

The Unfailing Pattern of Progressive Sanctification

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Alright, grab your Bibles and let's go to Philippians 1 as we have the second part of the seventh strand of "The Unbreakable Eight Strand Cable of Sovereign Grace." This has been quite a journey for myself as so much to learn, so much to grasp and one of my problems has been so much to leave out as we look at the second half of "The Unfailing Pattern of Progressive Sanctification." The word "sanctification" simply means "set apart for God." Every single person that is saved, every single person that God saves will experience over all the journey something of a progression of sanctification. You learn more. You understand more. You're more sensitive to sin. You treasure Christ more. You have more honor for his word. You love the church more. These things should be progressing in the truly saved man's life. It doesn't mean there's not any falling down at times but as I said last time, a sheep may fall in a ditch but it doesn't wallow there. So in all of those that God saves, he enables them over the long haul to progress in sanctification.

Be careful, it's really really, it's not really hard, it's impossible to judge this for another. You see, you came into your Christian experience with these three or four particular weaknesses and struggles, another man or another lady had these three or four particular weaknesses and struggles, what's somewhat easy for you is hard for them, or hard for them could be easy for you, so as a person progresses, they're progressing from where God saved them. So be careful, don't just chalk up the big five sins or the big four, I don't chew tobacco, I don't drink, I don't smoke, I don't cuss, I don't whatever, whatever those are, it's just not that simple. You may have been raised in an environment where none of that happened but a brother may have been raised where all of that was always happening. I remember the dear testimony of a young lady in our church years ago and she said her first childhood memory was sitting on the floor and seeing her parents along with other adults passed out from intoxication and drugs. That's the life she came out of so she may have struggles that are foreign to you but whoever you are and wherever God found you, if you're his, he will see to it that you have a pattern, an overall pattern, some ups and downs, yes, but an overall pattern of progressive sanctification.

Now our forefathers called this the perseverance of the saints. Our earliest Baptist evangelical forefathers did not use the phrase "eternal security." Well, I'm not saying they never did, it just wasn't a common phrase. They did not use the phrase "once saved,

always saved." We believe those things but they do not really speak the truth of what we're talking about. It is true if you're once saved, you're always saved, it is true that if you're once saved, you do have eternal salvation, but the emphasis of our Scripture and our forefathers was that that is evidenced in a life that goes on for God. There is no such thing in the Bible as praying a simple prayer, boom, you've done the deal and now you can just live in the world until you get 70 or 80 and then you can come back into the church because you were saved all along, you were just back-slidden. That is a foreign concept to biblical Christianity. So that's why our forefathers used the phrase "perseverance of the saints" and I use the phrase "the unfailing pattern of progressive sanctification." They all mean basically the same thing.

Now in Philippians 1 we have a foundational verse that we've been working off of where Paul tells the church at Philippi in verse 6,

6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

He started the work, he's going to continue to work in you, and he'll complete it and it will come to perfection, full maturity, when you're glorified one day in Christ Jesus.

Now Philippians 2:13, he reminds them,

13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

God does the work. God is behind it all. Now certainly there are Scriptures which come from a mere or let's say a purely human perspective where we are commanded to commit, to strive, to labor, to work, to be disciplined for the Lord's sake, but in back of all of that the Scriptures require us to give all the credit to God, all the way from our justification that happens in a moment in time when you believe, through our progressive sanctification through life, and on to our glorification in the future.

Now reviewing just for a moment, last time we looked at I. in this and that was that those who fall away from the faith were never in the faith. Very important phrases there. They fell away from the faith because they were ones who were never in the faith. When I say fall away, I don't mean have a season of struggle or weakness, I mean they abandon, just go to the world and act as though for an extended period of time that they don't even know God, they don't care about God. To be quite honest with you, I wasn't raised Southern Baptist, I wasn't raised Baptist, I wasn't raised in church, at least after I was just a little boy, and when I became a Christian, quite honestly Baptist people, the great majority would say to me, "If you just prayed that prayer, you're done." And I would look at Baptist people and I would see how they lived and how they acted and I'll be honest, I was too zealous and too judgmental at times but I was accurate in assessing that a whole lot of these people who claimed they prayed the prayer and it's done, didn't get what I got. Something is missing. Something is odd and peculiar and that is what the Scriptures bear out very clearly that those who can fall completely away and live as if they don't even

know God or care about the things of God, particularly his church and his word and his people, that they must not have ever had true faith.

