



Lesson 15: Preservation of the Saints by God and the Perseverance of the Saints

We will look at this section in two parts: (1) God's work of salvation in keeping those He saves; and (2) God's work in the believer to cooperate and persevere unto the end.

The Westminster Confession of Faith (1646), which is the Reformed or Calvinistic doctrine of perseverance, says:

"They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved," (chapter 17:1).

The basis for this reality the Confession continues:

"This perseverance of the saints depends, not upon their own free-will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; abiding of the Spirit and the seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace."

The Confession adds that true believers may backslide for a season, but they will never be eternally lost, (17:2):

"They may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalence of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and for a time continue therein; whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit; come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves," (17:3).

Grudem’s treatment of the issue is:

- (1) All who are truly born again will persevere to the end.
- (2) Only those who persevere to the end have been truly born again.
- (3) Those who finally fall away may give many external signs of conversion.
- (4) What can give a believer genuine assurance?

Some questions to consider:

Can you know that you are truly saved?

Can you know for sure if the one professing to be saved is saved?

Are there any evidences of the new birth in our lives?

“Let it first be said that in declaring the eternal security of God’s people it is clearer to speak of their preservation than, as is commonly done, of their perseverance. Perseverance means persistence under discouragement and contrary pressure. The assertion that believers persevere in faith and obedience despite everything is true, but the reason is that Jesus Christ through the Spirit persists in preserving them.” (J. I. Packer, p. 241, Concise Theology).

Outline:

- I. The Preserving Work of God in the Life of the Believer
 - A. The Father’s Work in Keeping Us
 - B. The Son’s Work in Keeping Us
 - C. The Spirit’s Work in Keeping Us
- II. The Persevering Work of God in the Life of the Believer
Part “II” will be the lesson for next week

Let us consider the Preserving Work of God!

A. The Father’s Work in Keeping Us

1. The _____

Romans 8:28-29; no part of the chain of salvation in God’s divine purpose can be broken. All that is mentioned as *foreknown*, *predestined*, *called*, *justified*, and *glorified* are seen as completed actions.

Ephesians 1:3-6; can those who were chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world ever be eternally lost? (see Revelation 13:8).

Philippians 1:6; “He who begins the work in us will complete the work in us.”

2. The _____

1 Peter 1:5; we are being kept by the power of God.

Jude 24; God promises to keep His people.

Romans 14:4; God is able to keep even the weakest among us.

Romans 8:37-39; John 10:29

Whose power is on display in salvation?

Is it the believer’s power to endure?

Is it God’s power on display in the believer?

3. The _____

John 3:16; 5:24; 6:37

4. The _____

John 3:16 cp. to Romans 5:6-8; Eph. 1:4

When did God start loving us?

Did He see us and love us in our sin or without sin?

Our sins did not keep God from loving us. His love provided the payment for our sins in His own gift of Jesus Christ.

5. The _____

1 John 1:9-2:2 with Romans 3:24-26

God is just to declare a sinner righteous by faith in Jesus Christ.

God’s justice with regard to the sins of the believer has forever been satisfied.

B. The Son’s Work in Keeping Us

1. The _____ covers our sins forever.

Romans 8:34; and Hebrews 9 show the once for all sacrifice of Christ for any and every sin a believer will ever commit.

No true believer is seen to blaspheme the Holy Spirit or to commit any eternally damning sin.

2. The _____ guarantees our right standing with God; Romans 4:24-25.

3. The _____ to keep us; John 10:28-29; 6:39, 44.

4. The _____ for us.

A. He asks the Father to keep us in this world; John 17:9-20.

B. He intercedes for His own; Romans 8:34; Heb. 9:24-27; 7:25.

C. He advocates for us when we sin; 1 John 2:1-2.

C. The Spirit’s Work in Keeping Us

1. He _____. By the Holy Spirit’s work in salvation eternal life was given to us and we were made alive; Ephesians 2:1,5; John 3:3-5; Titus 3:4-5.

