Don't Lose focus of Jesus - posted by JoeBenson (), on: 2008/4/14 20:50

Where did He go?

Luke 2:41-46 (NKJV)
41 His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. 43 When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; 44 but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. 45 So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. 46 Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.

As we see in the text, “the boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem.” This scripture never ceases to amaze me every time I read it. The parents of Jesus lost Him! I know that it shouldn’t surprise me that His own parents lost Him because I know at times in my life I have definitely lost Him. There have been days that I feel like I have wandered so far away from Jesus that I have completely lost Him. I am probably safe to say that most of you have felt the same way.

I am not talking about losing your salvation. That is something that you can never lose once you attain it through the blood of Jesus Christ. Once saved, always saved. I truly believe that God is not an “Indian giver.” His Word assures us of that. I am talking about losing sight of Jesus in your heart and daily walk. It can happen and I hope to elaborate on how it can happen.

Christ Can Be Lost

The scripture above demonstrates that Christ can be and was lost. And he was lost by those who loved Him. And lost in Jerusalem and in the Temple! And yet why be astonished when the same thing is happening today. Christ is still lost by his friends, and in Jerusalem and in the Temple.

When we ask the question, how can Christ be lost; we must be honest to ourselves to find the answer. Many of you may feel like Christ has left your life and you have no reason for it. Some of you may know what happened. Some of you may feel that Christ can never leave you. I am here to tell you that we have full control of the closeness that we have with Christ!

One reason that some of you may have lost Christ is because of the hustle and bustle of life. Losing Christ doesn’t mean that you have to commit flagrant, blatant sins. You may just be so busy, that Christ is not a part of your life.

Joseph and Mary were so busy buying, and selling and getting ready for travel that their eyes got off Jesus and they drifted apart. Many have done just the same since. They never intended the thing to happen, but they became so absorbed that it did. In some of these cases there was no flagrant sin, but strange to say while attending to a business or occupation that was legitimate and proper they gradually let go of Christ. They were busy buying and selling, taking care of the children, attending to the husband and running around generally, when lo the loss was discovered. There were hours of laughing and talking, days were consumed in entertaining company, contact with many people distracted and diverted the mind so that one night in going to bed there was no Christ in the heart. They were fairly jostled out of the divine companionship by the multitude; and as a good man once said: “I was busted out of my spirituality.”

Another reason that you may have lost Christ is because you are so busy with the Church.

It is a fearful thought to think that Jesus is parted with in the service of God. But just as Joseph and Mary got separated from him in Jerusalem, it has often been and still is the case. It was what happened to Eli’s sons who became corrupt in the priesthood. It was what took place with Judas who retrograded from an apostle to a thief, betrayer and self-murderer. It is what is happening in a number of, pulpits today. Preachers are losing Christ; the dark sad face, hard tone, and unctuous less sermon are unmistakable. Deacons and church board members are so focused on the administrative duties that the focus on Jesus has been put on the back burner.
Many of you may be so focused on your entertainment in the church that you forgot that praise and worship was for the Lord, not the people in the pews. Who are you glorifying? Glory to the people at your service or to God? It’s no wonder that Jesus is wondering away in the church today! Preachers in the pulpit are talking more about God sending a financial breakthrough than they are talking about God’s grace and our growing in relationship with Him! No wonder God is drifting away from the church and peoples lives!

I know some churches that close there doors when most of the congregation is on vacation for spring break or the 4th of July! How about having prayer service for the members that aren’t out of town! Where has the commitment gone? No wonder Jesus is wandering away! Churches today treat Jesus as a visitor and not a permanent resident!! Jesus is not a uniform that should only be put on at Sundays and occasionally some Wednesdays! Jesus is Life not just a part of life. No wonder Jesus is absent! Have you lost Jesus?

How is Christ Lost

The first answer suggested by the circumstances in the passage before us is that it is done through carelessness. What but needlessness could have allowed Joseph and Mary to be separated from the Savior? And the same thing today is the explanation when such a trouble befalls the soul. The Scripture expressly urges to watchfulness. It is while the virgins slumbered the midnight cry was raised; it was while the man slept that his enemy sowed tares in his field. And what I say unto one I say unto all, ”Watch.”

But how does the thing itself happen? What are the steps of this departure?

Christ is lost gradually. God loves us too much to leave us all at once. The same way a ship sails away until you can no longer see it in the distance is the same way that God drifts away. God will give gentle and tender warnings of the drift, but we must be sensitive to hear and see the drifting away of Jesus. The instant we cease moving on the parallel of a perfectly consecrated life, the fact of spiritual distance and the additional fact of an ever widening distance between us and Him, and the final disappearance of Christ out of the heart and life become as veritable a reality and as patent to other eyes as the spectacle of the parted ships on the ocean. It seems that not by one great evil act are men parted from the Lord, but it is by a number of little acts, none of which are very grave and alarming. Just as a person does not get off of a high tower by jumping down from the top, but descends by hundreds of steps to the ground; so the Christian rarely ever brings himself down and away from the presence of Christ by one gross sin; but it is by a long line of little things said and done which were unspiritual, objectionable and reprehensible in an increasing degree that the calamity of a lost Christ takes place. One of the alarm signals hung out in the soul is a protracted spiritual coldness. Instead of going at once into a faithful self-examination and prayerful waiting upon God for help, this signal is made to mean nothing by the statement that the Christian life is a faith life and not one of feeling. It is true the life is one of faith, but it is also one of feeling. The Bible says, ”The joy of the Lord is your strength,” and Christ said, ”These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full.” In the book of Revelation that the Savior found with a certain church was that it had lost its first love, and in another verse he said he would spew a lukewarm church out of his mouth. A protracted spiritual coldness means that Christ is leaving, and we should at once fly to Him and wait on Him until the clear assurance of His presence is restored.

Another way that Christ is lost by the Christian is by getting the eye off Christ and resting it on church work. This is what happened to the Jews. With all their boasted love of the Lord they let the Temple and Temple work come in between the m and the Holy One. Devoted to the Temple, they killed the Lord of the Temple. How busy they were when Jesus stood in their midst silently contemplating them! There was no end to religious ceremonies, the victims were being slain by thou sands, the smoke of incense was rising, the priests and Levites were regular in their duties, the Scribes and Pharisees were fasting twice a week and saying long prayers; and yet in the midst of it all Jesus saw spiritual death, and said that he outside was as fair as a glistening marble tomb, but inside was corruption and dead men's bones. The thought is fearful that we can get the eye off of Christ while abounding in His work. That we can lose Him at the altar of Jerusalem and in the Temple. That loaded down with church work, writing business letters, attending Board and committee meetings, keeping the church books and passing around the collection basket, we can become so absorbed in these things as to utterly lose Christ.

I believe if we knew how many men and women prominent in the church, how many ushers who are smilingly seating the congregation every Sabbath, how many Sunday-school teachers and members of the choir and preachers in the pulpit have lost Christ out of their hearts, the world would be horrified. We do not mean that they are living immoral lives, but they have been more loyal to church work than to Jesus, and the jealous God is grieved and gone. The dark and sad countenances we often see in the pew, choir and pulpit confirm what I say. It is never to be forgotten that it is easier to attend windy Board and Society meetings in the name of the Lord than to spend the same hour alone on the knees with Christ. There is much pastoral visiting called the work of the Lord that amounts to nothing. It is easier to pay a social visit than to wait with groanings on the Lord. The jealous God sees how much
work undertaken in His name deserves not the name and is simply a sop thrown out to ease conscience. It is happening today as much as in the times of the Scribes and Pharisees that the Temple is put in the place of the Lord; the House and its services are exalted and the Lord of the House is set aside. Today some of the most active church workers have the most superficial experience; and some have none, having lost it all by placing the work above Christ, and the Temple above the Lord of the Temple.

Mistakes People Make on Discovering the Loss of Christ

The first mistake appears in the sentence "they went a day's journey" without Him. They were separated from Him, did not see Him, and yet pushed on a whole day's journey. It is what many are doing today. They lose Christ and go on their way. Here is the first mistake, and it not infrequently ends fatally. The thing to do when we miss the Savior is to stop every-thing until we find Him. Let no one think it a loss of time, for when He is in the heart you can speak, write, work and live a thousand times more effectively.

A second mistake comes out in the words, "They supposed He was in the company."

What if He was, He was not with them. A man to be happy must have Christ in his heart as a conscious, personal possession. It is and should be a poor comfort to one to feel that Christ is in the congregation or household and not in himself. There is neither joy nor salvation in this fact. Some husbands shelter themselves with the thought that their wives are religious, but a child could tell them that this alone will never save them. We must repent of our sins and put our faith and trust in the Savior Jesus Christ in order to be saved.

Yet, we have many churches today that will not even talk about sin and repentance. No wonder Jesus is drifting away!

A third mistake is seen in the sentence, "they sought Him among their kinsfolk."

You would be amazed at how many people that you are related to do not know or have Christ in their hearts. Ask them. Find out the answers from them. You can't! You have to seek Jesus for yourself. You can not judge the closeness of Jesus from anyone else's relationship with Him. It is all about a personal journey between Christ and you alone!

A fourth mistake is seen committed by the Caravan or large company with whom Joseph and Mary were traveling. Altho-ugh Christ had been left behind they never turned back! Jesus was missing, but they went on. I can see the long winding line as they threaded the ravines and pushed across the plain. They camp that night without Jesus, and next morning start out again without Jesus, and so pass away out of Judea and Galilee into the great world beyond and Jesus has been left behind.

With the deepest compassion I see the crowds of this world doing the same thing! They toil and travel all day without Christ; they go home and get up without Him, and push on the next day, and the next, and the next and always without Jesus. They have music, papers, books, pleasures, travel and business, but they do not have Jesus. They do not seem to realize the dreadfulness of their loss, and so push on in life's Caravan talking, laughing, singing, loving, hating, camping, sleeping, arising again, pushing on further and further until we see them go out from under and beyond the horizon of our lives and disappear from our view forever. How we feel like calling them to come back; telling that they can never meet the dangers, nor stand the toils, nor live right nor die victoriously without Jesus. And we do call to them; but few seem to turn back. The great mass pushes on without the Savior whom they have left far behind forever.

This is what to Do When Christ is Lost

The true way is shown in the conduct of Joseph and Mary. —"they turned back again seeking Him." There is nothing else to do if we would find Christ. If we went away from Him we must return to Him. Necessarily it is a sorrowful seeking. The thought is quite a bitter one that through our own carelessness and neglect of duty the separation was brought about. It is never a good feeling to cry to the Lord for forgiveness of letting something come between us and Him. Shame and regret are never comforting. It is a sad occurrence, but God will forgive, even when we feel as though we cannot forgive ourselves.

I have noticed also in many instances that it takes longer to recover the Savior than to lose him. Joseph and Mary lost Him in a few minutes or hours, but it was three days before they got him back. This is not compelled to be the case, but thorough the heartbreak and mental bewilderment arising from the separation, the soul loses much time in finding the path of return. Still it will be a glad seeking, for with all the pain of recollected unfaithfulness and all the sorrow of the separation, the thought that he now is going back to Christ will of itself be an inspiring and glad thought to the wanderer. Sad as his heart may be, his case is unspeakably better than the man who remains wallowing in his sins far from the Savior. Better far to turn back with tears, like Joseph and Mary, than to go on with laughter and chatter like the Caravan.

Moreover it is to be remembered that Christ is not far away. The Scripture is authority for saying he is not far from any one of us. And in the case before us, when Joseph and Mary turned back from Beeroth to Jerusalem to seek Christ they were separated then from him just eight miles. This is the exact distance between the two places. In other words, they were about two hours' journey from the Lord, and I cannot help but think that most people are not more widely separated from Jesus than this. I firmly believe that two hours spent on the face in tears, repentance, faith and prayer, would in the case of the great majority of spiritual wanderers restore them to the loving embrace of the Son of God.

Christ is not far off from the saddest, hardest and worst. He walked in the midst of publicans and sinners while on earth, and are near them today in His great mercy. He is oftentimes much closer than men dream. He walked by the side of tw
o heartsick disciples for several hours before they knew Him, and stood before the weeping Mary in the garden before s he recognized His voice and form. The very burden on the heart is His own begun work. The heartsickness that so disco urages is the result of the light that He has poured in, while the pain of soul shows life and godly sorrow. The dead do n't grieve nor feel pain. The living does that. The very shadow that you feel may come from His blessed form bending over you.

It is wonderful how utterly unable one is to judge and understand these phases of feeling and all the phenomena of the s oul's return to God, while personally separated from Jesus. The sinner who is convicted does not know what the matter i s, and the backslider returning to God fails to realize that the sorrow which bows him down is one of the drawings of hea ven, is the direct work of the Holy Ghost, and is no occasion for despair, but of confidence and gladness.

Still another feature of the recovery of Christ is that you will find Him where you left him. It was in Jerusalem they became separated from Jesus, and it was in Jerusalem they recovered him. It is right where you left Christ you will find Him. C ertain things were done or left undone, and right there today you must return. You dropped certain duties, and there is C hrist waiting for you to resume them. The burden lay upon you by the Providence of God you cast off; the cross of Christ you laid aside for awhile; and so the glory faded out of your life. The thing to do is to go back where you threw off the cro ss and burden, and patiently take them up again. You will find Christ there at that place and at that moment. He is waitin g for you.

Still again, I notice that the text says that the sorrowing parents found “Jesus in the Temple.” So it will be with you. The h ouse of God is the best of places to find Christ.

Fall on your face and praise God for giving you the ability to realize that you lost Him. Cry out to the Lord and He will hea l your broken heart.

The Way to Keep from Losing Jesus
First, keep the eye fixed steadily upon Him. Suppose Joseph and Mary had done this, then the separation which cost th em such solicitude and pain would never have occurred. The thing to do is to allow no object come between us and Chri st. Keep the eye on Jesus, not occasionally, but fixedly and continually. It can be done, thank God, in the busiest life. So Paul says, “Looking unto Jesus.” Not looking to the Temple, but to Jesus. There are some people who are absorbed in t he church rather than Christ. And there is no question that if they paid as much attention to Jesus as they do the church they would be accomplishing so much for the Kingdom!

Second, keep talking to God. We must be steadfast in our prayer. Not just a prayer every now and then, but diligently pre aying and seeking the face of God. It is impossible to lose someone if you are continually talking to them. We read in Ge nesis that when Abraham ceased communing with God, then the Lord went up from him. It is so still. If we would retain Christ by our side we must see to the unbroken communion of our soul with His Spirit.

Third, get Christ as a resident. Many of God's people know him as a visitor, as one who comes and goes, visiting the he art and then leaving it. It is in these conscious absences that so much spiritual hurt is realized, and Satan gets in his wor k. There is an experience which greatly increases our religious strength and so lessons the likelihood and peril of backslid ing. This experience is spoken of by the Savior in the fourteenth chapter of John where He says if we love Him and kee p His commandments He will come unto us and take up His abode with us. In a word, He will cease to be a visitor and b ecome a resident. He who would keep Christ near all the time should seek this blessing. The wonder with me is how a m an can lose the Savior when he obtains this grace.

Finally, keep claiming "the blood." If the slightest shadow and spiritual trouble arises, if there has been any neglect of dut y, any word spoken or act done that brings a shadow or feeling of unrest, then fly at once to the blood that cleanses from all Bin, and claim its present merit and power. There is such a thing as staying under the blood all the time. He that does that will hardly lose Christ. Thousands have lived this life; ten thousands are living it today; and countless millions will yet do so. God grant that you who have Christ today will never lose Him. It would be better to part with friends, the whole wo rld and life itself, than to give up Jesus.

Never forget the cross! It is by the cross that Jesus died and became our Savior. Forget not that the cross is our repre sentation of redemption and salvation. Always remember the cross and give thanks to the Lord. Jesus is risen and will be with you at all times, but only if we make Him the center and the fullness of all our being.

May God bless you.
Re: Don't Lose focus of Jesus, on: 2008/4/15 8:31

Good Word Joe!

Re: Don't Lose focus of Jesus - posted by destinysweet (), on: 2008/4/17 0:20

I enjoyed your work here..interesting and your heart comes through loud and clear..but I have not found it to be completely accurate..you state a few instances from Rev.2..but you skipped over the stern truth within the whole statement.each statement in fact,but you must see it brother..be willing to stand corrected..rather then to be the cause of others falling into deception along with you. Once saved always saved you claim..but Jesus does not agree.

Example:those who lost their first love were warned to repent..with the promise that Jesus would remove their lampstand from it's place..no lampstand..no light..in darkness from there on out..those in darkness are not saved ..we are transferred red/delivered from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of Jesus, the Beloved Son of God..in whom we have redemption,forgiveness of our sin.Redemption contains/is full of light not darkness..darkness is void of light.

Only those whose names are written in the Book of Life are saved..and in the 3rd chapter..while we are not losing our focus on Jesus and His word..He says again..I will not blot out your name from the Book of Life if..if you repent! He is talking to believers who have a name (as Christians) as though they should be alive in Christ, but were dead (in their sins)..these, hence, if they don't repent will be blotted out.

Spewing someone out is not gathering them in…it is rejecting them as distasteful,putrid,unworthy.

We wander away from Him..He is always waiting where we have fallen..He never leaves or forsakes us..but we can forsake Him..I've known souls who walked with Him and forsok the path to righteousness,becoming demon possesed..these are not going to heaven to be with the Lord..many are called, but few are chosen.

To preach once saved always saved is not accurate and means you have lost sight of His clear and stern warning..no idle threat..a promise..I will remove..He says it..we must listen and be obedient not watering down a salvation that is worked out with much fear and trembling..if the sons are scarcely saved then what of the purposely lax due to such lukewarm preaching..Your word lacks the full authority it needs to move folks into diligence if you soften/change the full integrity of the truth by not presenting the full counsel of God.

Also those who refuse to forgive..will not be forgiven..you also have the sheep and the goats scenario..far too many witnesses to ignore..do so at your own peril.

Food for thought..lose that one part and you've got an interesting work of writing. Leave it in and you are courting disaster,in misrepresenting the truth..thus becoming a liar. When we are full of truth, there is no room for darkness..be careful not to only look (in the scriptures)for what you want to believe, arguing your case when His word ever stands to refute you, align however with Him in truth..His word is truth..He is Truth.. and you will speak with full authority, the spirit of Truth will move to convict the hearts of those who hear..be willing that your eye not have any darkness in it..look intently upon the promises of Jesus..spoken to believers,and believe Him.


destinysweet,

Without the sake of argument, I would like to express some concerns regarding your reply about "Once Saved, Always Saved."

I am troubled to think that you are referring that God's grace is insufficient and that you can be saved by works. That is troubling to say the least. What kind of peace could we possibly have if we thought that we have to continue to be saved over and over again? Maybe I can better explain myself. Please read and let me know if you have any concerns. Thanks.

ONCE SAVED - ALWAYS SAVED?

The question of the "eternal security of the believer" is often raised in letters I receive. This subject has been the cause of much controversy in the church for centuries- and still creates confusion and distress for many Christians. It is too much to expect to dispel this problem completely for everyone in a brief tract, but perhaps we can at least help in that
Those who believe in "falling away" accuse those who believe in "eternal security" of promoting "cheap grace." The latter in itself is an unbiblical expression. To call it "cheap" is really a denial of grace, since it implies that too small a price has been paid. Grace, however, must be absolutely free and without any price at all on man's part; while on God's part the price He paid was infinite. Thus for man to think that his works can play any part in either earning or keeping his salvation is what cheapens grace, devaluing this infinite gift to the level of human effort.

To speak of "falling from grace" involves the same error. Since our works had nothing to do with meriting grace in the first place, there is nothing we could do that would cause us to no longer merit it and thus "fall" from it. Works determine reward or punishment-not one's salvation, which comes by God's grace. The crux of the problem is a confusion about grace and works.

First of all, we must be absolutely clear that these two can never mix. Paul declares, "...if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Rom 11:6). Salvation cannot be partly by works and partly by grace.

Secondly, we must be absolutely certain that works have nothing to do with salvation. Period. The Bible clearly states, "For by grace are ye saved... not of works" (Eph 2:8-10). True to such Scriptures, evangelicals firmly declare that we cannot earn or merit salvation in any way. Eternal life must be received as a free gift of God's grace, or we cannot have it.

Thirdly, salvation cannot be purchased even in part by us, because it requires payment of the penalty for sin-a payment we can't make. If one receives a speeding ticket, it won't help to say to the judge, "I've driven many times within the 55 mph limit. Surely my many good deeds will make up for the one bad deed." Nor will it do to say, "If you let me off this time, I promise never to break the law again." The judge would reply, "To never break the law again is only to do what the law demands. You get no extra credit for that. The penalty for breaking the law is a separate matter and must be paid." Thus Paul writes, "...by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight..." (Rom 3:20).

Fourthly, if salvation from the penalty of breaking God's laws cannot be earned by good deeds, then it cannot be lost by bad deeds. Our works play no part in either earning or keeping salvation. If it could, then those who reach heaven could boast that while Christ saved them they, by their good lives, kept their salvation. Thus God would be robbed of having all the glory in eternity.

Fifthly, salvation can be given to us as a free gift only if the penalty has been fully paid. We have violated infinite Justice, requiring an infinite penalty. We are finite beings and could not pay it: we would be separated from God for eternity. God is infinite and could pay an infinite penalty, but it wouldn't be just because He is not a member of our race. Therefore God, in love and grace, through the virgin birth, became a man so that He could pay the debt of sin for the entire human race!

In the Greek, Christ's cry from the cross, "It is finished!" is an accounting term, meaning that the debt had been paid in full. Justice had been satisfied by full payment of its penalty, and thus God could "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom 3:26). On that basis, God offers pardon and eternal life as a free gift. He cannot force it upon anyone or it would not be a gift. Nor would it be just to pardon a person who rejects the righteous basis for pardon and offers a hopelessly inadequate payment instead-or offers his works even as "partial payment."

Salvation is the full pardon by grace from the penalty of all sin, past, present or future; eternal life is the bonus thrown in. Denying this cardinal truth, all cultists, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, reject salvation by grace and insist that it must be earned by one's good works. They accuse evangelicals of teaching that all we need to do is to say we believe in Christ and then we can live as we please, in the grossest of sins, yet be sure of heaven. Evangelicals don't teach that at all, yet a similar complaint is made by those who believe in "falling away." They say that "once saved, always saved" encourages one to live in sin because if we know we cannot be lost then we have no incentive for living a holy life. On the contrary, love for the One who saved us is the greatest and only acceptable motive for living a holy life; and surely the greater the salvation one has received, the more love and gratitude there will be. So to know one is secure for eternity gives a higher motive for living a good life than the fear of losing one's salvation if one sins!

While those who believe in "falling from grace" are clear that good works cannot earn salvation, they teach that salvation is kept by good works. Thus one gets saved by grace, but thereafter salvation can be lost by works. To teach that good
works keep salvation is almost the same error as to say that good works earn salvation. It denies grace to say that once I have been saved by grace I must thereafter keep myself saved by works.

Such teaching, says Hebrews 6:4-9, rather than glorifying Christ, holds him up to shame and ridicule before the world once again for two reasons: if we could lose our salvation, then (1) Christ would have to be crucified again to save us again; and (2) He would be ridiculed for dying to purchase a salvation but not making adequate provision to preserve it for giving a priceless gift to those who would inevitably lose it. If Christ's dying in our place for our sins and rising again was not sufficient to keep us saved, then He has foolishly wasted His time. If we could not live a good enough life to earn salvation, it is certain we cannot live a good enough life to keep it! To make the salvation he procured ultimately dependent upon our works would be the utmost folly.

"Falling away" doctrine makes us worse off after we are saved than before. At least before conversion we can get saved. But after we are saved and have lost our salvation (if we could), we can't get saved again, but are lost forever. Hebrews 6:4 declares, "If they shall fall away... it is impossible (v.4)...to renew them again unto repentance." That "falling away" is hypothetical is clear (v.9): "But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, tho ugh we thus speak." So "falling away" is not what he means by "accompany salvation." The writer is showing us that if we could lose our salvation, we could never get it back without Christ dying again upon the cross. This is folly! He would have to die an infinite number of times (i.e., every time every person who was once saved sinned and was lost and wanted to be saved again”). Thus, those who reject "once saved, always saved," can only replace it with, "once lost, always lost!"

John assures us, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life..." (1 Jn 5:13). To call it eternal life, if the person who had it could lose it and suffer eternal death, would be a mockery. On the contrary, eternal life is linked with the promise that one cannot perish—a clear assurance of "eternal security" or "once saved, always saved." John 3:16 promises those who believe in Jesus Christ that they "should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 5:24 again says, "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation...." One could not ask for clearer or greater assurance than the words of Jesus: "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (Jn 10:28). If, having received eternal life, we could lose it and perish, it would make Christ a liar.

If sin causes the loss of salvation, what kind or amount of sin does it take? There is no verse in the Bible that tells us. We are told that if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness—so a parently any sin can be forgiven. Even those who teach falling away rarely if ever say they got "saved again." Rather, they confessed their sin and were forgiven. Hebrews 12:3-11 tells us that every Christian sins, and that instead of causing a loss of salvation, sin brings God's chastening upon us as His children. If when we sinned we ceased to be God's children, He would have no one to chastise—yet He "scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Indeed, chastening is a sign that we are God's children not that we have lost our salvation: "if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

Some teach that one must be baptized to be saved; others that one must "speak in tongues." Both are forms of salvation by works. Some people lack assurance of salvation because they haven't "spoken in tongues;" others are confident they are saved because they think they have. Both are like those who say, "Lord, Lord, have we not...in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Mt 7:21-23) They are relying on their works to prove they are saved, instead of upon God's grace. Nor does Jesus say, "You were once saved but lost your salvation" He says, "I never knew you."

Here is an important distinction. