

Fil-Am Community Church

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Key verse: John 5:24

“Assurance of Salvation”

“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”

John 5:24

For the last few Sundays we have talked about salvation. We said that salvation means that God forgives a sinner and declares them to be “not guilty” based on the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Then, we also talked about what takes place in the life of the believer while he or she is on earth and we call that sanctification, meaning, God makes them holy as they themselves cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Today, I’d like to talk about the third aspect of salvation which is the assurance of it. I’m talking about the Bible doctrine of the Eternal Security of the Believer. That once you are saved, you are always saved!

Now, if you are a sincere follower of Christ, meaning, you have put your faith in him as your personal Lord and Savior and in nothing else in this life and in this world, not your good works, not your religion, not your achievements, God wants you to know that you are saved! God wants you to know that your sins have been forgiven! God wants you to know that you're on your way to Heaven as though you were already there! The Bible says in 1 John 5:13, *“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”*

There is something that God wants you to know as a fact: that you have eternal life. And having assurance of salvation will eliminate fear and liberate your life.

Back in 1937 when the Golden Gate Bridge was being built in San Francisco, it was so tall that when the people doing the iron work looked down, they got so dizzy that 23 of them fell to their deaths.

So to help eliminate their fear a large safety net was built under the bridge. Now let me ask you a question: after the safety net was in place, do you think more fell or less fell? Less fell and do you know why? They said that with the safety net in place, they could concentrate on what they were doing. Once your future is secure, you can handle the present. And you can have your future secure. You can be saved and sure and that's what I want to talk to you about this morning.

Now look with me to John 5. In verse 24 I want to give you three bible reasons why you can be saved and sure. Three Biblical reasons that will give you a "know-so" salvation rather than having a "hope-so" salvation.

In John 5:24 Jesus says, and let us read together, *“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”*

Now here is the first reason that the saved can be sure that they are saved:

1. God's Promise to You.

In the KJV, the words “very truly” is “Verily, Verily.” I once read a black preacher say that when you come across the expression “Verily, Verily” in the Bible that it's like saying, “Sure-nuf .. sure-nuf.” And so Jesus says “whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.”

Do you know how long “eternal or everlasting life” is? It's for a loooong time. It means “never to stop .. forever .. life without end.” Now do you see the word “has” as in “has eternal life”? Jesus used a present tense verb here which speaks of something that begins at a certain point in time and keeps on taking place. Now here is what that means for us today: First, it means that the eternal life that Jesus gives begins at a certain point in time. And that certain point in time is when

you decide to follow Jesus, repent of your sins and invite Jesus to come into your heart.

You don't just stumble into salvation. You don't take confirmation classes, take a test and pass your way into salvation. Salvation is an event, not a process. Now it may take a process to get you to the point of salvation, but salvation is not a process, it's an event!

Now, some pseudo-Christian religions teach that salvation is available to everyone but you don't know that you are saved until the day you die. Like the Jehovah's Witnesses. They say that you may be baptized as a Jehovah's Witness, do all those things that a faithful Jehovah's Witness do but after you die, you may not wake up anymore because you may have done something that may not have passed the test of being a Jehovah's Witness. They believe that those who are not saved will remain in the grave because they don't believe in the existence of the soul.

So, eternal life begins at a certain point in time. That Present Tense verb also means that it never ends. Whatever started at a given point in time never ends! Now somebody asks, "Rolly, do you have eternal life?" I sure do. You say, "It sounds like you're bragging." No, I'm not bragging, I'm just agreeing with Jesus. I have heard His Word. I believe in Him who sent Jesus. Therefore I have eternal life.

It's not that I'm going to one day get eternal life. I already have it. You are looking at a man who has eternal life because I believe. Now suppose I got saved and kept it and then ten years later I lost it. What did I have? A ten-year life. Suppose I kept it for twenty years. What did I have? I had a twenty-year life.

Now let me tell you something: If I got eternal life and then lost it .. whatever I had wasn't eternal. Because "eternal" means "never to stop .. life without end."

If I ever lost it ... then it wasn't eternal life. If I lose it ... it's because I never

had it. Do you see it? Eternal life isn't something you get when you die, it is something you get when you hear His word and believe in Him who sent Him.

Eternal life isn't something you get when you die or when you go to heaven or at the resurrection ... you possess eternal life the very second you believe!

That's why those who are saved can be sure ... because of God's Promise to You!

