

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Salvation Is Irrevocable, Part 2

Scripture: Romans 8:33-34

Code: 90-183

Well, we have the opportunity tonight to turn to the Word of God in Romans chapter 8 and we're coming to the end of this wonderful chapter, what a glorious time it's been in studying life in the Spirit, security in the Spirit, all the great truths of this monumental section of Scripture. We find ourselves in the closing part of the chapter, verses 31 to the end, which is sort of a doxology that ends the chapter. But at the same time, also it's a fitting summation of Paul's argument for the security of the believer. He started out in chapter 8 verse 1, "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ." In other words, those who are in Christ who are believers will never be condemned, they'll never lose their salvation, they'll never be sent to eternal punishment, there will be no condemnation to those who are in Christ. That is the fact that he states in chapter 8 verse 1, spending the rest of the chapter showing why that, in fact, is true.

In Jeremiah 31:3 God said this to His people, "I have loved you with an everlasting love." And that is still how God loves His people. He loves His redeemed people with an everlasting love.

One hymn writer had it right. This is what he wrote, and you're familiar, I'm sure, with this hymn, many of you are. "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord; is laid for your faith in His excellent Word. What more can He say than to you He has said, you who to Jesus for refuge have fled. Fear not, I am with you, O be not dismayed for I am thy God and will still give thee aid; I'll strengthen thee, help thee and cause thee to stand upheld by My righteous omnipotent hand. When through the deep waters I call thee to go, the rivers of grief shall not thee overflow; for I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress. When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, My grace all sufficient shall be thy supply. The flame shall not hurt thee, I only design thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine. The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose, I will not, I cannot desert to its foes. That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no never, no never forsake." And that, of course, is a hymn based upon the very truth of Romans 8...no, never forsake. That is the promise of God to those who are in Christ, there will never be any condemnation.

You remember Paul summed up the believer's confidence in 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 12, "I know whom I have believed," he says, "and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day." And that is to the day when the Lord Jesus comes. Philippians 1:6, "He who began a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." He is able to keep us. Jude says He is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before His own glory. And that is the theme of this entire chapter, it is the security of the believer. The marvelous summation of how God works this security is in verses 28 to 30. "God causes all things to work together for good," remember...good being our eternal good. All things that happen in our lives

whether good things or bad things or righteous things or sinful things, God causes them all to work together for our eternal good because we love God and are called according to His purpose. Why? "For whom He foreknew He predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son." When He predestined us it was to the end of our salvation, not the beginning of it. We were predestined to the ultimate conformity to the image of His Son which occurs in eternal glory when we're made like Christ. "Whom He predestined," verse 30, "He called, whom He called He justified, whom He justified He glorified," and nobody gets lost along the way.

All the predestined will be called. All the called will be justified. All the justified will be glorified. So he has summed up this great, great truth that there is no condemnation. Everything in the life of those who belong to Christ works together for their eternal glory.

Now having done all of that, we come to verse 31. And while verse 31 to verse 39 is doxological, in a sense, it is also a very important part of Paul's argument. It is not just doxology, but it is also a very important part of his argument because he anticipates at this point that somebody is going to throw up some objections. Remember, we talked about this. Somebody is going to say, "Well, that's all fine, but what about this possibility and what about that possibility?"

The first possibility, there are some persons who can take away our salvation. Second possibility, there are some circumstances which can take away our salvation. Those are hypothetical and Paul knows that they might be raised by someone so he wants to eliminate them all together. So in verses 31 to 34 he deals with whether or not any person can take away our salvation. And in verses 35 to 39 he deals with whether any circumstance can take away our eternal salvation. He does anticipate and well so, but there will come people who in spite of this massive argument from verses 1 to 30 will conclude you can lose your salvation, somebody can take it away, or some circumstance can take it away...and rightly did he judge that because even today in the church of Jesus Christ there are many who teach that you can lose your salvation through the influence of some person or some circumstance, some event. So Paul is arguing wisely against the possible arguments against eternal security. He assumes the objections and well he might because indeed they have come.

Now that takes us to verse 31. "What then shall we say to these things?" What's going to be our response to this? What is the appropriate response? How do we react to this?

Well, some people react by saying, "Well, that's true, we believe all of that, provided some person doesn't come in and remove your salvation or some circumstance take it away." So Paul then moves to discuss, first of all, the hypothetical possibility of persons who could take away our salvation. Now we've already gone through this, let me just review it.

