

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **Saving a Soul from Death James 5:19-20 Part Two**

We have completed our study of the Epistle of James. Why did James write this epistle? James wrote this epistle to call professing believers to examine their faith to make sure it was a living faith. He wrote this epistle to call professing believers to examine their faith to make sure that it was a saving faith?

James provided a series of tests to help us in that examination. There was the “Response to Trials test” in James 1:2-18. There was the “Response to the Word test” in James 1:19-27. There was the “Impartiality test” in James 2:1-13. There was the “Works test” in James 2:14-26. There was the “Speech test” in James 3:1-12. There was the “Wisdom test” in James 3:13-18. There was the “Friendship with the World test” in James 4:1-5:12. And finally there was the “Prayer test” in James 5:13-18. If the qualities represented by these various tests are present we should be encouraged.

But though we may be encouraged we should not be satisfied. The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Therefore we should not only look to see if these qualities are present but we should also look to see if those qualities are increasing in our lives. If we do find these qualities present and increasing, then we should be very well assured that we possess genuine, living, saving faith.

Now having said that let me ask you a question: Can a professing believer who has been assured of their salvation by looking at their life in light of these tests, lose that assurance? And the answer of course is, Yes! All they have to do in order to lose the assurance of their salvation is to **“Stray from the truth”** as we see in **James 5:19-20** or find themselves no longer **“applying all diligence”** in pursuing Christlikeness as we see in **2 Pet. 2:1-11**. Assurance of salvation is not necessarily a permanent possession for a professing believer. Rather the assurance of their salvation will depend upon the way they are living their lives.

But now let me ask you another question: Though assurance of salvation is not necessarily a permanent possession, what about salvation itself? The Scriptures teach us that though assurance of salvation may come and go, the gift of salvation is a permanent possession. This belief in the permanence of salvation, in theological circles, is called the doctrine of “Eternal Security.”

The concept that a believer who is once saved is always saved is based on the principle that salvation is the work of God. If man does the saving, salvation is insecure. If it is a work of God, then salvation is secure. The examination therefore of “so-called” faith to see if it is living or saving is not to determine whether or not we have been booted out of God’s family, it is rather to determine whether we have ever been in God’s family at all.

This morning I would like to give you biblical support for the doctrine of eternal security. The solid scriptural basis for believing that a person once saved is always saved is supported by many important arguments, but this morning I will only point to just a few.

Christians are eternally secure because of God the Father’s plan (Rom. 8:28-30).

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The Lord in eternity past determined that certain people would be saved and saved eternally. He determined that certain people would occupy a place in heaven with Him forever. And that plan which was begun in eternity past and which reaches into eternity future will not be thwarted. Listen to **Romans 8:28-30** Paul writes, “**And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (29) For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; (30) and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**” During the course of our lives we will have many different plans. Some of those plans may actually work out and other plans will not work out. But this is not the way it is with God.

Being infinitely elevated above the highest creature, He is the Most High, Lord of heaven and earth, subject to none, influenced by none, absolutely independent; God does as He pleases. None can thwart Him, none can hinder Him. His purposes will be accomplished.

What do the Scriptures teach us? In **Is. 46:10** it says, “**Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.’ Daniel 4:35 says, ‘And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven. And among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward of His hand....’**” When we think of the Lord we need to think of Him on a throne over all of His creation, directing all things, working all things “**after the counsel of His own will**” as **Eph. 1:11** tells us. And this includes our choice to embrace His Son as our Lord and Savior.

Some people believe that God is over everything except our choice of him. But this is not so. Even our choice of Him is His work and not ours. Listen to what **John 6:25-29** says. Jesus had just recently miraculously fed the 5000. After this miracle had taken place, His disciples departed by night to the other side of the Sea of Galilee and many of the people who had been fed were not going to let their meal ticket get away so easily so they followed after him. And this is what it says, “**and when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, ‘Rabbi, when did you get here?’ (26) Jesus answered them and said, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves, and were filled. (27) Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, even God, has set His seal. (28) They said therefore to Him, ‘What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?’**” They asked a very sincere question. And they expected that Christ would answer that question. But how did they expect him to answer that question? They would have expected Him to give them a list of things that they would have to do. But how does He respond? He does not ask them to do anything but what? Believe. Listen to the verse. “**Jesus answered and said to them ... believe in Him whom He has sent.**” The only thing he tells them to do is to believe in Him. That is it. And in a very real sense “belief” could be understood as a work, but whose work is it? It is God’s work. Let us again read **John 6:29** but this time let us read the entire verse, “**Jesus answered and said to them, ‘this is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.’**”

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Almost 40 years ago I believed in Jesus and I put my faith and trust in Him alone as My Lord and Savior. How did that happen? Was it because I was so insightful or spiritual? It had nothing to do with me at all. I came to believe in Jesus because God removed my spiritual blindness and opened my heart to receive the implanted Word so that I could be born again.

