
RETHINKING THE CHURCH: BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES

SECURE IN CHRIST

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on May 7, 2017

INTRODUCTION

One expression that is often associated with Southern Baptists is, “Once saved, always saved.” The phrase is sometimes misunderstood and even misused, but we (at FBC Diana) are interested in affirming what the phrase was originally meant to convey. Southern Baptists do believe that Christians can never lose their salvation, but there are a few vital things related to such a statement. In this message, we will consider the meaning and implications of this imprecise phrase.

1 JOHN 5:10-13

10 Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son.

11 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

THE POINT I’M AIMING AT TODAY

Christians are secure in Christ. Therefore, rest in Him and nowhere else.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

(1) WHAT DOES “ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED” MEAN?

(2) ADDRESSING SOME MISUNDERSTANDING...

(3) SOME APPLICATION

(1) WHAT DOES “ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED” MEAN?

- “11 And this is the testimony, that **God gave us eternal life**, and **this life is in his Son**. 12 **Whoever has the Son has life**; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”
- “Saved” is a broad term for all that God does in a person’s salvation
 - **Regeneration** – Spiritual life from spiritual death; “born again” or “born from above”
 - **Justification** – legally declared righteous in God’s sight
 - **Adoption** – made to be a child of God
 - **Sanctification** – progressively transformed into the image of Christ; real-time growth in practical moral purity
 - **Glorification** – The culmination of all God has promised in salvation; the final and permanent state of eternal glory
- “I was saved!”
 - Regenerated, Justified, and Adopted
 - *“When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, **he saved us** [past], not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit** [Regeneration], whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being **justified by his grace** [Justification] **we might become heirs** [Adoption] **according to the hope of eternal life**” (Titus 3:4–7).*
- “I will always be saved!”
 - Sanctified and Glorified
 - *“4 When Christ who is your life appears, then **you also will appear with him in glory** [Glorification]. 5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you... 12 **Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved** [Sanctification], **compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another...** (Col. 3:4–13).*

- Saved = United with/to Christ
 - ***“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me...”*** (Gal. 2:20).
 - ***“if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him...”*** (Rom. 6:8).
 - This is more than “we will live *beside* Him...”
 - We did not literally “die *beside* Christ,” rather we are united to Him in His death. Thus, we will remain united to Him in resurrection life (both now and forevermore).
 - ***“You [the Church] are the body of Christ, and individually members of it”*** (1 Cor. 12:27; cf. Eph. 1:23; 4:12; 5:30; Col. 1:24).
 - Union with/to Christ is a *corporate* and a *present* reality.
 - While God saves individuals, He always *saves them into* unity – family – community – a body.
 - Christians *are now the body of Christ*.
 - ***“Even when we were dead in our trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ...”*** (Eph. 2:5).
 - Salvation – Eternal Life – is synonymous with “together” or union with Christ.
- Therefore, “Once saved, always saved” means...
 - Saved is (past, present, and future) all that God does in salvation.
 - Regeneration, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, Glorification...
 - At every step, Salvation is synonymous with “Union with Christ”
 - ***Therefore, once a person has entered into union with Christ*** (“once saved”), ***that person will always be in union with Christ*** (“always saved”).
 - ***“11 God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life”*** (1 Jn. 5:11-12)

(2) ADDRESSING SOME MISUNDERSTANDING...

- The Bible does not teach that a person is saved by a **prayer**.
 - When Peter proclaimed the Gospel on the day of Pentecost, the hearers said, “*What shall we do?*” (Acts. 2:37). His reply was, “**Repent and be baptized...**” (Acts. 2:38).
 - Later, “*those who received his word were baptized*” and added to the number of believers (Acts. 2:41).
 - Sometime later, Peter was preaching the Gospel again, and his subsequent command was the same, “**Repent**” and “*turn back*” from your sins that you may be forgiven (Acts 3:19).
 - “*Many of those who heard the word believed,*” and there were still more added to the number of believers (Acts. 4:4).
 - Therefore, **repentance** and **faith/belief** are the biblical response required from those who would be saved and enjoy eternal security.