First of all, could some human being take away our salvation? Some unsaved family member putting great pressure on us, or a whole family of people putting great pressure on us, secular friends, unconverted friends and acquaintances leading us astray, moving us away from the things of Christ, are they potent enough to take away our salvation? What about secular educators? Could they take a young person raised in a Christian family all the way through his early schooling, sent him away to a university somewhere and have his mind polluted with lies that captivate him and lead him away from Christ? What about immoral influences? What about the wretchedness of the culture and the

mediums and the culture by which it sells its immorality, do they have the power in the culture to lead people away from Christ? What about legalists? Can Judaizers like in the case of Paul come into a church where the gospel is preached and people belong to Christ and dump on them circumcision and all kinds of ceremonial legalism that consequently lead them away from grace and away from salvation?

What about cultists? What about...what about the Gnostics of the New Testament age who are trying to lead people away, the neo-Gnostics of today trying to do the same thing, those people who talk about having a higher knowledge, the secret knowledge? What about the cultists, those who come in and tell us that the real truth is in the writings of Mary Baker Eddy or Madame Blavatsky or Annie Besant or Judge Rutherford or anybody else? And maybe it was all dumped down on Joseph Smith and it's in the Book of Mormon or The Doctrines and Covenants or somebody else's writings, can they lead someone out of salvation into damning lies?

What about just false teachers in general who equivocate on the true gospel and confuse people with their false methods of salvation by works? What about persecutors? Can persecutors lay such a heavy burden of fear on the hearts of true believers that they would recant their faith and abandon Christ for the salvaging of their own lives? I mean, there's all kinds of possibilities, the kind of people who might steal our salvation.

Paul's answer is this, verse 31, "If God is for us, who is against us?" Bottom line, if God is for us who can successfully defeat Him. If He is for us and He is making everything in our lives work together for good and He is taking us from being foreknown and predestined to be glorified, if that's His plan and He's God, who possibly could overturn that plan? Answer: no one, no one. If God is for us, and by the way, Romans 3:21 to Romans 8:30 indicates God is for us...chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 are all about God being for us...if God is for us, who could be against us? Actually the Greek says, "Since God is for us, who can successfully be against us?" Because of 1 John 4:4, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." God is greater than all.

The second hypothetical possibility is...Well, okay, no created person could lead us away from our salvation, what about God Himself? Could God Himself, He's a person, could God Himself become so disgusted with us, could we reach such a point of disobedience and protracted and prolonged or repeated sin that God Himself takes away our salvation? Verse 32 answers that, remember this? "He who...and this is one of those typical Jewish arguments from the greater to the lesser...He who did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all," that's talking about God giving Christ to die on the cross to purchase our salvation, "How will He not also with Him," that is with Christ, "freely give us all things?"

The argument is simply this, very simple argument. God delivered up His own Son, Jesus, to die on the cross to provide our salvation, that was the greatest gift, the greatest sacrifice, the greatest act and God will do all the lesser acts necessary to keep us saved. That's the argument. If He gave the greatest gift to save us, He'll do less to keep us. The greatest act was God giving Christ, and He will do whatever else is necessary to sustain us in Christ. Whatever would be done by God to hold on to us would be something less than the greatest act, which was the giving of His own Son to die on our

behalf. And if He would do that to save us when we were enemies, what will He do to keep us while we're His children and His friends?

Well, somebody says, "Okay, God isn't going to do it and people aren't going to do it but that brings us to where we left off two weeks ago tonight, what about one other personality? What about Satan? Satan is a person, Satan is a created personality, created by God. When God created all the angels who later fell and with him a third of the angels and became known as demons, what about Satan? He's a very powerful being, obviously, he was a supreme angel in the hierarchy of the angelic hosts, a very powerful and influential angel, is it not possible that Satan can wrest us, as it were, out of the arms of Christ if we fall into patterns of sin and are guilty, isn't it possible that Satan can work to effect the loss of our salvation?

You say, "Well, how would it work?" Well, we sin, we sin, we sin and Satan keeps the record of our sin and as he likes to do, he goes before the throne of God and accuses us. Isn't that what he does? He's known as the accuser of the brethren, isn't he?, who night and day is before the throne of God accusing believers. He is relentless, folks. He is absolutely relentless. He is before the throne of God, Revelation 12:10, accusing believers before God day and night, all the time, all the time.

