

**Icebreaker – Longest event in memory**

This feels like it will never end!

Half Marathon in Louisville, KY – 2000

Two-hour OT soccer game in North Carolina – 1992

This morning's sermon...

**Introduction: Where are we?**

Ordo Salutis

1. Election (God's choice of people to be saved)
2. The gospel call (proclaiming/hearing the message of the gospel)
3. Regeneration (being born again)
4. Conversion (faith and repentance)
5. Justification (right legal standing)
6. Adoption (membership in God's family)
7. Sanctification (right conduct of life)
- 8. Perseverance (remaining a Christian)**
9. Death (going to be with the Lord)
10. Glorification (receiving a resurrection body)

TULIP – Outline of Calvinism/Reformed view of Salvation

Total Depravity

Unconditional Election

Limited Atonement

Irrresistible Grace

**Perseverance of the Saints**

**Common Expressions**

"Eternal Security," "Once saved, always saved," "Assurance of Salvation"

"If your faith fizzles before the finish it was faulty from the first"

**Defining our Terms**

Wayne Grudem (Chapter 40)

"All those who are truly born again will be kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives, and that only those who persevere until the end have been truly born again."

Westminster Confession of Faith – [Chapter XVII](#)

Of the Perseverance of the Saints

I. 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.

II. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all which arises also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

III. Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalence of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time, continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

**Contrasting Viewpoints:**

Arminian: All who believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation.

Antinomian: All who make a profession of faith are eternally secure, whether or not they keep up their faith.

Reformed: All who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in Faith by the Power of Almighty God and therefore continue to persevere in faith.

**Outline of Study**

9/3/06 - Background and Introduction

9/10/06 - Biblical texts - what does the Bible really teach on this?

9/17/06 - What is God's responsibility and what is my responsibility?

9/24/06 - Handling the difficult passages of scripture

10/1/06 - How can I know that I will persevere?

Check out this website for more info:

<http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/topic/doctrinesofgrace.html>

**Icebreaker – Oldest saint in your life**

Abuela celebrates 80<sup>th</sup> birthday this weekend

John Piper: To keep from giving up the faith, surround yourself with people who never gave up... even if they're dead! And today, most of them are.

**What Does the Bible Say about Perseverance?**

I. The True Believer HAS new Life that is ETERNAL.

John 3: 16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3:36 He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

John 6:47 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.

John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.

Romans 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

1 Peter 1:23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

*II. All True Believers WILL persevere until the END.*

John 6: 39-40 This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.

John 10:27-29 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will 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 the Father's hand.

Romans 8:29-30 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

1 Corinthians 1:4-8 I thank my God ... who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:13-14 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

Philippians 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 1:5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

*II. All True Believers MUST persevere until the END.*

John 8:31-32 If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.

Matthew 10:22 You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.

Colossians 1:22-23 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach- if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard...

Hebrews 2:1 For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.

Hebrews 3:14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end

### **Conclusion**

If your faith fizzles before the finish it was faulty from the first.

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

Man goes to his pastor to tell him that it is God's will to divorce his wife in order to marry the woman with whom he is having an extra marital affair.

Good news & bad news: God will break your legs... but He might not.

**Recap Week 2 and Conclusion****Icebreaker – Order of Operations**

Evaluate these equations:

$$2 + 5 \times 3 = 17 \text{ (not } 30)$$

$$12 / 3 - 2 = 2 \text{ (not } 12)$$

$$4^2 - 2 = 14 \text{ (not } 4)$$

The order of operations matters! The wrong order gives the wrong answer

Philippians 2:12-13

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

**God's Part: INITIATE, CONTINUE, and FINISH His work**

Initiate – Romans 8:29-30

Continue – 1 Peter 1:5

Finish – Philippians 1:6

**My Part: Trust & Obey**

I. Trust? Two part response...

A. PRAY that God does His part: Pray for my own soul, prone to wander. Pray for the souls of others, that God may also save them.

Question – If God is going to do it anyway, why should I pray?

Response 1 – We don't know what God is going to do – we must pray! Prayer is for us – to increase our faith. Prayer is for God – to give Him the glory and acknowledge Him as sovereign.

Response 2 – Because God is sovereign He is able to answer prayer. If He is not sovereign, there is no point in praying because He cannot answer them!

B. LIVE by faith in Him and His promises.

Question – Which promises?

Response – ALL of them!

1) If God IS and heaven IS, then we should live like heaven is our destination, not a big house on earth

2) If God promises lasting joy and intimacy from sex within marriage, then we should wait for marriage to prove Him right.

3) If God truly gives us all material blessings and promises to bless all nations through us, then we should give joyfully to Him a portion of all that He has given us.

