

ONCE SAVED ALWAYS SAFE?
WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES

INTRO: Last Sunday I spoke in the LaCrete Bergthaler Church. I mentioned that I had spoken at the recent tragic funeral and had said I did not believe in the "once saved always safe" doctrine. Since I did not have time to make a theological defence for what I said I chose to speak about it last Sunday. I feel that to even briefly cover this teaching I need at least three messages. I began last Sunday with explaining historic Calvinism. For those of you who have taken our Wednesday Bible studies you will be familiar with what I covered in that message since it deals with the famous TULIP, total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and the perseverance of the saints.

For those of you who are interested in that message you can get it on tape from the church. In the first message I dealt with historic Calvinism. Today I want to deal with what I believe the Bible teaches. Next Sunday Lord willing I will speak on objections to the view I hold. I have never preached on this topic before. I have covered various aspects of it in Bible studies or Bible courses. I do not plan to preach on this topic again for a long time unless I should come to some great and new discoveries. I am having these messages taped so that when I am asked what I believe I can say, "Here are the tapes of what I believe. Listen to them." If you would like these taped messages please sign up at the back and I will see that you get a set.

Let me invite you to feel free to share with me any points you feel I may have missed or any objections you might have to what I am teaching. I trust I am open to learn objective truth where I may have missed it.

Let me say that those who hold to the *once saved always safe* view, hearing my last message will likely say, "Brother Phil, I hold to the *once saved always safe* view but that does not mean I hold to all five points of Calvinism." Yes, I understand that. Though I feel the majority of North American Christians hold the *once saved always safe* position the majority of those probably do not even know of Calvin's five points. And those who know them probably reject 2 or 3 of the 5 points. However, I have said earlier, that one of the doctrines crucial to this discussion and a prerequisite to this topic is the issue of election. So if you hold to the *once saved always safe* teaching you need at least to understand the doctrine of election.

Once saved always safe? What does the Bible teach?

We want to consider this question under two headings: The manner and maintenance of salvation.

I. THE MANNER OF SALVATION

A. NEGATIVELY - Not by works

B. POSITIVELY

1. The balance in salvation

The clear teaching of the Word of God is that man is saved by grace through faith. God's grace and man's faith. That is the balance. Salvation is from God by grace but is conditioned on man's faith. Faith does not earn salvation, it accepts salvation. There is a big difference.

Let us say our Dodge dealer in town sent out an add saying that all new vehicles sold in November would be sold at half price. The condition of course is that you must buy a new vehicle and it must be bought in November. Would you say the buyer earned the good deal? No! He simply met the conditions. So it is with salvation. God has provided it and it cannot be earned, one must simply meet the condition. The condition is so clearly spelled out over and over again I need not explain it today. In order to be saved we must believe in Jesus Christ. Believing in Christ is called faith. And of course the other side of the coin of faith is repentance. Over and over the Scriptures exhort us to believe in Christ. This is the condition of salvation.

2. The activity of the soul in salvation

Now saving faith is an activity of the soul. It is never taught in Scripture to be a gift. If it were the Calvinistic position would be correct, but saving faith is not a gift. It is an ability man has and must exercise in order to be saved. All men believe something. It is an inherent capacity.

One of the things I have greatly enjoyed in our present location is the Blue Hills off to the south.

When we moved north several miles the hills were not as visible and I greatly miss that. I suppose that if I told my son Trent to move those hills a little closer you would really begin to wonder about your pastor's mental health. But if you heard that I had punished him severely for not obeying my request you would promptly relieve me of my duties. I would not blame you.

Now let us say God told you to believe in Jesus but you cannot do it. According to the Calvinistic position you cannot believe. It is a gift and if you have not been elected you cannot believe. Would you think you still had a just God? Now let us say God condemned to hell forever those who would not believe because they could not believe. Would you still think you have a just God? Calvinism says, yes that proves He is just. It proves He is not a respecter of persons.

I want to tell you this morning with the deepest conviction possible, you CAN believe and you MUST believe. The condition of salvation is that you believe, "For God so loved the world..."