Now remember this, Satan is not omnipresent. Those people who think Satan is everywhere in the world at the same time are wrong. He's in heaven day and night accusing the brethren. It's much more important to him, listen, it's much more important to Satan to get God to release His grip on us, that's the only hope he has to get us back, than it is for him to work on us. The idea that Satan is running around working on you personally, it may be that there are times when Satan deals with a specific human being, I wouldn't say that's not the case because we know in the case of Peter, Jesus said to him, "Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit," right? So for his own purposes there may be times when Satan is engaged and actually involved in the life of an individual. But for the most part he has minions concocting lies to confuse people and damn their souls and keep them from coming to the truth of the gospel. And he works on believers simply by concocting a wicked world system that becomes tempting to them through the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. But one of his major enterprises relentlessly is to go before the throne of God with a litany of our iniquities and tell God to let us go because we're not worthy to be held by Him.

He probably uses some of the things he did with Job, telling God the only reason Job is faithful to you is because you bless him. They're not worthy of You, he's not worthy of You, none of Your people are worthy of You. Look at them, they sin, they only are true to You because of all the blessings You've given them. He goes to heaven to lay all of his accusations against us.

Verse 33 answers that. "Who will bring a charge against God's elect?" Well, I just told you who tries, who is it? Satan. Is he going to be successful at it? Verse 34, "Who is the one who condemns?" Well, it could be Satan. He lays a charge, enkaleo, literally to bring a legal charge against somebody. It's a law term. It's a courtroom term. It's a legal term. Satan literally goes before God with a list of accusations to ask God to condemn us. The personality primarily in view here is Satan.

If God won't cause us to be lost and other people can't cause us to be lost, can Satan cause us to be lost? Could he go successfully before God and get God to turn His back on us? Listen to Zachariah

the great prophet Zachariah chapter 3 verses 1 to 3, "He showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, here is Joshua, the high priest in his vision, he's standing before the angel of the Lord and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him." Here is this faithful high priest in this vision standing before the angel of the Lord. And, of course, the angel of the Lord is the defender of Israel and the defender of the priests of Israel and this is one of the priests, not to be confused with Joshua who led the children of Israel, but this is Joshua the high priest. And there is Satan right there, right in the presence of the angel of the Lord, and he is accusing Joshua. "And the Lord said to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke you, Satan, the Lord rebuke you, Satan.'"

Can we be legitimately accused and condemned? Can we be damned? Will God hear such accusations? Back to verse 33, here's the answer. "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the One who justifies." Literally...shall God, the justifying One, is God going to listen to such an accusation who has justified us? Can God...listen carefully...can God at the same time condemn us and justify us? If He has declared us righteous, can He at the same time condemn us? If He has made us righteous in Christ, if He has granted us the righteousness of Christ, can He at the same time hold us guilty? Answer...No. If He did it would be to negate the work of Christ, wouldn't it? It would be to depreciate the work of Christ.

You see, the reason we can stand before God is not because we're righteous. Accusing us of sin is not going to get it done. Satan may try to do that, he does try to do that. It's not going to get it done because our salvation is not predicated on our righteousness, is it? It is predicated on the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. On the cross Jesus bore all of our sins, took the full wrath of God, He bore our sins in His own body on the cross, Peter says. He was made sin for us, Paul says. God poured out all the fury of His wrath against Jesus Christ as our substitute, put all our sins on Christ and then took the righteous life of Christ and covered us with it, imputed it to us. What we've said before...God treated Jesus as if He had committed all our sins, so He can treat us as if we only lived Jesus perfect life. It doesn't do any good for Satan to go before God because...and accuse us of sin because all that sin has been paid for and we're not justified, we're not righteous, we're not holy before God because of our own righteousness, but because of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. So if God were to take away that righteousness, then He would be demeaning the work of Christ...which is imputed to us.