We talked about the key insightful passage from Hebrews about how there can be those who are illumined by the Holy Spirit; they taste the heavenly gift; there's a work of the Spirit in the hearts of some that is truly a work of the Holy Spirit but it is short of true conversion. I don't understand all these things but let me say this to you, church: remember the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead, don't you define the work of the Spirit as some very tiny, simplistic thing, this is what he does and this is the only thing he does. No, he's as complicated as God the Father is complicated. He is as diverse and as dynamic as God the Son or God the Father are. So there are works of the Holy Spirit that are not necessarily conversion and one of the best ways to phrase that is there are awakenings of the Spirit that are not conversions of the Spirit and that's why you see some people showing such valid testimonies and such a valid confession, such a valid appearing walk with the Lord and then, boom, they just fall away and they stay away. Scripture would tell us that's an awakening but not true conversion because once you're truly saved, there will be a pattern of progressive sanctification.

We talked about that there are two basic streams of theological doctrine, one is a false stream, one is a true stream. One is the stream of law and works chiefly in church history championed by the Roman Catholic Church, and the other is the stream of grace and life or grace and faith, I should say, and that's the stream of the Protestant Reformation and the Baptist background that we came to the Scriptures in realized we do not find God by achieving certain works and performing certain sacraments or attending, rather, the sacraments or performing certain rituals, that works and law are not the way to God, salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and those who are truly his stay his.

II as we continue on this security message, this message of the unfailing pattern of progressive sanctification, notice the divine and vital union that cannot be dissolved. How do we know we're going to be secure? How do we know that once we're saved we will continue on and we cannot ever lose our salvation? That's because there is a divine and vital union that has happened between you and Christ that cannot be dissolved. You didn't get in Christ so you can't get out.

The Bible expresses this in a lot of ways. The Bible says he is divine and we're connected, we're the branches of vital union. The Bible speaks of Jesus as the cornerstone but we are the living stones, a vital union. The Bible says he is the foundation but it says we are the spiritual house, a vital union between the two. The Bible says he is the head and we are the body, a vital union. The Bible says he is the groom and we are the bride. All of these express a vital essential uniting or union but the most prominent in an impacting phrase in the New Testament for this union, that's a mystical union, you can't tangibly see it, you can't see it with the eyes or hear it with the ears or taste it with the tongue, it's a spiritual union but it's real and that is the phrase "in Christ." It's one of the Apostle Paul's most favorite phrases, we are in Christ. We are in the sphere, if you will, of Jesus Christ so what he has, we have. The way the Father views him is the way the

Father views us. You're not saved by somehow connecting to Christ, you're saved because you are in Christ.

Many many phrases. I'll just mention, I think, four of them. In Romans 3:24, we have redemption in Christ. He redeemed us because we are one of those who are in Christ. I think it's very important to keep in your mind that this is written from a godly perspective, that is, an eternal perspective. Jesus died for you and you were in him before he died and when he died, you were in him as he died. Now you've got to be careful, don't go too far with this to some mystical image that you can't really comprehend but the point is there is a vital union that takes care of all that is necessary for our salvation.

In Romans 6:11, the Bible says we were made alive to God in Christ. How did you become aware that there is a God to be known and worshiped? And further than that, how did this kindling of love and adoration and passion for God and the things of God begin in your life? It's because you're one who's in Christ.

We have, Romans 6:23, the free gift of eternal life in Christ. This union that cannot be dissolved.

Romans 8:11, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ. We're worthy of condemnation, based on our merit we ought to receive condemnation but, no, not for those who are in Christ, this absolutely indissoluble union we have in him.

Now this phrase of being "in Christ" reaches beyond anything we know in any human relationship. You know, the Bible says when a man and a woman become husband and wife, there is a special union that forms; there is a completion that enables us to picture the Gospel and as man and wife, husband and wife, we became a message of God in a way that we can't in singleness, at least not the in full aspect of what God wants to show. Now that doesn't mean if you're single you're somehow incomplete; God gives men like the Apostle Paul the gift of singleness for service, but for the majority of us, he shows himself through the completion of husband and wife together in a union. Pastors and church members have a union, as such. A physician has a union or a relationship with patients. A lawyer/client have their relationship. But it's interesting none of these is said to be in the other one. Only how we're connected to Christ is the phrase used that we are in someone, we are in Christ. That means it's a more intimate union.

