

# So That You May Know

## An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

### Chapter 15- The Affections of the Heart

#### 139. The Assurance of Salvation- Part 8

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WAOY Wednesday 01/23/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to look at what the Apostle John taught about, "The Assurance of Salvation". So, let's read **1John 3: 19-24** again together:

- 19** We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him
- 20** in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.
- 21** Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;
- 22** and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.
- 23** This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.
- 24** The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Now on the last broadcast- we were discussing the issue of Assurance and of how what we think about Assurance is tied to what we think about both Salvation and Sin. And on the last broadcast- I was going over with you the history of the second view of Salvation and how it started back in the 1600's. This view of Salvation that is only a little over 400 years old is the *dominate* view of Salvation in the world today and teaches that Salvation as well as Assurance is "conditional".

This view teaches that Salvation can and is lost to those who acquire it because they do something wrong or they don't do something right. And this is the view that I was taught when I was first saved in the early 1970's and that I believed for over 30 years until I began to study the Epistle of Romans several years ago.

Those who believe this view teach that even though someone has been genuinely saved and born from above- they can lose their Salvation if they commit certain sins or if they don't do certain things that the Bible commands. Of course just *which* sins have the power to destroy their Salvation differs from Church to Church.

Some Churches teach that if you don't attend their Sunday Services- you will lose your Salvation. Others teach that if you commit the so-called, "big sins" like adultery; lying; or idolatry- you will lose your Salvation. Still others teach that if you try to sin- that is- if your sin is premeditated- then that means that you are lost- even if at one time- you were found.

Now I know many of these people personally- and I love them. I spent over 30 years in this camp and I can testify truthfully to you that most of the people who believe that you can lose your Salvation love Jesus with all their hearts and would be very willing to lay down their lives for Jesus Christ.

They are very sincere and they have a zeal for God. Most of these people desire to love and serve God with all their hearts and I would never try to say or do anything that would cause them any discomfort or harm.

But with all the tenderness I can muster- I must respectfully say that they are wrong about this issue and they are wrong primarily because of just a few concepts that are not defined properly in their hearts or minds. And this brings me much sadness because these people are my friends and I love them and when they hear me speak today about the Assurance of Salvation in the very same way that John spoke about it- they feel as though I am backslid or that I am condoning sin or that I am a traitor or that I have left my first love.

But again- I speak about Salvation and Assurance the way that I do because I cannot escape what Scripture clearly teaches about this issue and so I have to repeat the words of Martin Luther who when confronted by the Roman Church over his views about Salvation and Assurance and ordered to recant said,

“Unless I am convicted by Scripture- I do not accept the authority of what any man teaches- for they have contradicted each other. My conscious is captive to the Word of God and to go against Scripture is neither right nor safe”

I do not doubt for one second that those who teach that we can lose our Salvation are themselves not saved- I believe that many of them are saved. But I will say that the only reason we can be saved and still be off base in our Theology is because what I am teaching about Salvation is true- namely that Salvation is solely and wholly a Sovereign act of God that is accomplished without any action or assistance in any way from any man.

And because that is true- the Assurance of that Salvation is safe; it is secure; it is certain; and yes, it is eternal.

Now the great objection that many people have about a statement like this is the very same objection that I used to have. It seems to some that by saying that Salvation is certain- that it gives people a license to sin. It seems that when you tell someone that they are saved eternally- that you are allowing them to sin with abandon- with no thought of ever having any eternal consequences about their sin. And I want to talk about that for a moment.

This argument is ancient and one that many people have bantered about for many, many centuries. What happens when someone who is saved- sins? How are sins that are committed *after* Salvation paid for? And just how do our sins that we commit after we are saved affect our Salvation? How you answer these three questions formulates your view of just how secure and steadfast your Assurance is.

So, let's take them one at a time. The first question is:

### **What happens when someone who is saved – sins?**

The Bible says in **1John 3:4**:

**Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.**

So the Bible teaches that anytime that we transgress God's Law- we are sinning. And then in **James 2:10**- the Bible says:

**For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one *point*, he has become guilty of all.**

So from that we know that even if we keep all of God's Law for a whole day and yet slip up in just one area- it is as though we have

broken the *entirety* of God's Law and so at the end of the day- we are in fact nothing more than a transgressor of the Law. And we can dress this up any way we want to- but the fact remains that because we are flesh- we sin.