If through God's work you or I have come to believe, then we can be assured of this: That God will continue to work in and through our lives until his plan for us has been completed. What does **Rom. 8:28-30** say, "**And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (29) For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; (30) and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**"

How do we know that a person once saved is always saved? Because the Sovereign God of the Universe purposed it. How else do we know that a person once saved is always saved?

### Christians are eternally secure because of, God the Son's Provision

If someone is going to lose their salvation it would be because of sin. Why would I say this? Because the wages of sin is death. No matter what kind of religion a man has, if it cannot deal with sin, it is of no value. Let us for a moment consider the Christian faith and see how it handles our sin.

When a person places their faith in Christ, and he is born again, what happens to the sins of his past? All the sins that we have committed before receiving Christ are forgiven (Acts 2:22-38). Certainly this clearly was the message of Peter to the Jewish multitudes in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Listen to the message that Peter preached to them **"(22) "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know - (23) This man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. (24) And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. (25) For David says of Him, "I was always beholding the Lord in my presence; For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. (26) Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted; Moreover my flesh also will abide in hope; (27) Because thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, nor allow thy Holy One to undergo decay. (28) Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou wilt make me full of gladness with thy presence. (29) Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. (30) And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to Him with an oath to seat one of his descendants upon his throne, (31) he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. (32) This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. (33) Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.**

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**(34) For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, (35) Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for thy feet.’” (36) Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ -- this Jesus whom you crucified.**” How did the Jews listening to this message respond to this message? It says in V. 37 **“Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart.”** Why were they pierced? They suddenly realized that they had crucified the Lord of glory.

Look back in your life. Think of the worst sin that you may have ever committed or even ever thought of committing. Now compare that sin to what Peter has now accused these Jews of doing in **Acts 2**. What had they done? **“They had crucified the Lord of Glory.”** I don’t know what sin you may have committed in your past, but I know this, it cannot compare to crucifying God the Son.

But Christ through His death provided forgiveness to every person for every sin, even the sin crucifying the Lord God. How do we know this? After the Scriptures tell us that these Jews who were listening to Peter’s message were pierced to the heart by what Peter had shared, it says that they said to him, **“What shall we do?”** And he responds **“Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Spirit .”** What a wonderful gift! If they would simply turn to Jesus they would have their sins forgiven and certainly this is something they knew they needed very badly at that moment.

Those who turn to Christ, whoever that might be, has this very same expectation. Whatever sin we may have committed or even thought about committing in the course of our lives will be forgiven when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior. But what about the sins that we commit after we by faith accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior?

All the sins that are committed after receiving Christ will be forgiven (Heb. 10:4-12.) This is certainly the clear message of **Hebrews**. Let us read **Heb. 10:4-10** **“... it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (5) Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, ‘Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired, But a body thou hast prepared for me; (6) in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast taken no pleasure (7) then I said, ‘Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God’ “ (8) After saying above, ‘Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast not desired, nor hast thou taken pleasure in them’” (which are offered according to the law), (9) then He said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Thy will,’ He takes away the first in order to establish the second. (10) By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus (until our next sin) once for all.”** When Christ died for our sins on the cross He was not dying just for the sins that we committed before embracing Him as our Lord and Savior, He was dying for our sins after we committed ourselves to Him as our Lord and Savior. All sins past, present, and future in my life, in your life, in the lives of all the people who have ever lived or ever will live was carried to the cross with Christ and it was there that He paid the price for us which God required.

And just in case we missed the point, he goes on to say in **Heb. 10:11-12** **“And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; (12) but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God.”**

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When Jesus said "It is finished." It was finished.

How could any sin separate us from God when we are in Christ? It is impossible. Why? Because there is no sin in my past, present or future that has not been paid for. How could God plan to save me eternally with all the sin that I have committed in my past and have yet to commit in my future? How could He plan to do this? Because He also purposed a perfect provision. But this is not all. Not only are those who place their faith in Christ alone for their salvation eternally secure because of God's purposed plan and God's perfect provision, but also because of the protector that God has provided us.

Christian's are eternally secure because of God the Holy Spirit's protection (Eph. 1:13,14).

Let us read **Eph. 1:13,14** **"In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation -- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, (14) who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory."** The seal was used to signify ownership. The seal was affixed to property that was to be transported to other places. After the attaching of the seal, only delivery of the property remained. In this way the apostle looks at the believer. He is a son, sealed with the Spirit. The transaction is complete; only delivery to the presence of the Father remains.

Let me ask you this question: Who is able to break that seal of the Holy Spirit that secures our salvation until we enter into the presence of God? No one!! Listen to the words of **Romans 8:35-40** **"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." (37) But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. (38) For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, (39) nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."**

Not only is it true because of God the Father's plan, and God the Son's provision, but also because of God the Spirit's protection. He has sealed us awaiting our delivery into the presence of Christ.

### CONCLUSION

The Scriptures teach us that though assurance of salvation may come and go depending on how we are living our lives at a particular point in time, the gift of salvation is a permanent possession. And this is true no matter how intense our battles with the world, the flesh or devil might become.