



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Basic Bible Doctrine, John 6:39; 10:27-30

"Eternal Security"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we turn to Thee again with thanksgiving for all of the goodness that has been shown to us through Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for the saving work of the cross, and we praise Thee for the salvation that is ours by virtue of what he has done. We thank Thee, Lord, for the assurance of our salvation which comes to us by virtue of the teaching of the word of God. We know that Thou art faithful in the things that Thou doest say, and we know that Thou doest say that he who has the Son has life, and so in having him we have assurance that we possess everlasting life.

Now as we consider the topic of the perseverance of the saints or eternal security, give us understanding Lord and enable us to profit from our time together. We ask Thy blessing upon each one present. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The topic tonight as I just mentioned is the perseverance of the saints or looked at from the divine side, eternal security. I'd like to turn to a few passages in the Gospel of John and read them for our Scripture reading. First, John chapter 6 and verse 39. John chapter 6 and verse 39, the Lord Jesus in the great discourse on the Bread of Life says, "And this is the Father's will who 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." And then John

chapter 10 and verse 27 through verse 30, perhaps the most significant passage of all on the doctrine of the certainty of our salvation forever. John chapter 10 verse 27,

"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 to 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."

And for the final passage, let's turn to Romans chapter 8 and read beginning at verse 28. Romans chapter 8, verse 28 and we'll read verse 28 through the remainder of the chapter. The apostle writes in Romans chapter 8 and verse 28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." What is his purpose? Well, the next verses tell us.

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

That's a very significant verse and I suggest sometime when you have nothing to do, but thirty minutes or an hour of free time, that you just sit down and meditate upon Romans 8:32, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." Is there anything greater that he could do for us? "How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Everything else is less than that. So if he's given us the Son, everything else would be less and surely if he's given us the most, he will give us the rest.

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Shall God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Will the God who justifies lay any charge to the ones he has justified? Will the one who makes justification for us constantly condemn us?) "Who shall or what shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints or the doctrine of eternal security from the divine standpoint; really what we have is the doctrine of the eternity of the spiritual life that is given us in grace when we have believed on our Lord Jesus Christ. The positive term, eternal security, is the term that looks at our security from the standpoint of God, whereas, the perseverance of the saints is the term that looks at it from the standpoint of man. This term, the eternity of spiritual life, is the positive term. Eternal security is strictly speaking a non-biblical term, but remember we shouldn't be too moved by that since there are lots of things that are clearly taught in the Bible that are not so names in the Bible; like the doctrine of the Trinity, like the doctrine of the old nature. These are things that are taught in Scripture, but the precise terminology is not found there.

This is one of the five points of Calvinism; that is, part of the answers that the Calvinists gave to the Remonstrants or the Arminians included the doctrine of the

perseverance of the saints. When we think of the five points of Calvinism, we think of the mnemonic device of TULIP to remind us of the first letter of each of these doctrines: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, which is not really a good term because both Arminians and Calvinists limit the atonement. The Arminians limit the efficacy of the atonement because they say that man may actually thwart the purposes of God. Calvinists limit the design of the atonement. They say Christ did not die with the intent of saving all. So limited atonement is not a good term; it's actually the Arminians who limit the atonement, because in the final analysis, is it better to limit from the standpoint of God or from the standpoint of man? We believe in the sovereignty of God, it's clear that it's much better to limit the design of the atonement than to limit the efficacy of the atonement and have a frustrated deity who cannot do what he has purposed to do according to the Arminians. But that is not the topic tonight, is it? The others are the irresistible grace of God, and finally, the P stands for the perseverance of the saints.

I have a good friend who says Arminians have their flower too. It's the daisy. He loves me, he loves me not. He loves me, he loves me not. [Laughter] He loves me, he loves me not. I didn't make that up. That's what one of my friends told me.

Mr. Spurgeon used to say about the perseverance of the saints that that really is not the proper term. It should rather be the perseverance of the Savior, because the perseverance of the saints is due to the perseverance of the Savior. Put as the country fellow put it, "I am sometimes up and sometimes down, but still my soul am heavenly bound."

