

Secure In God's Hand

John 10:22-29

Pastor John Miller

Follow with me in John 10:22. Jesus is going to speak down a little later in the chapter. It says, "And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. 23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch," or known as the Portico. "Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ," the Messiah, "tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. 26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you."

We've been away from John for a couple of weeks, but we stopped last Wednesday night when we were together in verse 21. I want you to back up to verse 19 and give you a little setting that introduces us to verse 22. It says, "There was a division," note that word, "therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. 20 And many of them said, He," referring to Jesus, "hath a devil," or a demon, "and is mad; why hear ye him? 21 Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil," or demon, "open the eyes of the blind?" This all ties together with the miracle that Jesus performed in John 9.

In John 9, there was a man that was blind, and Jesus healed the blind man. He did it on the Sabbath day which upset the Jewish authorities because they considered it to be "work on the Sabbath." It then transitions from the miracle into the teachings, that we spent a few weeks, on Jesus as the Good Shepherd. We looked at Jesus the Good Shepherd for several weeks. What happens in John's gospel is there is a miracle, then there's a message, and then a response. Always in the response, there is a division, as we see in verses 19-21. There were some that said, "He has a demon. Why would you listen to Him?" Others said, "These are not the words of him that has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" That is a rhetorical question that expects a "no" answer. I wanted you to see that that was the division as the result of the message that Jesus gave that came out of the miracle He performed.

There's a gap between verses 21 and 22 of about two months. John ties them together because Jesus, again, mentions being the Shepherd who actually keeps His sheep. We saw the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep, now we see the Great Shepherd who is keeping, guarding, protecting, and watching over His sheep. The two-month period is mentioned here in verse 22, "And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter." We have where this is taking place (verses 22-29). It's taking place in Jerusalem, and it was the time of the Feast of Dedication.

The Feast of Dedication is known today as Hanukkah, which takes place in December around our Christmas. Hanukkah, known as the Feast of Dedication, also known as the Feast of Lights, was the celebration that, by the way, isn't Mosaic. It wasn't Moses that gave us this feast but was actually during the time when Judas Maccabeus, it would have been in 164 B.C., cleansed the temple and reinstated the temple worship after it had been desecrated by a man

known as Antiochus Epiphanes. When we studied Daniel we got the background for that. He was a Syrian ruler who hated Jews. He went into the Jewish temple and spread pig broth all over the holy place and tore it down and destroyed and desecrated the Jewish temple. It was a forerunner or fore picture of what we know will happen in the tribulation known as the abomination of desolation. When they re-cleansed and rededicated the temple, they needed oil prepared for the lamps to light the lights. It took some time to prepare the oil, and they just had a little oil. God miraculously kept the light going for a period of time, so it's called the Feast of Lights or Hanukkah today.

Verse 23, "And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch," or Portico. It's like a big patio area around the outside of the temple. "Then came the Jews round about him," which actually indicates that they literally surrounded Him. Jesus is no doubt teaching, preaching, and ministering, and these hostile Jewish authorities, these Pharisees and no doubt scribes and Sadducees, gathered around Him and began to ask Him (and in the Greek it indicates that it's a continual asking), "and said unto him," and kept saying to Him in a very hostile manner, "How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ," the Messiah, "tell us plainly." He has actually said so plainly, but notice how Jesus responds. "Jesus answered them, I told you," He alludes to His words, "and ye believed not: the works that I do."

You have two things that Jesus alludes to in verse 25: His words and His works. Jesus did works and miracles that no one ever did before. He says, "Look at the works that I've done. They testify that My Father sent Me, that I am the Messiah, I am the Christ." Verse 26, "But ye believe not," this is where it transitions into our focus tonight, verses 27-29. So, "I've given you My words, I've performed My works, I do them in My Father's name and they bear witness of me, but you do not believe." Then He gives them the reason, and you need to notice it in verse 26. The reason they did not believe is "because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." He talked about the fact that He had sheep of other pastures. He talked about the blind man and a picture of Him coming into the fold, but he says to these religious Jews, "You're not one of my sheep."

