

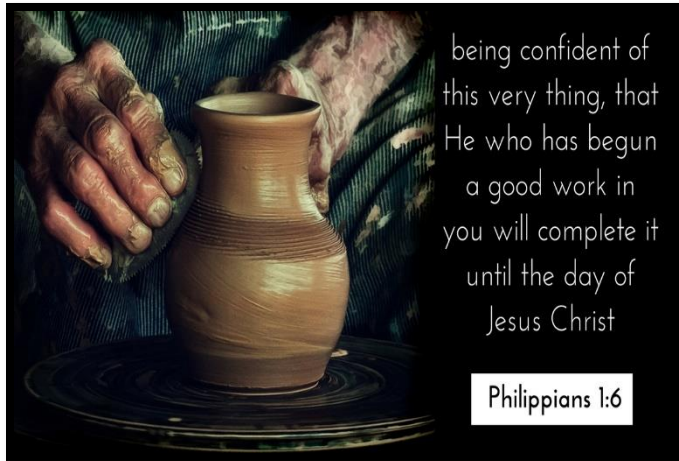
Being Certain of Your Future!

Philippians 1:6

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

“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”

To be released from the entanglement of sin (Hebrews 12:1-3) and have the laws of God written upon one’s brand-new heart (Ezekiel 36:26-27)¹ that is sealed and sanctified by His Spirit (Ephesians 1:13; Romans 15:16) is truly a miracle of divine grace! “The conversion of a soul is



quicken, renewing, and transforming. It generates new life, forms a new character, and lifts people into alliance with God.”² I can think of no greater gift a person could ever attain than to be justified by the blood of the Lamb with every spiritual blessing possible (Ephesians 1:3) and necessary to conform to the likeness of the Son (Romans 8:29-30)!³ Having found such an invaluable treasure and pearl (Matthew 13:44-46) it is only natural to wonder if such a gift received through grace and faith (Ephesians 2:8-

9) could be lost through disbelief and unholy living? After all, what could one ever say is irrevocable for are not all things of this world temporary and destined to be “consumed by fire and laid bare (2 Peter 3:10)? But if one believes salvation can be lost then does this mean one is to “walk with carefulness and circumspection”⁴ so intense that one constantly lives in fear of losing that of which one attained by faith and grace? If true, does this mean no return is possible (Hebrews 6:4) and if so would this not only make “Christ’s atonement an event without efficacy and force”⁵ but also contradict Scriptures that say Christians are eternally adopted into God’s family (John 3:16)? Today’s sermon is not going to review all the arguments that one cannot

¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Perseverance of the Saints,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 300.

² William Paxton, [“Salvation as a Work,”](#) in *Princeton Sermons* (New York; Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1893), 76.

³ James Montgomery Boice, [Philippians: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 35.

⁴ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Perseverance of the Saints,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 299.

⁵ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Perseverance of the Saints,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 296.

lose one's salvation but instead review Philippians 1:6 and suggest that we as Christians can be confident that He who began a good work in us, i.e., conversion, will carry His presence and seal in our hearts until the day He returns, and our salvation is consummated for all of eternity!⁶

The Great Shepherd Sought Me

Our confidence of our salvation must first start with an understanding that we of our own effort cannot lift ourselves from our bootstraps and attain any measure of acceptance in God's sight! Lest we join Satan and foolishly think we "can raise our thrones above the stars of God



and sit on the mount of the assembly" (Isaiah 14:13), let us not forget the words of Apostle Paul, "there is no one righteous, not even one" (Romans 3:10-18)⁷ or the prophet Jeremiah who said the "heart of a person is deceitful above all things" (17:9). "The Philippians did not begin the work of salvation in themselves only to have God come along and add a little to it,"⁸ no, to be born again there "must be the decree of the Eternal Father, the death of the ever-blessed Son, and fullness of the operation of the Spirit of Truth!"⁹ "The first steps of ending the separation

between the prodigal son and the Father"¹⁰ is not the offering of mere platitudes or filthy rags of our presumed but mistaken righteousness (Isaiah 64:6), as if works could ever purchase our salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9), but the Father¹¹ seeking the defiant, lost souls of stony hearts (Ezekiel 36:26) to repent and accept by faith and grace that which was purchased by the very blood of His own Son (John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:20)! "The hardness of the human heart and the fickleness of human love"¹² can only be born again and grafted into His vine (John 15:1-11)

⁶ F. F. Bruce, [Philippians](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Peabody, MA: Baker Books, 2011), 32.