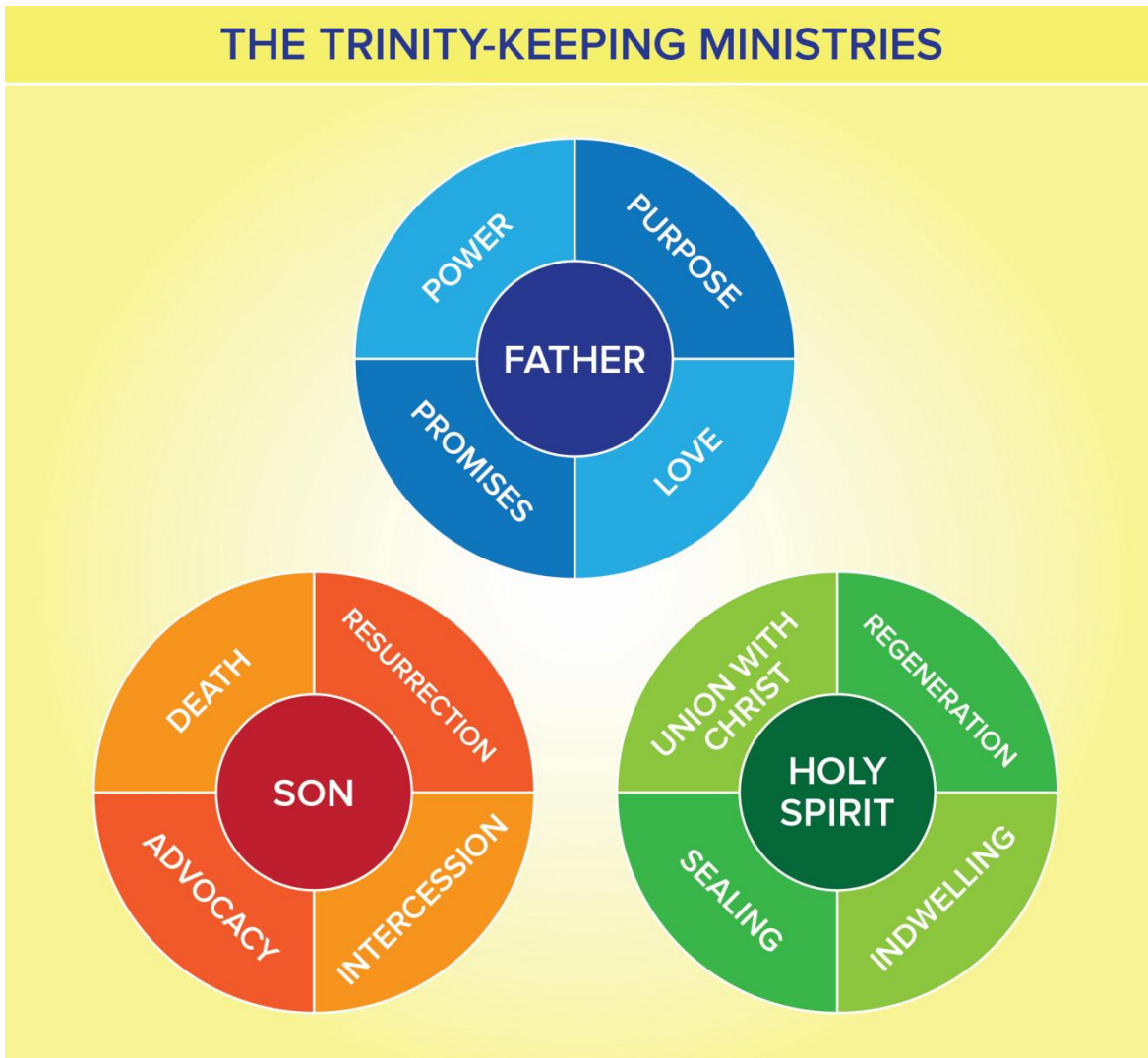
Jesus Christ promised us *eternal life*; John 3:16.

2. He _____; John 14:16-17; 7:37-39; Romans 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:15-20.

3. He _____;
1 Cor. 12:13; Galatians 3:26-27.

As a Scottish sister said; “I am not just safe in the hand of the Savior, I am as safe as the hand of the Savior for I am a member of His body.”

