

82. Grow in Assurance of Your Salvation

"Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:10-11)

"Once saved, always saved" is a biblical doctrine. Yet the confidence it engenders is not without qualification. What do I mean? Repeatedly over the course of this book, (Remade by Paul Tautges) we've seen from Scripture that the rescue of sinners such as ourselves should be credited completely to the triune God and not to ourselves. The Father planned it. The Son paid the required price. And the Spirit applied the life-giving gospel to our blinded eyes, deafened ears, and dulled wills. The triune God "brought us forth by the word of truth" (James 1:18). This implanted gospel seed produces life that continues to grow and bear fruit for him. However, we are not passive in this development. In the couple of verses before today's passage, Peter explains two blessings of growth.

Assurance of salvation. Certainty that you have been saved does not come from being able to remember when you made a decision, prayed a prayer, or walked an aisle. You "confirm your calling and election" by being diligent to see to it that godly virtues "are yours and are increasing" in your current walk (2 Peter 1:8). This progress keeps "you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 8).

The flipside is equally true: "Whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins" (2 Peter 1:9). The easiest way to short-circuit your assurance of salvation is to remain in your sin. Jesus says, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36). Now walk in your freedom.

A triumphant future. The entrance of the fruitful believer into the eternal kingdom will be "richly provided." They will receive a "Well done, good servant!" (Luke 19:17) welcome rather than the loss of reward experienced by an unfruitful believer: "He himself will be saved, but only as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:15).

Don't misunderstand. In both cases, believers enter eternal life by grace alone, but the triumphant entry of the fruitful believer brings greater glory to God as the one who saves by grace, sanctifies by grace, and finally welcomes us home with a deluge of grace. This is the kind of welcome Paul must have anticipated: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

Assurance of salvation grows in our hearts as we rest in the saving work of Jesus in our place, but it also grows in proportion to our progress with the Spirit who "bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16). For this reason, it's good for us to evaluate the fruit of our faith, as Paul exhorts us: *Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves" (2 Cor. 13:5).

Nevertheless, self-evaluation becomes unhealthy when it turns into morbid introspection. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones warns of this in his classic book Spiritual Depression: "We cross the line from self-examination to introspection when, in a sense, we do nothing but examine ourselves, and when such self-examination becomes the main and chief end in our life.... If we are always doing it, always, as it were, putting our soul on a plate and dissecting it, that is introspection." If we look inward too much, we will get stuck.

Ultimately, we look to Christ. In doing so, however, we look not only to his work on the cross in the past but also to heaven's throne room where our ascended High Priest now intercedes for us. We must look to the One "who is able to keep [us] from stumbling and to present [us] blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen" (Jude 24-25).

TALK TO YOURSELF. Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. Notice that one of the purposes of the Lord's Supper is to nudge us to examine ourselves. Do you do this regularly— perhaps the evening before you partake?

2. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1965), 17.

Remade, *Embracing Your Complete Identity in Christ* by Paul Tautges, #82, pg 231-234