Let me repeat the words of Jesus, *"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."*

In John 11:25 (WEB), Jesus emphasizes it, *"Whoever lives and believes in me will never die."* Let me clarify this. The death it's talking about here is spiritual death. It is being separated from God for all eternity. As a human being, you will die physically, unless Jesus comes again and the Bible says that when he comes again, in the twinkling of an eye, our bodies will be transformed into spiritual bodies and Jesus takes us with him to heaven. When you die physically, it is only your flesh that dies but your soul lives on. If you are saved, that soul goes to be with the Lord in heaven. If you're not, it goes somewhere else. Where? In hades first while it awaits judgment then to hell. And in hell, you also exist there for a long, long time. This is called eternal death or second death as the Bible terms it as opposed to eternal life.

I think you'd rather go to heaven than hell, right? You can have that assurance because that's God's promise to you. And the Bible says that God is not like man that he should lie. He promises and fulfills that promise.

Now, another assurance that once saved, you are always saved is because of **2. God's Purpose for You.**

That purpose is found in Philippians 1:6. As Paul begins this letter to the church at Philippi he says in verse 6, *"being confident of this, that he who began a*

good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Let me ask you something: who started salvation in you? You or God? Did you seek God or did God seek you?

Well, the Bible says in Romans 3:11 that "*there is no one who seeks God.*" You say, "Wait a minute, the Bible says in Deut 4:29, "*But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul.*"

The skeptic says, "You see...the Bible is full of contradictions. One place, it says that if you seek Him you will find Him and in another place, it says that nobody seeks Him. So, which is it?"

Listen folks, the only reason you sought God is because God first sought you! The only reason you love God is because God first loved you. And what God has started in you He is going to finish!

Look at it again in verse 6, "*being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion...*" God finishes what he starts. He doesn't make half-baked cookies. He doesn't say as he looks at you, "Oh, Rolly has some rough edges here. I don't think he'll ever learn. I think I'll put him on the shelf." No, he looks at you and loves you despite all your flaws and follies. In his sight, you are already a finished product, which you will be when you meet Jesus face to face in heaven.

So, God has promised to finish what He has started in you! He has saved you and will keep saving you. And the way he keeps salvation for you is the same way you get salvation. In other words you stay saved the same way you get saved. If you're saved by grace you're kept saved by grace. These people who think they can lose their salvation somehow have in their minds that they have to work to keep it.

Now if you get it by works you keep it by works. But if you get it by grace you keep it by grace. And you're mistaken if you think because you blow it or mess up

that somehow God changes His mind and says, "Rolly, wait a minute. You blew it. You sinned. Therefore I'm going to stop what I've started in you." No way!

God's purpose in me means that what He started in me long ago as a 16-year old young man He's going to finish!

There was a man who was tired of shaving and decided to go to the local barber, just for once, to have somebody else give him a shave. Well, working at the barber shop was the local Pastor's wife named Grace. After she shaved him, she said, "That will be \$20.00." He thought it was a little high, but he paid it and went his way.

The next day he noticed that his face was as smooth as it was the day before. The next day his face will still smooth. In fact, two weeks went by and he still couldn't find a trace of whiskers on his face. He couldn't believe it.

After two weeks, he went back to the barber shop to find Grace. He said, "Grace, I owe you an apology. I thought \$20.00 was a little high for a shave. But it's been two weeks and it still hasn't started growing back."

Without blinking an eye, she said, "Sir, you shouldn't be surprised. After all, you were shaved by Grace. And once shaved, always shaved."

Yes, dear Christian, once saved you are always saved by the grace of God. You can be sure about it and here's why:

First is God's Promise to You,

"...Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life."

And second is God's Purpose for You,

"...he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion..."

Now, let me give you the third reason:

3. God's Protection of You.

In John 10 a crowd had gathered around Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem and

they were asking Him questions. And here's what He said beginning in verses 27-29, *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 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."*

Did you notice that Jesus says that his sheep are in "My hand" in verse 28 and that they are in "My Father's hand" in verse 29? Let me tell you how you can be saved and sure: Those that are saved ... those that have peace with God and the peace of God ... those who have repented of their sin and turned to Jesus for salvation ... those that have had a life-changing salvation experience are in the hands of Jesus and in the hands of the Father.

Can you think of a power that's strong enough to pry open the hands of God? There isn't a power that strong. Not demonic power or any other power. There is nothing that can take you out!