You don't have to hang on to your own salvation by your own righteousness. And that's the fallacy of the kind of theology that says you can lose your salvation. It's predicated on the idea that something you do creates salvation, and nothing you do can save you and nothing you do or don't do can keep you saved, it is purely the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

And look at it again, verse 33, "Who will bring a charge against God's elect?" There it is again. "Whom He foreknew He predestined, whom He predestined He called, whom He called He justified, whom He justified He glorified." There's that theme of election again. We were chosen before the foundation of the world to be granted the righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is imputed to us at the point of faith. Those then who stand at the bar of God are not outlaws, they're God's elect. O what great safety there is in election. John 10:28, "We're hid with Christ in God. We're placed in the Father's

hand and who is going to take us out of the Father's hand?" God will never condemn us, we're His elect. He will never condemn us, He has imputed to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And if He were ever to turn against us and take away our salvation under the accusation of Satan, it would mean that Jesus Christ's righteousness was inadequate. That's impossible because He was holy, harmless and undefiled, separate from sinners and it was His perfect righteousness imputed to us. And we'll take that even further. There's only perhaps one other possibility, if no human being can remove us from our salvation, if God can't remove us from our salvation, if Satan can't remove us from our salvation, what about Christ? After all, if He's the lawyer for our defense, if He's our Advocate, what if He turns against us? It was Christ who brought us in, can it be Christ who sends us back out?

God can't justify us and condemn us at the same time and neither can Christ...listen...neither can Christ intercede for us and condemn us at the same time. Verse 34, "Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God who also intercedes for us?" You think the One who died and rose and was exalted and is interceding for us is going to all of a sudden negate all of that, reverse the whole thing and condemn us? The thought is ludicrous. He who is our Savior, who is our resurrection life, who is our exalted King and who is our mediating High Priest cannot be our condemner. Paul demonstrates that Christ provides a four-fold protection. This is a great, great verse, verse 34, it is a summation of the work of Christ.

Let's take those four-fold protections. "Christ Jesus is He who died." Do you think Christ who died for you would condemn you? The point is when Christ died He paid the penalty for your sin. He received your condemnation, certainly not His own because He was without sin. He died on the cross, He was being punished for your sin and my sin. He did all that was necessary to satisfy the justice of God, He took the full force of judgment. He died on the cross for you and for me. His death, listen, is the only condemnation we will ever know and it's something we only know, praise God, and don't experience, isn't it? Do you think He would undo His cross? Do you think when He went into the garden and said, "Father, if there's any way possible that this cup pass from Me, nevertheless Thy will be done," and with that resolution went directly to the cross to bear our sins, do you think He would reverse that whole horrible sin-bearing, that entirely undeserved crushing judgment of God that made Him cry out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Do you think He would do all of that for sinners and then undo that? On the basis of what?

Not only did He die for us, secondly, verse 34 says, "Yes, rather who was raised," or literally what is more, "He was raised again." Christ's death blotted out our sins and this was affirmed by His resurrection. The fact that God raised Him from the dead was indicating that God was satisfied with His sacrifice. God was saying, "That's enough, the sacrifice is paid," and He took Him right out of the grave because He had paid sufficiently the penalty for our sins. And God therefore raised Him from the dead as affirmation that the penalty had been paid.

Romans 4:25, "He was delivered up to the cross because of our transgressions and was raised because He had accomplished our justification." By the way, there are a myriad of Scriptures, in the book of Romans, in Ephesians, Colossians and Hebrews, that point to the importance of His

resurrection. The resurrection proves that He had accomplished sin bearing. When God raised Jesus from the dead He showed that He was satisfied with His sacrifice. Every demand of His holy law was met and we were justified. His resurrection guarantees that we will be raised to eternal glory. Would Jesus undo His death? Would Jesus undo His resurrection?

Thirdly, in verse 34, Paul tells us He is at the right hand of God. He is at the right hand of God. That's referring to His coronation, to His ascension, to His exaltation. It wasn't that God was mildly satisfied when He raised Him from the dead, it was that God was completely satisfied. So much was He satisfied that He lifted up Jesus Christ and sat Him on His own throne at His right hand. It's an echo...this is an echo of the ancient text of Psalm 110:1, "The Lord said to My Lord, 'Sit Thou at My right hand.'" Hebrews depicts Jesus Christ the exalted High Priest sitting at the right hand of the throne of God and there is the place of exaltation. Hebrews 1:3, "After He had made purification of sins on the cross, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high and He had inherited a more excellent name than angels." You know what the excellent name is? Lord, sovereign. Hebrews emphasizes this not only in chapter 1 verse 3 but throughout the book of Hebrews...chapter 2 verse 9, He was a little while made lower than the angels, but then after that He was exalted. Just temporarily was He made lower than the angels. Then because of the suffering of death, He was lifted up and crowned with glory and honor because by the grace of God He had tasted death for everyone. Hebrews 7 says it, Hebrews 8, Hebrews 10, Hebrews 12, even once in chapter 4 and verse 14.