Now our faith can be viewed as the umbilical cord, if you will, to Christ and the vitality of the union is faith, but let's remind ourselves afresh it is not your faith that saves you, it is Christ that saves you. As you examine yourselves as the Bible says, to make sure you're in the faith, make sure you don't examine faith so much, just examine Christ. You don't look at your faith, you look to him with your faith. You look to Jesus. Be absorbed with him. Be enamored with him. Be full of him. That's where your security comes from. It is not our faith that saves us, though that be the conduit, it is Christ that saves us. Ephesians 2:8-9 reminds us, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Now I'm totally and absolutely and emphatically convinced that it means that even your faith is the gift of God because you're one of those who are in Christ.

Listen to Luke 22:32, "but I have prayed for you," Jesus is saying here, "that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." Now we know Peter did fail, Peter did fall, but he did not fall off entirely. So when he says here, "I have prayed that your faith not fail," what he means is entire failure; a complete falling away. That can't happen because we have this divine union.

Now in your walk with Christ, the great majority of us are going to have some troubled seasons of faith, some difficult days in our faith. You may have some real conflicts between your faith and with unbelief like Peter did. Remember Peter, the leader of the 12 apostles who denied the Lord three times? But the Lord was praying for him that his faith wouldn't fail entirely. He struggled but he did not fail completely. There was never a total and final failure of faith because the vital union of Christ with his children cannot be dissolved. That gives us great security.

Again in John 10:27-29, Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice," notice the union there, My sheep, "and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." I'm one with the Father, my children are one with me, the Father is one with all of us. There is a vital union between us all.

John 14:19, "After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also." Here's the point: as long as there's life in the head, there's life in the body. That's what he's saying, "I'm not going to die. Now I'm going to be crucified on the cross but I'm going to live on and as long as I'm alive, you're in me so you have eternal life. It can't be dissolved. Our union is forever." Infallible security is what one theologian called it. Infallible security of the believer in Jesus Christ.

John 14:20, "In that day," that's the day after he's gone the Spirit comes and he comes to us in the person of the Holy Spirit, he said, "you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." Again, the emphasis on this indissoluble union with Christ. That's one of the ways we know we're secure, this vital union that we have with Jesus Christ. Now look, there's not some trick, there's not some formula, there's not some mantra you've got to chant, there's not some motion you go through to get in Christ, you just repent and believe and you're one of those who is in Jesus Christ.

Now III, building on this enduring work of progressive sanctification, that is, that once we're saved we will continue on being saved and we'll ultimately be glorified with the Lord, there is a divine seal that cannot be removed. The Bible says we've got to take this a little bit further. Of course, the divine seal that cannot be removed from us is the work of the Holy Spirit. All converted children of God – now listen – all, not just some who've had a special experience, all truly saved children of God have experienced this great work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. It is a radical and revolutionary work.

Now there are a lot of terms that are used for this one thing. Sometimes it's called the new birth. Sometimes it's called being quickened. Sometimes it's called being born again. Sometimes the Bible calls us a new creation. The Bible uses various terminology but it means the Spirit comes in and does a special work by which you are converted and that very presence of the Spirit is the divine seal that you are authentically God's. All of these are the seal or the work of the Spirit.

Two parts to it: the work of the Spirit comes in and converts you to faith, and then the work of the Spirit continues on with you and both of those encompass, if you will, the sealing of the Holy Spirit in your heart and in your life. Ephesians 4:30 reminds us, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." What were you sealed for? You were sealed unto the day of redemption. It means the day of the final and full redemption, the final and full realization of who you were meant to become, that is, perfected with Christ and glorified with him in the eternal state.

