

Peace Adult Sunday School

Chosen by God

Chosen by God - R. C. Sproul

Session 11 – Can We Know We are Save?

A brief recap & context for today's session: Last week, we reviewed the some alternatives to true reformed thinking with a focus on "double predestination"

- We saw that was a distortion the Reformed view stating what we don't know
- We also examined related implications of the "double predestination" view such as thinking there's no reason to respond to God's call for evangelism because He almost fatalistically already chose.

We'll break this down into four parts:

1. Knowing that we're save is critical to our spiritual growth
2. God calls us to pursue being assured about our having saving faith
3. Our assurance doesn't rest on our faithfulness but on God's. We persevere in faith because God preserves us.
4. Finally, we'll review some passages that, taken at face value, might seem to suggest that true Christians can fall away from the faith.

Assurance of faith enables spiritual growth:

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:10-11 ESV)

Assurance of saving faith lays the foundation to avoid falling (or stumbling as some translations have it). This foundation lays the road to enter the kingdom of God. Some may argue that you will rest on your laurels if believe you are saved and cannot lose your salvation. That similar to the Judaizers arguing that is you believe you're saved by grace then you'll start living a life opposite to God's call. But Paul argues quite the

Peace Adult Sunday School

Chosen by God

opposite. – in knowing that we have saving faith by grace, we are freed and enabled to respond to God's love not to earn favor but because His favor has been placed on us.

God actually calls us to pursue our assurance of faith.

We see in the 2 Peter passage above that we're to be diligent to confirm our calling and election. How can we do that? By the ordinary means of grace: God's word, fellowship of believers, the Lord's Supper and your baptism as a sign and seal of God's promises. We are to hold fast to God and His promises. Cling to those. Remember the sign and seal of your baptism and that you are part of the covenant family.

So, how can we know we're saved?

R C Sproul sums it up nicely: I know inwardly that I do not love Christ totally. But at the same time I do know that I love him. I rejoice inwardly at the thought of his triumph. I rejoice inwardly at the thought of his coming. I will rejoice at his exaltation. I know that none of these sentiments that I find in myself could possibly be there if it were not for grace.

I we desire to follow God; if we love Jesus, then we can trust that He has moved our hearts to do so. If I falter or, as Paul puts – “.I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.” (Romans 7:15b ESV), God has still moved us to love and will not leave us alone in our failure but will move us to grow in Him.

Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6 ESV)

What about those challenging verses?

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since

Peace Adult Sunday School

Chosen by God

they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame. (Hebrews 6:4-6 ESV)

So there are qualities or states listed here:

1. once enlightened
2. tasted the heavenly gift
3. partakers of the Holy Spirit
4. tasted the good Word of God
5. cannot be renewed again to repentance

Some would argue that these could be true of the who were members of the visible church but didn't actually believe. There's some sense in which they were enlightened by hearing the gospel, had vicariously tasted what the heavenly gift could be like, partook of what the Holy Spirit was doing for the church (visible and invisible) – that is the benefits of being closely within the covenant community, and that those people, having been exposed to the gospel and lived within the community and still do not accept the gospel cannot be renewed to turn away from the old man and turn to true spiritual life.

However, taking the whole counsel of God in all of its context suggests this was a type of persuasive argument aimed at Christians pushing the consequences of turning away to their logical conclusion. In it, the author of Hebrews is pushing the Christian who were formerly Jews and tempted to turn back to the covenant of Moses due to all of the pressures of family, friends and their community to reflect on all of the loss. What would be left for them if they gave up on Jesus. If you were to continue in this passage to verse 9, you would see: *Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation.* Essentially, the author of Hebrews reference vv 4-6 as a thought experiment to help them see the better things from God that he trusts are theirs in Christ.

Peace Adult Sunday School

Chosen by God

Some verses for reflection:

- John 10:27-29
- 1 Peter 1:3-5
- Hebrews 10:14
- Romans 8:33-39

Peace Adult Sunday School

Chosen by God

To be sure, Christians fall at times seriously and radically, but never fully and finally.
Sproul, p. 158