Think about this. They were Jews. They were Jewish leaders. They were religious leaders and were so-called "looking and waiting" for the Messiah. He was right there in front of them, and they don't even acknowledge or recognize it. Can you imagine that? They're talking to Messiah, but because He says, "You're not one of My sheep," He says, "Therefore you do not believe my words." This idea of "you are not My sheep" indicates that they did not know Him as Messiah and Savior. They weren't chosen by God even though they were Jews.

Notice verse 27, "My sheep," and this is the contrast, "...because ye are not of my sheep," but "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." I don't know about you, but when I read those verses, I want to start clapping and shouting and celebrating because I am one of His sheep—I am in His hand, and I am secure. Amen? He says, "...and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Are

you out of His Father's hands? In the Greek, lest I forget because I have a lot of other things I want to share, it's actually emphatic and repeated, "No one, no no one, can every pluck you out of My Father's hand." If it were translated in the English in a literal way, it would be, "No one—no, no one—can ever, ever pluck you out of My Father's hand." Jesus is driving home this point, and He's repeating it several times.

These verses are some of the strongest (some feel the strongest) text in the Bible concerning the doctrine of the security of the believer. That's what I want to spend the rest of the night talking about. The subject may be new to some of you, maybe it's foreign to some of you—you have never thought about or delved into it—but one of the most common questions that I get and people discuss and talk about is: Can you be saved and a Christian and then turn away from the Lord and lose your salvation? Can you be born again and go to church and read your Bible and pray and follow Christ and then ever at any point in time that you may say, "Oh, I don't believe in Jesus anymore. I'm going to turn my back on God," or "I'm going to backslide," or you stumble or fall into sin. Do I lose my salvation? Do I need to get born again, again? Do I need to get saved again, or can I get saved again? How do I know whether or not I've lost my salvation? How do I know if I can be assured and have assurance of my salvation?

As you can see, this is a practical question as well as a very deep theological issue. Let me say this. We're not going to solve the question tonight because it's been debated and discussed for two thousand years in the church, so after two thousand years, John Miller is not going to solve the problem tonight, okay? You go, "Aw, shucks." I will share my heart, my life, but more importantly, I'm going to share what I believe the Bible teaches. I'm only frustrated because I realize that I can't do the subject justice or really exhaust it as I should. It would take several weeks to do that.

Let me share from a personal side as I kind of transition into the subject. Many times you've heard me say that I was raised in church. My mom and dad met in Bible college, and I was born into a Christian family. I went to children's church and Sunday school and all that, all the way along. My dad never went into full-time ministry, but his younger brother did. My uncle was a pastor, and we would go to his church; but I was a church kid. I went to church my whole life, but I was raised in a church that was of the persuasion that you could be lost after being saved. Now, the camp that's kind of theologically tied to is known as Arminianism, and that's kind of taking their cue from a man named James Arminius who kind of formulated this concept that you could be born again but there was the possibility or capability of you turning your back on God or denying your faith and losing your salvation. I was taught this as a young boy, grew up in this, became a Christian in my high school years, and went back to my church. Basically, I believed that, and this is one of very, very, very few teachings that when I first began to teach the Bible (and I don't really very rarely share this or talk about this) that was my position because I was taught that, I was raised in that, and I just followed into that. I had a pretty adamant opposition to the teaching that a Christian could not be lost, and I'll just leave that there. But I actually taught the other view.