So this all-powerful divine seal is set upon us unto the day of redemption so, first of all, there's a vital union that cannot be dissolved; nobody is going to get through your union with Jesus and Jesus' union in you; and then he says also the Holy Spirit has put a divine seal of authentication and security on you as God's authentic child and God's authentic property. 2 Corinthians 1:22, he "who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge." Now he's talking about how as we live out our Christian life, we are aware that we are one who has the Spirit's seal because the work of the Spirit in our daily lives continually reminds us and affirms to us that we're one of God's. The seal of authentication is there and it says it's given to us as a pledge, and do you know what that word "pledge" mean? It means "earnest money." The down payment of what you're going to ultimately become has already been given to you by the fact the Spirit of God is already at work in your heart. Now you're not perfected or glorified yet but he's there working and that is the seal, the evidence that you're truly his.

John 16:6-7, ""But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper," that's the Holy Spirit, "will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." That's send of the Holy Spirit to us.

So the picture in our minds, especially from this day in which this was written, this picture had to come to the mind of the first century Christians as they were thinking on and learning of what does it mean that we have the seal of the Holy Spirit. Isn't it the same thing that would happen in that day when a king would take his signet ring and he would press the emblem of his ring on any item and typically there was a droplet of wax and he would press that signet ring on something and that spoke to everyone, if you see that seal, you know that belongs to the king, you'd better not mess with it. Or if a herald came to your community and he unrolled the scroll and it had the seal of the king on it with his signet ring impression upon that droplet of wax on that scroll, when he opened that scroll, you'd better do what the herald says because this came from the king, it is authentic. And that's what you and I are, we have the Holy Spirit of God working in our

lives convicting us of sin, convincing us of the glories and the beauties and the wonders and the security of Jesus Christ, convincing us that what this Bible teaches is true, convincing us that his local church is where we are to pour our energies and serve him, all these things are the Spirit's working with the word of God and continually bearing upon our souls, "You are God's authentic child." That's the sealing of the Spirit. It's not some experience, though there are experiences along the way. It's that continual, convicting, prompting, confirming, illumining work of the Spirit, especially as you're under the word of God.

In the Hindu religion, they have what they call the bindi. The bindi is that red dot that you see on a Hindu's forehead and it's like in all religions, it's evolved over the years to have a lot of meanings but originally the Hindus put the bindi red spot on their forehead to identify with the blood sacrifice that they gave to please their many Hindu gods. Well, the Bible says it's the blood of Jesus Christ which has marked our souls with a redeeming, adopting, finished work of Christ on our behalf. That's the mark we look for, the indwelling presence prompting, leading, convicting, guiding, confirming work of the Holy Spirit primarily when we're under the word of God.

Now he says this is going to keep on, this sealing, this security, if you will, reminder. As a matter of fact, every time I preach to you and the word of God convicts you, the word of God convinces you of something and something inside of you says, "Yes and amen. I was thinking wrongly there. I think I'll agree with the Bible now. My conclusion was not accurate there, I think I'll go to the Bible on that. My attitude's been sorry on that. I repent of that." Well, that's the Spirit giving you the continual affirmation you are God's authentic child. That's the sealing of the Spirit.

You know, I coined a phrase. I've never seen it before, maybe other people have used it, but I call it the amen of the Holy Spirit. The amen of the Holy Spirit. The conviction of sin, that's the Spirit saying, "Amen! You're God's, that's why you're convicted." I've had so many people come to me through the years, "Pastor, I'm so troubled. This has happened in my life and I have these attitudes, I have these viewpoints. I'm so convicted about it. It's so wrong. I must not be a child of God." And I'll just laugh and say, "No, that means you are a child of God. That's the seal of the Holy Spirit. You can't get by with sin anymore." That's proof of the authentication, the convincing that the Scriptures are right and everywhere your thinking is out of line with the Scriptures, then the Scripture's right and God's right and you're wrong. That convincing is the amen of the Spirit saying, "You're God's authentic child." God has pressed his ring upon you, "Authentically his."

The settled conviction in your heart that, "I bring nothing to Christ. I offer nothing to him. I can merit nothing before him. I come bankrupt and I trust him and I just believe that's enough." That settled conviction is the Spirit. The Spirit gives you that. Now the flesh isn't going to give you that. Do you know what the flesh is going to do? The flesh is going to get you focused on rituals. The flesh is going to get you focused on sacraments. The flesh is going to get you focused on you doing good works and a thousand other things you can do to try to make yourself feel better. And by the way, just in the flesh you will feel better if you jump through some hoops; you will feel better if you do what the

priest says; you will feel better if you clean up your life ethically; but that is not eternal salvation, that's works of the law that only further condemns you before God. Salvation is by grace through faith and those who've been saved have the authenticating seal of the Spirit and his work in their hearts and lives.