Now there are differing views over the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer or the eternity of spiritual life or the perseverance of the saints. The Roman Catholic Church has answered the Calvinists by saying that salvation may be lost by mortal sin. The Council of Trent reads, "All mortal sins render men children of wrath and enemies of God." But to meet the doctrine of rebaptism, because they do not rebaptize those who have committed such sin, Rome says that three of the seven sacraments that

they teach are sacraments, baptism, confirmation, and holy orders imprint an inerasable character upon the individual and may not be repeated. This is a mysterious seal in the soul and in effect it's lingering life and can be healed by confession and repentance. That is a very strange doctrine and in fact, very few Roman Catholic believe that doctrine, but that is the official doctrine of the church.

Lutherans vary a little bit amongst themselves, but generally speak of "repeatable regeneration". They distinguish as Rome between mortal and venial sins in many cases. Some say that regenerated ones may fall totally and finally, but the elect can only fall totally, not finally. So that in some Lutheran teaching, the elect are all finally saved. In some it is not. In other words, they differ a little bit among themselves, which is not unusual because most groups differ a little bit among themselves.

Arminians generally believe that the regenerated man may be lost but not one of the elect. Incidentally, Arminius did not accept the position that a man could lose his salvation. He rather taught that we could not be sure about that particular doctrine and he was uncertain. But later Arminians went on to affirm that a man could lose his salvation after he had been saved.

Wesleyans and Pentecostals generally believe that any saved or regenerated man may be lost because of any willful sin or apostasy from Jesus Christ.

The Reformed or Presbyterian tradition has believed that the truly regenerated individual will persevere till the end and cannot be lost. These are the differing views.

Now we do need to distinguish in our thought between assurance and the doctrine of eternal security. They are not the same. Arminians or Wesleyans and Pentecostals, for example, do believe in the assurance of salvation. Assurance is the doctrine that we have salvation as a present possession. In other words, it is possible for us to know that we are saved now. All most all of Christians believe that. It is possible for us to know that we are saved now, but the doctrine of security or the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is that we have salvation as a permanent possession. So

Arminians generally believe we can know that we have salvation as a present possession. We have it now. But the question with them is can we know that we have it permanently? Reformed, Presbyterians believe that we can know that we have salvation as a permanent possession. Now it is important when we think about eternal security or the perseverance of the saints to define this doctrine accurately, because it is sometimes misdefined, and because it is misdefined it is properly criticized by some, and they do not think it is possible for a Christian to hold such a doctrine because they have a false definition in their minds. Negatively, the doctrine of eternal security or the doctrine of the eternity of spiritual life is not the teaching that a believer is saved no matter what his practice may be. In other words, we do not believe when we say that we believe that a man is secure, if he believes in Christ and cannot lose his salvation that he is saved no matter what kind of life he lived. That is not the teaching of eternal security.

Now that doctrine, if a person put it that way, we are saved no matter what we do, that overlooks the fact that we've been given a new nature when we believe in Jesus Christ, and we cannot live the same old life. There is a definitive change that takes place when a person believes in Christ. It overlooks, also, the fact that God has instituted family discipline, and when a believer as a believer lives in sin, he comes under the discipline of a heavenly Father just like a little child that disobeys his parents comes under his father's discipline, so we believers come under the discipline of a heavenly Father. And he will not permit us to live the same kind of life that we lived before we were believers. And if the rebellion is so great, well, he just might take us right up to heaven through sin unto death.

So the idea that a person may be saved and secure no matter how he lives is not true to the biblical teaching. It's not an accurate definition or description of this doctrine. It also overlooks the fact that the Bible states that there are rewards for faithfulness in the Christian life.

