

Eternal Security (Message 1)

It's not all about you

I would say that the question most frequently asked by Christians is this: is it possible for me to lose my salvation?

It bothers so many of us. We know the stakes. And the possibility of having got it wrong, haunts so many believers.

This message is the first in a series that are stand-alone messages but which all bear upon the question of eternal security.

Do we *believe* that the Blood of Christ cleanses us from sin?

Absolutely - no problem *there* - just read **1 John 1:9.**

Do we accept that no-one can snatch us *away* from God?

Of *course* we do - the Bible says so. *No one* can snatch us out of the Father's hand - **John 10:28-29 makes that one *quite* clear**

But here's where agreement ends and doubts begin!

We hear so many things that can make us insecure - particularly if we're really struggling to live the lives we know we should.

So many *doubts!*

So many different *slants* and *theories!*

***When* do we get saved?**

Is it at a *particular point* in time?

Or does it develop *over* time?
 Is it possible to stop believing and *lose* it all?
 Can we *blow it* by persisting in wilful sin?

Or does that wilful sin show that we've *already* blown it in the *first* place? *After* all - the tree is known by its *fruit*!

So - to extend that principle a little - can we forfeit Eternal Life - not just by *sinning* - but by being *unfruitful* and *unproductive* in our lives? Carelessly allowing our salvation to slip through our fingers - as **Hebrews 2:3** seems to suggest?

In *this* series, we're going to examine these fears and see if they have any *basis* in *reality*. What does the Word of God *actually* teach?

But don't just take *my* word for it. Like the Bereans - examine this subject for yourself. I'm confident that when you understand the principles by which God operates - understand His motivations in relation to your salvation, you'll put to rest these doubts and fears; you'll appreciate the yawning gulf that divides *human* reasoning from *Divine* wisdom and *Infinite* Love and Grace.

This first session is entitled: '*It's not all about you*'

We'll discuss this in a moment - but first let's address a couple of the concerns we mentioned at the beginning:

Among the various positions adopted on the question of *eternal security*, what undisputed facts can we all agree on - if we take the Word of God at face-value? What does the Bible clearly teach about eternal life?

Well - the first thing we find is that:

Eternal Life is a *present* possession!

**It's not something we have to wait to receive;
Not something we grow into;
And not something that develops gradually.**

The Bible does talk about aspects of our salvation that still lie in the future - but entering into a relationship with God - and receiving the gift of Eternal Life - is something that happens at a particular point in our lives!

In [John 5:24](#) Jesus said these words:

“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me *has* eternal life and will not be judged but *has* crossed over from death to life.

Then in [Ephesians 2:4-5](#) we read:

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, *made* us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions---it is by grace you *have been* saved.

And finally, Paul says in [Romans 5:1-2](#)

Therefore, since we *have been* justified through faith, we *have* peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we *have* gained access by faith into this grace in which we *now* stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

So that's quite clear. Salvation isn't something we're looking forward to - it's something that occurs in one point of time!

So you and I are either saved right now or we're *not* saved at all!

So what's the next thing we can agree on?

It's this. It appears that we can be *sure* that we have eternal life. God intends for us to have confidence - to be able to rest quietly in the knowledge and complete assurance of salvation - no shadow of a doubt!

John writes in his first epistle, chapter **5:13**:

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may *know* that you have eternal life.

In **Rom 8:16** Paul says:

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

And in **2 Timothy 1:12**, we hear Paul's stirring words:

***I know* whom I have believed, and am *convinced* that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.**

Some people would - of course - say that this confidence is conditional upon us showing the fruits of salvation in our lives.

They say, in other words, that we can be sure of our salvation *as long as we have it* - but that's no guarantee that we can't *lose* it!

So the question that remains to be answered is this:

Is it possible for us to *lose* our salvation?

Is it possible to *cease* being a Christian?

Can we be saved *one* minute - but lost the *next*?

Ok. If we want to get down to what the Bible *actually* says, we'll need to scrap this misleading terminology once and for all.

***Losing your salvation* is not a term used in Scripture at all!**

And for *very good reason!*

Certainly *salvation* is spoken of as a *gift* - but *not* as an *object*: a thing that can be dropped, given away or lost.

This gift is nothing less than the gift of new life - *Eternal Life!*

So can you lose your Salvation?

Well - what happens if you lose your *life*?

