibly cause God to take our salvation away? Is it the severity of sin? Could that cause God to take the salvation he gives back?!

If so, what sin is it? The "worst" sin we see in scripture is the torture, mockery and crucifixion of Christ. That's a bad sin right there...nailing the hands and feet of Jesus to the cross!

But, what did Jesus say to that? What did he do? The scripture says he said on a continual and repeated basis, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Severity of sin doesn't

cause someone to lose their salvation...you cross this line, and your done! We don't read that or see that in scripture.

Some of you may be thinking, "No, it's not the severity of sin that would cause God to take his salvation away, but it is the repetition of sin!"

So, if we habitually sin, God will take his salvation away? Really?! What's the chapter and verse?

Because the chapter and verse I'll go to is Jesus answering his disciples in Matt. 18 that if someone sins against them not just seven times, but 70x7 times, they should forgive them! Certainly (as we will see in just a moment) the love of God is stronger than that which one has for a brother!

The concept of losing your salvation or God taking your salvation away because of sin as always kind of bewildered me because if this is the case, why would he save you in the first place?

You can't lose your salvation. I'm with **Voddie Baucham** on this who said, "**Folks, if we could lose our salvation, we would.**"

God is not going to take his salvation away from you! It's a gift!

And if you are thinking, well the person I know was saved, baptized and they have left the faith – I would say, if they have left the faith...if they have become apostate then they were never in it in the first place!

1 John 2:19a – “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us...”

Phil. 1:6 – “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

What God starts IN you, he will finalize and complete. Salvation is a past, present, and future reality. If you are saved, Jesus saved you:

- Past tense – that's justification – you are saved!
- Present tense – that's sanctification – you are being saved!
- Future tense – that's glorification – you will be saved!

This gift is received the moment you in humility and faith call on the Lord for salvation. It's instantaneous. And what God starts, he will complete!

Listen to the promise of Romans 8:30 – (and this is key...when it comes to salvation, we base what we believe about it, NOT on what we feel, but on the truth of God’s word!)

Illus. Next Steps – this is what week three is about – eternal security. We show this image of a train.

Rom. 8:30 – “**And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.**”

Salvation is a gift from God that is as sure as the promises of God. And how do we know his promises are sure? It’s based on his character. And this leads me to the second way we can know for sure we are saved.

1. Understand the gift of God in salvation.
2. **Understand the role of God in salvation**

The reason this doctrine of eternal security...or to go by another name the “Perseverance of the Saints” is so critically important is because the work and role of the triune God is at stake. To deny that you can know for certain you are saved, is to deny the work and role of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Let me explain it by giving you NOT my opinion or feeling on the subject, but by the truth of scripture. We serve one God in three distinct persons – this is the Trinity. Each person (one God) in the godhead has a role in our salvation.

a. God, the Father

Eph. 1:3-4a – “**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him...**”

b. God, the Son

Eph. 1:4b-5,7 – “**...In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will... In him (God, the Son) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.**”

c. God, the Holy Spirit

Eph. 1:13-14 – “**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,¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.**”

So, notice the work and role of the Godhead. Salvation is ALL about him. God, the Father chooses and calls to salvation. God, the Son redeems and purchases our salvation. And God, the Holy Spirit seals and guarantees our salvation.

You can be confident in your salvation because his character...his work...his role – that’s the letter of authenticity that comes with it!

Illus. Letter of Authenticity – You know what I’m talking about when I say this, don’t you? (example of Spurgeon sermon)

Listen to **John 6:37-40** – “**All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.** ³⁸ **For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.** ³⁹ **And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.** ⁴⁰ **For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”**

The work, role and character of God is at stake regarding our salvation. Once you have received Christ, you will ALWAYS be in Christ.

You’ve heard, “Once saved, always saved.” That needs to be changed to, “If saved, always saved.”