Now there is a story which I read a long time ago about a banker friend of a man who was a Bible teacher who was a friend of mine. This banker friend of my friend was saved in the land of Scotland. His friends learning that he was saved in a gospel hall, one of those little halls where people preached the gospel of Jesus Christ like they do in Brethren Assemblies, many of them in Scotland; said to this banker, "Ah! Now you believe since you've been saved and you meet with those people over at the gospel hall, once saved always saved." The banker said, "Yes." And then his friend said to him, "Then you believe that you can do what you like?" And he said, "Yes, I do, but since I've been saved, I've got different likes." Well, now that was true to the biblical teaching. He could do what he liked, but a transformation had taken place within him and he didn't have the same old likes that he had before he was saved.

Now positively what this doctrine means is that God secures the salvation of true believers keeping them from sinning as a practice. God secures the salvation of true believers keeping them from sinning as a practice. Now the key words are "God secures the salvation of true believers;" that is those who have truly believed. Their salvation is secure because God secures it, and he keeps them from sinning as a practice.

Now it is true, of course, that believers do from time to time sin. They frequently sin, but sinning as a practice, a life characterized by sin; that has been transformed by the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ. If a man is not saved from sin by his salvation, it is not much of a salvation. So there has to be some transformation of life.

Now in the beginning of our Christian life as we've talked before, we don't make a great deal of progress. But as time goes by the Holy Spirit works his work of sanctification within the saints. The doctrine then is that he preserves us in the faith, keeping us from sinning as a practice. We, as a result of his preservation, persevere till the end. One man said there are two marks which are found on all of God's sheep. One is the mark on the ear and that mark is they hear the Shepherd's voice. And then they have a mark on the feet. They follow him. "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me." That really

characterizes a true believer. They hear the voice of the Shepherd by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, and they follow him.

Jonathan Edwards said and I think he was right, he said that the sure proof of election is that one perseveres till the end. That's the final evidence that we have been elected. We do persevere as a result of God's saving work.

Now what I would like to do is to just give you some reasons why I think that a person who truly believes in Jesus Christ is preserved by God in the eternal life which he possesses. I once heard a man speak over the radio and he said he was going to give five reasons why a saint cannot break into hell. And so, I'm going to give you seven reasons, in a moment, why a saint cannot break into hell. The first of them is this; the believer is eternally safe because of the plan of salvation. I'd like to remind you of one text here; John chapter 19 and verse 30. The Lord Jesus was hanging upon the cross and when he was hanging upon the cross he utters those very important theological words, "It is finished!" The text reads, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the spirit."

Now if it is true that a person believes in Jesus Christ, but may lose his salvation, then the work of Jesus Christ is not a finished work. His work is not a finished work, it is an unfinished work. We are not lost by acts that we perform nor are we saved by acts that we perform. In other words, if we are saved by what Christ died plus what we did thereafter, the Lord Jesus could never say on the cross, "It is finished!" He could only say I have done my part now you must do your part. So the very plan of salvation by which men are saved by the grace of God in Christ and required to do nothing other than receive salvation as a free gift, that alone is harmonious with the doctrine of the preservation of the saints. That demands the doctrine of the preservation of the saints.

Mr. Ironsides in one of his books says that an Arminian friend once said to him that getting to heaven is like riding a bicycle. If you don't keep pumping you fall off. Well the only thing bad about that is that getting to heaven is not like riding a bicycle.

Getting to heaven is more like riding a jet plane. You don't have to worry about putting your whole weight down either. You don't have to get in that plane and say, ah! This is terrifying! I came back from Chicago Friday and there was a lady sitting by me and she had ridden on a plane before, but I've never seen anybody in my life so terrified of the plane. When we came near the ground, she shut her eyes. Her husband looked over at me and smiled because he was a little irritated by it in this crowd, and then as we got closer and closer she became more and more like this, and finally, when the plane hit the ground, I hate to do this to you, but she said, "Ahhhhoooo". It was not until we taxied up in front of the American Airlines that she finally relaxed, and I wondered if she had had her whole weight down the whole time from Chicago.

