

## **WE BELIEVE IN ETERNAL SECURITY**

### **1 John 5:13**

Today we are going to talk about eternal security. In the last several months we have looked at numerous doctrines that we believe as Christians. And some of these are pillars of our faith that the secular world attacks with a vengeance, like the inerrancy of Scripture, the Deity of Christ, or a six-day Creation. But most Christians stand firmly together on all of these, and we all stand firmly on Christ's Deity if we are Christians at all. But not so with eternal security! It is a teaching that stands as a great watershed, a great continental divide among true, sincere believers in Jesus Christ.

Sometimes people who differ on eternal security are able to live and minister along side of each other in an amicable way. I remember when I was in seminary years ago that our church outside of Chattanooga had a team of Freewill Baptists come in and lead a service for us. And of course, the Freewill denomination believes that you can choose to be saved and then if you wish you can choose to walk away from God and be lost again. And as we were leaving after the service some of us were kidding them about their belief in the possibility of losing their salvation. And those guys just took it good naturedly and kidded right back. There is an old hymn that some of us old timers remember entitled, Ye Must Be Born Again. And part of the words is the KJV rendering of Jesus' words to Nicodemus. It goes like this: "Ye must be born again....ye must be born again". And as those fruity Freewillers began singing that song. Only they sang it this way, "Ye must be born again and again and again and again..."

But there are some opposers of eternal security who would never joke about it. You can go to a website named "Noeternalsecurity.com" and see a post that says, "The truth is, that teaching (eternal security) is not Biblical or Christian. It has been a dangerous snare to multitudes over the centuries. **Without a doubt millions are in the fires of hell at this moment because of the false doctrine of eternal security.** Another in opposition said, "Eternal Security is surely **Satan's masterpiece**". A third had this opinion: "This doctrine completely destroys the distinction between right and wrong, and removes all motives to abstain from sin. It boasts in the perseverance of the saints, while it believes in no saint but one, that is, Jesus, and neglects to persevere".

Well, what are we to make of all of these accusations? Have we as Baptists and also our Presbyterian brothers been deceived by the devil all of these years? Do we preach a doctrine that had damned millions to hell? Does eternal security destroy all motives for godly living, for sanctification, as I preached last week? I declare to you today, like Paul declaring from time to time on certain issues, "Certainly not!" "May it never be!" We believe in eternal

security because it is a precious Bible truth! And contrary to being Satan's masterpiece, eternal security is **God's masterpiece** that brings great glory to His holy name.

Turn in your Bibles, please, to 1 John 5:13. In this verse John tells us clearly that God wants all who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord to know that they have eternal life, that they know that if they died at that moment they would be saved. Now, there are two main words in the Greek language for the word "know", *ginosko* and *idon*. *Ginosko* means "the beginning of knowledge", or "progress in knowledge", and *idon* means fullness of knowledge, a settled, intuitive knowledge. Knowledge without a doubt. For instance, If you asked me, "Bro. Mike, do you know Price Pate", I would say, "Why, yes, I know Price Pate. He's one of my church members. I see him every Sunday morning and every Sunday morning he tells me that he is as mean as a two-headed snake. And if you were to ask Betty Pate if she knew Price she would say, "I'd say I know Price Pate. I've been living with him for 65 years. And he's as mean as a two-headed snake". But what Betty knows about Price and what I know about Price are two different things. My knowledge of Price is *ginosko*, just the beginning of knowledge, knowledge in progress. But Betty's knowledge is knowledge in fullness. She knows Price probably better than he knows himself. She *idons* Price.

And this is the word that John uses. "These things have I written unto you, that you may know, that you may *idon* that you have eternal life. Not think so, not hope so, but know that you have eternal life with fullness of knowledge. And this word is also in the perfect tense, which signifies present action that continues indefinitely. And so this knowledge of which John speaks is not a knowledge that will be here today but might be gone tomorrow. So John is very specific in his choice of words here. And he is saying that he is writing in order that his readers might know, right at that moment, without a doubt that they have eternal life, and that they might know it from then on. A translation by Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest puts it about as literally as it can be said, "These things I write to you in order that you may know with an absolute knowledge that life you are having, eternal life, to you who believe on the Name of the Son of God".