You *die*, of course!

So the real question should be this:

If a man is reborn (through the process of the new birth) and consequently has eternal life - can he *die again*?

And that puts an entirely different complexion on things!

Can a life be described as eternal if it can *end* - and you can *die* again? Christ is our life. Can *he* die again?

Well - actually he can't!

Romans 6:8-11, says this:

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the *same way*, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

When you think it through - it's actually a nonsense to talk about *losing salvation* - because of the very meaning of the

word. In certain circumstance I can save myself - but if I'm saved by someone else - by very definition I'm not contributing to the action. Christ saves me! If I were to perish for any reason - then in actual fact he wouldn't have saved me.

But let's start from the beginning:

As we said before: *it's not all about you!*

Salvation is not all about us.

What do I mean by that - and what bearing does it have on our *eternal security*?

Well, in the Garden of Eden, Satan had effectively stolen God's creation *from* him. We belonged to God - we were created differently from the animals. Mankind was His special creation - formed in His image so that He could enjoy fellowship with us forever - *loving* Him and being loved *by* Him for eternity.

Now you can't force a person to love you. The relationship for which God created us, had to be based on our willingness to fellowship with Him and to freely offer Him our love and devotion.

So in that sense - maintaining a relationship with God was man's responsibility. We were born with a self-determining free-will and this privilege and dignity is something God would never over-ride.

So He had to risk losing us. He had to take the chance of us turning our backs on Him.

And that's *exactly* what happened!

Adam and Eve transferred their allegiance to Satan. They passed from God's control to Satan's authority.

But Satan wasn't going to win. God had a plan - a plan of Salvation - in order to regain what Satan had been allowed to steal from Him; a plan to repossess that which He had lost.

Luke 19:10: For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

Lost by whom?

Once again we make it all about us. We were *lost* - we say - in *sin*. But surely a natural reading of what Christ said would be that we were lost to *God* - *He* had lost us - and that *He* had come to recover us: to save us - to get us back.

And that's what *redemption* is all about!

In the OT, the word translated "*redeem*" is **pâdâh** and it means: to *ransom, redeem, rescue, or deliver*.

In the NT the word is **exagorazo**. In the Roman world, the market place was called the *agora*. *Exagorazo* therefore literally means - *to take out of the market place* - hence - *to purchase*.

According to Strongs Concordance, it means: *To recover from the power of another, to ransom by paying a price.*

Of course, being *recovered* or *ransomed* implies that we formerly belonged to someone else - who then paid a price to get us back.

And that's what our English word *redeem* conveys. It comes from two Latin words meaning: *to buy again* or *to buy back*.

So – if I redeem something, I recover or ransom something that once belonged to me.

God *did* that - He once *owned* us because He *created* us. He then lost us when we sinned - so He set out to recover that which was lost - to ransom us; to buy us back; to redeem us. And the price He paid was staggering: it was the life of His own beloved Son! The blood of Christ was the currency that was used.

1 Peter 1:18-19 says this:

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

We were redeemed from the slave-market of sin and are now twice-owned!

There's a story of a young boy who loved boats, ships and so on. So what his father did was to make him a beautiful model sailing ship with beautifully painted lines and wonderful silken sails. And it could float on the water. The little boy was delighted! Every day he would go down to the river with his treasure clutched in his arms. There he would sit on the bank, place his little boat on the water and watch it float.

Then one day, everything changed. A sudden gust of wind whipped over the water and filled the little sails. The boy watched in horror as his little craft was snatched out of reach and scudded down the stream. Crying out, he tried to chase it

down but it was no use! His pride and joy was gone - lost and out of sight. He returned home - broken-hearted.

Several weeks later, the same little boy and his father were walking down the Main Street of their little town. Suddenly the lad cried out, grabbed hold of his father's sleeve and pulled him towards a store window.

"Daddy" he cried, "Look! There's my boat".

Sure enough, in the store window was the very same little boat, proudly displaying what seemed to be a quite expensive price-tag. Someone had obviously recovered the little craft somewhere down the stream, and placed it in the shop window for sale.

The little boy was beside himself.

"Daddy," he cried. "It's my boat. Can I have my boat back?"

His father didn't hesitate. He entered the shop, took out his wallet, and immediately paid the full asking-price for the boat and handed it to his son.