4) If God really will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, then we should confess those sins and seek His righteousness.

I. Obey? Goal & Process...

A. Goal: Pursue ... the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. (Heb. 12:14)

B. Process: No short-cuts! Exercise of Christian Disciplines

1) Bible reading and Meditation

Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1:2, Matthew 4:4

2) Prayer

Phil. 4:6, 1 Thes. 5:17

3) Worship

Eph. 5:18-20

4) Witnessing

Matt. 28:19-20

5) Christian Fellowship

John 13:34-35, Heb. 10:24-25

6) Self control

1 Cor. 9:27, Gal. 5:23

### **Conclusion**

For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. (Heb. 2:1)

Translation: An ultimate decision not to pursue grace is evidence that we are not of God's people in the first place. (1 John 2:19)

If your faith fizzles before the finish, it was faulty from the first.

**Recap Weeks 1-3*****Week 1 – Background & Intro***

Step 8 in Ordu Salutis, Last letter in TULIP

Definition: “All those who are truly born again will be kept by God’s power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives, and that only those who persevere until the end have been truly born again.”

Contrasting views: In again, out again (Arminian), Once in, always in (Antinomian), Those who are in stay in and finish in (Reformed)

***Week 2 – Biblical texts***

John 6:47 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.

John 10:27-28 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

Hebrews 3:14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end

***Week 3 – God’s responsibility and my responsibility***

God’s Part: INITIATE, CONTINUE, and FINISH His work

My Part: Trust & Obey

Trust: Pray and live by promises

Obey: Pursue sanctification via Christian Disciplines

**Difficult Passages**

A. Foundational Principle: 1 John 2:19

They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

B. An Old Testament Paradox

Q: Whom did God deliver out of Egypt?

Jude 5 Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.

Hebrews 3: 16-19 For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His

rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

### C. A New Testament Challenge

Hebrews 6: 4-6 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

Q: Are the people being described in this passage true believers?

Once enlightened – Came to understand the gospel, not respond to it

Tasted the heavenly gift – No permanence implied by this statement

Partakers of the Holy Spirit – can be interpreted as loose association; observed and become acquainted with the works and movements of the Holy Spirit

Q: If not believers, then who are these people?

People in the church who have heard the gospel, participated in the fellowship, witnessed and appreciated attractiveness of Christian life, seen God answer prayer and possibly even exercised spiritual gifts in the manner of unbelievers in Matthew 7:22 – but in their hearts, people who do not love God.

Read Matthew 26:20-24 None of the disciples could guess which one was the betrayer!

### D. A Tale of Two Kings

1 Samuel 16:14 Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul...

Context makes it clear that this is not spirit of salvation, but rather Holy Spirit's anointed over God's choice of a king for Israel.

### **Conclusion**

If even devoted church members can be outside of the People of God, how can I know someone is truly a believer?

**Finish difficult passages and conclusion from week 4****Biblical Answers to Difficult Questions***1. How can I know that I will persevere?*

Three guiding questions:

1) Do I have a present trust in Christ for salvation?

No reason to think you will finish with Christ if you are not with Him right now.

If I were to die tonight and stand before God's judgment seat, and if He were to ask me why He should admit me to heaven, what would I say?

2) Is there evidence of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in my heart?

a. Character fruit – seeing the fruit of the spirit in me

b. Ministry fruit – evidence that God is influencing others through my faith

c. Continued faith in the doctrines of the church

d. Obedience to God, acknowledging and confessing sin as I become aware of it, and accepting God's forgiveness

*3) Do I see a long-term pattern of growth in my Christian life?*

*Growth in holiness, to some extent*

*Growth in appreciation of and adoration of the holiness of Christ*

2. How am I to interact with someone who has made a profession of faith, been externally united with the church (maybe even formally) and then walked away from Christianity? Is that person a true believer? Does that affect my interactions with them?

Some guiding principles:

1) Scripture speaks more harshly of these people than of unbelievers that have not heard the gospel. (Heb. 6:6, Heb. 10:26)

2) There is a biblical model to follow for confrontation of sin. (Matt. 18:15-17)

3) The church is strongest where the line between the church and the world is most clear. You are giving the person a false sense of assurance if you tell them they are all right, and you are weakening the church by allowing them to remain in the body.

4) Everyone ultimately gets what he or she wants for eternity.

If someone has left the church willfully and then desired to repent and rejoin the body, by all means let them!

If someone has left and never desires to return, understand that they were never united with Christ in the first place. They have chosen a life apart from God and that's exactly what they will get in eternity.

### **Summary of Perseverance of the Saints**

If your faith fizzles before the finish, it was faulty from the first.