

## Gospel Encouragement: Perseverance of the Saints

### 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. (ESV)

- 1 Thes 5:11 is an admonition from Apostle Paul to:
  1. Encourage one another
  2. Build one another
  
- The young church in Thessalonica was facing
  - Persecution
    - 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4
  - that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. (ESV)
  - Death of fellow Christians
    - 1 Thessalonians 4:13
  - But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. (ESV)

### 2 Timothy 3:14-15

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (ESV)

- The Good News of Jesus Christ is a subject that can be understood by a little child and misunderstood by the most mature adult at the same time.
- There are many aspects of salvation that we can cover:
  1. Election/Predestination
  2. Gospel Call
  3. Regeneration
  4. Conversion (Faith & Repentance)
  5. Justification
  6. Adoption
  7. Perseverance of the Saints
- Today, we will briefly discuss perseverance. I pray that we are able to glean some encouragement from this doctrine.

- Explanation: What is Perseverance of the Saints
  - Perseverance of the saints is the [Calvinist](#) doctrine that those who are truly saved will persevere to the end and cannot lose their salvation. It doesn't mean that a person who is truly saved will never lose faith or backslide at any time. But that they will ultimately persevere in faith (inspite of failures) such as not to lose their salvation. (Theopedia.com)
- Perseverance is not the only view of evangelical Christians. There are brothers and sisters in the faith who hold that it's possible for someone to be truly born again and lose their salvation.
- While my goal today isn't to stress the differences, I will say that this is not an essential tenant of our faith and there is absolutely no reason to break fellowship with brothers and sisters who hold a view different from the official stance of the leadership of CRCC.

There are multiple scripture passages that teach that the truly regenerate will continue in the faith until death, and will go to heaven.

### **John 3:36 English Standard Version (ESV)**

36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

1. Eternal life is the endless life of the future (Eastons Bible Dictionary)

### **John 6:38-40 English Standard Version (ESV)**

- 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

What did Jesus just say?

1. He does the will of the Father (38)
2. The Father's will is that none He gives the Son will be lost (39)

3. Everyone who believes in Him will have eternal life (40)

### **John 10:27-29 English Standard Version (ESV)**

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

1. Those who follow Jesus are given eternal life.
2. No one will snatch them out of His hand!
3. They won't perish (separate from Christ)

### **Romans 8:1 English Standard Version (ESV)**

8 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

### **Romans 8:30 English Standard Version (ESV)**

30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

- Paul writes as if the glorification is a done deal. You can take it to the bank.

### **Ephesians 1:13-14 English Standard Version (ESV)**

13 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, 14 who is the guarantee<sup>[a]</sup> of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it,<sup>[b]</sup> to the praise of his glory.

- The Holy Spirit, who lives in us, seals us (13)
- Guarantee - A legal term which means down payment.

- Until we acquire possession of it: All of the future benefits of salvation are certain to belong to those sealed.

### **Philippians 1:6 English Standard Version (ESV)**

6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

- The great work of salvation was initiated with God's unconditional election.

### **1 Peter 1:5 English Standard Version (ESV)**

5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

- Phroureo: to guard, protect by a military guard, either to prevent hostile invasion, or to keep the inhabitants of a besieged city from flight
- Peter stresses that this guarding is by God's power through faith. The power of God works in tandem with our faith (which is a gift).

2 Timothy 3:14-15

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (ESV)

Paul's letter to his young protege is heartfelt and chocked full of useful teaching.

- In the midst of much false doctrine, Timothy was to continue in what he learned.
- What false teaching do the prevailing winds of the world blow today?
  - To begin with, according to official Mormon teaching, Jesus Christ is the first spirit child conceived and begotten by Heavenly Father and one of Heavenly Father's many wives (commonly referred to as "Heavenly

Mother”). Just as Heavenly Father before him progressed to godhood, so Jesus progressed through obedience to the status of a god (prior to his incarnation on earth). In the words of the late Mormon Apostle and General Authority Bruce McConkie, Jesus Christ through obedience and devotion “attained that pinnacle of intelligence which ranked him as a God.” As such, according to LDS authorities, Jesus is not to be worshiped or prayed to as one would worship or pray to Heavenly Father.