II. THE MAINTENANCE OF SALVATION

A. NEGATIVELY - Not by works

B. POSITIVELY

1. The tenses of salvation

I suppose few theologians would argue with me that the tenses of salvation are three-fold.

Past tense salvation - I was saved in 1972. That was initial salvation. That is what we were just talking about. In past salvation I am delivered from the PENALTY of sin. I am now on the road to heaven. I may have assurance of my salvation as 1 John 5:9-13 so clearly tells us.

Present tense salvation- I am being saved day by day. This is progressive salvation or better known as the process of sanctification. In German we call it Die Heiligung. It is this present tense salvation that

clears up many difficult verses on salvation. Such verses for example as 1 Tim. 2:15 which tells us the woman will be saved in childbearing. Present tense salvation is the deliverance from the POWER of sin.

John 1:11-12; 3:14-16, 3:18, 3:36; 5:24 etc... speak of present tense salvation. The present tense verbs and participles in these and more passages indicate that salvation involves both "crisis and continual trust" (Boyce W. Blackwelder). Example John 5:24: "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth (pres. ptcpl. goes on hearing) my Word and he that believeth (pres. ptcpl. goes on believing) on Him that sent me, hath (pres. tense, goes on having) everlasting life..."

Future tense salvation - I have been saved from the penalty of sin, eternal punishment in hell. I am being saved from the power of sin and some day I shall be saved from the very PRESENCE of sin. Glory to God!

It is in present tense salvation that the maintenance of salvation comes in. Every day I make choices with regard to sin. God has provided a means whereby I can be victorious daily. If past tense salvation is set out in John 3:16 present tense salvation is set out in Romans 6:11. This is a topic we cannot now cover. If you are interested in further studies on this great doctrine you might ask for our Wednesday night Bible study notes on this topic. How is salvation maintained?

2. The balance in maintaining salvation

If salvation is by grace through faith, if election is by grace through faith surely the maintenance of salvation is by grace through faith. Does the Bible teach this? (1 Pet. 3-5; 2 Pet. 1:5-11). As past tense salvation is conditional so present tense salvation is conditional. God will keep us by HIS power and THROUGH our faith, continual faith. The whole of salvation is by grace through faith.

How is salvation maintained? God will provide all we need to maintain our salvation by His grace but we must appropriate His provision by faith. That is the consistent teaching of Scripture.

3. The activity of the soul in maintaining salvation

In regeneration the soul is passive. God gives us a new nature. We do not bring about a new nature. We cannot. That is God's work.

In justification the soul is passive. God declares the sinner righteous. We cannot justify ourselves. We are never instructed to regenerate ourselves and we are never told to justify ourselves. Why? Because we cannot. However, regeneration and justification are both preceded by conversion and in conversion the soul is active. We must repent and believe. God cannot and will not do this for us. We have the ability to do this and we must do it.

4. The exhortations to maintain salvation

It is clear that repentance and faith are man's responsibility in salvation. They are the conditions on which salvation rests. It is also clear that the maintenance of salvation is man's responsibility because he is commanded to it over and over again. (Romans 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15 etc... Read 6:12-13; 8:12-13.) So many commands are given to Christians in the epistles that it would take a whole service just to read them.

When we do not maintain our salvation we slide back into sin. There is no middle ground. Move forward or slide back, those are your options. The writer to the Hebrews was writing to a people who were discouraged with Christianity. He was writing to Jewish people (Hebrews) who were sliding back into Judaism. It is no wonder then that this book is full of warnings.

Ill. of teacher asked to teach Hebrews.

Read 3:7-19. Context, not unbelievers but backsliding believers. Note v. 12. The Hebrews were already departing from the living God but it was not yet too late. That is why the writer writes so urgently.

The Galatians were another group of people who were erring. They had been saved by grace through faith but were now seeking to maintain their salvation by works.

Paul writes in 3:3, "Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?" He proceeds to show that not only are we justified by faith but the just shall live by faith. In 5:1 he exhorts them to stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made us free. In 5:16 he exhorts them to walk in the Spirit (living by faith) and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. How do we maintain our salvation? By walking in the Spirit. He warns them as Christians because if they do not walk in the Spirit they will live in the flesh and the flesh manifests itself in those things then listed. Living in the flesh, if it goes unchecked will bring about eternal consequences.

