



"If God should justify a people and not sanctify them, he would justify a people whom he could not glorify."

—Thomas Watson

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The Surety of Our Salvation

The churches of [God](#) do not believe that the Bible teaches the Doctrine of [Eternal Security](#), the idea that once we profess belief in Christ, our salvation is irrevocable, regardless of any future conduct. Some professing Christians believe that salvation is entirely the work of Christ and that we are justified and sanctified by [faith](#) alone. Jesus tells us, though, that we must [repent](#) and believe [the gospel](#) ([Mark 1:15](#)). To be justified, we need to repent of our wrong ways of thinking and living, and we are sanctified as we grow with God's help into our Savior's image.

It is undoubtedly the work of [Jesus Christ](#) and our faith in His sacrifice that justifies us, but [James 2:17-26](#) teaches that faith without works is a dead faith. We have a responsibility to obey God, which relates directly to our salvation. Believing that Jesus is our Savior is necessary, but James also cautions us in verse 19, "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!" By itself, belief in God puts us at the same level as demons.

As my wife and I were looking for a new home, she made the observation that people do not put earnest money down on a house they do not want or if

they think the deal will fall through. This idea parallels Paul's words in [II Corinthians 5:5](#): "[God] has given us the Spirit as a *guarantee*" of what is to come (emphasis ours throughout). Even though He has all the time and resources in [the world](#), God is not in the habit of wasting His efforts on failed projects (see [Isaiah 55:11](#)).

God's purpose is to bring *all* humanity to salvation. In [II Peter 3:9](#), Peter tells us that for God to accomplish that goal, He exhibits extraordinary [patience](#) on behalf of His children: "[He] is patient with you, because He does not want *anyone* to be destroyed, but wants *all* to turn away from their sins" (*Good News Translation*).

Consider how personally Paul took the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for him. He writes in [Galatians 2:20](#), "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I [live by faith](#) in the Son of God, who loved me and *gave Himself for me*." Christ did indeed die for Paul, but as [I John 2:2](#) says, "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also *for the whole world*."

John here calls Christ "the propitiation for our sins." The Greek word for "propitiation" is *hilasmos*, a synonym of Hebrew *kippur*, as in [Yom Kippur](#), "*the day of coverings*." This covering involved His becoming the focal point of God's righteous wrath on the sins *we* have committed! Who but our Savior could have—or would have—done such a thing? With divine determination, the Word gave up the power, the authority, the [peace](#), and the serenity that He and our Father had in heaven to become a human being and ultimately [die for our sins](#) ([I Corinthians 15:3](#)).

Scripture is clear on this point. [I Corinthians 5:7](#) says that Christ is our [Passover](#). [John 1:29](#) affirms that He is the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world, and [John 3:16](#) tells us God loves humans so much that He sent His Son as a gift to cover their sins so that He could legally grant them eternal life.

Can we grasp the enormous cost of the payment that was made to enable our eternal future? Could we dare ask or even hope for more? Jesus laid His *own* eternal life on the line! As the old saying goes, Jesus paid a debt that He did not owe because we owed a debt we could not pay. We could use a different

metaphor: Jesus saw the truck bearing down on us and pushed us out of harm's way at the cost of His own life.

Jon Bloom, in his article "Jesus Died Because He Loved You," begins by quoting from [Ephesians 5:25](#), "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her." He continues:

Jesus died for the church. But for Jesus the church is not an institution like Yale University or Apple or The United Way. . . . Jesus did not die for an institution. He died for individuals.

The church isn't even a republic like The United States of America. Jesus didn't die for a republic. He died for persons.

Jesus died for persons with names, faces, personalities, disabilities, histories, and sins. He did that because he loves *each person*. Every [sin](#) Jesus bore on the cross had a name attached. They were *real* thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions. It was *real* anger, lust, evil motives, and murders. Some of these sins were *yours*. Some were *mine*." (Bloom's emphasis throughout.)

He urges us to consider the words of John Piper in his *Fifty Reasons Jesus Came to Die*:

Surely this is the way we should hear about the sufferings and death of Christ. They have to do with me. They are about Christ's [love](#) for me personally. It is *my* sin that cuts *me* off from God, not sin in general. It is *my* hard-heartedness and spiritual numbness that demean the worth of Christ. I am lost and perishing. When it comes to salvation, I have forfeited all claim on justice. All I can do is plead for mercy.

Bloom concludes: "It's true, the Father and the Son had *you* in mind when they planned [the crucifixion](#). Jesus died because he loved *you*."

The New Testament contains seven verses where the words "gave Himself for" are distinctly associated with the substitutionary work of Christ. By His life and His death, Jesus Christ became the surety—the guaranteeing

deposit—for our salvation, as He posted our bond and took our place on Death Row.

It is incredible to reflect on what both our heavenly Father and Elder Brother have already done for us. More than this, we can rejoice in the apostle Paul's words in [Romans 8:38-39](#): ". . . neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." While we realize and consider how Their love has been manifested to us, we must—in appreciation—work to follow Their example. This is knowing God, which leads to salvation and eternal life.

It is a tall and daunting order. We may feel at times like the proverbial money pit—a costly and questionable reclamation project—but Paul assures us in [Philippians 1:6](#), ". . . 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." God has given us His Word and confirmed His Word by His actions. From His end, salvation is practically an accomplished fact. It is, if we cooperate with Him in His work.

When we think of everything that God has done, is doing, and will yet do for us, despite there not being such a thing as "Eternal Security," we can feel confident and secure in the Eternal.

- John Reiss

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[The Awesome Cost of Salvation](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

The world's religions are in abject bondage to falsehood because they do not observe the Passover. Freedom comes to God's called out ones incrementally from continuing on the way- the relationship between God and us. It is this relationship which is the most important thing Christ has died for. We need

to be sobered at the awesomeness of the cost to set us free from sin- how far Christ was willing to be pushed. Immense have been the preparations for our ransom- involving billions of years (Hebrews 11:3, I Corinthians 10:11) and the death of our Savior. Because we have been purchased, we have an obligation to our Purchaser.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Do We Have 'Eternal Security'?](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Are we "once-saved, always-saved"? Once God grants us His grace, are we assured eternal life? Richard Ritenbaugh exposes the fallacies of this Protestant doctrine of "eternal security."

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