My friend, it's a seal that cannot be removed. I'll tell you what, you just go out there and you try to remove it. Now I don't mean this, just run out there and you just get as far away from God as you can get and you'll see what happens to you. The Holy Spirit will start screaming to you. He'll start calling out to you. He'll start unsettling your soul. That's the authenticating, affirming work that you are God's child and that you can never be lost because it can never be removed. Jesus is the King and King Jesus sent his divine seal, his Holy Spirit, to authenticate that we are his work and that we are his property and nobody messes with that that King Jesus has authenticated. We're his.

IV. Another reason we know we're secure, can't lose our salvation, we're going to continue on in a pattern of progressive sanctification, is because of the divine decree that cannot be thwarted. There is something in back of all of this salvation that comes from the Almighty, all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful God and that is a divine decree that you're his. You see, once you get into a state of acceptance before God, you continue in that state of acceptance all the way through life and all the way into eternity. Now you were transferred at conversion from a state of spiritual death to a state of grace and life – use your brain – you were in the state of spiritual death, at conversion you got into a new state of grace and life, then when you die, you'll be transferred from grace to glory. You go from the state of spiritual death, to the state of grace, to a state of glory, but you will always continue on because God's decreed it to be so.

Now there are those who fall away and those who fall headlong, if you will, and they seem to wander away and enjoy sin and rebellion against God. They had no full root in them. As I've said before, the faith that was not faithful to the finish was faulty at the first. That's always been the case. Dr. Rogers used to say that all the time.

Now let me ask a question: can a Christian fall away from the state of grace? Yes, if God gave up on him. If God were not faithful to his decree he could, but God would not do that. 1 Peter 1:5, the Bible says in 1 Peter 1:5 that we "are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Protected by the power of God. God has decreed it so.

Jude 1:1, "Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ." The beautiful picture there, especially when you investigate the balance of systematic theological truth is that God has given you to Jesus as a precious gift. That's why you're saved, and so the text here says you're kept by the power of God so that Jesus gets his full gift, his full reward. You've got to understand something: your security is to the benefit of God's purposes and God's decree. Did you hear that? You being saved and continuing on in your salvation, you making it all the way from conversion to glorification is God fulfilling his decree and God's decrees cannot be thwarted in any way, shape or fashion.

So our pattern is always progressive sanctification. It's a perseverance because our progressive sanctification is the servant of the decrees of God. These didn't come from man, these came from God. They originated in him. This is the purpose of God, he chose us in him. That's his decree before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him in love. He chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him in love. That's his decree. It cannot be thwarted. It cannot be changed. The determinate counsel of the Godhead ordained this very purpose and our progressive sanctification fulfills that purpose.

Now, in one sense the divine purpose is him choosing and predestinating us that we would one day be holy and blameless before him in love, the decree also includes the divine execution of salvation, that is, Jesus' atoning work in redemption; the Spirit's work of regeneration under the preaching of the Gospel; us believing and repenting of sin; and continuing on in sanctification. All that is the divine decree of God. It didn't just happen. It's not just a contract thrown out there. It's not just an opportunity cast forth. It's a decree from God himself. So the divine decree necessitates the execution of God both saving and keeping all the way to glorification his children.

Now in Galatians 6:15, the Bible speaks of us being the new creation. There is the old creation, the old Adam when God created the heavens and the earth. "Let there be light. Let the birds fly in the skies. Let's divide the waters and create dry land." That was God's decree of the first creation. I mean, think about it: could it be possible that God decreed the first creation and it failed? Could it be possible that God would say, "Let there be light," and there would not be light? Could it be possible that God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters," and there be no expanse in the midst of the waters? Could it be possible that God said, "Let dry land appear," and no dry land would appear? Could it be possible that God would decree, "Let the earth sprout its vegetation," and there be no sprouting of vegetation? Could it be possible that God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens," and there be no lights in the expanse of the heavens? Could it be possible that when God decreed that the waters teem with swarms of living creatures that there would be no swarming teems of living creatures in the waters? Could it be possible that when God decreed, "Let the birds fly above the earth," that there would be no birds flying above the earth? Could it be possible that when God said, "Let's make man in Our own image," that man was not created in the image of God? Unthinkable. Brothers and sisters, likewise with the same weight and validity God decreed the new creation. God decreed that, "Those whom I foreknow and those whom I predestine I will also call, and when I call them, I will justify them, and after I've justified them, I will sanctify them," that's the one we're on today, "and then ultimately I will glorify them. That is the decree of my new creation and it cannot be thwarted."