Isn't it interesting too, incidentally, that Noah's Ark did not have a pump in it? In other words, they got in that Ark and they trusted the Ark to keep them above the waters and from the storm. So the very fact that we are saved by grace demands eternal security, the perseverance of the saints. Otherwise, our salvation would depend upon what Christ did plus what we do thereafter. So the idea of losing your salvation is not harmonious with the principle of our salvation; grace salvation.

Secondly, another reason why the saints shall not break into hell is because of the purpose of the Father. Now we read Romans chapter 8, verse 28 and 29, where the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul wrote, "We know that all things work together for good to those that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Now then the apostle describes what that purpose is in the verses that follow. They are magnificent expression of the purpose of God. Notice the five great acts, "For whom he did foreknow," act number one. "He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover," verse 30, "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified." There are the five great acts that make up the purpose of God: Foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, glorification; five great acts that make up the purpose of the Father.

Now I want you to notice something about this verse. We'll just read it over again, these two verses. We'll read it over again. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." Now let me ask you a question. Are those that are predestinated the same as those that are foreknown? Well, yes. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate," so the very ones who were foreknown were predestinated. Is that not right? Was anyone lost in that movement from foreknowledge to foreordination? No. "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called." Are those that are called the same as those that are predestinated? Well, yes. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified." Now are those that are justified the same as those who are called? Well, yes. Does not the Bible say here, "and whom he called, him he also justified"? Was anyone lost in the process from the whom to the them? No. But now notice the last, "And whom he justified them he also," not will glorify but it's so certain in the mind of the apostle that he puts it in the past tense. "Them he also glorified." Now is there anyone lost in the passing from justification to glorification? Well, no there is not a single person lost in that movement from justification to glorification. And it's so certain that he puts it in the past tense. Why you can see that the purpose of the Father is to comprehend not only the salvation of some but also their eternal security.

Mr. Spurgeon use to like to say that he thought it was scriptural to speak of the perseverance of the Savior, but he also liked to say that he was so thankful that God had chosen him before he saw him, because if he had waited until he saw him, he might not have wanted him. But this particular text says, you see, foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, glorified, and not a single person is lost in the process. The purpose of the Father encompasses the foreknowledge of us from ages past with the intimacy of personal choice. He selected us and he guarantees that we shall be glorified in the days to come.

Third, we are eternally secure because of the power of the Father. Let's turn over to 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 5 and read that text. 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 5, Peter says,

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his abundant mercy he hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

We are secure because of the power of the Father. We are kept by the power of God through faith. Now that faith, incidentally, is the initial faith that brings us in the relationship with God as his children. So the faith which saves us is the means by which we come to be the Lord's, but from that point on we are kept by the power of God unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. We have a beautiful illustration of this in Peter's walking upon the water. In Matthew chapter 14 that description is given of that event. You remember the Lord Jesus in the middle of the night in the midst of a storm came to the disciples in the little boat on the Sea of Galilee, and as he came to them he was walking on the water. They were very much disturbed at first, because they thought he was a ghost.

But finally, the Lord Jesus spoke to them and said, "Be of good cheer. It is I. Be not afraid." And Peter answering said, "Lord, if it's really you, bid me to come unto you on the water." Most amazing statement, isn't it? Can you just imagine a human being saying something like that? And the Lord Jesus said to him, "Come." And Peter got out of that boat and began to walk on the water to go to Jesus. Surely as great a miracle if not a greater miracle than the miracle of our Lord walking on the water; a man, a mere man, but as he walked toward the Lord he looked out, maybe he thought well, I'm really doing

pretty well. In the midst of all of this storm, his eyes moved away from the eyes of the Lord and he saw all the winds and the waves that they were boisterous and he became suddenly afraid and he began to sink. Finally, just as he was going under, he said, "Lord, save me!" And immediately, he had walked all the way from the boat into almost the presence of our Lord, because all Jesus had to do to save him was just to stretch out his hand. He was practically there. And we read that "the Lord Jesus stretched out forth his hand and caught him and said unto him, Oh, thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" That's an illustration of how we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed at the last time, even when we believe he is faithful and saves us till the end. "For though the strain and stress of life my thread of faith may break, the cable of his faithfulness no storm can ever shake."

