

**Life in a Whole New Light**  
***Can I Be Sure? – Assurance***

This morning we begin a new message series that will run through mid-February. The title of the series is *Life in a Whole New Light*. Each week the focus is on a question that deals with a subject critical to living the Christian life. That is, if I am to be a growing, maturing Christian, what are some of the essential ingredients that must be in place?

Here are the questions we are going to explore over the next six weeks:

- 1) Can I Be Sure?
- 2) How Does Forgiveness Work?
- 3) Where's the Power?
- 4) Can I Change?
- 5) Why Are We talking About This?
- 6) Congratulations, You're Gifted!

This morning we are going to deal with the question: Can I Be Sure? It is a question that lies at the foundation of our Christian experience. It addresses the issues of eternal security and assurance. I suspect there are some of you here today who struggle with these concepts in your faith walk. While this will be a review for many of you, it's an important component to a healthy Christian life.

There are two questions to deal with:

- 1) **Is it possible to lose your salvation?** That is, having trusted in Jesus Christ, is it possible that somehow, some way, somewhere, you might be spiritually and eternally lost?
- 2) **Can you really be assured of your salvation?** Or another way of putting it: is it really possible to know with certainty where you will spend eternity?

Many Christians would say “yes” to the first question, and “no” to the second. My intent this morning is to show you what the Scriptures say, to

encourage you to understand how God answers these questions, and then to challenge you to accept what God has to say.

So let's consider the first question: **Is it possible to lose your salvation?**

I believe the emphatic response from Scripture to this question is **NO!** For the person who has trusted in Christ, their salvation is guaranteed. This is the doctrine of eternal security.

Let's consider the basis upon which we are secured:

### **1) God's sovereign purpose.**

The first reason why you can't lose your salvation is because believers are saved according to God's sovereign purpose.

For God to be sovereign: It means that everything, which God sets out to do in his sovereign purpose, he is able to fully accomplish. If not, he is not sovereign; he is not God.

Turn in your Bible to the New Testament book of Romans, chapter eight. **Romans 8:28-30**

Called according to his purpose

Past – Called

Present – Justified/Conformed

Future – Glorified

God's sovereign purpose behind his saving us involves our future glory with Christ, so if you can lose your salvation then God's purpose would be thwarted, and that's impossible because God is sovereign.

### **2) God's infinite power.** Turn to the Gospel of John, chapter ten.

**John 10:27-30**

Illustration with ring – in Jesus' hand / in the Father's hand

God's sovereign purpose, God's infinite power; now another basis of our security in Christ:

### **3) God's unfathomable love.**

Go back to Romans again:

#### **Romans 8:31-39**

There are four critical questions posed:

- Who will oppose us?
- Who will charge us?
- Who will condemn us?
- Who will separate us?

The answer: NO ONE! Notice why:

- |                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Who will oppose us?   | God is for us!        |
| • Who will charge us?   | God has justified us! |
| • Who will condemn us?  | Jesus died for us!    |
| • Who will separate us? | God loves us!         |

Here is a fourth basis for our security:

### **4) God's solemn promise.**

The fourth reason you can't lose your salvation is because of God's solemn promise. There are those who wrestle with the idea of eternal security because of sin, it's the thought that even though I've been saved, if I sin too frequently or severely enough God will revoke my salvation. Even though all sin is serious, God does NOT take away a persons salvation because of it.

## Still in Romans chapter eight: **Romans 8:1**

There is a crucial phrase in that verse – “in Christ.” What does it mean to be “in Christ?” There are two ways of considering the concept of “in.”

First, “in” as the water in this glass. I can pour it in, and I can pour it out.

The second, “in” as a seed in an orange – sealed inside.

How does a person become sealed in Christ?

Listen to Paul, writing to the believers in Ephesus: *In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. – Ephesians 1:13-14*

It is a work of the Holy Spirit. When you put your trust in Christ and believe on him, he comes – in the person of the Holy Spirit – and takes up his residence within you. Eternal life is a present possession for every believer! You have it right now, and the presence of the Holy Spirit is your guarantee that God will keep his promise.

