

Week 19: Assurance and Security of Salvation

Grudem_{ST} 40; Grudem_{BD} 24; Ryrie 57

A. Eternal Security of the Believer (Preservation of the Saints) (Once Saved, Always Saved)

1. Definition: the work of God that guarantees that the gift of salvation, once received, is forever and cannot be lost. (Ryrie, 379)
2. Theological Possibility: Christ's Sacrifice (Heb. 10)
 - a.Gr. *ephapax*: "once for all" (Heb. 10:10-12) – Christ's sacrifice was for all sins forever
 - b.Gr. *dienekes*: "for all time" (Heb. 10:1, 12, 14) – Christ paid for all sins for all time
 - c.Gr. *perielein*: "take away" (Heb. 10:11) – Christ removed our sins from us perfectly
3. Theological Reality: God Secures our Salvation
 - a.God the Father: Security in...His omnipotence (John 10:29; Jude 24), His promises (Rom. 4:24), His irrevocable gift (Rom. 11:29), His love (Rom. 8:38-39), His purpose (Rom. 8:30): those justified = those glorified (no more, no less)
 - b.God the Son (John 6:39-40): Security as...Our Advocate (1John 2:1-2), Our Intercessor (John 17:11; Heb 7:25)
 - c. God the Holy Spirit: Security in...His indwelling (John 14:16-17), His sealing (Eph. 4:30)
4. "Problem" passages (Luke 8:13; 1Cor. 3:11-15; 8:11; 9:27; Gal. 5:4; 1Tim. 5:15; Heb. 2:1; 6:4-6; 10:26-29; 2John 1:8) generally refer to losing present salvation (sanctification/fellowship) or future salvation (rewards), NOT eternal salvation (justification/relationship)

B. Assurance: the realization that one possesses eternal life (Ryrie)

1. A secure salvation is a true fact whether one realizes it or not. (Ryrie, 379)
2. If one does not believe in the security of the believer, then he will undoubtedly lack assurance more than once in his lifetime (Ryrie, 380)

"Assurance of grace and salvation, not being of the essence of faith, true believers may wait long before they obtain it." – *Westminster Confession of Faith*: 18.3 (1643-46)but why?

C. "Perseverance of the Saints" (Assurance According to the Reformed Tradition (Grudem))

1. All who are truly born again will persevere to the end (Grudem, 789-792)
2. Only those who persevere to the end have been truly born again (Grudem, 792-794)
3. Those who finally fall away may give external signs of conversion (Grudem, 794-803)
4. What can give a believer genuine assurance? (Grudem, 803-806)
 - a.Do I have a present trust in Christ for Salvation?
 - b.Is there evidence of a regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in my heart?
 - c.Do I see a long-term pattern of growth in my Christian life?

This tradition, however, fuses justification (born again, regeneration) with sanctification (perseverance, long term growth). The focus is on self-assessed *present* evidence of sanctification for assurance of a *past* justification.

Fortunately, the Bible declares a *greater* testimony of assurance than that of our own.

D. God's Promises as Assurance for the Believer

1. *"If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:9–13, ESV)*
2. *"if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself."* (2 Timothy 2:13, ESV)
3. *"The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,"* (Romans 8:16, ESV)

"Self-testing," "checklist," and "perseverance" passages such as 2Cor. 13:5; Gal. 5:19-23; Col. 1:22-23; Heb. 3:12-14; 2Pet. 1:5-11; 1John 2:4-6, in context, generally speak of our condition (sanctification - fellowship (cf. 1John 1:5-7)) & the rewards we will either inherit or forfeit; NOT our position in Christ (justification - relationship)

"The experience of the believer can offer confirming evidence, but it is only secondary to the promises of God's Word and is nowhere taught in Scripture as essential for assurance." (Anderson, 214)