

"To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace"

A True Salvation – The Keeping Power of Grace

Larry Podhordeski

Question 1:

Is it possible for a person to be chosen by the Father, have his sins paid for by Christ, and regenerated by the Spirit, and then to be lost?

Question 2:

Can a person be a true Christian and live like the devil?

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." John 10: 27-28

Every one of Christ's sheep has eternal life and there's no possibility of them perishing. The big question we then have to ask is: Who are Christ's sheep? Who are these people who have eternal life and never perish?

- everyone who walks an aisle or signs a card?
- everyone who prayed the sinner's prayer?
- everyone who professes belief?

Who are the sheep?

These sheep have two marks:

- They have a mark on their ear-- they hear His voice (literally they keep on hearing)
- They have a mark on their feet-- they keep on following (evidenced by their attitude to the authority of God's Word; i.e. His commandments are not burdensome to them).

Sheep have had their natures changed - permanently. They are incurably in love with the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for their redemption. So they follow Him in love, and none of His sheep will ever quit following. Therefore, the sheep are those who will hear, and they will follow.

What then about those who do not follow?

The bible nowhere guarantees them eternal security when their lives are divorced from faithfulness to Jesus. If they don't follow they are not sheep. If they are not sheep, they won't follow.

The Bible speaks of people who stop following. What does Jesus say about this? Through His apostle John, Jesus says:

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us." 1 John 2:19

1 John 2:19 is not alone. The Scripture is full of statements that proclaim the necessity for saints to persevere in the faith.

Matthew 24:13

"But he who endures to the end will be saved."

1 Corinthians 15:2

"...by which also you are saved, *if you hold fast that word which I preached to you-unless you believed in vain.*"

Colossians 1:22-23

"...in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and irreproachable in His sight- *if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel* which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister."

Hebrews 3:12,14

"*Beware, brethren*, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; vs.14 For we have become partakers of Christ *if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.*"

Since we must persevere, and the Bible is clear, we must, is it then left up to us? Is our ultimate salvation left in *our* hands and *our* ability to endure?

How does the believer keep hearing and keep following? Here's the good news! If you are a true believer, GOD will give you grace to persevere to the end. You may fall, you may stumble, but you will rise again and walk and you will not quit. God's true people, who have been brought to faith by the power of the gospel and the power of the Spirit, will, by God's grace, persevere to the end.

We do persevere. We must persevere. And it is God's grace that enables the believer to do so.

This is the KEEPING POWER OF GRACE!!!!

" ***who are kept by the power of God*** through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" 1 Peter 1:5-7

You may know that God is merciful. You may know that God has caused you to be born again. You may know that God raised Jesus from the dead. You may know that your inheritance and the riches of heaven are bound up in Christ. In other words, you know what God has done in the past to give you life, and you know what God is going to do in the future to give you your inheritance. Eternal life is not temporary, it is eternal!

But what about now? What about the time between new birth and final salvation. What about the temptations, pressures, stresses, weariness, persecution, frustrations, suffering, confusion, perplexity, fears and traps that we face now? Does God supply all that Christ has done and then stand back and wait to see if we will make it to heaven? I think Peter answers that question clearly and powerfully in verse 5.

" *who are kept by the power of God*"

Those who are born again are "kept" or being "protected" by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Peter's answer to the question of whether God stands back to see if we will make it to heaven is a NO. God does not just stand back after he has caused us to be born again. He uses his divine power to protect us all through life for the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

What Peter intends for us to see is that God means for his people to be profoundly secure in Him. He wants us to know that God himself is doing everything that must be done to guarantee our final, eternal salvation.

There is danger on the way to salvation in heaven. We need continual protection after we are born again. Our "security" does not mean that we are home free. We are in a battle and we need protection and help far beyond what we can supply for ourselves. Our "security" does not mean that there is not a battle, or that we don't have to win it- because we do- but that GOD will fight it with infallible skill and omnipotent power!

The means that God uses to protect us is FAITH. We are being "*kept by the power of God THROUGH FAITH*" (See also 1 John 5:4)

The bottom line is that the one thing that cuts us off from heaven is unbelief. Not trusting God. Not living "by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us." Gal 2:20

This is what we need to be "kept from". God's power protects us for salvation by sustaining our faith. The only thing that can keep us from heaven is forsaking our faith in Christ and turning to other hopes; other treasures. So to protect us, God prevents that. He inspires and nourishes and strengthens and builds our faith. By doing this He secures us against the thing that could destroy us; unbelief, lack of trust in God.

God caused us to be born again by creating our faith, and He protects us all the way to heaven by preserving our faith. Therefore it is gloriously and invincibly secure. We have a great God and a great salvation! Let's remember this, saints, the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable!

God promises to hold every believer securely until He delivers him to heaven, no matter what temptations or trials he encounters. Though the believer sins, he will not finally fail, but will be kept by God's power through the gift of persevering faith. To think of it simply: God will **preserve** every true believer, but He will not do so without **persevering** faith; a faith He alone gives.

- We are kept by the promise of God (John 6:37-39)
- We are kept by the power of God (John 10:28-30)
- We are kept by the passion of God (Romans 8: 38-39)
- We are kept by the Priesthood of God (Hebrews 7: 23-25)
- We are kept by the presence of God (Ephesians 1:13-14, Hebrews 13:5b)

God's heart work is so powerful that he guarantees we will not turn from him. This is what's new about the new covenant; not only do we get the forgiveness of sins, but we also receive a new heart that loves God (Ezek. 36:25-27). God promises to fulfill by his power all the conditions that we have to meet. We must fear him and love him and trust him. And he says, I will see to that. I will put the fear of me in their hearts"-- not to see what they do with it, but in such a way that "they will not turn from me" (Jer. 32:39-40; see also Jer. 31:31-34). This is the keeping power of grace.

Perhaps some of you may be tasting the sweetness of this grace for the first time this afternoon. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in your life, and I urge you to yield to it and be mastered by the sustaining, keeping power of grace.

God himself will make sure of our perseverance in faith- not in perfection in faith, but perseverance; persistence. How do we know this?

Romans 8:30 states, *"Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; who He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified these He also glorified."*

Justification, regeneration and sanctification are all part of this glorious salvation of grace. It is from grace to grace. The glory of Jesus Christ is bound up in the preservation of those He saved. If He can save us, and then lose us, it takes away from the glory of His power. His keeping us is part of His saving us. God will certainly see to it that we persevere in faith.

This is a precious truth: God himself is committed to keeping His own sheep and not letting them forsake him utterly. They may stray for a season. But He will bring them back. Clouds may gather and faith may falter, but those who are justified will not stumble so as to fall utterly. They WILL persevere in faith. Our hope for glorification is not in our own willpower to believe. It is in God's faithfulness. So that we are confident of this very thing *"...that He who began a good work in us will complete it unto the day of Christ."* (Philippians 1:6)

One of the reasons that we have been holding these IDS seminars is because we want others to know the experience of resting in the comfort of the truths of God – truths like the keeping power of grace. We want for others to experience knowing and trusting the sovereign grace of God in such a way that HE and HE ALONE gets the glory.

Brothers and sisters, I would like to leave you with this:

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty dominion and power, both now and forever. AMEN." Jude 24-25