

WORDS OF GRACE SEASONED WITH SALT

August 2014

The Eternal Security of Believers

By Pastor Art Watkins

In 1 Corinthians 1:17-18 Paul wrote: ***For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.***

The preaching of the cross and the benefits of the cross are the foundation upon which all doctrines are built upon under grace. What we believe today doctrinally is highly influenced by the preaching of the cross. For example; two major doctrines we believe today are salvation by grace minus works and the eternal security of the believer. They are both true because of the cross.

The Cross and Eternal Security

It's amazing how many people who believe in eternal security today, but can't tell you why. Be honest, do you know why a believer's salvation is secured eternally today? Some folks say we are secure because we are sealed unto the day of redemption. But, we are not secure because we are sealed; we are sealed because we are secure. But, why is our salvation secure? Why are we sealed and secured unto the day of redemption, which is the second coming of Christ?

The most important reason we have eternal security is because of the cross of Christ. The cross of Christ removes the two main obstacles to security which are sin and works. Those who believe you can lose your salvation, say you can lose it because of sin or failing to maintain good works after you believe. The cross of Christ takes care of both problems.

The Cross and Sin

Romans 4:8 says; ***Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.***

This verse is clearly a verse of security. God does not impute or charge believers for sin. But, why can't God impute sin to our account? Why can't

he charge us for sin? Because they were all imputed to Christ's account on the cross, who in turn suffered and died for them. All charges against our sins were imputed to Christ who canceled them out by his death and shed blood. If that is so, how could we possibly lose our salvation?

Romans 5:9 says: ***Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.***

This verse says those who are justified by the blood of Christ shall be saved from wrath through him. The wrath in this verse is future wrath God will pour out on sinners at the second coming of Christ. Paul describes this wrath in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10: ***And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.***

This is the wrath we are saved from in Romans 5:9 and also 1 Thessalonians 1:10. But, how are we saved from it? Romans 5:9 says we are saved from the future wrath of God because we are now justified by the blood of Christ. If you are now justified by the blood of Christ you have an absolute guarantee from God himself that you will be saved from his wrath in the future. This is a verse of security and it is true because of the cross of Christ. Because God's wrath against us was poured out on Christ on the cross, we are saved from the wrath to come. On the cross he suffered the wrath and anger of God against us and our sins. If this is true, can God pour out his wrath on us if he has already poured it out on Christ? No. As far as God is concerned he has already poured out his wrath on us when he poured it out on Christ. The cross is our guarantee of future salvation from wrath. When Jesus comes in fire and wrath in the future, we will be like Lot who was delivered out of Sodom before God's fire and wrath fell on Sodom and Gomorrah.

Romans 6:7 says; ***For he that is dead is freed from sin.*** In what way are we free from sin? Sin's penalty. But, how can God say we are free from the penalty of sin in Romans 6, when God said: *all have sinned* in Romans 3? Sin is a transgression of the law and if we have broken all of God's laws

and commandments, how are we free from suffering the penalty of breaking his law? The penalty for breaking the law of God is death; the second death. If so, how can we say we will not suffer the penalty, if we are guilty of breaking all of the laws of God? It's because Christ suffered the penalty for our sins on the cross. On the cross the law cursed Christ for all of the laws we broke and we broke them all. Being cursed for us releases us from suffering the same curse ourselves. God cannot curse us for breaking his law because he has already cursed Christ in our place. We are free from sin's penalty in Romans 6, because Christ was penalized for them in Romans 5:8-11. We did the crimes and he paid the fine and he paid it in full. This is why the believer's salvation is secure; it is secure because every law we broke was paid for in full by the death and shed blood of Christ.

Romans 8:1 says; ***There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.***

The condemnation in this verse is eternal damnation in hell or the lake of fire. In the context in which it appears, it's the condemnation that comes upon all those who break the law of God. This verse teaches security from eternal condemnation, because it says there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. If you are in Christ Jesus you are delivered from future eternal condemnation. But why is this true? Why is there no possibility we will ever come into eternal condemnation? Because Christ was condemned for us on the cross. The condemnation of Romans 8:1 we deserve was poured out on Christ. The law condemned us to hell, but on the cross Christ allowed the law to curse him and condemn him for what we did. When he died on the cross we died with him, which means that when he was condemned we were condemned with him. All believers have already been condemned and that is why they cannot be condemned again for the law cannot condemn a man twice for the same crimes. God has already condemned us when he condemned Christ. He can't do it again.