⁷ James Montgomery Boice, [Philippians: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 34.

⁸ Roger Ellsworth, [Opening up Philippians](#), Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2004), 18.

⁹ Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Perseverance of the Saints](#)," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 290–291.

¹⁰ Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Perseverance of the Saints](#)," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 291.

¹¹ James Montgomery Boice, [Philippians: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 35.

¹² Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Perseverance of the Saints](#)," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 292.

through the Son's power for He alone justifies, sanctifies and adopts the wayward and lost eternally into His family (Romans 5:9-11)! Any attempt to attain righteousness any other than through belief in the atoning sacrifice of the Son is merely "dust building upon dust," futile and without merit!

The Holy Spirit Changed Me

Confidence in our salvation must rest purely upon its author and pefector, the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 12:1-3)! No matter how "healthy in body, wealthy in estate, educated," loved by all for one's philanthropic deeds,¹³ the leopards spots of the entanglement of sin cannot be



ripped out of a person unless touched by the very finger of God!¹⁴ "The fact is, that the divine life has departed from the natural man; man is dead in sin, and life must come to him from the Giver of life, or he must be dead for evermore."¹⁵

One simply cannot be like a Pharisee and clean the outside of the cup (Luke 11:39-40)¹⁶ and attempt to produce good fruit¹⁷ in the form of holiness unless one first becomes part of the Vine, the only place where eternal life and holiness is found! Whether one believes as the Arminian that the "first movement of the

soul to God begins in the self-determining power of the human will" or as the Calvinist that salvation is assigned to whom God pleases before they are even born,¹⁸ one can be rest assured that salvation is accomplished only through the Holy Spirit,¹⁹ for no one else can perform the miraculous second birth and renew of a person into God's image²⁰ except the Potter who alone

¹³ Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Perseverance of the Saints,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 290.

¹⁴ Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Perseverance of the Saints,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 290.

¹⁵ Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Perseverance of the Saints,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 291.

¹⁶ William Paxton, "[Salvation as a Work,](#)" in *Princeton Sermons* (New York; Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1893), 81.

¹⁷ William Paxton, "[Salvation as a Work,](#)" in *Princeton Sermons* (New York; Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1893), 81.

¹⁸ William Paxton, "[Salvation as a Work,](#)" in *Princeton Sermons* (New York; Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1893), 82.

¹⁹ Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Perseverance of the Saints,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 290.

²⁰ Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Perseverance of the Saints,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 290.

molds the clay! For a sinner to be “lifted from eternal condemnation and ruin and made a part of God’s family”²¹ is accomplished by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, yes, but still is granted and sustained by the miraculous power and grace of our Lord! It is a myth and dangerous to the health of our souls to believe that it is only by our filthy rags of “good” works of self-sufficiency²² that we maintain our relationship with our Lord for those whom God sought are nothing without the Vine that gives them life. I am not saying that we are absolved from using our spiritual gifts, having faith in our Lord or a desire to obey His commands but merely that our efforts to be holy must be divinely aided to result in holiness!

The Work God Gave me has a Purpose and is Progressive

The good work that was begun in those saved will be carried on until Christ returns! “Along the road from sin to heaven, from the first leaving of the swine-trough right up to the



joyful entrance into the banquet, and the music and dancing of the glorified spirits, every step must be enabled by divine grace.”²³ Becoming more like Jesus means continually discovering how far one misses the mark of holiness and constantly turning to the Great Physician for “hourly forgiveness and cleansing!”²⁴ Ironically the more we draw nearer to God the more His light reveals our deepest of sins and the more need for both grace and our continual repentance! For Apostle Paul there is no salvation that does not include living a progressive,²⁵ transformed life²⁶ molded by the crucible

of the flames of temptations, trials, tribulations that “in God’s providence and grace prepares one for an eternity in His presence!”²⁷ The chosen are not just granted salvation and sanctification for

²¹ Roger Ellsworth, [*Opening up Philippians*](#), Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2004), 18.

²² Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Perseverance of the Saints,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 291–292.

²³ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Perseverance of the Saints,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 291.

²⁴ James Montgomery Boice, [*Philippians: An Expository Commentary*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 36–37.

²⁵ William Paxton, [“Salvation as a Work,”](#) in *Princeton Sermons* (New York; Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1893), 85.