Would the Father undo that honor? Would the Son undo that place of majesty? It's absolutely unthinkable...absolutely inconceivable that the Lord Jesus Christ who had accomplished all of that would undo it, that His death would become meaningless, His resurrection meaningless, His exaltation meaningless. You see, folks, your salvation and my salvation is so intrinsically and intimately tied to the work of Jesus Christ as to be inseparable. He died you death, He rose that you might walk in newness of life and He was exalted into the glory of heaven where He will be the firstborn among many brethren who will be made like unto Him in eternal glory. We are crucified with Christ, we are risen with Christ and we are exalted with Christ. We have died with Him, we have risen with Him, and we will be lifted to sit on His throne with Him. He finished His work and some day we will be exalted and be made like Him in glory. The new sanctuary for us is heaven and we're headed there for eternal glory.

And then the fourth component, and really where his argument is going here, "Who also intercedes for us." Christ died, He rose, He ascended and He intercedes...there is the summation of Christ's great work. This is the high point. He keeps on making intercession for us. This is just a marvelous, marvelous reality. Satan is there night and day accusing the brethren but we have an indefatigable and indefeatable lawyer for our defense, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I love Isaiah 53, one of the great chapters of the Old Testament. Unfortunately the unconverted Jews who reject Jesus Christ don't understand it, but to those who do understand it, it is so rich. Isaiah 53 which talks about how He carried our griefs and our sorrows and all of that, He was led as a sheep to slaughter and so forth. But at the very end of Isaiah 53, down in verse 12, it says, "He poured out

Himself to death, He was numbered with the transgressors, yet He Himself bore the sin of many," that's talking about Christ in His sacrificial death, but Isaiah 53 ends with this line, "And interceded for the transgressors."

Every time an accusation might come before God, you have a lawyer for your defense, the High Priest Jesus Christ interceding on your behalf. And when Satan comes with a list of iniquities, Christ is there to say, "I paid for that one...I paid for that one...I died for that one...I suffered for that one...I was separated from God for that one...That one's covered...They're all covered...The price has been paid...It's all done...It's all accomplished." No accusation can stand because the lawyer for the defense was Himself the sufficient sacrifice. What a tremendous truth that is.

Go back to verse 27 in this chapter just for a moment. So many things, so many Scriptures flooding my mind I've got to do a little editing here so I don't get carried away here. But in Romans 8 I want you to go back to verse 27 for a minute. "He who searches the heart," that's God. You remember when we studied that, "He who searches the heart," the One who knows the hearts of men, it's God..."He who searches the heart knows what the mind of the Spirit is." All right, God knows the mind of the Holy Spirit. Why? Because they're one, that's the trinity. "Because He...the Holy Spirit...intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." Remember what we said about that? As a believer you possess the Holy Spirit, right? Back in chapter 8 verse 9, "If you don't have the Spirit of Christ you don't belong to Him, if you do belong to Him you have the Holy Spirit, the Spirit lives in you." And the Spirit does many things. "You are the temple of the Holy Spirit."

One of the things the Holy Spirit does is right here, the Holy Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. He always prays according to God's will and God knows the mind of the Spirit. And what is the Spirit praying for? Praying for your security, praying to bring you to glory, interceding for you. The Spirit is your intercessor, your personal indwelling intercessor interceding according to the will of God. The Father will always hear and always answer the intercessory prayer of the Spirit because the Spirit always prays according to God's will and God always does His will and God's will is all who were predestined be glorified. And the Spirit prays to that end. It doesn't happen just because God had said it happened, it happened because God makes it happen and the Spirit prays that it happen and Christ intercedes so it happens. The trinity is very involved in that. The Spirit is praying that we get to glory, that is God's will, God hears that prayer and answers it according to His will.