Now the point that I am making is this. If sin causes us to lose our Salvation- then no one is saved- because we all sin. That is the harsh reality of sin. All men sin and come short of God's Glory. Lost people sin- but saved people sin too. Everybody sins.

Now in saying that- I am not saying- and God's Word does not say- that sin is okay- it isn't. Sin is wrong- sin offends God and sin must be repented of and turned from. And saved people will do that multiple times every single day. But the point I am making is that if our sin causes us to lose our Salvation- then we are not saved for every long on any given day- because we don't get very far into the day until we sin.

So there is a great misunderstanding about this issue in the Body of Christ today. And because of a lack of sound Biblical teaching- we have two extreme positions- both of them unbiblical- that people naturally migrate toward concerning sin.

Some people view their own *personal* sin as not being that big a deal. And so they excuse most or all of their own personal transgressions and then they try to appease their conscience by saying that because they have a "good heart" or because they are "trying" to serve the Lord that God sees that and excuses their sinful behavior.

And these people may well repent at night- right before they go to bed- with some style of prayer that basically asks God to forgive them for all their sins. And these people might even tell you that praying this prayer before they go to sleep at night is mandatory- lest they die in their sleep. Of course they would be hard pressed to explain what would happen to them if they died at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon- before they could pray that prayer.

But this type of thinking leads people to eventually become self-righteous- and to believe that they themselves possess some inherent goodness that allows them to escape damnation. They would be quick to say that *your* sins might cause *you* to lose *your* Salvation- but they rarely- if ever- think that their *own* transgressions are serious enough to warrant *them* missing Heaven. This is just one of the *many* inconsistencies that this unbiblical position manifests.

This is the very same trap that the Pharisees fell into and you need to know that this wrong thinking is very common today. These people have great assurance in their own Salvation- but when asked- they will tell you that the *reason* that they are secure in their Salvation is due to what *they* do- in obeying God or in following the rules. So in reality- their Assurance is *not* based on what *God* did for them- it is based on what *they* do for God- and that is *exactly* what the unsaved Pharisees taught.

But the second position that people, who do not correctly understanding sin, migrate toward- is just as bad. These other people readily acknowledge that they sin- but rather than go into self-righteousness- these people sink into utter despair over their lack of being able to walk perfect before God.

These people have no Assurance at all- because they reason to themselves that if they were saved- they would not sin therefore- they must not be saved- because they periodically sin. And these people live continually in great torment.

Now the only way to correct both of these wrong views about sin and how sin affects our Salvation and the only way to relieve both groups from their error is to teach the Scriptures correctly. And that is why I am doing what I am doing.

Those who believe that a saved person can lose their Salvation must acknowledge some facts before we can proceed. First of all- the Theology that teaches that Salvation is conditional and is not permanent- is *not* Protestant Theology. Protestant Theology does *not* teach that Salvation is conditional. Roman Catholic Theology teaches that Salvation is conditional. Now I am not the one who formulated either Catholic or Protestant Theology- so please don't get angry at me when I say this- but the fact of the matter is that one of the greatest divides between Catholicism and Protestantism in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century was over the issue of the Assurance of Salvation – precisely what John is dealing with in these six verses.

So when you believe that Salvation is *not* permanent and is conditional- then please know that you are in alignment with Rome and you are not in alignment with what the Reformers taught about Salvation. Now that may not bother you- but here is another thing to think about.

To believe that Salvation is conditional puts you at odds with

every major figure in Christian History. All of the giants of the Christian faith- all of them- believed and taught and wrote the very same thing about Salvation- that it was a Sovereign act of God alone to undeserving sinners- and that it had nothing to do with what Man did or did not do.

Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Athanasius, Chrysostom, Augustine, Patrick, Anselm, Waldo, Wycliffe, Huss, Gutenberg, Luther, Latimer, Knox, Calvin, Rutherford, Baxter, Owen, Bunyan, Newton, Watts, Edwards, Whitefield, Brainerd, Judson, Bonar, M'Cheyne, Ryle, Warfield, Spurgeon, Lewis, Barth, Lloyd- Jones, Bonhoffer and Graham and many, many other names that you may recognize were all unanimous in believing and teaching that Salvation was certain and it was permanent and it was eternal- precisely because it was a Sovereign work of God alone.

Now I realize that this collection of great men may not impress some of you- and so Lord willing- on the next broadcast- we will get into what *will* impress you- and we will investigate just what the Scriptures teach about this very important subject. May God help us all.

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