Finally, you can know for sure you’re saved by rightly understanding the gift of God in salvation. We need to understand the role of the God in salvation. And then thirdly, we can know with certainty we are saved when we:

3. Understand the love of God in salvation

Illus. Valentine’s Day – month of love (Friday is Valentine’s Day!) We’ll get a card, some flowers, chocolate, have a dinner date with our loved one. We know to a degree what it is to give and receive love.

God’s love is a divine love. It’s altogether different from any type of human love we can express. God’s love has staying power! It’s steadfast! NOTHING can change it or effect it.

Rom. 8:38-39 – “**For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,** ³⁹ **nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

God’s love is what our salvation is rooted in and it’s what keeps our salvation. If you ever need assurance of salvation, the first place you need to go is to the love of God. His love is what is holding on to you and will NEVER let go!

They are not holding on to me, I am holding on to them.

John 10:27-28 – “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.”

This is God’s love. It holds on to us:

- even when we’re unlovable...
- even when we’re trying to let go...
- even when the Enemy is trying to snatch us out of the Father’s hand...it’s NOT going to happen.

Our salvation does NOT depend on the strength of our grip on Christ – but the strength of his grip on us!

We can walk in confidence as it relates to our salvation when we properly understand the gift of God in salvation, the role of God in salvation, and the love of God in salvation.

1 John 5:13 – “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know (absolute certainty, NOT hoping...NOT guessing...that you may KNOW) that you have eternal life.

We started this message with a question: “Can I know for sure I’m saved?” And the answer is, “Absolutely YES!” I close asking this question, “Do you know for sure you are saved?”

You CAN know...do you?

- It’s NOT based on works!

Jesus said in **Matt. 7:22-23** – “On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

Going to church doesn’t save you. Being a good person doesn’t save you.

- It’s NOT based on believing the right things with your head!

James writes in: **James 2:19** – “You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!”

- It’s NOT based on saying a prayer when you were little or being baptized – NONE of those things saves you.

What saves you is faith in Christ – salvation is a gift of God! So, how do you know you have a saving faith? One word – CHANGE.

The Puritan, **Thomas Watson** – “**Faith that does not change your heart will not save your soul.**”

To put it simply...a saving faith changes you. Jonathan Edwards the great preacher/theologian from the First great Awakening saw thousands of converts under his ministry. He wrote a pamphlet called, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, and in it he tried to list out what he describes as key characteristics of saving faith.

I’ve edit some of these and added some of my own. This list isn’t exhaustive, but you want to know if you have a saving faith, here’s a good place to start.

- 1. Do you have an increasing love for Jesus Christ?** (Progressive sanctification)
- 2. Are you sensitive to sin in your life?** The Puritans felt the difference between a true believer and a false convert wasn’t sinlessness, but warfare! The saved wage war against the sin that assaults their soul. Those that are lost are at peace with it! Lifetime of repentance!
- 3. Do you have an increasing desire and hunger for the word of God and prayer?**

1 John 2:3 – “**And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.**”

- 4. Is your passion for family members and friends that do not know Christ growing?**

1 John 3:14 – “**We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.**”

- 5. Are you aware and becoming more sensitive to need around you?** (Fruit of the Spirit is not works, but produced as we abide in Christ!)
- 6. Is biblical community a priority in your life?**
- 7. Have you undergone the Lord’s discipline or experienced suffering or persecution for your faith?**
- 8. Have you openly confessed Christ and followed through in obedience to baptism?**

That’s WHY we are giving you a chance to be baptized today...NOT because it saves you, it doesn’t! But what baptism will do is help solidify in your own heart and mind the choice you have made to surrender your life to Christ.

It's your identification as a believer in Christ and it is a stake in the ground to show the world that you are following Jesus.

So, if you have never called on the name of the Lord and followed him in baptism OR you just want to settle it once and for all and demonstrate to the world what you believe and to whom you belong – you want to get your baptism on the right side of your salvation, this day is for you.

Let's pray and I'll give instruction from here.

Please Note: This document is not meant to be a published, cited, annotated research paper. It is simply a transcript of a spoken message, provided as a resource. Many commentaries, articles, and other sermon helps were likely studied and contributed to the forming of this message.