As I continued to study the Bible, and study the Bible, and study the Bible—because I'm

preaching the Bible I had to study the Bible because I'm preaching the Bible—and reluctantly, I actually say reluctantly because by this time I'm a part of the Calvary Chapel movement, and the group mainly at that time did believe that you could lose your salvation and I was a Calvary Chapel pastor. But I went through this agonizing time that took me years as I continued to study the Bible to come to the conclusion that if you were born again—and I say if you are born again or if you're truly saved—that you can never be lost. I know that opens up a lot of issues, and I'm going to touch on some tonight, but actually came to believe that. Having come to believe that, I found great joy and great excitement that God keeps me by His grace. I have a theory, and I'll talk about it a little bit more, is that you cannot really have assurance if you believe in the possibility that you can be lost. You can't absolutely know that you will go to heaven when you die because you don't know that you might not turn your back a year from now, two years from now, three years from now on Jesus Christ and not go to heaven. So, I believe that the doctrine of assurance comes out of the doctrine of the security of the believer.

The other theological camp—and I question whether to even mention or to go that way—is known as Calvinism. Calvinism emphasizes the sovereignty of God, the elective purposes of God. Generally, a Calvinist following John Calvin's teachings and so forth believes that once you're saved, you cannot be lost. But they like to use a term called perseverance of the saints. They teach that basically if you're really saved, it will become evident because you'll continue on—you'll persevere, you won't backslide, you'll trust the Lord. That term I think focuses for me too much on your continuance as opposed to God's grace and power in keeping you, so I prefer the title or the term of security of the believer and that if we are saved by grace, we're kept by grace—not by works or by our goodness or by our righteousness—so my works will not save me, my works will not cause me to be lost, that I'm saved by the grace of God, and the focus needs to be on God rather than on my perseverance. Again, I only believe that you can have assurance if you hold the doctrine that you are secure once you have been truly born again.

I have a quote I'm going to put on the screen (and I don't often do this either), but I want you to see this quote by Charles Caldwell Ryrie in his book, *Basic Theology*. He says, "Eternal security is the work of God which guarantees that the gift of salvation, once received, is forever and cannot be lost. The concept of eternal security emphasizes God's activity in guaranteeing the eternal possession of the gift of eternal life. It relates to those the Holy Spirit regenerates, and its veracity does not rest on feelings or experiences." Maybe I'll get the staff to print those out on little cards and hand them to you, but I'm going to give you a bunch of verses now. You're probably thinking, John, are you ever going to go into the Bible? Yeah, I'm going to go in the Bible. I think you know me well enough that I'm going to do that. But I love that statement from Charles Ryrie about the doctrine of eternal security, and he closes this statement by saying, "the veracity does not rest on feelings or experiences."

How many of you have ever had a day where you don't feel saved? You feel like you're pretty wretched, right? Well, you don't go by your feelings, you go by the fact of God's Word and God's promises. Amen? The God, who cannot lie, has promised us; so we need to rest in that fact, in that truth. The problem with people often in this doctrine is that they have their preconceptions, their emotions, and their attachments. Given the fact that I was raised in this

certain church with this persuasion—my mom and dad, my parents, my sisters, everybody around me—it was difficult for me to come to this conclusion. If I haven't made it clear, let me say this: This is not a doctrine that is essential for Christian orthodoxy. This is not a doctrine that we should fight over. We sometimes do, but we shouldn't; so don't get militant about it and don't say, "Well, I can't fellowship with you because you don't believe like me." There are good, godly Christians on both sides of these views. I happen to believe one is right and the other is wrong, but that's okay, we'll work it out when we get to heaven.

Many of you have heard about John Wesley the founder of Methodism. Well, John Wesley was Arminian and believed you could lose your salvation. George Whitfield, the great evangelist, was a Calvinist and didn't believe that you could lose your salvation, but they were brothers in Christ and they loved one another. One person once asked George Whitfield, "Do you expect to see John Wesley in heaven when you get there?" George Whitfield said, "No." They thought, Oh right, you know, he's fighting with the Arminianist. This is great. He said, "No, and I'll tell you why, because he's going to be so close to the throne of God, and I'm going to be so far back there in the back that I won't be able to see him." I love that. They didn't really divide or fight over these issues, so when it comes to essential orthodoxy, it's not an issue. I think that there are practical implications of this doctrine and that it is linked together with other doctrines that won't make sense until it all comes synchronized together.