4. He is the _____; 2 Cor. 2:22;
Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30. Seals were used as a sign of guarantee of protection. Not only is the Spirit the seal but He is also the *down payment* guaranteeing the deal. God’s Spirit is the promise that safe delivery to heaven is guaranteed on the seal of God which is nothing less than the Holy Spirit.



May the words of Augustus Toplady, “Faith Reviving,” encourage our hearts:

“From when this fear and unbelief?
Hath not the Father put to grief
His spotless Son for me?
And will the righteous Judge of men
Condemn me for that debt of sin
Which, Lord, was charged on thee?

Complete atonement thou hast made,
And to the utmost farthing paid
Whate’er thy people owed;
Nor can His wrath on me take place,
If sheltered in thy righteousness
And sprinkled with thy blood.

If thou hast my discharge procured,
And freely in my room endure
The whole of wrath divine,
Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding surety’s hand,
And then again at mine.

Turn then, my soul, unto thy rest;
The merits of thy great High Priest
Have bought thy liberty;
Trust in His efficacious blood,
Nor fear thy banishment from God,
Since Jesus died for thee!”

**Next Week Lesson 16: Preservation by the Savior and
Perseverance for the Saints, Part 2**



Selected Scriptures on the Security of the Christian Believer

John 3:14-18	Believers are not condemned and shall <u>never</u> perish but have eternal life.
John 5:24	Believers <u>now have</u> eternal life.
John 6:37-40, 47	Believers shall <u>not</u> be cast out, shall be raised (resurrected) and now have eternal life.
John 10:9-10 27-29	Christ brought the abundant life. They shall <u>never</u> perish because God holds them.
Romans 6:23	Eternal life is a gift from God.
Romans 8:28-30	The elect of God are assured of going the entire route having begun their salvation experience; (c.f. Phil. 1:6).
Romans 8:35-39	<u>Nothing</u> or <u>no one</u> (including ourselves) can separate us from the love of God.
I Cor. 3:13-16	Even those believers who have done no good works worthy of being rewarded will be saved.
I Cor. 12:12-13	Believers have been baptized (by the Holy Spirit, not by water) into the Body of Christ; (c.f. Ephesians 5:30).
Ephesians 1:13-14	The Holy Spirit has sealed every believer. The Holy Spirit (being Himself the seal) is the earnest (i.e. a down payment) of our heavenly inheritance; (c.f. 2 Cor. 1:22).
Ephesians 4:30	We were sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption (of our physical bodies....when we are resurrected).
Ephesians 2:5-7	God quickened each believer (gave his spiritual life) by His grace. He gave each believer a positional standing in heaven <u>in Christ</u> . Note: Much of our salvation is as a result of our having been placed <u>in Christ</u> by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.12:13). Believers have been given this heavenly position so that in the ages to come God will be able to show us the great riches of His grace.
Ephesians 2:8-10	Our salvation is a gift from God, not because we work for it (c.f. Romans 11:6), but God has a definite plan of good works prepared for each believer.

Ephesians 5:8	Believers are now children of light and no longer of darkness (c.f. Colossians 1:13-14).
Philippians 1:6	Believers may be confident that because God has begun a good work (of salvation) in us He will carry it out until the Day of Christ (when He will come to raise our bodies and claim us).
Colossians 1:13-14	Believers have been delivered (for eternity) out of the domain of darkness (Satan’s kingdom) and have been transferred by God into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have also been redeemed (our sins have been forgiven).
Colossians 1:20-23	Christ made (eternal) peace with God for <u>all</u> believers (c.f. Romans 5:1). Believers have been reconciled to God (eternally) so that He can present us holy, blameless and irreproachable before Him. Our salvation is verified if (literally <i>since</i>) we continue in the faith having been grounded and made steadfast and are not moving away from the hope of the gospel. (A life of victory and faithfulness testifies to the presence of eternal life in a believer – c.f. 1 Thess. 1:5).
2 Timothy 1:9	God <u>has</u> saved believers.
2 Timothy 1:12	Christ is able to keep what has been committed to Him (the believer’s life and thus his security) until that day (the Day of Christ when we shall be resurrected).
2 Timothy 4:18	God will preserve Paul (and all believers) for His heavenly kingdom (<u>personal experience</u> resulting from our <u>heavenly position</u> in that kingdom as seen in Colossians 1:13-14).
Titus 3:5	God saved us according to His mercy. The Holy Spirit was the One who regenerated us (applied eternal life to us).
Hebrews 10:22	Because of the sacrifice of Christ we should have full assurance resulting from faith.
1 Peter 1:4-5	We have an eternal salvation. We are kept by God’s power.
2 Peter 1:10	Diligently confirm the fact of your calling and election.
1 John 3:1-3	When Christ appears the believers will be just like Him.