Some who don't believe this try to philosophize and say, "You can jump out of that hand." Remember, there are two hands there keeping you and they are shut tight. You cannot unsave yourself because you did not save yourself in the first place. It is God's work from beginning to end.

Look at verse 28 again, "I give them eternal life." He's talking about life without end. Let me ask you something: if Jesus gives life without end... can it end? Can it be interrupted? If somebody says, "Well, I had eternal life for a while and then lost it"... they would be contradicting themselves. It couldn't be eternal or else he would still have it. If it is eternal .. there would be no end to it. And if it's not eternal .. then Jesus Christ is a fraud and a liar because Jesus said in John 10.28, "I give them eternal life."

Look at other verses:

John 3.16, *"... whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

John 6.40, *"For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life..."*

John 6:47, *"Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life."*

Galatians 6.8, *"Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life."*

Peter says the same thing over in 1 Peter 1.3-5 (NKJV), *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."*

I want you to look at the phrase "who are kept by the power of God..." The Greek word for "kept" means "to guard, to watch over." It's a military word that described a soldier on guard. And it's in the Present Tense which speaks of continual action. You could translate it this way: who are kept and continue being kept by the power of God." And what is it that guards us and keeps on guarding us? The power of God!

How many different ways does God have to say something before you'll believe it? Again, in John 10:28, *"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish."* There are no exceptions. Eternal life is not earned by being good and it cannot be lost by being bad.

By Your Grace Alone, I Stand

Now that it's clear that our salvation is secure for all eternity, what does it mean for us in the here and now?

First of all, it tells us that God loves us for what we are and not what we can do. In Christ, we are already righteous and holy before his sight. Even though I commit a grievous sin, he still loves me. Even though I mess up big time, he still

loves me. His love for me doesn't depend on my performance. The problem is, some of us are on that performance treadmill. We try to be good in order to please God.

But nothing you can do can change his love for you. He's not Santa Claus who's checking out whether you're naughty or nice.

Second of all, it tells us that I should do good things in response to his love for me. God's assurance of his love for me should move me to behave in a way that shows I'm grateful for the gift of eternal life. One of the arguments against the doctrine of eternal security is that it will lead some people to commit sin. That it is a license to sin because they say, "You are saved anyway. What's the difference if you indulge in sin?" This is more of a theoretical argument rather than a biblical argument. In reality, it doesn't exist. For example, now that you know that you are secure in your salvation, after this Service, would you intentionally think, "I'll cheat in my income tax. I will not lose my salvation anyway." No way! A true Christian wouldn't think that way. If someone thinks that way, their salvation is then in doubt. You know why? The Holy Spirit in you will tell you that what you're thinking is wrong. A true Christian would live for Christ. A true Christian would live in a way that brings honor to Christ's name. But this doesn't discount the fact that a Christian can mess up and backslide. The apostle Peter did. Christians mess up because they give in to temptations not because they want to prove that they are still saved.

And third of all, it tells us that because we're heaven-bound, it should make us be at peace despite our circumstances. This physical body we have is temporary. I may be suffering emotionally, physically, even mentally, but a time will come when all these sufferings will go away. The Bible assures us that in heaven there are no more tears, no more pain, no more sickness. I may also be facing great challenges in my life right now, but the Bible assures me that because God loves me and he keeps me secure that he is in control. As it says in his Word, "*And we know that in all*

things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28 (NIV) If God has called me, he has saved me and because of that he will work things out for me.

Folks, it's great being saved. But even better is being saved and knowing that you're saved. Better still is being saved and knowing that you're saved and knowing that you can never ever be unsaved again.

This morning, friend, you can be saved and sure! The question is, Do you have that kind of assurance today? If you don't, Jesus wants you to come to him to be saved and have that assurance. Jesus died for your sins to save you. Maybe you're afraid that you're going to hell because of your sins. Whatever you have committed in the past, things that you're ashamed of or guilty of, Jesus can forgive. That's why he died on the cross. He wants to forgive you of your sins. All you need to do is to repent and believe that Jesus is your Savior, your only Savior. Jesus also rose from the dead. He resurrected to give you the gift of eternal life. This morning, if you believe that Jesus died for your sins and resurrected to give you eternal life, you can give your heart to him. In a moment, we're going to sing a song and then I'm going to pray. I'd like to pray for you. Please open your heart to Jesus as we sing.