²⁶ Gordon D. Fee, [*Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 87.

²⁷ William Paxton, [“Salvation as a Work,”](#) in *Princeton Sermons* (New York; Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1893), 87.

their benefit alone but also to participate in the sharing of the Gospel message.²⁸ “The outward cooperation in the work of the Gospel is, of course, the outcome and expression of inward change made at the time of conversion.”²⁹ We are to stain towards what lies ahead (3:13-14)³⁰ while living as future citizens in heaven³¹ in the present through whatever arrows the powers of this dark world throw our way (Ephesians 6:12)! While the “survival of the *koinōnia* in the Gospel does not depend merely on human initiative or human endurance,”³² we must not forget we are called to faithfully and with an abundance of grace to plant the seeds of righteousness of which God alone will make grow (1 Corinthians 3:6)! So, let us not grow weary doing good for in His time the harvest will surely come (Galatians 6:9)!³³

God’s Work of Salvation is Irrevocable

Philippians 1:6 teaches what scholars call the doctrine of perseverance of the saints:³⁴



that states while faith is a prerequisite to becoming born again, it is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that salvation is received and maintained. When Paul says he had confidence that the good work, i.e. their salvation, would continue until Christ’s Second Coming this means that salvation for Paul cannot be lost once received! While giving all the Scripture that teaches salvation is irrevocable is beyond this short sermon,³⁵ I want to highlight some of the

more predominant passages and their meaning.

²⁸ James Montgomery Boice, [*Philippians: An Expository Commentary*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 36.

²⁹ I-Jin Loh and Eugene Albert Nida, [*A Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*](#), UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995), 12.

³⁰ Gordon D. Fee, [*Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 88.

³¹ Gordon D. Fee, [*Philippians*](#), vol. 11, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Westmont, IL: IVP Academic, 1999), 48.

³² G. Walter Hansen, [*The Letter to the Philippians*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 50.

³³ Charles H. Spurgeon, [*“The Perseverance of the Saints,”*](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 291.

³⁴ James Montgomery Boice, [*Philippians: An Expository Commentary*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 33.

³⁵ Charles H. Spurgeon, [*“The Perseverance of the Saints,”*](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 294.

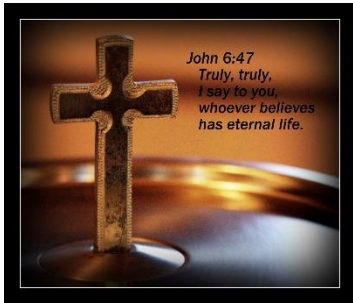
1. **God is Immutable.** Despite knowing that none would be righteous (Romans 3:10) and even the



saints would not be able to stop sinning (Romans 7:18-20), before the foundation of the world God chose to provide a way for humanity to be saved through the atoning sacrifice of His Son (Ephesians 1:4; John 3:16).³⁶ Since many Scriptural references state in some way God alone elects people to be saved (Romans 9-11) if one could lose one's salvation then this means that God changed His mind when Scripture clearly says He does not revoke the promises He gives (Numbers 23:19; Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17). And if one who was born again

could land in hell then what charge could ever be made against the elect when the Son justifies them as part of God's family (Romans 8:33-34)?³⁷

2. **God is Omnipotent.** If a person can lose their salvation, then why would Peter say we are born again with an incorruptible seed (1 Peter 1:23)?³⁸ "Corruptible seed brings forth flesh unto death; the incorruptible seed of the Word brings forth life everlasting."³⁹ If our salvation depends on "fickle faith" then why does Scripture say who "eateth of the bread of life shall live forever" (John 6:57-58)⁴⁰ or why does it say that the Holy Spirit is our "deposit guaranteeing our inheritance" (Ephesians 1:13)? Also, does not Scripture say that the Father has given Christ His sheep of which no one can snatch them from His hand (John 10:28-30)?⁴¹ And if the spiritual forces of evil (Ephesians 6:12) were able to deceive the elect (Matthew 24:24) so perversely that a Christian would become "unborn again," would not these evil forces have to be powerful enough to tie up the Strong Man, i.e. the Holy Spirit, and if so would that not contradict 1 John 4:4 which clearly says "greater is the One who is in you than in the world?"



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³⁶ Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Perseverance of the Saints,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 292.

³⁷ Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Perseverance of the Saints,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 296.

³⁸ Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Perseverance of the Saints,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 297.