1 John 5:11-13 God has given eternal life to believers; this life resides in God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Only those who have received the Son are possessors of eternal life.

(Note: Eternal life is the life of God, which the Father has in Himself and which He gave to the incarnate Son to have in Himself (John 5:25). Christ presented this life to the world (1 John 1:2 d.f. Titus 2:11). As a result of the fall man became alienated from this life (Ephesians 4:;18). Anyone may receive this life by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:15). Christ is *the life* of the believer (Colossians 3:4), and He maintains the life which He gives (John 6:35,63). Eternal life is the actual present possession of the believer because of his relationship to Christ (John 5:24, 1 John 3:14). Someday this life will extend itself completely to the sphere of the body of each believer; this fact is assured by the resurrection of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:4; 1 Corinthians 15:20-24). Since this life is the life of the eternal God which believers have received as a permanent gift then believers shall live this for all eternity.

“These things (1 John 5:11-12 and the rest of 1 John) were written to assure believers of the fact that they now possess the gift of eternal life.”



Break Out Session – Lesson 15

Group Discussion Background

In each of our break out sessions we will probe three aspects of the truths presented during each class through a series of discussion questions as described below.

WHAT: What is the key informational content?

SO WHAT: What is the implication of this information? Or said another way, why is the truth of this information important?

WHAT NOW: How will you apply this truth or what will you do now that you know this truth?

Our goal for these classes is not simply to increase our knowledge, but for lives to be transformed by truth. (Romans 12:2)

Discussion Questions: (25 minutes)

Ask the group at least 2-3 of the following questions and allow the group to thoroughly explore and discuss.

1. In hearing the teaching and doing the homework related to God's work in our preservation, was there anything you heard or studied that created a question in your mind or was difficult to understand? Were there insights you thought especially meaningful about being preserved by God and eternally secure and what this truth means?
2. Share and discuss your answers to question 3 of the homework.
3. What are the various things God the Father is doing to keep the believer? How are they different than those things being done by Jesus or the Holy Spirit?
4. In the homework, you were asked to define three terms; assurance of salvation, eternal security and perseverance of the saints. Share your definitions and discuss, paying special note to how the meanings of these terms are similar or different and how they interrelate.

Time to Care – Share – Bear (15 minutes)

During this time, the group is encouraged to share in each other's lives and demonstrate care for one another by bearing one another up through prayer.

Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

Answer any remaining questions and clarify the homework for the following week.



Lesson 15 Homework

1. Refresh last week's reading Grudem, pgs. 155-175, Chapter 11, "The Perseverance of the Saints."
2. Be familiar with the following passages about diligence in living the Christian life:

Hebrews 3:12-13; 2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 1:10
3. Is it possible to know for certain that you are saved? What verses would you use to support your position?
4. Knowing that our salvation is a work of God from first to last, including the power to persevere, what do you think Paul meant to communicate in Philippians 2:12-13, "continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."?
5. Answer question #2, Grudem, p. 174 – If you have doubts about whether you are truly born again, what is it in your life that is giving reason for those doubts? What would Scripture encourage you to do to resolve those doubts (see 2 Peter 1:5-11; also Matt. 11:28-30; John 6:37)? Do you think that Jesus now knows about your doubts and understands them? What do you think he would like you to do now to gain greater assurance of salvation?