Fourth, we are secure because of the promise of the Son. John chapter 10 and verses 28 and 29, we have probably the greatest of all the texts on the security of the believer or the perseverance of the saints. Now here in these verses we read, verse 28, "And I give unto them eternal life." Now first of all, I want you to notice that this is a promise with no proviso attached to it at all. It includes the mountaintop experiences of the Christian life. It includes the valley experiences. It includes the tempests of life through which we must pass. It includes the calm periods of life. It includes the periods of time, and it also includes the periods of eternity. He says, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish." Eternal life, he doesn't say I give unto them six months life. He doesn't say unto them, I give unto them life until they sin. He doesn't say I give unto them eternal life if by their free will they cooperate with my great sovereign power. He says simply, "I give unto them eternal life."

Now if the life that he gave us was not really eternal, if it does not last into eternity, it would not be eternal life or we could say you have not given us eternal life if it is life for a time if it is conditional life. It is eternal life. He also says, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish." Now he does not say they will sometimes

perish, perhaps, or they might perish, but he says, they will never perish. If you are able to read Greek and you know anything about Greek grammar, some of the simplest features of it, you know there is such a thing as the subjunctive of emphatic negation. It's probably the most emphatic way to express anything in Greek negatively. Well, that is the construction that is found here. "They shall never perish." We could paraphrase it in order to bring out the strength of this emphatic negation. I give unto them eternal life and they shall by no means ever perish.

Now if it is true that eternal life is given to an individual and he loses his life, what becomes of the word of the Lord Jesus Christ? "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish." But if someone does perish our Lord has not told the truth. Our Lord's honor is at stake. Don't you see? It's our Lord's honor, not mine. It's our Lord's honor that is at stake. "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish." It is something for us to remember. You know, when we deal with the word of God, we're dealing with the honor of our Triune God. There are people who know better who are very wishy-washy about biblical doctrine. They know the Bible speaks something, but it's the kind of thing that might cause a little bit of criticism. The unsaved might not understand. They might think that we are arrogant, or they might think that we are bigoted. Who wants to be a bigot? I'm sure if our Lord were here he would be criticized by many people as being a bigot. You know why? Because he says God doesn't here any prayers except those that come through me. He said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father except by me."

Now he'd be the biggest bigot of them all with the Apostle Paul trailing right at his right hand. [Laughter] Don't you see that it's our Lord's honor that is at stake when he says, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish"? If someone does perish, what becomes of the truthfulness of Jesus Christ?

Now he goes on to say, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish," and in order to make it even stronger, if possible, "neither shall any man pluck them out

of my hand." Many years ago I was speaking at a conference in the east. A lady approached me after a message that I gave from Galatians chapter 5 on falling from grace. I tried to point out that it is possible to fall from grace when we understand grace to be a method of salvation. For example, if a person is saved by grace and then someone comes and says, look in order to really be saved you've got to be baptized too. You're not saved if you haven't been baptized. Well, he introduces works into the plan of salvation, and that person if he believes that and goes to be baptized in order to be saved, he's fallen from grace. Now he hasn't fallen from salvation if he's truly believed in Christ, but he's fallen from the grace principle of salvation. That's what that text means, incidentally, in Galatians 5.

Now this person had heard me speak on this topic and so she came up and said, "Many people point to the any man of John chapter 10:29 and say that Satan can pluck us out of his hand." So, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand," but Satan might pluck us out of his hand. She didn't have an answer for that, so she asked me. Well, all I did was, I happened to have my Greek Testament. I really like to carry it with me all the time. I have it right over here now, because people do ask questions like that. So I just opened it up to John chapter 10 and this verse, and I said now in the Greek text it doesn't say any man. It says any one. In other words, the any one comprehends not only any man, but any person at all. "Neither shall any one pluck him out of my hand."