5. The consequences of not maintaining salvation

In 1 Cor. 6:9 Paul, writing to Christians warns of the consequences of unrighteous living. The consequences are that they will not inherit the kingdom of God. This is taught in Galatians 5:16-21 as well. A Christian cannot persist in known sins such as listed in these two passages without eternal consequences. Such people will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Romans 8:12-13 - eternal death

Hebrews 10:23-31 - Horrible punishment

Hebrews 6:4-6 - a point of no return

Some people are afraid they have blasphemed the Holy Spirit or crossed the point of no return. I do not know where the line is. But I am confident that those who have those fears probably have not crossed the line. If the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin I trust you have not crossed the line.

6. The promises of maintaining salvation

He that endures to the end will be saved (Matt. 10:22; 24:13; Mk. 13:13). I know that these verses in context speak of the tribulation time. However, the way of salvation is the same in every dispensation. Rev. 13:16-18 warns believers not to take the mark or the name or the number of the beast. If a believer could not lose his salvation these verses would be meaningless. A believer who takes the mark of the

beast will be lost. Therefore, he that endures to the end will be saved. It is that way in every dispensation.

Look at these verses from Revelation 2-3 which clearly speaks of the Church age before the tribulation (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21).

Rev. 21:7; 17:14.

CONCL: Let me conclude this message with the solemn warning that arises out of its content. Do not fool around with sin. If today you are harboring ill feelings towards others, if there is deep bitterness, if there is a spirit of unforgiveness if there is any practice of sin; deal with it. Today if you hear His voice do not harden your hearts. A little fooling with sin, a little dabbling in unrighteousness and next you're walking after the flesh. The end result of such a life is eternal death. Separation from God which has no remedy.

ONCE SAVED ALWAYS SAFE?
WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES
Review Questions

1. When we consider the manner of salvation negatively we must say that it is not _____.
2. Salvation is by God's _____ and man's _____.
3. Explain the following statement: Man does not earn salvation when he believes in Christ.
4. Explain the condition of salvation.
5. According to John Calvin a man has the ability to believe Christ when the Gospel is preached to him.
 True False
6. According to your speaker man is born with the capacity to believe.
 True False
7. Would God be just in demanding that man must believe to be saved if he does not have the capacity to do so?
8. Would God be just in condemning to hell all people who reject Christ because He did not give them the gift of faith?
9. According to your speaker we do not maintain our salvation by _____.
10. Explain briefly each of the three tenses of salvatio:
Past:

19. What error had the Galatians fallen into?

20. Not only is man justified by faith but he must live his daily life by faith.

True False

21. What does Galatians 5:16 imply will happen if a Christian does not live by faith?

22. According to 1 Corinthians 6:9 and Galatians 5:16-21 what is the consequence of a Christian who habitually lives after the flesh?

23. According to Romans 8:12-13 what is the consequence of a Christian who habitually lives after the flesh?

24. What are the consequences of

25. What hope does one have who is sanctified by the blood of God's covenant and then he tramples the Son of God under foot?

26. According to Hebrews 6:4-6 can a person lose his salvation and then regain it?

27. What promises are given to those who maintain their salvation in the following verses?

Matthew 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13:

Revelation 2:7:

Revelation 2:11:

Revelation 2:17:

Revelation 2:26:

Revelation 3:5:

Revelation 3:12:

Revelation 3:21:

Revelation 21:7:

28. Of what value would the warning of Revelation 13:16-18 be if a believer could not lose his salvation?

29. According to Revelation 17:14 those who will ultimately go to be with Jesus will be the called the chosen and the faithful. Explain those three terms briefly.

30. According to your speaker, if a person should die just after he has sinned and has not taken care of that sin he would go to hell.