³⁹ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966), 72-73.

⁴⁰ Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Perseverance of the Saints,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 297.

⁴¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Perseverance of the Saints,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 297.

3. **God is Merciful.** Psalms 139 states God knows everything both past, present and future about our lives. This means that when we became born again, He knew that we were and would



always be, based on our own merit, far from righteous (Romans 3:10-18). And yet due to our “faith as tiny as a mustard seed” (Matthew 17:20) and the grace of the atoning sacrifice of His Son Jesus (John 3:16), His Spirit granted us new life and we became God’s very own children (Ephesians 1:13). If bridging the gap between our filthy rags and God’s holiness is the only way to maintain salvation, then the cross was in vain for the children of God would be cast into hell without any accusation that the blood of the Lamb had not atoned

for.⁴² After all, does it not make God unjust to offer unconditional salvation and then permanently remove it from the fallen with no possibility of repentance or return (Hebrews 6:4-12)?

Spurgeon is right to conclude that “the veracity of God to His promises, the faithfulness of God to His purpose, the immutability of God in His character, and the love and mercy of God in His essence, all these prove that He cannot and will not leave a soul that He has looked upon with mercy until the great work is done.”⁴³ Christ will not be “one” with a members of a body in which some will one day be cast in hell,⁴⁴ but only with those who are eternally the redeemed masterpieces of His grace, for who could ever condemn the ones God has chosen (Romans 8:31-39)?

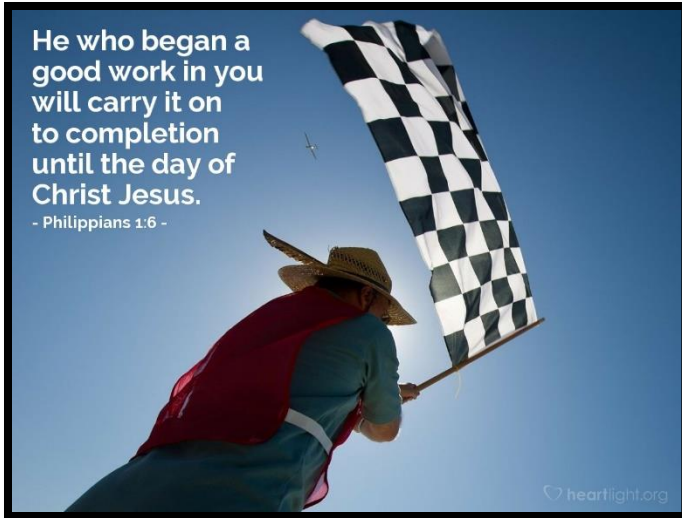
God’s Good Work will be Completed Upon Christ’s Return

So why should we as Christian’s care about the doctrine of perseverance? To answer this let me give you a quick illustration. Please find a large room, go to one end, and create a line with masking tape on the floor. Then pray to God to reveal your level of faith and obedience to Him. If the room represents God’s racetrack towards eternal holiness, how many steps in your spiritual journey have you already taken to be more like Him? By your own might and power ... none ... but do not lose heart the day you believed in the atoning sacrifice of Christ was the day He joyfully carried you onto His kingdom track! “Believers in Christ are people of the future, a sure future that has already begun in the present. They are citizens of heaven (3:20), who live the life of heaven, the life of the future, in the present in whatever circumstances they find

⁴² Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Perseverance of the Saints,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 296.

⁴³ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Perseverance of the Saints,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 296.

⁴⁴ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Perseverance of the Saints,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 297.



themselves.”⁴⁵ While you certainly can not be perfected until the Lord descends from heaven,⁴⁶ you can be rest assured that when the Judge returns His very own blood will secure you an eternal position on His racetrack! I want to finish with a warning that must be taken quite seriously! If you have never felt any change in your life since the day you said YES to the Lord or if you have backslidden for a long time and God has not disciplined you to bring you back (Hebrews 12:6) then please get on your hands and knees, your salvation was never obtained for

while one cannot lose one’s salvation neither can one be left unchanged after haven born of the Spirit or disciplined by the Father when wandering on the broad path! For those who have the Spirit you can be confident that the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end (Revelation 21:6) “who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day He returns” (Philippians 1:6)!

⁴⁵ Gordon D. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 88.

⁴⁶ Charles H. Spurgeon, “*The Perseverance of the Saints*,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 293.