

# BY GRACE ARE YOU SAVED, NOT OF WORKS

By Pastor Mike Taylor



**8** “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

**9** Not of works, lest any man should boast.

**10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:8-10)

We have been having a discussion on a forum, and some get very belligerent over the issue of OSAS. It's a doctrine that causes some very strong opinions when you address the question, “Are we saved for all eternity and is “eternal security” a license to sin?”

I say “strong opinions” as men are mortal and the human nature of mankind is to want to be right. To challenge a long embraced doctrinal belief, even with scripture, is to threaten the intellectual part of a person and many people who resort to being antagonistic just can't handle being told they are wrong.

I had one lady on the forum make the following statement :

“So my line of thought is.... If you're Catholic and don't believe in eternal security (because you think it's a license to sin), yet you believe that you must go to purgatory for the purification of sin...

"Why is it that those who believe in eternal security are looked down on because we know that we sin (as the Catholics do), but we believe that since salvation is given and not earned, we can't lose it?"

And then you have the alternate religion which places salvation on a work based platform and denounces those who follow what scripture says and hold onto a legalistic viewpoint that they must obey their church. Thus they speak that their church is the final authority and not the Bible. We must raise the question proposed:

““What about someone who professes to be a Christian and accepts they are a sinner, and admits Jesus died for their sins -- yet they continue to live an unrepentant sinful life?" That's a good question. So what's the answer? Let us first define what the belief of “eternal security” actually is.

Taking the definition from a purely secular definition found on Wikipedia, the definition is pretty straight forward: “**Perseverance of the saints** (also referred to as **eternal security** as well as the similar but distinct doctrine known as "Once Saved, Always Saved") is a teaching that asserts that once persons are truly "born of God" or "regenerated" by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, nothing in heaven or earth "shall be able to separate (them) from the love of God" (Romans 8:39) resulting in a reversal of the converted condition.”

So since those of the “mother church” Roman Catholicism, and Evangelical Christianity both can't be right, we must turn to the final authority and what is found in your Bible...Now RCC will argue traditions and the writings of the “apostolic fathers”, but when tradition contradicts the Bible, the Bible takes precedence. But you must interpret the clear meaning of scripture by the Holy Spirit, as the doctrines of salvation are spiritually discerned.

**18** “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

**19** For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

**20** Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

**21** For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:18-21)

**12** “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

**13** Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

**14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:12-14)

We all know someone who went to church, accepted Jesus, then fell away right back into the life they were living before they got saved. They still talk about Jesus and use Christian buzzwords around other Christians, but that is about the only visible extent of their conversion. That question is on both sides of this doctrine of eternal security, Catholic as well as Evangelical.

There are those who profess Jesus Christ, but still continue in sins of the flesh..some more, some less. They rarely gather at your local church; they may continue to smoke; have loose lips and say profanity either out of anger, or just habit, or practice other sins of this world... but they still claim to believe Are they really saved? Taking the arguments of those on the afore mentioned forums, the transformation of an angry, worldly person over a long, painful period didn't just happen...it didn't change them from their old habits into the glorious image of our Lord and Savior at the point of conversion. It may take a long period of willing sacrifice and the question of salvation is not of works, but the question is, if there are no works after salvation, was the salvation real or imagined?

Can someone believe themselves to be saved and heaven-bound without demonstrating any kind of relationship with Christ? Quoting the forum post directly, can a person "just claim knowledge of the saving grace of God, but never put it into practice?"I have to sympathize with the person who posed the question, as living a Christian life in this world, is not easy because the transition and the transformation process from one extreme (a lost sinner) to the other (a changed life) is a painful process that some Christians prefer not to take the trip.

But is the process of transformation, evident by works, a requirement of salvation? For that is the question in the final analysis.

## **JESUS EXPLAINS THE DIFFERENCE**

I want to explore a parable that Jesus told to those who condemned Him for eating with tax collectors who were the most hated of the Jewish society, as they were viewed as traitors by working for the Roman authorities.

We all know the story of the Prodigal Son, but to quickly summarize, Jesus spoke of a man with two sons. One demanded his inheritance and went off and lived a riotous, sinful life. The other son stayed home and worked for his father on the family farm. Ultimately, the younger son found himself in the pig pen competing with the pigs for the corn husk (the most foul unclean destiny for any observant Jew could imagine). Meanwhile, the elder son, (the more serious one) put his love for his father into action by working in the fields, obeying his father's commands, and serving him faithfully.