I believe that a true Christian can never be lost, but you have to have to have to underline the word "true." Sometimes we see somebody that we think is a Christian—they seem to be a Christian—and then they seem to no longer be a Christian, and we're perplexed. Will they go to heaven? Will they not go to heaven? Only God knows the heart. We don't know a person's heart. Maybe they're a prodigal son and they'll come back from the pigpen to the Father, I don't know. If they haven't been truly born again, then they never really were saved—they were professing to be believers but didn't possess true salvation—and there's a big difference.

From the text, and then I'll go on some other issues, I want to point out eight reasons that a true believer cannot be lost (if you want to write them down right out of our text), verses 27-29. First of all (reason number 1), true believers are His sheep. Look at verse 27, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me," so they are His sheep. They are authentic genuine true believers. Do you know that even Jesus had a Judas Iscariot in His group? If you were with Jesus and His disciples, you probably never would have expected that Judas was not genuine. You might have suspected Peter because he was goofing off and messing up all the time, "I don't know about Peter. I don't know if he'll make it to heaven," and Judas is actually the one that was the betrayer. By the way, I don't believe Judas was ever saved. I don't believe he was ever authentic, genuine, or truly saved. He followed Christ, but he wasn't genuine. He wasn't one of His sheep.

Write down John 6:39, "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me," Jesus speaking, "that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." Jesus said, "All that the Father has given Me, I will lose nothing." If He starts off with one hundred sheep, He ends with one hundred sheep. If He loses one, He goes into the wilderness

and finds and brings it back. I just make that point that they are authentic believers. They are His sheep.

The second reason (verse 27) is true believers hear His voice and follow Him. I want you to note that there are no conditions here—follow Him and don't sin, follow Him and don't stumble, follow Him and constantly obey—but they hear His voice and follow Him. Notice verse 27. He says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Actually there are three important things He says there. He says they are, "My sheep," He says they "hear my voice, and I know them," and thirdly, "they follow me." They are genuine believers, and they are obedient followers of Christ—they are following Him and walking after Him.

Thirdly, true believers have eternal life. This is where this doctrine really kicks in in verse 28. Jesus says, "And I give unto them eternal life." It's funny how we stumble over that. It's simple yet simply profound. If you have eternal life and you lose eternal life, you never had eternal life. If it's really eternal life, then you can never lose eternal life. Why? Because it's eternal life, duh. It's not something you can get and lose. I'm going to get into it in a minute, but this is what happens the moment you are born again or regenerated—meaning given new life—you enter into a sphere of life that is the very life of God. Only God is eternal. A Christian is a person who has the life of God in their soul. The moment you are saved or born again...and by the way, regeneration is not a process. It's super important for you to catch these little points. It's not a process. Once you've been regenerated, it happens instantly. The moment you believe in Jesus you are regenerated by being given new life, and it's eternal life. How important that is.

In John 3:16, which is actually a marvelous verse on the security of the believer, it says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The moment you are saved you are on your way to heaven, you have eternal life. It's not just that you get to go to heaven when you die, you have heaven in your soul right now—the life of God dwelling in you. It's not a matter of not sinning, 1John 1:9 was written for Christians. By the way, you can believe that you're secure in Christ but understand you'll never be perfect. You will have times when you do stumble and fall. This is why 1 John 1:9 is in the Bible, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Let me give you the fourth reason: Eternal life is a gift. I want you to note that in verse 28. It says, "And I give unto them eternal life." Notice Jesus is speaking and actually says, "I give them..." something. They don't earn it, they don't deserve it, they don't merit it, they don't work for it. If somebody gives you a gift and you pay them for it, it's not a gift anymore, right? "No, no. I'm giving it to you. No, it's a blessing to be able to give this to you." "Oh, let me pay for it." How many of you after you open all your Christmas presents go get your wallet out and say, "Okay, how much was that sweater? How much was that watch you gave me?" It's a gift! You don't work for it, you don't earn it; so God gives you salvation as a gift. The idea there is that it's a gift of God's grace.