Now, we only have time to touch on the mountain top Scriptures of eternal security this morning. But I do want you to leave here knowing that if you have ever been truly saved, you need have no fear of losing your salvation. And that brings us to an initial question that I would like to address: **Why is the doctrine of eternal security so important?** Why do we cling so tenaciously to eternal security when practically all of the rest of Christendom rejects it? There are two reasons. First of all, we cling to eternal security because **only by eternal security can we have peace in salvation.**

Turn in your Bibles, please, to Isaiah 26:3. Beloved, God wants His children to have perfect peace in their lives. Is that not what He is saying here? Now look at Isaiah 32:17. This verse tells us the pathway to peace, and it is righteousness. Now, the primary application is in the millennial reign of Christ. In the 1000 year reign, Jesus will rule with a righteous scepter and there will be worldwide peace. But this verse also has a present application. In the sinner's heart that has been made righteous there is peace. There is quietness and assurance forever.

Beloved, this is God's will for His children. He does not want His loved ones to worry about being kicked out of the family and losing their eternal inheritance, because in a moment of weakness they succumbed to the devil's temptation and then had the unfortunate experience of dying before they had time to repent. Or because there is some sin they've forgotten to confess, or because they haven't quite lived up to God's standard for Christian living. NO! He wants you to enjoy your journey home. He wants all of His children to have the security that they will never perish, that no demon or the devil himself can pry them out of His hand. Jesus said, "Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you **rest**. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find **rest for your souls**." And beloved, the only way we can have true rest and peace in our salvation is to know that we are eternally secure.

But not only by eternal security do we have **peace in salvation**, but also only by eternal security can we have **progress in sanctification**. Look at Hebrews 6:1-3. The writer has just concluded a section about the Hebrew Christians needing to get off their spiritual baby bottles and begin to take in some solid food; that they needed to start growing up. And so in the verses we just read he says, "Move on to perfection, that is, move on to maturity! Don't go back and lay the foundation of repentance and faith again. Don't linger with discussions about the basics of baptisms, laying on of hands, the resurrection, and eternal judgment. You've already covered all of that. Move on! And this is what we'll do if God allows us to". Now, this is a good thing, wouldn't you say? Heaven knows, we have too many baby Christians in the church. But, beloved, you can't ever take in the solid food of the Word and grow up in your faith if you have to constantly go back again and again to lay another foundation of salvation.

So these are the reasons that eternal security is such an important doctrine. It assures us our peace in salvation, and it makes possible our progress in sanctification. Now, for the rest of our time today I want to do two things. First of all, I want to lay out for you a brief argument for the doctrine of eternal security, and then I want to refute from Scripture three arguments against it. Let me give you a one sentence statement of the argument for eternal

security. **Eternal security comes by God's sovereign choice, by faith alone, through Christ alone.** Now, there are three parts to this glorious truth, and I want us to look at each one briefly.

First, eternal security comes by God's sovereign choice. Turn for a moment to Ephesians 1:3-6. In these verses Paul declares to us the sovereignty of God in the matter of salvation. And verses 4 and 5 say that all of the saved have been chosen by God before the foundation of the world, and that they have been predestined unto the adoption as sons by Jesus Christ. Now, in order to interpret these verses correctly we must understand the meaning of two words, the words "chose" and "predestined". The word "chose" means "to pick out", and to set apart from among many. It is the word that Jesus used when He told His disciples in John 15:16, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you..." Jesus chose the twelve from among many, and Jesus chooses His children from among many. And the word "predestined" means "to decide beforehand". And it is important to know that God's decision beforehand to save His children was not because in His foreknowledge He knew that one day they would believe in Jesus. In other words, His choice was not based on their choice. Nor did God choose His children because He looked ahead and saw any innate goodness in them at all. Verse 5 says that He chose them "according to the good pleasure of His will", that is, just by His sovereign choice. And verse 6 says He did it simply "to the praise of the glory of His grace", just so He could receive glory in Heaven.

Turn over quickly to Ephesians 2:4-7. Paul says that when we were dead in our sins were made alive together with Christ, by grace through faith. And then he says that God has raised us up together with Christ and that He made us to sit together in the Heavenly places in Christ. And beloved, those are past tense verbs. At the moment we were saved we were spiritually raised up and made to sit in Heaven with Jesus. Spiritually speaking you are there right now if you are saved. And God predestined all of this for you in ages past that in the ages to come He might display the exceeding riches of His grace to all creation. So let this soak in for a moment. If you are saved, you are in Heaven in Christ this very moment. If you can lose your salvation, then first of all you must be removed from Christ, and then an angel or St. Peter or someone must usher you to the front gate of Heaven and cast you out. And then God would lose all the glory that He was to receive in the ages to come by saving you.