- In Watchtower theology Jesus was created by God as the archangel Michael, during his earthly sojourn became merely human, and after his crucifixion was re-created an immaterial spirit creature. JW's also deny the physical resurrection of Jesus. According to Russell, the body that hung on a torture stake either “dissolved into gasses” or is “preserved somewhere as the grand memorial of God’s love.”
- The Black Hebrew Israelite movement has infiltrated black communities on the basis of two principal claims: (1) All African Americans biologically descend from the ancient Hebrews, and (2) The means of salvation for African Americans is obedience to the Law of Moses.
- The Nation of Islam claims that God is a black man who is the biological father of the black race on earth.<sup>5</sup> They believe that the "Son of Man" is another name for Allah and that this proves he is just a man.
- In the NAM Man is central. He is viewed as divine, as co-creator, as the hope for future peace and harmony. A representative quote might be: "I am affected only by my thoughts. It needs but this to let salvation come to all the world. For in this single thought is everyone released at last from fear." (A course in Miracles, The Foundation for Inner Peace, Huntington Station, N.Y. Lesson 228, p. 461.)

What does CRCC believe?

**We believe that:**

1. *The Holy Scriptures, comprised of Old and New Testaments, are fully and verbally inspired by God and are therefore infallible in the original writings and completely trustworthy in all areas in which they speak. Their central salvation message and essential teachings are clear and accessible to all who follow the standard and self-evident rules of literary interpretation. They are therefore the supreme, unmediated, and final authority of faith and practice for every believer.* (2 Tim 3:16-17)
  - This belief means that rather than relying on pop psychology, talk show hosts, current trends, or even the words of the preacher, you must fall in love with your Bible again and be diligent in learning how to interpret it AND obeying it.
2. *There is only one eternal, almighty and perfect God. Within the Being of this one true God exist three eternally distinct and coequal Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three Persons are the one true God.* (Matt 28:18-20)
  - This belief affects our understanding of the Gospel, redemption, the Resurrection, and the nature of God. Considering the implications of the Trinity should motivate YOU to love, give, and serve as God did and does.
  - As theologian James R. White put it, "To be consistent and honest in our worship and witness, we must know who God is, and how God has revealed Himself to us. We must acknowledge the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, as Scripture has revealed them to be related to one another and to us. *If the Bible is truly God-breathed, then we must worship God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. This is the plain verdict of the entire Bible. This is how God has revealed Himself, and we must love Him in truth. That truth is expressed in the words of the great hymn, "God in three Persons, blessed Trinity." Let us, then, bless our majestic God! And let us more and more love the truth that is the Trinity!"*
3. *Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, who took upon Himself human flesh through the miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary. He who is true God became true man, uniting two natures in one person forever. Christ lived a perfect, sinless life, died*

*on the cross as an atoning sacrifice for our sins, rose bodily from the dead, and ascended into Heaven where He now serves as our High Priest, our only Mediator. He will return bodily and visibly to the earth as King of kings and will judge every human being who has ever lived. (Jn 1:1-3)*

- Praise God! This belief should motivate you to tell everyone you can about our Savior, King, High Priest and Advocate, who is “the way, the truth, and the life!” (Jn 14:6)

4. *The Holy Spirit is the eternal Third Person of the Triune God, the Regenerator and Sanctifier of the redeemed, the Bestower of spiritual fruit and gifts, and the abiding Advocate who empowers believers for godly living and service. (Jn 14:15-18; Acts 1:8)*

- This belief should give you both the faith and the commitment to action to do everything God instructs. Why? Because He is empowering you to do so!

5. *In Adam human beings were created in the image of God (i.e., they share in a finite way the communicable attributes of God, including personality, spirituality, rationality, and morality). Through the fall of Adam that image of God in humanity has been defiled, although not eradicated. Every human being is radically corrupt and estranged from God. Human beings are condemned by God because of their descent into sin, both through their relationship to Adam and through individual choice. The desperate need of humanity is forgiveness of sins and consequent restoration of fellowship with God; yet humans remain totally unable to atone for and restore themselves. (Jn 3:16-21)*

- This belief should humble you, cause you to worship, motivate you to share your faith, and help you understand why people do what they do. The only answer for fallen man is Christ!