Ephesians 2:8-9 is another classic verse that supports the doctrine of the security of the believer where Paul says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves." The faith isn't what's not of yourself, it's the salvation that is not of yourself. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it," your salvation, listen carefully, "is the gift of God: 8 Not of works, lest any man should boast." So, you don't do anything to get it, you can't do anything to lose it. Now, I know some people will disagree with me, and if you're disagreeing with me right now, just try to calm down a little bit and listen to me, okay? I don't care if you just totally disagree with me and don't follow me. I'm cool with that. I'm totally cool with that, but at least don't cut me off until the end of the evening. If you've been given a gift, you didn't work for it, but you have to do something to lose it is the idea (I'm going to get there to reinforce what I'm saying in just a few moments). It's not of works—you can't save yourself, you can't keep yourself, and you can't make yourself get lost.

Fifthly, true believers, verse 28, "...shall never perish." Underline, highlight, and circle that and put "praise God" in the margin of your Bible. I don't know what people do with that...well, I do know what they do with it, but it's just crazy. You can't get anymore clearer, more in your face, more forceful than Jesus saying from His own lips, "they shall never perish." He doesn't say, "They might perish," "If they're lucky they'll maybe not perish," "If they work real hard and read 10 chapters a day and go to church on Wednesday night and really do their best they'll maybe not perish," "shall never perish." That's consistent with John 3:16, and you need to make a note there, it's a promise from the God who cannot lie. This is a promise from God who cannot lie.

Let me give you the sixth. True believers (verse 28) cannot be snatched out of the Good Shepherd's hand. Remember in verse 27 He started off by talking about these are, "My sheep," so if you're one of His sheep, He says, "neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." I love it there. Notice what He says, "...and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them," the word "pluck" in the King James Bible is actually a reference to snatch or take away by force, "out of my hand." He's using the imagery of a shepherd, so the idea could be that a wolf or a predator would come and snatch one of those sheep and go running off with it. We have a lot of hawks fly around our house and one of my kids has a small dog. She's always freaked out that her dog will get carried away by a hawk, kind of a toto thing, you know, it's carried off by the birds. Satan is a thief who comes to kill, steal, and destroy, but he can't touch you. He can't destroy you. He can't rob you of your salvation. He can't snatch you or take you away. How marvelous is that? The truth there is that they can't be snatched away.

I want to touch on this because I don't want to forget it, is that some will say at this point, "But, Pastor John, though no one can snatch you out of His hand, you can take yourself out of His hand. You can actually jump out of His hand or climb out of His hand or turn your back on Him and leave Him and walk out of His hand." I'm convinced, very simply stated, that first if you're a believer, you're not going to want to do that. Secondly, when He says, "no man" that includes you. "No man" includes you and me. I'm in the "no man" here. I can't snatch myself out of my Father's hand or out of the Son's hand at this point. Jesus mentions His hand and then mentions the Father's hand at the end of verse 29.

Let me make it clear: God does not have a hand. This is what's known as anthropomorphism. It's a description of God by using human body parts or language. When it talks about the God who is immaterial in spirit holding us, the only way we can kind of relate to that is the idea that He hold us by our hands. The other day I was talking about holding my grandchildren's hands, so Jesus holds us with His mighty hand. By the way, the hand is scarred. He stretched it out on the cross and was crucified for you. That nail-scarred hand has a hold of you and He's keeping you in the palm of His hand as we'll see the Father is keeping you in the palm of His hand. I don't believe that you can undo what God Himself, by His grace, has done.

Seventhly, true believers are gifts from the Father to the Son. This is verse 29, "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all." Notice that statement "gave them me." Jesus actually says (verse 28), "...they shall never perish," and then adds to that...that would be enough right there, but He adds, "neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand," and then He adds another there, "My Father, which gave them me," so these sheep were actually given to Jesus by the Father. You say, "Well, what's significant about that?" The significance of that is that if the Father gave us as a gift to the Son, He's not going to take that gift back. He's going to keep it secure.

