**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**“Once Saved – Always Saved”**

A very prevalent doctrine today that is believed and taught by many professed Christians is the doctrine of “once saved always saved.” The teaching is that when one is saved from his sins by the blood of Christ, when he becomes a Christian, it is impossible for him to fall away and be lost eternally in hell. The Westminster Confession of Faith states it this way, “They, whom God has accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.” (Chapter 17)

What does the Bible say about the doctrine of “once saved – always saved?”

The Bible plainly teaches that a Christian, one who has been saved by the blood of Christ, can so live that he falls from grace and be lost. In the book of Galatians Paul is writing to Christians in the churches of Galatia. These are ones who had received the Spirit by the hearing of faith (Gal. 3:2). They were sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (chapter 3:26-27). These are Christians. In chapter 5 and verse 1 Paul said to them, “*Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.* You see, there were false teachers who were teaching that in addition to believing and obeying Christ to be saved, one must be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses to be saved. Some of these Christians in the churches of Galatia who had been saved by Jesus were being influenced by these false teachers, and Paul is saying to them, to require circumcision and the keeping of the Law of Moses is to be *“entangled again with a yoke of bondage.”* Paul says to them in verse 2, “*Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing*.” In verse 4 he says, “*You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace*.” Keep in mind that Paul is writing to Christians, people who have been saved, and he is saying to them that if they require circumcision and the keeping of the Law of Moses to be saved, then Christ will profit them nothing, they will have become estranged from Christ and they would have fallen from grace. For Christ to profit them nothing means that Jesus Christ, the Savior will not save them. To become estranged from Christ and fall from grace is to fall from the means of their salvation. We are saved by grace, and to fall from grace, is to lose one’s salvation. It means they lose their soul. This passage clearly stands in direct conflict with the doctrine of “once saved, always saved.”

Now look with me in the book of Hebrews. This book was written to Jewish Christians who were being pressured by unbelieving Jews to return to Judaism. These Christians are called “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling” in chapter 3:1. These are Christians who have been saved by Jesus. The Hebrew writer says to them in chapter 3, verses 12-13, *“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”* Why would he tell them to “beware” if it was impossible for them to fall into an evil heart of unbelief and to depart from the living God? Why would he tell them to exhort one another if it was impossible for them to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? No, the point is, this can happen to Christians and so they need to “beware.” In chapter 10, verses 28-29 the Hebrew writer says to these Christians, *“Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?”* The Hebrew writer wants them to see that if they reject Christ and return to Judaism there are grave consequences. He reminds them that those Jews who rejected Moses’ law died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. But what about the one who rejects Jesus’ sacrifice by which he was sanctified? He says that this one tramples the Son of God underfoot, he counts the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insults the Spirit of grace. Someone says, he’s talking about unbelievers who have never been saved. This is not true. Notice again it says, “he counts the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing.” This one was sanctified by the blood of Christ. But he turns his back on Christ with an evil heart of unbelief. The Hebrew writer says, *“Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy….?”* He says in verses 30 and 31, “*For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. And again, ‘The LORD will judge His people.’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*” This passage clearly teaches that one who has been sanctified by the blood of Christ can fall away from Christ and then suffer the vengeance of God.

One of the main arguments that is made to defend the doctrine of “once saved – always saved” is that the Bible teaches that God’s power preserves and protects the true believer, and since God preserves and protects the believer, that precludes the possibility of their being lost. They cannot conceive of how a saved man can ever become a lost man without God being either weak or faithless.

There is no question that the Bible teaches the security of the true believer, but it is not an unconditional security. The question is not whether God preserves and protects the righteous man, but whether the righteous man can become and unrighteous man. It is not whether the believer is secure, but whether a believer can choose to become an unbeliever. We read earlier in Heb. 3:12-13 that it is possible for one who was once a believer to have an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

The Bible teaches that a believer’s security in Christ is conditioned upon whether he continues to walk by faith. In 1 Peter 1:5, Peter writes that Christians “*are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*.” Those who contend for “once saved – always saved” will say, “See, the child of God is kept, or guarded by the power of God for salvation. How then can he be lost?” But, notice that this verse says that they are kept, or guarded “through faith.” As long as the believer remains in the stockade of faith, God’s power is there guaranteeing his safety.

Look at another passage that proves that the believer’s security is conditional. In John 10:27-29, Jesus says, “*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone 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 My Father's hand*.” Now, those who believe in “once saved – always saved” will say, “See, Jesus is saying that there is no possibility that His sheep will ever be lost. No one can snatch them out of His hand.” But let us examine the passage closely. Jesus says, “*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish…”* Do you not see the condition which qualifies this entire process of securing the believer against perishing? Jesus promises eternal life and protection from perishing only to those who hear His voice and who follow Him. Therefore, the condition of security in the Lord is one’s faithful allegiance to Christ. So this passage does not teach that a child of God cannot be lost, only that he cannot be lost against his will. If that child of God chooses of his own free will to forsake the Lord and cease to follow Him, he will be eternally lost. It is not that God was unable to protect him against Satan; it was simply that he wandered away from the Lord and forfeited the Lord’s protection.

Consider with me some other passages that indicates that the believer will not fall and be lost “if” he meets certain conditions. These are what we call “if” passages. In Colossians 1:21-23, Paul says that these Colossian saints had been reconciled by Christ, “*in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight-- if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard*….” Whether or not they would be presented holy, blameless and above reproach in the Lord’s sight was conditioned upon whether they continued in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel. Hebrews 3:6 says, “*but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end*.” We are the house of God, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. Look at Galatians 6:7-9. In verses 7 and 8 Paul says that he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. In verse 9 he says, “*And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart*.” Whether or not one reaps eternal life is conditioned upon whether he does not lose heart. These are just some of the “if” passages that teach us that eternal security of the believer is conditioned upon his continuing to live by faith.

In Philippians 2:12 Paul wrote to the saints in Philippi, “*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*;” Why would Paul encourage these saints to work out their own salvation if it was impossible for them to lose it? Someone may say, but in verse 13 Paul says, “*for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure*.” The point is, as long as the believer does his part in believing and following Christ, working out his own salvation with fear and trembling, then God does His part to work in him both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Our security in Christ is conditional.

Our time is gone for today.

If you have questions concerning anything we have talked about today we would like to talk with you. Just give us a call at 573-265-8628. If no one is there to answer, just leave your name and telephone number and we will be glad to get back with you. That phone number again is 573-265-8628.

Also before we close we want to announce a special series of meetings that will be conducted by the St. James church of Christ in St. James. The dates are April 10-13. Colly Caldwell from Temple Terrace, Florida, will be with us and will present lessons from the Book of Ephesians, lessons that have application to our live today. The Theme of these lessons is, “What Is My Purpose for Being and How is it fulfilled in Christ?” That’s April 10-13. We will be meeting at our regular times on Sunday and then at 7:00 each evening Monday through Wednesday. Come and be with us. Our building is located at 685 Sidney Street in St. James, where Sidney Street and Highway B intersect.