He had *redeemed* the boat. *Recovered* what was his and now the boat was twice-owned. It was his because he made it - and became his again because he paid for it!

You and I are twice-owned.

God created us - lost us and bought us back.

We are now His treasured possession - He purchased us.

A transaction has taken place and the highest possible price was paid: the full asking price demanded by the law to free us from sin - the blood of Jesus Christ, God's only Son.

So **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** says.

You are not your own; you were bought at a price.

That's redemption!

Do you *get* that?

We no longer belong to ourselves.

God paid the highest possible price to get us back.

We are now *His property!*

Titus 2:14 says that he:

gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify *for himself* a people that are *his very own*, eager to do what is good.

It's not all about us. It's not purely for our benefit.

We are now *His inheritance!*

Paul says to the **Ephesians in chapter **1:18**:**

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may *know* the hope to which he has called you, the riches of *his* glorious inheritance in his holy people....

As Israel was continually referred to as God's inheritance, we are *His* spiritual people - *His* glorious inheritance - *His* new creation.

2 Corinthians 5:17:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: Old things have gone, new things are here!

We've already seen that in the first creation, *man* was responsible for maintaining fellowship with God and he failed.

But do you think that God will allow Satan to once again usurp Him successfully? To once again frustrate His purposes and steal away His possession? One that He paid for with the death of His Son?

And *that* would happen if just one believer were to lose his Salvation - because effectively Christ would have died again. Grace wouldn't be reigning through righteousness - sin would once again be reigning through death - at least in that one life)! (A death, by the way, which has been destroyed by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ).

Not a chance! Things are different now. In the new creation, the responsibility of maintaining our relationship with God is now *His* responsibility - not *ours*. And why? Because He bought us and we are *His* possession.

Remember [1 Corinthians 6:19b-20](#)

You are not your own; you were bought at a price.

This involves ownership. We actually don't have the right to give ourselves away again - in any way shape or form. We're *God's* property!

In fact, God made certain that we couldn't blow it again - either as a new race or as individuals. Next message we'll see how we're protected as a race. For now - let's look at how He protected us as individuals - how He has further guaranteed that we'll never die again!

It's found in [Rom.4:16](#). Here Paul writes these wonderful words:

Therefore, the promise comes by *faith*, so that it may be by *grace* and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring-not

only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.

Notice what God has done! So that the responsibility for our salvation might be taken out of *our* hands *altogether* - in other words, so that it might be by *grace*, entirely on the basis of a *free gift* - with us contributing nothing at all - He made its acquisition conditional upon *faith* - simply believing - so that we have no active part to play: just to receive what is offered!

Ephesians 2:8-9 therefore says:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-not by works, so that no-one can boast.

So God took on the responsibility for the whole thing so that the promise could be *guaranteed*. He had to! Sin had to be paid for - that took the death of Christ. We had no part in *that* - except, of course, in the fact that he was representing us. And our new life had to be perfect forever.

To those who say that we can lose our salvation by sin in our lives, I would remind them that it only took *one* sin to sink the whole human race!

I mean, what estimation do we have of God? Do we think that He can tolerate a certain level of sinning and then, if it gets beyond that, He'll say: "Ok, that's enough!"

It took one sin to sink the human race!

You think you can lose your salvation by sinning?

Then fine – but remember this: you lost it with the first sin you committed after you got saved!!

What is good enough for God is absolute and total perfection - or nothing at all!!

And *He* guaranteed that too - by imparting to us the life of Christ by way of the new birth!

As I said, our salvation consisted of God taking back what belonged to Him. And doing so by paying the price for our freedom.

I mean - Consider what *happened* at the *moment* of our salvation.

A *transaction* took place;
A *deposit* was paid on us;
We were set aside as *His property*.

That's pretty much a guarantee of Eternal Life, isn't it?

In fact, [Ephesians 1:14](#) describes the Holy Spirit as: **a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession---to the praise of his glory.**

There's the guarantee. It's because a deposit has been paid - and this deposit is the Holy Spirit.

The word *deposit* here is the word: **arrhabon**. It's a word of Hebrew origin and means: *a pledge* - that is, part of the purchase money or property given in advance as security for the rest. It's the money which, when a *purchase* takes place, is given as a *down-payment* - in effect, a pledge that the full amount will subsequently be paid!

When you were saved - did you receive the Holy Spirit??

Of course you did!

