

Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

**Ecclesiastes 7:8**

## Store In My Heart

### Ephesians 2:8

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

While we might sometimes shy away from the statement, the inspired apostle Paul is very plain in stating that the brethren in Ephesus were saved by God, not themselves. There are many verses that speak of salvation. Most of them talk of responsibility that is laid upon the individual being saved. Certainly these show a need for action on our part, but they must not cause us to think we were saved by our own action. Scripture is clear that we are saved by God's grace, not our own action.

Without God's provision for salvation through the blood of Christ we would be lost. The gracious God saves us when our belief in that sacrifice brings us to act according to what He has revealed.



# Our Security in Christ

**Edward O. Bragwell, Sr**

In our Grace – Obedience – Fellowship discussions, we are often told that without those in Christ being continuously cleansed of sin (even as they sin) we can have no real sense of security in Him. It goes something like this: It must be that God forgives us as we sin (and we all sin often), or else we would be constantly shifting from being in Christ (saved, in fellowship) and out of Christ (lost, out of fellowship) and vice versa. While it is true that sins (even one) will separate us from God (**Isaiah 59:2**), it does not follow that the separation is instant.

There is another factor in this matter – God's long suffering. There is no scriptural basis for affirming that God does not take into account the sins of one in Christ – for any reason, whether it be that God imputes the perfect righteousness of Christ to those in Christ so that, rather than seeing their sins, He sees the righteousness life of Christ who had no sin; or He simply chooses to ignore the Christian's sins while choosing not to ignore the sins of non-Christians, making Him a respecter of persons. The fact of the business is that the Bible does not teach that God cuts off His children at the instant they sin, but rather after having given them time and opportunity to repent. Peter lays down the general principle that God is not willing that any should perish, but is longsuffering (**2Peter 3:9**). In the letters to Christians in the book of Revelation, it is clear that their separation from God for their sins was not immediate.

To those at Ephesus, the Lord said that they had "fallen" but He had yet to "remove [their] lampstand." In Thyatira, there was Jezebel, who by seduction and teaching caused others among them to commit sexual immorality. We cannot determine the details of how she accomplished this, but do know that God had been longsuffering by giving her, and those affected by her, time to repent before executing punishment. We are not told how long God's longsuffering would be, but long enough.

Hence, our peaceful assurance in Christ does not rest in God's overlooking or immediately dismissing our sins, but in His patiently

giving us time and opportunity to repent of them. We don't have to worry that we might slip up and be immediately cut off from God and be lost before we can repent. We can trust the longsuffering nature of God's character.

At the same time, we must not consider God's longsuffering a license to sin. **Hebrews 10:26-29** (NASB) warns those who had been sanctified by the blood of Christ not to "*go on sinning willfully*" or else face worse punishment than those who sinned under Moses' law. It also says that willfully practicing sin is an insult to the Spirit of grace.

So, wherein lies our peace of mind and sense of security as Christians? Certainly not in perfect obedience – none are in this position. But in seeking to do our best to avoid sin and, when we do sin, realizing that without repentance we cannot be forgiven. At the same time realizing that God is longsuffering, giving ample time to correct matters by repentance. To try to determine the exact amount of time we might have between our sins and our separation from God, would be, as brother Robert Turner used to say, "whittling at God's end of the stick." We must not test the Lord by trying to see how long we can wait to correct our sins before His longsuffering expires. At the moment we become aware of our sin, we had best turn to God, in repentance and prayer, for forgiveness.

Truly, it would be depressing for a Christian to go through life, believing that at the moment of any sin that he is out of fellowship with the Godhead, and maybe in a few moments repents his way back in fellowship then in a few more minutes sins his way back out of fellowship – in and out, out and in, constantly. But, as we have seen, this is not the case.

Yes, we can joyfully go about our business of serving the Lord daily, trying to obey all things commanded us (cf. **Matthew 28:20**), knowing that when we fall short, God gives us opportunity to repent before cutting us off – knowing it is up to us to take that opportunity. We truly serve an awesome God, who is not willing that any perish, but that all come to repentance.

(To be secure in our salvation is a very comforting thought. Study well & Apply the Word. DLH)

## Contact Us

We want opportunities to speak with others about the Lord.

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## Find Us Online

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## For Our Information

**Gloria Hurst** starts radiation treatments Monday.

**Paula Laubach** is considering Single Level ACDF surgery for her vertebrae problems.

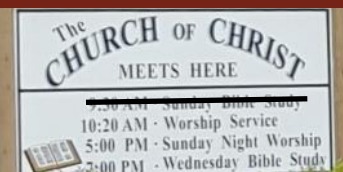
David & Paula Laubach's daughter, **Deana** recovering well from her recent surgery.

**Ruben & Brenda Keisler** came home to no water and due to the continual freezing temps they are still without water as I type this.

**Bill Venable** was unable to get out until Saturday due to ice at his place and on his road.

Sunday Evening - **Esther 5:5**. Wednesday - **2Peter 2:4**.

**Our meeting with Reuben Prevost starts 3 months from today.**



We seek only to serve God according to His Will!