Hebrews 10:17 says; ***And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.***

When God forgives our sins and iniquities, he remembers them no more. This is a promise of security. But, why can't God remember our sins anymore? Because by his death and shed blood they are blotted out, taken away, removed out of his sight. This shows us how powerful the blood of Christ is. There is power in the blood. It is so powerful and effective that once it is applied to our sins, God himself cannot remember them anymore. If God does not remember our sins anymore after he forgives them, how could he condemn us for them again?

Colossians 2:13 says: ***And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.***

All is all. All is all without exception and distinction. All is past, present and future. This is a promise of security for if God forgave you of all sins past, present and future and all without exception, what sin can he send you to hell for now? But, how did he forgive you of all sins? In this same book in chapter 1:14 it says: ***In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.***

*True believers cannot be condemned eternally for their sins, for Christ was condemned for them on the cross.

*True believers will never suffer the wrath of God, for Christ suffered the wrath of God they deserve on the cross.

*True believers will not suffer the penalty for their sins in hell, because Christ paid their penalty in full on the cross.

*The sins of true believers are blotted out and remembered no more and are no longer held against them.

*God does not impute sin to true believers because they were all imputed and charged to Christ on the cross.

*The sins of true believers are all forgiven by the cross and being forgiven cannot be held against them again.

When it comes to the security of the believer the cross solves the problem of sin. Our sins were imputed to Christ who died for them and once we believe on him they are no longer imputed to us or charged against us who believe. They are remitted, taken away, blotted out, removed and

remembered no more. We are pronounced justified, just as if we had no sin.

But what about works? There are many who preach and teach that once you believe on Christ you must continue to maintain good works to keep yourself saved. They preach salvation by the installment plan. Christ made the down payment and you pay the notes by a life of good works. If that were true, heaven will be an empty place because all of our works are not good after we are saved; in fact, sometimes they are downright evil. I have seen Christians do some awful things that even embarrass lost people. There are some lost people I know who have more morals than some saved people I know. Take a look at the church at Corinth. There were people in the church committing fornication, suing each other in court, yoked together with unbelievers, they perverted the Lord's Supper, harbored false doctrine and false teachers, twisted and perverted the sign gifts and some of them acted like mad men according to 1 Corinthians 14:23. They were so bad that the Lord even struck some of them with weakness because of their sins, some with sickness and some with death because of their sins. (1 Corinthians 11:30) The Corinthian church was a spiritual train wreck, but yet Paul said this about them in chapter one;

I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Corinthians 1:4-9)

If there is anything we should learn from the church at Corinth, it is the fact that works play no part in gaining or keeping salvation. If good works keep you saved then the whole Corinthian church went to hell. They are the worst church Paul wrote to, but yet he calls them saints and said: *the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them!* How could he say this? Because works play no part in gaining or keeping salvation. And why? Because of the cross. The cross takes care of the works problem as well as the sin problem. No believer can lose his salvation because of sin and no

believer can lose his salvation for a lack of good works after he is saved. The cross takes care of both problems.

The Cross and Works

In Ephesians 2:8-9: ***For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.***

These verses plainly say salvation is the gift of God and not of works. But, why is this true? Because of what he wrote in verses 14-15 which say: ***For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.***

Ephesians 2:8-9 is true because of Ephesians 2:14-15. We are saved by grace through faith without works in verses 8-9, because God took the works out of salvation by abolishing the law in verses 14-15. You may ask; what does the law have to do with works and salvation today? In time past, prior to the cross men were required to keep the law along with faith to be saved and receive any kind of blessing from God. Some folks do not believe this, but consider the following verses:

In Galatians 3:12 Paul wrote concerning the law: ***And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.***

Deuteronomy 6:25 says: ***And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.***

Romans 2:13 says: ***For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.***

In Romans 10:5 he wrote: ***For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.***

But Paul also wrote concerning Christ and the law in Romans 10:4; ***For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*** And why is Christ the end of the law for righteousness? Because by his death on the cross he abolished the law according to

Ephesians 2:14-15. By abolishing the law he abolished the works of the law, which made salvation by grace minus works possible.