Now carry that same idea down into verse 34. Here is the Son at the right hand of God also interceding for us in perfect harmony with the will of God and that gives us the confidence that Christ doesn't have to argue God into anything. Christ is praying consistently with the will of God which is to bring us to glory. John 11:42 Jesus said, "I know...talking to the Father...I know that You always hear Me." God always heard the prayer of Jesus because Jesus always prayed for God's will to be done. So, you have the Holy Spirit praying for the continuity of your faith, you have the Holy Spirit praying for your protection that you might never have to face something more than you can bear. The Holy Spirit praying, as it were, from within you before the throne of God always according to the will of God and then in heaven at the right hand of God you have Jesus Christ interceding for you also in perfect

harmony with the will of God. And as a result of all of that intercession going on, we are kept secure. Turn to Hebrews for just a moment. The book of Hebrews chapter 4 verse 14, "Since then we have a great High Priest...speaking of Christ...who is passed through the heavens in His ascension, Jesus the Son of God, let's hold fast our confession for we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Listen, He's not a high priest who will only intercede for us if we're innocent. He's not a lawyer who only takes the case of those who are innocent. He is a high priest who intercedes for us knowing you're guilty and knowing that we need grace and we need mercy. We can't possibly get what we deserve and survive. So here we can go to this high priest with confidence, verse 16 says, that He will provide the necessary grace, that is the necessary favor in spite of our iniquities that we need, the necessary mercy, the withholding of judgment and we will find from Him mercy and grace. This is just a tremendous, tremendous promise.

There are people, you know, who think...Well, you can lose your salvation if you sin too much. There is no limit to grace. When you go before the Lord no matter what you've done as a Christian and you seek grace and mercy, it's there, isn't it? Where sin abounded...what?...grace did much more abound. Look at Hebrews 7 for a moment, Hebrews chapter 7 verse 24. Just in case somebody might think that Christ might turn over His priestly work to somebody else, "He abides forever and holds His priesthood permanently." I'm glad for that, aren't you? There won't be any change, folks. He will always be there. He will always be interceding for us. Hence verse 25, "He is able...listen to this...to save for a while," is that what it says? I don't think so. "He is able to save...what?...forever." How can He do that? "Because He always keeps on living to make intercession for them." He is that high priest, verse 26, holy, innocent, undefiled, separate from sinners and exalted above the heavens and He doesn't have to daily like other high priests offer up sacrifices first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people because this He did "once for all" when He offered up Himself. Isn't that a great verse? It's all done. It's all finished. And now we have a high priest who is perfect and He's paid the penalty and He's done the work and He's made the sacrifice and now He just keeps on interceding for us. You see, everything is settled in heaven...everything is settled in heaven. I can't resist this. Go back to chapter 6. Once I get into Hebrews I can really get lost. Go back to chapter 6 of Hebrews. Look at verse 17, "In the same way...talking about oaths and swearing to confirm things in the human level in verse 16, and in verse 17...in the same way, God...listen to this...desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise...look at this...the unchangeableness of His purpose." If God purposed before the world began to save you, is it going to change? It's not going to change. It's unchangeable. "And in order to demonstrate to the heirs of promise the unchangeableness of His purpose He interposed with an oath.." People who want you...you know, this is a typical pattern in the Old Testament, Abraham and so forth, you make a promise, you make an oath, you make a covenant, you make a contract. So God using a human sort of means wanting us to understand how...how absolutely perfect and unalterable and unchangeable His saving promise

is made an oath.

Verse 18, "He did it in order that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to...what?...to lie." So if God made a promise, that's the way it will be. "We may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge and laying hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have is an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek." God made pledges. God made promises. And then God sent Christ into heaven as the anchor that holds those promises and those promises are based on two things...the fact that God can't lie and the fact that Christ is in heaven interceding for us.

Now when you go through this in Romans chapter 8 you really begin to wonder how people can believe someone can lose their salvation, right? Now, there are people who come into the church and confess and profess Christ and go away and maybe even deny the Lord. How are we to understand them? Look at 1 John 2, 1 John 2, and this is a very important passage because otherwise it leaves a question in people's minds because they say..."Well, you know, there's a member of my family and they came to church and I thought they knew Christ, you know, they seemed to respond to Christ and so forth and so on...and then all of a sudden they turned their back and went away and they're living in sin, how are we to understand that?" First John 2:19, here it comes, "They went out from us...okay...but they were not really...what?...of us." Boy that's so important. "If they had been of us they would have...what?...remained with us."

Let me tell you something. One of the evidences of genuine salvation is continuity of faith. When God grants saving faith, it's not temporary. It's not that God gives you the faith to believe and then after you've believed you're on your own faith, no. It's not that God by His Holy Spirit empowers you to believe at the moment of salvation and then abandons you to your own faith to hang on to that salvation, impossible. When He gives you the faith to believe, He gives you the faith that sustains that belief right on to glory. True believers persevere in faith. "They went out from us, they were not really of us. If they had been of us they would have remained with us but they went out in order that it might be shown that they're not all of us. But you...verse 20...have an anointing from the Holy One, you true believers have an anointing from the Holy One," who's that?, the Holy Spirit; implication: they didn't have the Holy Spirit.