Here's number eight: True believers are safe in the Father's hand, "and no man," that would include us as well, "is able to pluck," or snatch, "them out of my Father's hand." It's very, very emphatic and very forceful—no one ever, no ever, can pluck them out of my Father's hand. I'm not a carpenter, but I've been around woodworking enough and helped my friends that are in the business to frame houses when I was younger. Sometimes they would drive a nail through a couple of pieces of wood, and in order to really secure that wood together with that nail, they would do what they called "clinching a nail" by turning the boards over and bending the back of the nail. Any of you guys that have driven nails and know that if you turn that thing over and take the back of that nail and hammer it over that you're not going to pull that thing out. That's pretty tight, right? Well, that's really what Jesus does here. He doesn't just say, "They're My sheep," He says, "They're My sheep, they hear My voice, I know them, they follow Me, I give them eternal life, they shall never perish, no one can pluck them out of My hand, My Father gave them to Me and He is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand," and He bends the nail WHAM! WHAM! WHAM! on the back. It really is a picture, what Jesus is doing here. It's like, "Whoa! Enough is enough, Lord," and I can't believe that anyone can read this passage and not comprehend the truth is that of I am His sheep.

I understand the problem might be that you say, "Well, I don't know if I'm one of His sheep. I don't know if I've really believed." I understand that that could be an issue. If that's the case, then repent of your sin tonight, get right with Jesus, and you know you are one of His sheep. If you hear His voice, harden not your hearts. You say, "I don't know if I'm really one of His sheep. I don't know if I'm going to go to heaven," then get saved tonight. Amen? Don't leave church without Jesus in your heart and then rest on His promises.

What I want to do...and I'm going to try to wrap it up as quickly as I can, but I couldn't help covering these points, I want to give you the reasons for eternal security as they relate to the

Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. If you're taking notes, these are good. You need to write them down as they relate to our triune God. I'm going to give you a couple of reasons why the believer is secure in relation to God the Father. First, because of His power, and we got that at the end of our text that He "is greater than all," He's powerful, "and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

In 1 Peter 1:5, Peter says that we are, "kept by the power of God...unto salvation." God is omnipotent. If God has you in His hand, He's not going to go, "Oops, lost another one. Uh, slipped out, gone!" "Shouldn't we look for 'em?" "No, he was a flake anyway." His hand is strong, and not only His power, but secondly His purpose. This is amazing, Romans 8. Now, if you haven't listened to my series all through Romans 8, we called it Blessed Assurance. From beginning to end, all of Romans 8 is about the security of the believer. It opens in verse 1 with, "There is...no condemnation to them which are in Christ," ends with no separation and in between, no defeat. If you want to flip there real quick. If you want to follow me in your own Bible, turn to Romans 8.

I want to show you the Father and His purpose in your salvation. Romans 8:28-31. Paul says, "And we know," this is something we're sure of, "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." This is a genuine sheep. These are true believers. They love God, they're called according to His purpose. "For whom he did foreknow," that means whom He set His love upon, this is God's elective purposes, "he also did predestinate," which means He predetermined them, "to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover," this is key, "whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." That's heaven, that's salvation.

There is no break in this golden chain. This is why I love that statement by Jonathan Edwards where he said, "What begins with grace, ends in glory." When God does a work of His grace in your heart, it will end in you being glorified. This is why in Romans 8:28 he says, "We know," we're confident, we're sure, "that all things work together for good," so if you're discouraged tonight, you're going to heaven. Cheer up! You won't have to live in California anymore. Won't that be amazing? That would be awesome! You read Romans 8 here, and it tells us that, "whom he did predestinate...them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31 What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Now, let me give you reasons that relate to God the Son. First, the price that He paid. Jesus died on the cross for your sins. Do you think that it wasn't sufficient or adequate to forgive your sins—past, present, and future? Jesus paid the price, His death on the cross. Now, if you're still in Romans 8, begin reading in verse 32, as you follow in the text. It says, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him," that is, His Son, "also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." God

the Father gave God the Son to die on the cross for our sins, so I know that I'm forgiven and going to heaven because Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe.