In true salvation by grace, God took the works out of salvation and made faith the only requirement to be saved. When Paul said "*not of works*" that means you don't work to gain it, or keep it. Those who God saves by grace through faith, without works, are kept saved the same way. This is an important fact when it comes to eternal security, for if God keeps you saved by grace without works, how could you possibly lose your salvation? ***If you didn't do any work to gain or keep it, then you can't lose it.***

No believer can lose his salvation because of a lack of good works for in salvation by grace your works, good or bad, don't count. The only thing God counts when it comes to salvation is your faith. (Romans 4:5)

If the cross of Christ made eternal security possible and it did; this means anyone who preaches the cross for salvation today must preach eternal security.

*How could someone say Christ died and paid for your sins in full and then say you must pay for them also by your works? What atones for sin? Christ's blood or your works? Hebrews 9:22 says: *Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.* The blood of Christ atones for sin, not our works. But, those who say you must maintain your salvation by good works after you believe are in fact preaching a bloodless, works atonement. That is what Cain believed and God rejected him. (Genesis 4)

*How could someone preach that a believer can suffer eternal condemnation for his sins in hell and at the same time say Christ was condemned for his sins? That's a contradiction.

*How could someone say that God imputed our sins to Christ on the cross, but then turn around and say God will impute and charge them to us again?

*How could someone preach that Christ suffered the wrath of God for our sins on the cross, which he did, and then turn around and warn believers that if they are not careful, they stand a chance of suffering the wrath of God for their sins? Either Christ suffered the wrath of God for our sins, or

he didn't. If he did, then anyone who puts their full faith and trust in Christ death and shed blood to save them will not suffer the wrath of God and to say they will, is a lie.

Those who say a person can lose their salvation after they put their faith in the death and shed blood of Christ to save them, do not understand the cross or security. The cross of Christ made eternal security possible; therefore anyone who preaches the cross must preach security. You can't preach the cross without preaching security. You can't preach the cross and at the same time say a man can lose his salvation. That's a contradiction.

The most important reason we have eternal security is because of the cross of Christ. The cross of Christ removes the two main obstacles to security which are sin and works. By the cross our sins are forgiven, blotted out and remembered no more. By the cross God abolished the law and by abolishing the law he took the works out of salvation and made faith the only requirement to be saved. Those who preach the cross must preach eternal security for it's the cross that secures our salvation.

This means that all of the apostles preached security, because all of the apostles preached the cross for salvation.

The Apostles and Security

In Luke 24, Christ opened the understanding of the 12 apostles to see why he died and what he died for and who he died for and from that day forward they preached the cross for salvation. (Luke 24:44-47) If there is any doubt as to whether or not the apostles like Peter, James and John preached the cross just consider what they WROTE.

In 1 Peter 3:18 he said: ***For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:***

In 1 Peter 1:18: ***Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:***

1Peter 2:24: ***Christ his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.***

1John 1:7 John wrote: ***But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.***

In Revelation 1:5 John wrote: ***And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.***

All of the apostles preached salvation, redemption, forgiveness and cleansing from sin by the death and shed blood Christ. This shows us the doctrine of eternal security is not limited to Paul's epistles only as some teach. All of the apostles preached security, because they all preached the cross for salvation, for it is the cross that makes security possible.

I mention this because there are those who actually teach that God sent Paul to preach eternal security to believers and at the same time he sent the other apostles to warn believers that they could lose their salvation. But, how can they say we have security because of the cross, but then say the people that Peter and John wrote to could lose their salvation? Their faith and trust was in the death and shed blood of Christ just like those Paul wrote to. Let's put it this way; If the people that Peter, James, John and Jude wrote to could "quote"; *lose their salvation*, then the people that Paul wrote to can lose theirs too, because all of the believers the apostles wrote to were trusting the death and shed blood of Christ to save them.

The fact is anyone whose faith is in the death and resurrection of Christ to save them has eternal security, because it is his sacrificial death on the cross that secures our salvation. This is why the doctrine of eternal security is not limited to Paul's epistles only, as some teach. It's found throughout the epistles of all the apostles.

Christ and Security

If eternal security is true because of the cross, this means it can be found in the Four Gospels for Christ preached the cross throughout his ministry on

earth. There are those who do not believe eternal security can be found in the Four Gospels, because they do not believe Christ preached the cross for salvation in the Four Gospels. But, this is wrong for the fact is he did over and over again:

In Matthew 20:28 Jesus said: ***Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*** Paul alludes to this verse in 1 Timothy 2:5-6 where he said: ***For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.***

What Paul preached about Christ giving his life a ransom for our sins was based upon what the Lord himself said in Matthew 20:28. Paul just repeats what the Lord said.