6. *Jesus' death on the cross provided a penal substitutionary (He took our punishment) atonement for the sins of humanity. In salvation we are rescued from God's wrath by His unmerited grace alone, through faith alone, on account of Christ alone. (1 Pet 2:24)*

- This belief should fill your thoughts and heart with consistent awe and reverence. How could we possibly live selfishly and haphazardly if we believe this?

7. *Those who have received the free gift of salvation will be raised from the dead or raptured (snatched up from their earthly lives) to meet Christ at His Second Coming, and their bodies will be transformed like unto His glorious, immortal body. They will live forever in the fellowship and Kingdom of God in a new heaven and a new earth. Eternal, conscious punishment apart from the fellowship and Kingdom of God (hell) is the ultimate destiny of unredeemed humanity, Satan, and his entire angelic host.*
- This belief should cause you to live for eternity. This should affect how you forgive, use your time, what you read, and how you treat others.
8. *The Christian church, which is the body and bride of Christ, is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Corporately and individually, its members strive to worship, serve, and glorify God through prayer and praise, diligent study and application of the Scriptures, evangelism, sanctified living, good works, and observance of the rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper. The ultimate mission of the church is the discipleship of all nations - not only the saving of souls (which is primary) but also the bringing of the gospel to bear on every aspect of life and thought - until the Lord returns.*
- This belief should alter your view of the church from "somewhere I go for me" to "something I live" for Christ. We must remove consumerism from our view of the eternal Body of Christ.

In closing, this message should serve as encouragement to those who truly possess saving faith. God will indeed keep those who are truly saved. It also serves as a warning to those without saving faith. There are some tests in scripture that can deliver assurance to the believer, or show the sinner they are not in the faith.

1. Do I have a present trust in Christ for salvation?
- Do I today have trust in Christ to forgive my sins and take me without blame into heaven forever?
  - Do I have confidence in my heart that he has saved me?
  - If I were to die tonight and stand before God's judgment seat, and if he were to ask me why he should let me into heaven, would I begin to think of my good



deeds and depend on them, or would I without hesitation say that I am depending on the merits of Christ and am confident that he is a sufficient Savior?

(Col 1:21-23)

- 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation<sup>[9]</sup> under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.
- 14 For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. (Hebrews 3:14)

2. Is there evidence of a regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in my heart?

- The subjective testimony of the Holy Spirit within our hearts bearing witness that we are God's children
  - 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (Romans 8:15-16)
- Holy Spirit produced fruit in our life. (Gal 5:22)
  - It's not about are were perfectly exemplifying these fruits... It's does my life generally display these characteristics. Do those closest to me see these traits exhibited in my life. Have I been growing in them over a period of years?
- Continuing to believe and accept the sound teaching of the church.

- Those who begin to deny major doctrines of the faith give serious negative indications concerning their salvation.

- 1 John 2:23-25: <sup>23</sup> No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. <sup>24</sup> Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. <sup>25</sup> And this is the promise that he made to us<sup>[e]</sup>—eternal life.

- Is there a continuing present relationship with Jesus.

- Is there regular fellowship with him in prayer and worship  
(Abide in me, and I in you John 15:4)

3. Do I see a long-term pattern of growth in my christian life?

- 2 Peter 1:5-10: <sup>5</sup> For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue,<sup>[e]</sup> and virtue with knowledge, <sup>6</sup> and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, <sup>7</sup> and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. <sup>8</sup> For if these qualities<sup>[f]</sup> are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, brothers,<sup>[g]</sup> be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

- These character traits are to continually abound in the life of believers.

- The way we confirm our call and election, then, is to continue to grow in “these things.” This implies that our assurance of salvation can be something that increases over time in our lives.

Every year we add to these character traits in our lives, we gain greater and greater assurance of our salvation.