Secondly, because of the prayers that He prays. I just read it, Romans 8:34. It says, "...who is even at the right hand of God," what's He doing there? "who also maketh intercession for us." Did you know that right now God the Son is seated right next to God the Father, and He knows His sheep and is actually praying for you? Did you ever get a text from a friend saying, "Hey, I'm praying for you today," and you go, "Aww, that's awesome!" Even greater than that, Jesus is praying for you. Wouldn't it be cool to get a text from the Lord, "Hey, I'm praying for you today," "Ahh!" But He is. He's actually praying for you.

Remember when Peter was going to be tempted by Satan and Jesus said, "But I've prayed for you, that your faith fail not, and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren." I have an intercessor. I have an intermediate, Jesus the Son of God, who "ever liveth to make intercession for them." He prays for us. Write down John 17:24. He said, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory... before the foundation of the world." He prayed for us, and now He's praying, interceding for us.

Let me give you reasons related to the Holy Spirit, and this is my favorite. First, He regenerates us. I use that term rather than saying He gives us new life which is what it means, or you're born again. You can't be a Christian without being regenerated or born again. Let me make a point. I literally could preach a whole sermon right here. You can't regenerate yourself. You can't "born again" yourself. You can't sit in a lotus and contemplate your naval. You can't, "Hmmmm....," chant your mantra. We used to think you could take LSD and get to God. Guess what? It didn't work. There's nothing you can do to regenerate yourself. Why do I emphasize that? Because I'm telling you, I'm absolutely convinced, and in all my years of studying the Bible I don't know anywhere where you can find it—you cannot unregenerate yourself.

Let me make a point, and I may be getting ahead of myself on my notes, but this really stirs my heart. When you got saved (if you're taking notes, you might want to write this down), something actually happened to you. You got a new heart. You got new life. It wasn't just that, "Yeah, I believe in Jesus," and now, "I don't believe in Jesus." You can't just turn it on like a switch. You were born into God's family. You can't unborn yourself. I've got four kids. They can denounce me, disown me, run away from me, but I am their biological father. Even if they don't talk to me or like me, I am their biological father. They're stuck with me whether they like it or not. I think they like it though. You can't unborn yourself, and there's nowhere in Scripture that you can show me or explain to me what you need to do to unregenerate yourself. My background in the church I grew up in...this blew my mind when I came to realize that. I always thought that I had to repent, and I had to believe, and I had to trust Jesus, and I had to pray, and I had to be good, and I had to...I don't smoke and I don't chew, and I don't hang out with those that do because I want to go to heaven. Everybody in the church got saved every week, "Aw, I played cards this week, I'm so sorry. I'm going to hell, so I gotta come down and get saved again." It was so liberating and so freeing to realize God regenerated me, and I can't

undo what God did. Only God can do that, and He's not going to do that.

Every one of these points, by the way, I give you about the work of the Holy Spirit is what God does and we can't undo, so we are regenerated by Him. Read John 13 where Jesus wanted to wash Peter's feet. Peter said, "No, You can't wash my feet." Jesus said, "If I don't wash your feet, you have no part with Me." Peter goes, "Okay, then give me a whole bath." He said, "Peter, you've already had a bath, all you need is your feet washed." That "bath" was a picture of regeneration. Once you've been born again and you fall into sin all you need to do is to get your feet washed, 1 John 1:9.