In Matthew 26 when the Lord observed the Lord's Supper the first time with his apostles it says: ***And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.***

Paul quotes these same verses in 1 Corinthians 11 where he commands the church to observe the Lord's Supper. What Paul said about the bread and cup of the Lord's Supper was based upon what the Lord said in Matthew 26; that the bread represents his body broken for us on the cross and the cup represents his blood that was shed for the remission of our sins.

These two verses are proof enough that Christ preached the cross for salvation in the Four Gospels, but there are many others which we will look at in this study. Keep in mind, eternal security is based upon the cross of Christ and many times when Christ said he would die, he made a promise of security in the same context. You will see this fact in the following verses.

In John 10:27-30 Jesus said; ***My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.***

These verses are some of the greatest verses for eternal security in the Bible. The Lord made a promise to his sheep that he would give them

eternal life and they will never perish. Eternal is forever and never means never. There is no chance that God's people will perish in hell, for he said they will never perish. They will never perish because they have eternal life. It's because we have eternal life that we will never perish. If you could perish, then you never had eternal life to begin with. He also said that no man can pluck a believer out of his hand or his Father's hand.

But, how could Jesus make these promises of security? How could he promise that once we believe on him, we will never perish? Because in this same chapter where he made these promises of security he said four times he would die for us!

In John 10:11 he said: ***I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.***

In John 10:15: ***As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.***

John 10:17: ***Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.***

John 10:18: ***No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.***

Eternal security was made possible by the death of Christ on the cross. In this chapter, Jesus said he was going to die for us four times. This is why he could say in verses 27-30 we will never perish. The promise Christ made of eternal security and eternal life in John 10:27-30 is based upon his coming death that he mentioned four times prior to this promise.

In John 3:15-18 it says: ***Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.***

These verses plainly say that when someone believes on Christ they will not perish, but they have eternal life. It says it twice. It also says that those who believe on Christ will not be condemned. These verses clearly teach

eternal security. But, what are these promises of security in verses 15-18 based upon? The cross in verse 14; ***And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.*** And where and when was the Son of man lifted up? The Son of man answers it John 12:32-33 where he said: ***And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.***

The lifting up of Christ in John 3:14 was Christ being lifted up on the cross to die for our sins. Therefore, the promise God made in John 3:15-18 was made in view of Christ dying on the cross in John 3:14. Those who believe on Christ according to John 3:15-18 will never perish because of the cross of John 3:14.

In John 5:24 he also said: ***Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.***

This is another promise of security for the Lord said that once you believe on him you have everlasting life now and shall not come into condemnation in the future. But, how could he make this promise in John 5:24? Because of John 3:14 which says: ***And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.***

The promise of John 5:24, which we claim today, is based upon the death of Christ of John 3:14. We will not come into future condemnation according to John 5:24, because Christ was lifted up on the cross and condemned for our sins according to John 3:14.

In John 6:37 Jesus said: ***All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.***

This is a promise that once a man comes to Christ he cannot and will not be cast out of Christ. If a believer will not be cast out of Christ, then he has security. He said he would in NO WISE cast anyone out who comes to him.

In John 6:39 he said: ***And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.***

Jesus said he would not lose one person that God gave him and he would raise all of them up at the last day. It's not up to us to keep from losing Christ, it's up to him to keep from losing us and he will never lose one person the Father gave him. He said I should lose nothing. This is a promise Christ will not lose us and we will not lose him.

In John 6:40 he said: ***And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.***

The Lord says that those who believe on the Son have everlasting life and they will be raised up at the last day. Everlasting life is never ending life. Everlasting life is eternal life. If you have a promise of everlasting life, then you have a promise of eternal security, for eternal security is the promise of everlasting life. And those have everlasting life also have a promise that God will raise them up in the last day.

But, what are all these promises of eternal security in John 6 based upon? Keep reading; In John 6:47-51 he says: ***Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.***

All of the promises he made in John 6 of eternal security and eternal life are based upon what he said in verse 51. He said: **The bread that I will give IS MY FLESH, WHICH I WILL GIVE FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD.** You can't miss it even if you tried. All the promises he made in this chapter of security are based upon him giving his body of flesh on the cross to die for the sins of the whole world.

All the promises Christ made of eternal security in the Four Gospels were based upon his coming death on the cross. It's the death and shed blood and resurrection of Christ that makes eternal security possible. That is why you will find security in the Four Gospels and the epistles of the apostles for they all preached salvation by the death and shed blood of Christ.

One thought in closing: What good is salvation without security? Think about it.

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