I want you to listen to the comments concerning election from the study Bible edited years ago by Southern Baptist pastor and scholar W.A. Criswell:

"The doctrine of the elective purpose guarantees the perpetuity of salvation. Unthinkable is the idea that one of God's elect could forfeit his salvation. Those whom He has justified He will glorify....glorification is

already a settled issue in the mind of God. How could God lose one His elect?"

Now, beloved, as we have said numerous times before, election is a grand mystery that the finite mind cannot comprehend. For the Bible plainly teaches that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:4 that God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth". The writer of Hebrews declares that Jesus was made a little lower than the angels that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. Peter writes (2 Peter 3:9) that God "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance". John writes in 1 John 2:2 that Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Jesus Himself said that He came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). And if you are lost and without Christ today, over and over in this Book God cries out to you, "My Son died for you! Come to Him and be saved!" And if you will come and trust Christ, you can be saved today.

So how do we reconcile the free will of man and the sovereignty of God in salvation? Well, beloved, we don't. We believe both, for the Bible teaches both. We stand with Warren Wiersbe, who said, "The mystery of divine sovereignty and human responsibility will never be solved in this life. Both are taught in the Bible. Both are true, and both are essential". But beloved, even though we don't understand it all, we know that God chose His own before they were ever born. He predestined them unto salvation, and what God has predestined all Hell cannot keep from coming to pass.

Now, let's look at the second part of our statement on eternal security. Eternal security comes by God's sovereign choice **by faith alone**. Over and over, from both the Old Testament and the New, we read that unrighteous men are made righteous before God by faith and faith alone. Genesis 15:6: "And he (Abraham) believed in the Lord, and it was accounted to him for righteousness". Habakkuk 2:4 says, "...but the just shall live by his faith". Galatians 5:26: "For you are all sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ". Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace are you saved through faith..." Jesus: "He who believes in Me has everlasting life" (John. 6:47). And these verses merely scratch the surface. But let's go back to Ephesians 2:8-9 for a moment. Paul writes that we are saved by grace through faith. Grace is a gift that you don't deserve, that you did nothing to earn. And because you did nothing to earn it in the first place, there's nothing that you must do to keep it.

Let me tell you about a gift of grace that I once received. About three years ago I must have had some car battery trouble or something. I don't really remember. But one day I came home and sitting in my carport was a portable battery charger and tire inflator. Just sitting there; just for me. To this day I do

not know who brought it. But I have used it over and over and over again. But friends, I did not do one thing to earn that gift. And whoever gave it to me did not attach a note that said, "If you stop preaching the Word, or if you start going out drinking and dancing on Saturday night, I'm taking this gift back". It was all of grace, no strings attached.

That's the way it is with salvation. Salvation is a gracious gift received by faith alone. Just trusting Jesus to do what you cannot do. And the moment you try to mix your good works with the finished work of Christ on the cross, whether they are on the front end of salvation or the back end, you are seeking to earn your salvation. And you adulterate Christ's perfect sacrifice, you tarnish and cheapen His perfect sacrifice, and you *nullify* His perfect sacrifice! It is no more Christ alone that saved you, it is Christ doing His part in salvation, and you doing your part – working to keep yourself saved. But Paul said in Romans 4:5, "But to him who **does not work**, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness". Not his faith plus his works after he is saved, but his faith alone. Beloved, as long as you are trusting Jesus, God says you are righteous. You are eternally secure.

Now, let's take a brief look at the third truth concerning eternal security. Eternal security comes by God's sovereign choice, by faith alone **in Christ alone**. This actually is closely interwoven with the previous truth. The faith that saves is the faith that is placed in one thing and one thing alone, and that is Jesus Christ. We are not like the Hindus and place our faith in thousands of gods, nor do we place our faith in Christ and in ourselves. We place our faith in Christ alone. Turn to Hebrews 1:3. Speaking of Jesus, the writer says, "Who being...sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high". Take your pencil or pen and circle the words "by Himself". Friends, Jesus did not need your help in saving you and He needs no help in keeping you saved. Look quickly at Roman 5:18-19. Take your pencil again and in v. 18 circle the words "one man's righteous act" or similar phrase, then in v. 19 circle the words "one man's obedience". By **one man's** righteous act the free gift of salvation was offered to all men and by **one man's** obedience many were made righteous. Beloved, who do you think that one man is? It certainly isn't you! It is the God-Man, our Lord Jesus Christ!