Let me give you the second thing the Holy Spirit does. He indwells us, Romans 8:9. If you don't have the Holy Spirit of Christ, you're none of His. Every Christian has the Holy Spirit living inside of them, and He will never leave you or forsake you. I run into Christians all the time that are worried that they blasphemed the Holy Spirit and they left Him. If you've been born again, you cannot blaspheme the Holy Spirit and He will not leave you. You can grieve Him, you can quench Him, but you cannot grieve Him away. "Well, what about Psalm 51 where David said, 'Take not thy Holy Spirit from me?'" He lived in a different dispensation. He wasn't living in the Church Age, the body of Christ, where we have the new covenant and we've been given a new heart. We have a relationship with God. It's a whole different thing. The Spirit of God would come upon kings and prophets and come off them. Every child of God has a permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Let me give you the third thing of what the Holy Spirit does that you can't undo. He baptizes us into Christ, the body of Christ. I believe once you are in Christ, you're always in Christ. I believe this work of the Holy Spirit that I'm covering right now is actually the strongest and most powerful evidence for the security of the believer. By the way—I'll open some more cans of worms—I believe every Christian is baptized by, with, or in the Holy Spirit the moment they are regenerated because it's a work of the Spirit taking you out of Adam and placing you in Christ. You're baptized into Christ. He said to the Ephesians, "One baptism, one Spirit, one Lord, all made to drink of that one Spirit." So, if somebody tells you that you're a Christian but you might not be baptized in the Holy Spirit, that is not true. You may not be filled with the Holy Spirit—which is an ongoing, continual appropriating of the Spirit's work—but the moment you are born again, the moment you are indwelt, you are taken out of Adam and placed into Christ. Write down this verse for that point, 1 Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," we've "been all made to drink into one Spirit." Write down Romans 8:1, those who "...are in Christ Jesus," and everyone that is a Christian is in Christ, "no condemnation."

Write down this, too. I think it's the fourth, He seals us. This is so powerful. Ephesians 1:13, 4:30, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Not only are we sealed with the Spirit, it's until the day of redemption. That verse actually is saying that you're regenerated, you're indwelt, you're baptized, and you're sealed. All of this happens to every Christian the moment they are saved whether they feel it, know it or not, and none of it can be undone by anyone. God does it, you can't undo it. The word "sealed" there means that you are secure. It's a mark of ownership and security. If you want to lose your

salvation, you'll have to unseal yourself as well as unregenerate yourself. So, He seals us to the day of redemption.

What do we need to do to be lost? Well, we need to unregenerate ourselves, grieve the Holy Spirit away so He leaves us, we need to take ourselves out of Christ, and get back into Adam. We can't do that, and we are sealed. We need to break the seal of the Holy Spirit. You can't do that. Now, if you understand these works of the Holy Spirit, you come to the conclusion that there's no way that I can be lost. If I'm a true believer, if I'm a true child of God, I cannot be lost.

Now some people say to me all the time, "Yeah, but I have a friend, or a family member, they were a Christian. They went to church. They played in the worship team, they did this and turned away." We make our decision on what we believe not by experience but by the Bible. Experiences can be interpreted subjectively and differently. If you base what you believe about God on experience, you're going to be a mixed-up person; but if you base what you believe about God on the Bible, it's God's objective, unchanging truth. Amen? Now, it could be that they were saved and they will come back. It could be that they were never really born again, that they were not really a sheep, that they were a goat. Peter talks about these people who turn away, they're like dogs that go back to their vomit or like pigs who go back to wallowing in the mire, but they weren't sheep. I believe sheep will come back. The prodigal son came back, and the Father was waiting.

If you're backslidden tonight, come back. Some people say, "Well, this doctrine is going to lead people to go out and sin. Whoo! I'm free! I can go out and do anything I want tonight!" The verses in the Bible—we haven't even gone there—that seem to indicate you can lose your salvation, I believe, are warning you to make sure you have it. They're not warning you that you can lose it, they're warning you to make sure you have it. If you're living in habitual sin, practicing sin, the Bible says that you may not be saved, you may not be born again. You need to make sure that you've really been saved. If you're not sure tonight, then trust Jesus Christ who will come into your heart, forgive your sins, and make you His child. If you've done that, then believe His promises, rest on His Word, and follow Him. What a blessing to know that I'm kept by the power of God until the day I go to heaven. Amen?