**And if you *did* - then God's already paid a *deposit* on you.
The Holy Spirit *is* the *down-payment*!**

The Holy Spirit is also a *seal* on God's property!

In ancient times, when property was purchased, it was sealed by the new owner with his own distinctive mark - just like cattle was branded in the old West. This was to protect the goods and to ensure that nobody else could claim them or interfere with them.

In our case, we were also *branded* or *sealed*, just to make sure that we were His - that no-one else could claim us.

The Bible says in [Ephesians 1:13](#):

When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.

The word for *seal* is the noun from the Greek verb: σφραγίζω - and it's used 13 times in the Bible.

It means: *to stamp for security or preservation* – usually with a signet or private mark.

That happened *when you believed*!

It's not a *hope*; it's not a *promise*;

It's a *done deal*!

It doesn't say: 'if you *continue* to believe'

***Having believed* - the verb here is in what is called the *aorist* tense. It's a *one-time* process that's already been completed in your life if you've come to Christ!**

You and I have been *sealed*. The seal signified that the goods belonged to the owner of the seal or the mark.

Remember - it's not all about you.
You're *His* property now.

And the *seal* - the Holy Spirit in our case - is a guarantee that the goods will reach their destination in the same condition as they left! Nobody can get at you except by breaking the seal!

Is there something out there that is greater than the love of God? More effective than the blood of Christ? More powerful than the indwelling Holy Spirit?

Doesn't the Bible say that:**greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.?**

The Holy Spirit can't be overcome. He can't be ejected from the believer. In other words - the seal can't be broken. It's *His* seal - we are *His property!*

In fact *His* seal is an absolute guarantee!!

2 Corinthians 1:21-22:

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

How could our salvation be guaranteed if it was up to us in any way whatsoever? Adam and Eve were created perfect, in idyllic surroundings and in personal contact and communion with God every day. Yet they still blew it!

But God has purchased or redeemed us and put His personal seal within us.

Make no mistake about this. If *one* sealed soul were to be lost, then the seal will have been broken! The promise and guarantee of God will have been made void!

And God is very serious about keeping His word. It abides forever. He warns us about making oaths because in doing so, we're undertaking something that only God Himself is able to do - absolutely guarantee the fulfilment of an oath.

And if one saved soul were to be lost:

**Satan would have won again!
The deposit would have been lost!
Good faith in purchase destroyed!**

And no power in universe can do that! God has His own plans for His possession.

Nothing and nobody is going to steal us away *again*. No power in the universe is going to thwart and frustrate His purposes!

**Examine what is known as the Golden chain in [Romans 8:30](#):
And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.**

And so Paul says in [Romans 8:38-39](#):

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But sometimes it sounds counter – intuitive, doesn't it! As human beings, seeing everything from a humanistic perspective, we've been so ingrained with concepts like:

*There's no such thing as a free lunch!
If it sounds too good to be true - it probably is!
You only get out of something what you put in!*

And so forth!

So Christians, without realising it, often rebel against the principle of *Grace* - the free unconditional love of God and His gift of Grace - Eternal Life in Christ Jesus.

They might say - and you've all heard these objections:

Sure - nothing can snatch us out of the Father's hand - but surely we can, by our own choice. or our own actions. lose our salvation. I mean - there has to be consequences for how we live our lives!

So there's the question. Salvation is free, but can *we*, by *free choice*, stop being covered by blood of Christ?

Can we *ourselves* break the seal?

***Void* the contract?**

***Undo* God's work in us?**

Make *ineffective* the blood of Christ?

***Reverse* the effects of the death of Christ in our lives?**

See how silly that starts to sound!

Well - Some say that we *can* and they will give a variety of reasons:

*Living a sinful life;
No longer believing;
Not persevering with works of righteousness.*

Well, as we go through this series, you'll find that each of these objections will resolve itself from the Word of God.

For the moment, just remember one important thing:

Man had a relationship with God.

**The maintenance of that relationship was man's responsibility.
Man failed to live up to the terms of that relationship.**

Because of this, he passed from communion with God into the power of Satan.

God, by the death of Christ, went to amazing lengths to buy back or redeem His lost possession.

We now belong to Him - *signed, sealed and delivered*. Our safety and maintenance in that relationship is now up to Him - and Him alone!!

**May God bless His Word to each one of us!
Amen**

Stephen Smith

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