Do you see it, beloved? If your salvation is left all up to Jesus, then the only way you can lose it is if Jesus fails. But Jesus has not failed!! Paul writes in Romans 4:25 that Jesus was delivered for our offenses and raised again because of our justification. The resurrection is our indisputable proof that our sin debt has been paid in full!!

Well, I do pray that you have seen from all of these verses we've considered that salvation is eternal. The truly saved can never lose this precious treasure. But I do want to answer three objections that those who do not believe

in eternal security will often raise. The first objection that many have to eternal security is one that I mentioned at the beginning of the message raised by Daniel Steele. And that is, **eternal security removes all motivation for godly living**. For if you know that that you can't lose your salvation, why strive for sanctification, why strive to be holy as Jesus is holy? For you're going to Heaven anyway.

Well, beloved, the Bible says much to refute this charge. Look at Romans 12:1. For eleven chapters Paul has been heralding the riches of God's grace to his readers. And beginning in chapter 12 he switches gears completely and begins to expound on practical Christian living, fleshing out the Christian life. Holy living, if you please. And in verse 1 he gives them the motive for their effort. What does he say? "I beseech you, brethren, for the security of your soul, that you present your body as a living sacrifice to God?" No! He says, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God....." We are to offer our bodies to God for His service not that we may hold on to our salvation, but as a response of gratitude for all of His great mercies that He has poured out upon us.

Now look at 1 John 3:1-3. John writes in verse 2 that when Jesus comes again that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And in verse 3 he says that everyone that has this hope purifies himself. Now, the word hope does not mean a fearful, doubtful hope. The Greek word means "a joyful, confident expectation of eternal salvation". It is a certain hope birthed from eternal security! And look what that hope does in verse 3. It motivates the one hoping to purity. "I'm going to see Jesus one day, and I do not want to be ashamed by not being ready. I must look my best!"

Look at one more passage quickly, Hebrews 9:13-14. The writer states that if in the Old Testament the blood of bulls and goats sanctified the worshippers, how much more would the blood of Christ cleanse their consciences from dead works to serve the living God. Notice that the blood of Jesus cleanses from "dead works", works that are of no avail. But what is the result of a cleansed conscience? Service to the living God! Salvation motivates service! Someone wrote a poem years ago that expresses this truth: "I cannot work my soul to save, for that my Lord has done. But I will work like any slave for love of God's dear Son".

Quickly now, another objection to eternal security is, **what about people who live in perpetual sin after they are saved?** That's a good question. 1 John 2:4 says, "He who says, 'I know Him', and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him". And that is just one verse of many saying that if you don't live a holy life you are not saved. But listen carefully to another verse in 1 John. 1 John 3:9 says, "Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God". Now, we must understand that this verse is not talking

about sinless perfection. The meaning in Greek is that whoever is born of God does not habitually commit sin. No one is perfect; 1 John 1:8 and 10 tells us that. But do you see what John is saying here? When someone is born of God, when He is saved, God's seed is planted within him. That is the life of God, the Holy Spirit. And that seed remains in him, it does not leave him. And that seed of God prohibits him from perpetual sin. So friend, if you take an honest look at your life after you walked the aisle and professed Jesus as your Savior and Lord and you see no difference, you see no change, you see no growth in Christ likeness, then don't fool yourself all the way into hell! You are not truly saved. The truly saved don't continue in sin. They may backslide from time to time, but God will always bring them back.

There is one more objection to eternal security that many raise. **“The Bible says we must believe in Jesus to be saved. But what if someone who has believed in Jesus stops believing?”** Another good question. Turn to Jeremiah 32:38-40. This passage is part of the New Covenant that God made with Israel, predicting that one day in the future God would return them to their land and put His fear in their hearts. And though it is made to Israel, it is a pattern for how God deals with all of His children when it comes to personal salvation. And verse 40 says, “ will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me”. Beloved, God's true children don't stop believing in Him. There have been plenty of people like the disciples in John 6, who after hearing a hard teaching by Jesus, turned away and walked with Him no more. But beloved, they had never truly believed. How can we say this? John writes in 1 John 2:19, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us”. John says that those disciples deserted the church; they fell away from their faith, because they had no faith to start with. Beloved, when you've become a new creature in Christ Jesus, when old things have passed away and all things have become new, when the God of glory takes up residence in your soul and fills you with His glory, you don't walk away from Him. Real faith lasts!!

We have said so much today. I do pray that if you know without a shadow of a doubt that there has been a time in your life when Jesus washed your sins away, you now know that you can never lose your precious treasure of salvation. But could you be here today and uncertain of your eternal destiny? If so, you can settle the question today!