The comparison is stark and deliberate and Jesus used the parable to make a point to those who questioned Him, and it sounds like some of the questions proposed on this forum by certain members. I don't believe the similarity is accidental. On one hand, we have an unrepentant, lustful, disobedient son squandering his inheritance on sinful living, shaming his father everywhere he goes. He cares about nothing but himself and wastes all that his father gave him.

On the other, we find the obedient, hardworking and honorable son, working at his father's business, because he loves his father. He isn't working at his father's business to *earn* his inheritance. He already *has* that by virtue of his sonship. He is working that hard out of *love*.

So when the disobedient, lustful son shows up and is received as an equal to the obedient son, the obedient son says, "How can this be?"

"And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf." (Luke 15:29-30)

So how is it that the one son who had left his father and the elder son who honored his father, and this sinful son who has just now returned and given a joyful welcome, are by any means equal?

On first glance, the elder son has a legitimate point, but still the lesson is even though the elder son was obedient, he didn't do it for his inheritance, since it was his by being his father's son, but the younger son didn't lose his being his father's son by squandering away his inheritance either.

So from this parable that Jesus spoke in answer to those who made a difference between classes of people in the Jewish society, can we make the same comparison of those who claim to be Christian and have accepted Jesus as Personal Savior and ask the question "Can a person be a son of God without putting their faith into practice?" would appear to be, yes. I am reminded of what Paul wrote at the end of Romans chapter 8 and it begs a closer examination of this doctrine:

**32** "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

**33** Who shall lay anything 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.

**35** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

**36** As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the daylong; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

**37** Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

**38** For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

**39** Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:33-39)

Nothing can separate us from the love of God...NOTHING...not even ourselves. Jesus said that He will lose none who He has chosen:

**37** "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

**38** For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

**39** And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." (John 6:37-39)

There are no shades of gray when it comes to salvation. Either one is a child of God, or one is not. It is an issue of "relationship" not behavior. One does not work his way into a family relationship. It is not earned; it is given as a gift. Nothing we can do will earn us salvation. Our works will not impart righteousness to our account. Isaiah wrote :

**6** "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

**7** And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities." (Isaiah 64:6-7)

One need not be in fellowship to still be part of that family. I know of many fathers and sons, or even daughters who have no fellowship to speak of, but that does NOT make them unrelated. They are still father and son/daughter. That does not change.

Which brings us to the next, and most obvious question. How does one enter into a family relationship with God?

"And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? " And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts 16:30-31)

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9)

"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24)

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.: (1 John 1:9)

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (Romans 8:15)

"And *because ye are sons*, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Galatians 4:6)

("Abba" is the Hebrew equivalent to "Daddy" -- and *that* is how the Lord pictures the relationship between the Father and a Christian.)

## THINK BACK

Remember the time when you were first saved? I do very clearly. For each of us, there is the period of time before we were saved, and then the moments when we made that confession and belief in Jesus Christ as Savior, followed by all the time we have left on this earth. We are to repent of our sins at this moment of conversion, as that is the beginning of our conversion from what we were, into what we have now become...a child of God.

The English Bible translates repent from the Greek word *metanoeo*, which means, "to change one's mind" -- in this case, about one's sin. So an "unrepentant Christian" is an oxymoron. If one is a Christian, one has *already* changed one's mind about one's sin.

The moments that come afterwards cannot undo the moment that has already occurred. Hang with me here as I prove the point by following what God said, not what man believes is true from following their church's traditions.

There are some important points to understand when we look at the story of the prodigal son.

1) He is still his father's son, no matter what has happened.

The father assures the obedient son that all that the father has belongs to him.

**28** "And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him.

**29** And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

**30** But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

**31** And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

**32** It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." Luke 15:28-32)

2. The prodigal son gets nothing but a warm greeting and a place to call home. The elder son's inheritance is fully intact. The obedient son lived a sheltered life, protected by the father and never suffered the indignities, pain, hunger, shame and guilt that racked the prodigal's life. The obedient son will always be in charge. The prodigal is grateful to have a bed.

3. We get another picture of the difference between the obedient son and the prodigal son in Paul's letter to the Corinthians describing such a scene in heaven before the judgment seat of Christ.

**11** "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

**12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

**13** Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

**14** If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

**15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:11-15)

This is a picture of the obedient son standing in front of his Savior and being confused why another who is there at all, because they didn't live like a Christian. (a prodigal son Christian) The obedient son receives the rewards for those things done in his body for the Father here on earth and those done for the Name of His only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. He is rewarded for his struggles here on earth, for proclaiming the witness of Jesus Christ and being good stewards of the talents given to him and doing his Father's business.

