

Outline on Eternal Security
Pastor Marc Graham
Calvary Bible Church

THE QUESTION OF ETERNAL SECURITY

When discussing this question there are several crucial points that must be addressed:

I. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF SIN?

A. Sin is not something we do, sin has to do with who we are.

B. Every person (other than Christ, due to the Virgin Birth) is born into this world with a sin nature which resides in the heart (Eph. 2:3; Rom. 7:5; 8:5-7; Gal. 5:16-17; Psalm 51:5).

1. Note that the Greek word *sarx* is translated *flesh* in most translations (KJV, New American Standard). It refers to the "sin nature" which is why the NIV translates it as "sin nature," instead of "flesh."

C. Therefore, every person is a sinner before they even exit the womb (Psalm 51:5, which refers to David receiving the sin nature from the time of conception).

1. Thus, the words and deeds of sin are not what make us sinners. The original sin (of Adam and Eve) is passed down through the whole human race, causing us to be sinners under condemnation from God the moment we are conceived (Rom. 5:12-18). The actual acts of sin we commit are the fruit, not the root. The root that makes us sinners is the sin nature which resides in our hearts (Mark 7:21-23).

D. Implications of the above:

1. Our outer actions reveal whether or not we are truly redeemed. Throughout the New Testament we are told that salvation produces an inner heart change that will manifest itself in outer evidence.

2. With the above in mind, 1 John, for example, gives us three tests of a true believer.

a. The doctrinal test. Do they believe and confess

the deity of Jesus Christ, that He is God come in the flesh (1 John 4:1-4,15).

b. The obedience test. A true believer desires to please God and obey Him. They may struggle with sin and growth issues, but there should be a desire to learn how to walk with God present (1 John 2:3-6; 3:4-9----the passage in chapter 3 when it speaks of practicing sin in verse 9, it is the present tense in the Greek. This means it is speaking of someone who engages in the continuous practice of sin as a lifestyle. It is not speaking of anyone who commits and individual act of sin. In that case, we would all be lost).

c. The love test. A true believer loves God, His Word, His people, and His Church. The Bible knows nothing of a believer who wants nothing to do with the Bible or the Church (1 John 2:9-11; 3:14-15; 4:7-13).

3. The point is that when someone truly comes to Christ, there is external evidence of that change. This is the answer to the objection, "You Baptists believe that if a person commits murder or lives in sin, but says he is saved he is still going to Heaven, because of this eternal security business." That is not what we believe at all nor is it what the Bible teaches. The Bible calls into question the salvation of people who are still in bondage to sin and do not evidence indication of a changed heart.

4. Those who believe that one can lose his/her salvation emphasize external righteousness, much like the Pharisees did. The problem of sin is a problem of the heart (internal). The New Testament is clear that salvation not only delivers us from the penalty of sin (eternal Hell), but the daily power of sin and its mastery in our lives (Romans 6; Titus 2:11-14). There ought to be some evidence of change if a person is truly saved. Perfection? No. A love for God and new desire to know Him and serve Him? Yes (Romans 7:22).

II. THE NATURE OF SALVATION: GRACE AND GRACE ALONE!

A. What was the cry of the Protestant Reformation against the works-based Catholic religion? *Sola gracia, sola fide,*

sola Scriptura! Grace, alone, faith alone, Scripture alone!

B. You quoted some key verses: Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5.

C. There is clear theology in the New Testament that, due to the very meaning and nature of grace (unmerited favor), works can never enter at any point into the salvation process.

1. We never deserve to get it. We never deserve to keep it. This is why we are not only saved by grace, but our continued stand is in grace (Romans 5:1-2).

2. Paul gives a powerful illustration in Romans 4 using Abraham to show that if works enter into the process at any point, grace is no longer grace, but God is merely paying off a debt. (see Romans 4:1-8).

a. It is important to note that the Jews believed that God chose Abraham because he was more righteous than anyone else.

b. Paul says “No!” Abraham was saved by grace through faith, just like everyone else (Romans 4:3).

3. Note that if works enters into the process at any point then man has cause for boasting. Paul says, “No!!!” (see 1 Corinthians 1:26-31).

D. Paul rebuked the Galatians for starting in grace and then thinking that they could keep it by works (Galatians 3—whole chapter, particularly verse 3). Notice that Galatians 3 refers back to Abraham’s example, just as Romans 4 did.

E. If man is to be saved and kept by human works, what is God’s standard? It is absolute perfection. In the midst of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus hits the Pharisees, who were trying to be saved by works, with this statement---*Be ye therefore perfect, even as the Father which is in Heaven is perfect.* (Matt. 5:48). Since sin is anything that transgresses God’s law in thought (Matt. 9:4; 15:19; Mark 7:21; 4:14---note the terms, “evil” and “wicked” thoughts), sinful words (Rom. 3:13-14; Matt. 12:36); sinful actions (Mark 7:21-23; 1 Cor. 6:9-10;

Gal. 5:19-21) then we must maintain absolute perfection in thought, word and deed to get saved and “stay saved.” This is impossible.

F. The doctrine of Justification means that the righteousness of Jesus Christ has been credited to us, due to our own inability to present perfection to God (see Romans 3:20-28).

G. Because we are saved by grace alone and kept by grace alone, there are many statements in the New Testament as to the permanence of salvation (John 6:37,39; John 8:34-35; John 10:27-29; Romans 8:30, 38-39; Eph. 4:30).

III. THE PROPER PLACE OF GOOD WORKS.

A. Good works are the result of salvation, not the cause. (2 Cor. 5:17; Ephesians 2:10).

1. Because we are now dead to sin, no longer its slaves, we are to live in the power of Christ and yield our bodies as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:12-14).

B. No believer should conclude that grace is a license to live sinfully and do as they please (Romans 6:1-2,15-16; Gal. 5:13).

C. Justification is to result in progressive sanctification (Phil. 2:12-13; Ephesians 4:1, 22-24; Romans 12:1-2).

D. Struggle with sin does not result in the loss of salvation, but in the chastening of God. (Hebrews 12:4-11).

a. Notice that God’s chastening upon us for our sin is an indication that we are truly His children (Hebrews 12:5-8). His discipline upon us is proof of our sonship.