Church, are you hearing this, this morning? Are you grasping this? Listen to me, listen to me, whatever we taught about, "Well, if you did this..." Oh, my goodness. I'm not saying there's not a responsibility of man to repent and believe but in the balance of biblical truth that's 1/1000th and the rest of your security is all of this, including that God's decree to foreknow you, to predestine you, to call you, to justify you, to sanctify you, and then

ultimately to glorify you cannot be thwarted. Infallible security. What a security we have in Christ Jesus.

V. This is our last one. Divine pleasures that cannot be denied. In other words, God likes to feel pleasure. God likes to have enjoyment and there are some things that give him enjoyment and he's just not going to be denied them. Absolutely is not going to be denied them.

Isaiah 53:10 is a great insight here. God the Father speaking of God the Son says, "But the LORD was pleased To crush Him," God the Father was pleased to crush Jesus. Notice the word "pleased" there. Do you know what that old Hebrew word could be translated as? Delighted. God was delighted to crush Jesus. Wow. "Putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand." Here's what he's saying, he's saying, "I get great pleasure at seeing my plans unfold. I get great pleasure in seeing my decrees and my purposes to save for myself a people through the work of my Son, that I'm just delighted that he would do what's necessary that we can fulfill our purpose and our plan to save for ourselves a people over all time that will share all eternity with us."

Now look, if you and I could lose our salvation somehow, those who are truly saved, if somehow we could fall away and lose our salvation, that would be a triple robbery of God's pleasure. A triple robbery of God's pleasure. 1. It would rob Jesus of his reward. His reward is, "If I go and do what the Father sent me to do, I'll have all these children to share eternity with. I'll purchase them on the cross and they'll be mine forever." You could lose your salvation, then you're robbing Jesus of getting his reward. You're robbing from God the Father the joy of his work. It was his plan, his wisdom that laid out this work to be performed and you'd be robbing God the Father and God the Son of the deep joy of fellowshiping with their children for all eternity.

The Bible says in Ephesians 1:14, "who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession," and notice the wording there. God says, "I'm redeeming what's my own possession. Did you hear that? "I came to bring about the salvation of those who were my own possession." There's a preciousness there, an aspect of pleasure in, "This is mine and it's for my purposes and therefore my glory and I'm going to redeem them."

Then Titus 2:14, "who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself." Notice the pleasure aspect. "These are for me. They're for my enjoyment." Listen to me, child of God, you are secure because God wants the pleasure of having you, his purchased redeemed trophy, with him for all eternity. God's divine pleasure must be fulfilled. If he lost you, he would lose some of his own pleasure and he can't lose anything because he's God.

You see, God receives pleasure – now think – both in the saving of his people, it gives him great pleasure to see his Son going to the cross and rendering the redemption of the

children, it gives him great pleasure in the Spirit going out accompanied with the preaching of the word to bring them in time and space history to repentance and faith, it gives him great pleasure in using the Holy Spirit in local church congregations under the preaching of the word of God to continually sanctify them that they have an unfailing pattern of sanctification, we're talking about that this morning, and it gives him great pleasure to bring them all the way to glorification. God has great pleasure in the saving of his people. He's not going to be denied that pleasure. He's not going to, but also he takes great pleasure in his saved people. He takes great pleasure in the wisdom, the power and the beauty of his salvation plan for them, but he takes pleasure in them themselves. God has great joy in you because you are the product of his Son's work. That's why you can't lose your salvation because God's pleasure is on the line.

John 6:39, "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day." The unfailing pattern of progressive sanctification is so sure, so certain, so settled in the power and in the might and in the mind of Almighty God.