True False

31. According to your speaker, in order to maintain salvation we must walk faithfully with God.

True False

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Review Questions Keys /100

1. When we consider the manner of salvation negatively we must say that it is not by works. 2pts

2. Salvation is by God's grace and man's faith. 2 pts @ 1 ea.

3. Explain the following statement: Man does not earn salvation when he believes in Christ.

He does not earn anything he simply meets the condition
2pts.

4. Explain the condition of salvation.

Faith 2pts.

5. According to John Calvin a man has the ability to believe Christ when the Gospel is preached to him.

True False 2pts

6. According to your speaker man is born with the capacity to believe.

True False 2pts

7. Would God be just in demanding that man must believe to be saved if he does not have the capacity to do so?

No 2pts.

8. Would God be just in condemning to hell all people who reject Christ because He did not give them the gift of faith?

No. 2pts.

9. According to your speaker we do not maintain our salvation by works. 2pts.

10. Explain briefly each of the three tenses of salvatio:

Past: Initial salvation, del. from penalty of sin

Present: Am continually being saved, del. from power of sin.

Future: Will be finally and ultimately saved from presence of sin.

6 pts. @ 2ea.

11. Match the following with regard to our deliverance in salvation:

Past tense salvation	3	Presence of sin
Present tense salvation	2	Power of sin
Future tense salvation	1	Penalty of sin

6pts. 2 ea

12. Explain the balance in maintaining salvation.

It is by grace through faith 2pts.

13. Put the word active or passive in the following blanks:

In regeneration the soul is _____passive_____.

In justification the soul is _____passive_____.

In conversion the soul is _____active_____. 6pts. @ 2ea.

14. Justification and regeneration come before conversion.

True False 2pts.

15. According to your speaker man can and must repent and believe or he will go to hell.

True False 2pts.

16. Man has no responsibility in salvation for there is nothing he can do to be saved.

True False He must believe 2pts.

17. The book of Hebrews is written to what kind of people?

Backsliding Jewish believers 2pts.

18. Explain in your own words the teaching of Hebrews 3:12.

We must not neglect the salvation we already possess. 2pts.

19. What error had the Galatians fallen into?

Keeping their salvation by works 2pts.

20. Not only is man justified by faith but he must live his daily life by faith.

True False 2pts.

21. What does Galatians 5:16 imply will happen if a Christian does not live by faith?

If you do not walk in the Spirit you will walk after the flesh 2pts.

22. According to 1 Corinthians 6:9 and Galatians 5:16-21 what is the consequence of a Christian who habitually lives after the flesh?

Will not inherit the kingdom of God 2pts.

23. According to Romans 8:12-13 what is the consequence of a Christian who habitually lives after the flesh?

He will die 2pts.

24. What are the consequences of ??? (Ignore).

25. What hope does one have who is sanctified by the blood of God's covenant and then he tramples the Son of God under foot?

He will fall into the hands of the living God 2pts.

26. According to Hebrews 6:4-6 can a person lose his salvation and then regain it?

No. It is impossible to renew such a person to repentance 2pts.

27. What promises are given to those who maintain their salvation in the following verses? 12 @ 2ea = 24pts.

Matthew 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13: Will be saved

Revelation 2:7: Eat from tree of life

Revelation 2:11: Not hurt by second death

Revelation 2:17: Will give him hidden manna

Revelation 2:26: Power over nations

Revelation 3:5: Clothed in white garments; name not blotted out; will be confessed before Father

Revelation 3:12: Make him a pillar in temple and will go out no more

Revelation 3:21: Will grant him to sit with me on my throne

Revelation 21:7: Shall inherit all things; I will be his God and he my son.

28. Of what value would the warning of Revelation 13:16-18 be if a believer could not lose his salvation?

None 2pts.

29. According to Revelation 17:14 those who will ultimately go to be with Jesus will be the called the chosen and the faithful. Explain those three terms briefly.

Called: Call to salvation

Chosen: On basis of choosing Him in salvation

Faithful: Continue to believe to the end 6 pts. @ 2ea.

30. According to your speaker, if a person should die just after he has sinned and has not taken care of that sin he would go to hell.

True False 2pts.

31. According to your speaker, in order to maintain salvation we must walk faithfully with God.

True False 2pts.