- The Bible does not teach that a person is saved by **baptism**.
 - Baptism is the public display and entry-point of Christian discipleship.
 - Jesus said, “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age*” (Matthew 28:19–20).
 - As we have already seen in Acts 2, baptism is a commanded response.
 - Peter said to those who heard the Gospel, “**Repent and be baptized...**” (Acts. 2:38).
 - Philip immediately baptized the Ethiopian Official who believed after hearing Philip explain the Gospel from the book of Isaiah (Acts 8:36-38).
 - Paul proclaimed the Gospel to a Gentile “God fearer,” named Lydia, and she was baptized sometime later (Acts 16:14-15).
 - Therefore, **saved people should be baptized**.
 - But baptized people are not all necessarily saved.

- The Bible does not teach that a person is saved by ***church membership***.
 - Church membership without participation (including at least some uniform belief and practice) is a modern notion, so it is hard to find a passage that speaks directly to this absurdity.
 - Just as a church body has no power to remove your name from the Lamb's book of Life, so too, it has no power to add it (Rev. 3:5, 13:8, 17:8).

- The Bible does not teach that a person is saved by ***good works***.
 - The law doesn't make us good; it reveals our bad.
 - "By works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since ***through the law comes knowledge of sin***" (Romans 3:20).
 - If we seek salvation by works, we must be perfect.
 - "All who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, '***Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them***'" (Galatians 3:10).
 - Salvation is "by grace, through faith," "not a result of works."
 - "By grace you have been saved through faith. And ***this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast***" (Ephesians 2:8-9).
 - Therefore, good works cannot save, nor can good works contribute to salvation in any way.

- The Bible does not teach that a person is saved ***without evidence***.
 - Children of God (those who are saved) act accordingly.
 - "***By this we know that we have come to know him [God], if we keep his commandments***" (1 John 2:3).
 - "***We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning...***" (1 John 5:18).

- Children of the devil (those who are unsaved) act accordingly as well.
 - ***“No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he [God] is righteous. 8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil...”*** (1 John 3:6–8).
- Some will object: “But doesn’t the Bible say, ‘**Judge not...**’”?
 - ***“Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven...”*** (Lk. 6:37).
 - The context helps us know what Jesus is talking about here:
 - “blind men lead people into pits” (Lk. 6:39).
 - “take the log out of your eye before you operate on someone else’s eyes” (Lk. 6:41-42).
 - ***“No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit”*** (Lk. 6:43–44).
- Let us not forget the “fruit of the Spirit”
 - ***“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires”*** (Gal. 5:22–24).
- Therefore, good works cannot save, but **good works** (good fruit, fruit of the Spirit) **always expose those who are saved.**

(3) SOME APPLICATION

- “13 I write these things **to you who believe** in the name of the Son of God, **that you may know that you have eternal life**”
 1. “Once saved, always saved” helps us clarify what is being offered in the Gospel.
 - We are not offering a method for living, a new philosophy or perspective, or merely a second chance at life.
 - We are offering eternal salvation – union with Christ forevermore.

2. “Once saved, always saved” helps us understand what it truly means to be a “saved” person in the first place.
 - Those who are truly saved will continue in the faith, give evidence of their profession of faith, and endure throughout eternity.
3. “Once saved, always saved” helps us rest in the sure promise of God.
 - If you struggle with doubt or fear about the security you have in relation to God, then you may rest well in Christ.
 - He is a trustworthy Savior, whether you are a trustworthy follower or not.

Major Point: Christians are secure in Christ.

Therefore, rest in Him and nowhere else.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

The Believer's Security by James White

<http://vintage.aomin.org/Believer.html>

A Hymn of Security by Phil Johnson

<http://www.thegracelifepulpit.com/Sermons.aspx?code=2013-03-24-PJ>

Eternal Security is a Community Project by John Piper

<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/eternal-security-is-a-community-project>

Can Justification be Lost? by Mark Jones

<http://www.reformation21.org/blog/2015/10/can-justification-be-lost.php>

Perseverance: The Other Side of the Coin by Tony Tosti

https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/perseverance_tosti.pdf

Sheep Who Will Never Perish by C.H. Spurgeon

<https://www.monergism.com/sheep-who-will-never-perish>