So for those who have believed **in Christ** the Holy Spirit has come and taken up residence within them and sealed them **in Christ** and for those **in Christ** there is no condemnation.

I can't leave a discussion about God's solemn promise without reading **I John 5:9-13**

Our salvation is secured by God's sovereign purpose, his infinite power, his unfathomable love, and by his solemn promise.

## Can you really be assured of your salvation?

The doctrine of eternal security is objective. It is based upon the reliability and trustworthiness of God and His Word. The doctrine of assurance, however, is subjective. It is the settled assurance in our mind and heart that we are, without a doubt, saved and possessing of eternal life.

Let me ask you a question: Do you have that certainty? Can anyone be sure? This is the second question that we must consider: “Can you be sure?”

Two important aspects here of the means of having assurance of one’s salvation.

1) The witness of the Holy Spirit. Paul writes in Romans 8:16 –

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. – *Romans 8:16*

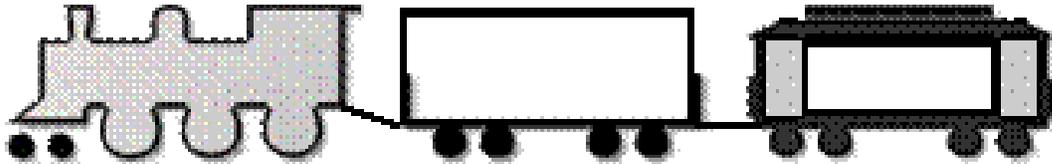
We saw earlier that when one is saved, God sends his Holy Spirit to indwell the new believer. It is God’s guarantee that he will guard you, keep you, secure you for eternity.

One ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is to witness to our spirit that we truly do belong to him. That doesn’t mean you never doubt or question that relationship. Rare is the person who never experiences any doubt. It is part of our humanness and our fallen nature.

But against those times of doubt, there is a settled conviction that you are God’s child. This is the assurance only God the Holy Spirit brings to our hearts as we grow in our understanding of and relationship with him.

2) The second aspect of assurance, deals with the question: “What do I do when I don’t *feel* saved?”

When I was in high school, I was introduced to a diagram by Bill Bright that blew my mind! In the diagram the engine represents the fact of God's word, the second car represents our faith, and the caboose represents our feelings.



The train will run with or without the caboose. It would be futile to attempt to pull the train with the caboose. How far do you get if the train is pulled by the caboose? I was putting my faith (in particular as far as assurance went) in my feelings. If I “felt” that I was loved, forgiven and saved, then I had “assurance.” If I didn’t, I doubted whether I was a Christian or not.

It means a choice. Am I going to believe what God has said, or am I going to believe what I feel?

### **Is Eternal Security a license to sin?**

Now, we have another important question to consider that bears on the doctrines of eternal security and assurance. “Does this mean ‘open season’ on sin? That I can live any way I wish?” Some have this question because they know people, who at one point believed but then for whatever reason punted the faith and are living in opposition to God and His Word.

First, let me remind you of a very important truth. We must always – judge and interpret our experience in light of Scripture, not the other way around. If we hold to the view of Scripture that it is God’s inspired Word, then if experience does not square with Scripture, it is experience that must be examined in light of and understood by means of the Word.

Eternal security is not a license to sin. The truly converted will not just be a professing Christian. There will be evidence of new life within

them. Do we continue to sin? Of course, because we are all still in the process of becoming like Christ, something that will be completed when we see Jesus face to face.

If you are truly a converted person and turn willfully away from God, he will pursue you and discipline you because you are his child whom he dearly loves. While your fellowship with him is broken, the relationship remains in tact. Paul wrote: *“If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.”*

To sum it all up this morning: If you have trusted in Christ, and Christ alone, for your salvation, God has saved you for eternity. He is the One responsible for bringing you into a relationship with himself and he is the One who guarantees it forever. Our response is one of faith – receiving. In response to his gracious work, the Holy Spirit works within us, helping us align our will to God’s, resulting in a life of obedience to him.

## **PRAYER**