Then comes the prodigal son...you know that Christian we all judged here on earth as not deserving any kind of reward, or even a place in heaven.

Note that he is also standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Not because of his obedience, but because of his status as a son. That status was extended to him the moment he accepted Jesus as personal Savior. At the moment of salvation, he changed his mind about sin and accepted the free pardon extended to him. He asked Jesus into his heart, he was washed clean of all of his sins, past, present AND future. He was adopted into the family of God and was saved.

Now he stands before Jesus being judged for his rewards, or "inheritance" ...just as the prodigal son was judged as a son, but received nothing but a place to call home and a warm bed. His status as a son, has not changed, but he didn't do much for God in the life he lived. He may have been embarrassed to witness...he may have been a wall flower who didn't have much confidence and didn't rely on the strength God gives to those who ask. But he is still family. Note the last verse of the passage quoted in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3. "If any man's work shall be burned, *he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*" (1 **Corinthians 3:15**)

Note that he suffered loss....loss of rewards. But he himself will be saved, as THROUGH the fire. We don't know what heaven will be like, but those who just "get by" will not be given the responsibilities of a son to rule over God's Kingdom here on earth, and into eternity.

**23** "His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Matthew 25:23)

**42** "And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?"

**43** Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

**44** Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath." (Luke 12:42-44)

## **ETERNAL SECURITY MISUNDERSTOOD**

Eternal security is NOT a license to sin, because your sin will find you out. If it be a habitual sin, it will kill your body. It will kill your witness for Jesus Christ and will kill your effectiveness for Christ. It may lead to disease, or it may lead to premature death. It will eliminate rewards handed out during Jesus Christ's Bema Seat judgment.

Sin has consequences in this life, and it has consequences in the next life...In the next life, there will be Kings and princes allowed to rule, and there will be subjects and servants. There will be mansions, some greater than others....which suggest that some will end up with just an apartment and a place to call home. But being tried by fire and coming through the fire, as the scripture says "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." means he is allowed to live. Why? Because he is a son, and has Jesus found in his heart when he received the deposit of His Holy Spirit at conversion and repented of his past sins. We are saved by grace. Grace is defined as receiving something you did not earn. Mercy is defined as something you earned but did not receive.

Being saved means literally being saved from “the second death” and not being cast out into outer darkness where Jesus described it as, “where the worm dieth not, or the fire quenched”. The rest is determined by your obedience in following the commands of our Lord God? Did you conform to the image of His Son, or did you just get by?

### **THE WAR BETWEEN THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH**

But if you follow the scriptures, you realize that no matter how hard you try, you will not be able to be perfect. You will still sin...maybe not to the level that you practiced before salvation, but in God's eyes, sin is sin....and Paul lamented in Romans chapter 7 of this very fact.

**14** “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

**15** For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

**16** If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

**17** Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

**18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

**19** For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.....

**22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

**23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

**24** O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

**25** I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” Romans 7:14-19, 22-24)

But moving on into chapter 8, Paul gives us even more truth of our inability to totally quit sinning in that we strive to follow the Spirit and subject our flesh to God's law though imperfectly.

**1** “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

**2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Roman 8:1-2)

Note that we are free from the law of sin and death....its penalty, YES, but not from sin entirely...it's humanly impossible, because we are still mortal. But those who strive to keep themselves from sin, are like the obedient son..Obedient Christians aren't wasting their time being good when they could be out partying. They are laying up for themselves treasures in heaven, like contributions to a heavenly 401k. ....

**19** “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

**20** But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

**21** For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matthew 6:19-21)

You don't need a 401K to retire here on earth, but if you don't have one, you'll regret it...so it is with eternity..if you don't lay up treasure in heaven and receive nothing but a place to call home at the Bema Judgment seat. As a Christian, you don't have to have works to get to heaven, but in the future, you will regret it...for all eternity.

This is Pastor Mike Taylor, praying you find savings Grace and God's mercy..if you need counseling, prayer, or just a listening ear, email me at [realteam1999@sbcglobal.net](mailto:realteam1999@sbcglobal.net), or visit me online for more biblical teachings from the Word of God at [www.pastormiketaylor.blogspot.com](http://www.pastormiketaylor.blogspot.com), God bless you all,

**TILL WE MEET AT JESUS FEET**