The first act of Christ's priesthood was sacrifice. The second act of His priesthood is intercession. He was the sacrifice and now He is the intercessory priest and He will bring us to glory. And anybody who comes and goes, goes because they really weren't of us.

I want to show you one other passage and then I'm actually going to save the rest for next time...the part about circumstances I want to save for next time. But I want you to look at Ephesians 5, and I promise, this will be the last one. In Ephesians 5 this you might overlook in the context of eternal security, but you shouldn't. "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church who gave Himself up for her."

Now, we just went through Valentine's Day and a whole lot of stuff about hearts and flowers and going out to dinner and romance and all of that's good, but that's not the nature of the love he's

talking about here. Loving your wife as Christ loved the church means giving yourself up for her. It doesn't mean buying her something, it means self-sacrifice for her. Just like Christ loved the church and He loved the church...now you notice this interesting thing, He loved the church and gave Himself up for her. You get the idea here that He set His love upon the church before He ever died. He loved the church and gave His life for her with the view, verse 26, that He might sanctify her, that is to make the church...what?...holy, pure, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word so that...that's the idea of that there, the purpose clause, so that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that she should be holy and blameless.

Now there is the plan of salvation in those verses. Forgetting the message to husbands here, let's just talk about what this says about our salvation. First, Christ loved the church. He loved the church that the Lord had Himself chosen before the world began. He set His love on the church because He loved the church, He gave His life for the church. He gave His life for the church in order that He might make the church holy, completely cleansed and washed so that He might some day present to Himself the church. Now what's that? When is that going to happen? In glory, right? The church that He loved is the church that He died for. The church that He died for is the church He's making holy. The church He makes holy is the church He will present to Himself. And when the church is presented to Himself in all glory, that church will no longer have any spot, any wrinkle or any blemish. That church will be absolutely holy.

Now that's just another way to say that whom He foreknew He predestined, whom He predestined He called, whom He called He justified, and whom He justified He...what?...glorified. He'll bring the church to glory. There is no person who can change that plan. There is no legalist, no cultist, no false teacher, no religionist, there is no person who can change that plan. There is no group of secular educators. There is no brilliant, bright savvy marketers applying all the media trade who can wrest your salvation away from you. God Himself won't do it because He already did the greatest thing in giving His Son. He'll do the lesser things to keep those who are in His Son for whom they were...for whom His Son was given.

Satan can't do it. He can't do it because no matter what he accuses us of, it's already been paid for and we're not righteous on our own anyway, but we have been given the righteousness of Christ. I love Philippians 3:7 and 8, Paul says, "I was found in Him not having a righteousness of my own, but the righteousness of Christ which was given to me." So Satan's accusations are a waste of time. And Christ won't do it because Christ died for us, rose for us, was exalted for us and continues to intercede for us. No person, or persons can remove us from salvation or cause us not to persevere...not anyone...not God, not Satan, not demons, not Christ, not anyone. Well next time we'll ask the question...what about circumstances...and you can sort of prepare for that by reading verses 35 and following. Let's pray.

Father, it's just a joy to bask in these great truths. We're just literally overpowered by the wonder of this grace. We were lost in sin, darkness, condemnation, headed for eternal hell, dead, without capability, we couldn't muster up the understanding to grasp the gospel, we couldn't somehow crank

up the faith to believe it. We were hopeless. And in inexplicable and boundless mercy and grace You reached down and awakened us to truth and give us life in Christ that we didn't deserve and we still don't deserve. And not only did You save us but You keep us and You will bring us to glory to be conformed to the image of Your Son who will then be the prototokos, the premiere one among many who are like Him. This is the expression of Your love to the Son and to us and we rejoice beyond words with gratitude. And, Lord, the fact that You keep us does not make us irresponsible, there are some who would accuse us saying if you feel so secure than you're responsible in the way you live...just the opposite is true. It is the gratitude, it is the boundless gratitude of our hearts that causes us to want to be faithful to You. We just praise You and thank You and that thanks turns to obedience. And, Lord, for those who might be with us tonight who don't know the Savior, O how we would pray that You and Your mercy would reach out and bring them to Him where they shall be His forever. These things we ask for His glory. Amen.

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