Now I don't need that. If we read, "I give unto them eternal life," that's enough for me, and if he says, "They shall never perish," that's the icing on the cake. I don't have to be told, "Neither should any man pluck them out of my hand," if he gave me eternal life, I know no man's going to pluck them out of my hand. But anyway, that was a help for her and she went home a little more assured of her salvation until someone came up and gave some other reason, no doubt.

Our Lord continues, he says, "My Father, who gave them to me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." It reminds me of an unbeliever and a simple woman who were debating eternal security and she appealed to this text; John 10:28 and 29, and she pointed out that she was in her Father's hands. The unbeliever said, well, but suppose you slip through his fingers? And she said, I can never slip through his fingers. Paul said, "Now you are the body of Christ and members in particular." Hallelujah! I'm one of the fingers. [Laughter] Well, now that's the attitude of faith, it seems to me.

So you can be sure because of the promise of the Son. Fifth, you can be sure because of the prayer of the Son. Turn over to John chapter 17 and verse 11. The Lord Jesus in the great prayer of John 17 says, verse 11, "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." Now the Father receives a prayer from the Son and the prayer of the Son is that the Father may keep those whom he has given to the Lord Jesus Christ. Now is that a prayer in the will of God? Well, of course it is. Are prayers in the will of God answered? Of course they are. And in fact, our Lord's prayers are always answered. Back in chapter 11, verse 42, standing at Lazarus' grave we read this, our Lord is praying and he says, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard and I knew that though hearest me always: but because of the people who stood by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me." In other words, I don't even have to speak my prayers out like this. You always hear me. I know you always hear me. I thank you that you have heard me, but on account of these poor souls out here standing around Lazarus' grave, why, I say what I say. Then he turned to Lazarus and said, "Lazarus, come forth!" And Lazarus came forth. Now when the Son prays, "Father, keep through Thy own name those who Thou hast given me," do you think they are going to be kept? I think they're going to be kept. In fact, you can squirm all you want to if you believed in Jesus Christ, you are kept and kept

forever. Our Lord's prayers are very striking prayers, but they're always answered. He prays for the disciples. He never prays with the disciples. He doesn't get down and say, now let's pray to our heavenly Father; our Father. He doesn't pray like that. He told them to pray our Father, but he never prays with them. He doesn't say now let's have a little prayer meeting and let's all get together and let's pray. No, our Lord stands on a different plain. He prays for them, but he does not pray with them for he is the eternal Son.

There's a difference between our Lord and men that is as fine as a hair but it's as hard as a diamond, because he's the divine Son. They are sons, the believers, but he is the Son. So his prayers are answered always, and he prays that we might be kept.

Sixth, we are secure because of the presence of the Holy Spirit. John 14, verse 16 and verse 17. We just have two or three more minutes, so we must go a little more rapidly. John 14, verse 16 and verse 17, the Lord Jesus says, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for" six months until you sin, until you commit a venial or a mortal sin. No. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever," so when the Holy Spirit comes to indwell the saints, he come to indwell them forever.

Now it's possible for us to grieve the Holy Spirit, but the Bible makes it very plain that we cannot grieve away the Spirit. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 30. The Bible says it's possible to quench the Spirit, but that is a doctrine that pertains to the local church, not an individual if you examine the context, you'll find that that is true. But even then, the Spirit is not extinguished in the life of the saints. But if you should happen to believe that that text pertains to believers individually, the Spirit may be quenched, but he cannot be extinguished in the life of the saint.

Finally, the believer is secure because of the reconciliation that Jesus Christ has accomplished. I'm going to ask you to turn to Romans chapter 5, and since most of you sitting here probably heard me speak on this passage just a couple of weeks ago, maybe we can do it very simply. I refer to verse 10 and verse 11, in which the apostle speaking

of the certainty of the believer's salvation says, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved because we share in his life." And I pointed out to you simply this, that what the apostle says is, we were enemies, but God through the work of the Holy Spirit wrought in our hearts so that he reconciled us. He brought us from being at enmity with God to being in amity before him. We were enemies, he made us friends.

Now if he worked as he did through the death of the Son when we were enemies, transformed us, and made us friends, now since we are friends, Paul says, in a much more kind of an argument; an *ad priorita* argument. Will he not now that we are his friends save us, particularly when we now share in his life? In other words, if he did the most for us when we hated him, he surely won't do the lesser thing now that we love him. The logic is unassailable. Consequently, we are safe because of the reconciliation of the Son and furthermore, Paul says in verse 11, we're going to be saved not with sad, lagopous, woo-be-gone continences, but he says, "And not only so, but we also joy in God."

Literally, this is we shall be saved because we share in his life and not only saved shall we be, but we shall be saved rejoicing. It is a participle in the Greek text and should be taken that way in spite of the fact that some do not take it that way, but that is what it is. We shall be saved rejoicing in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He's taking about the future. He's talking about the time that we enter into his presence as the little adverb, now, in the last clause indicates. "Through whom we have now received the reconciliation." What a magnificent promise that it. We are certain to be saved now that we are his friends, because he did the greatest thing that he could do for us when we hated him. He'll surely save us and he'll save us rejoicing. And every single individual in this room that knows Jesus Christ and enters into the presence of the Lord some day, you will enter into his presence rejoicing. That's one of his promises.

We sometimes claim that this teaching is immoral and teaches license. It does just the opposite. This kind of teaching is not immoral and it doesn't lead to license. In the

first place, it glorifies God, and in the second place, it is the kind of teaching that leads to love and gratitude and faithful service as a result of the sense of what God has done for us. Let me illustrate. Suppose I were to give you a gift. Let's just suppose. Let's just have a little fun. Let's just suppose I'm a very wealthy man, and let's just suppose that I say to one of you that I pick out in the congregation, like Dick Parker. I'll say, now Dick, I like you and I like those stories that you tell me all the times. I just have a great regard for you and I'd like to give you something. I'd like to give you a house, and so I take Dick to a beautiful home, a quarter of a million dollars at least, and say, now it's yours. And before he starts to thank me for it, I say, but now there's one little thing here that you need to know. I've had the deed drawn up and your names in it, but I just want you to know that there are one or two little provisions in it that you better take a look at. One of them is that at any moment I may take it back.

Now as he looks out over that house and it's a beautiful home, but as things happen to the house and they also do happen to houses, do you think he's going to spend, for example, suppose Eleanor said I sure would like to have a beautiful bedroom added to this house. Why don't we spend fifty or seventy-five thousand dollars and add a room? Dick might say, but wait a minute; in the deed that I have that can be taken back at any moment. If I spend seventy-five thousand dollars, old Lewis will drive down the street one day and say, ah, that house is more valuable. I like that house. I'll take it back.

Now don't you see if something can be taken back you're not going to spend any money on it? You're not really going to devote yourself to the development of it and care for it. And so likewise, if God has given us a salvation that we can lose at any moment, that is the thing that is immoral and that is the thing that leads individuals to discount the significance of the work of God. No, it's not immoral. It does not lead to license. It's just the opposite. It's an incentive to worship. It's an incentive to holy living, and it's an

incentive to faithful service. May God help us to truly appreciate the certainty of our salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you're here tonight and you've never believed in him, salvation is dependent upon what Christ has done and he has done it all. As you turn from trust in other things, other persons, other institutions, to trust in the blood that was shed, God gives eternal life through Jesus Christ and that's what it is, eternal life. You can have not only the assurance of life as a present possession, but the assurance of life as a permanent possession.

Now may God enable us to enjoy it. Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] We are grateful to Thee Lord for this wonderful truth of the truth of eternal life. We praise Thee that we have it through the Lord Jesus Christ. Enable us to rejoice in it. For his name's sake. Amen.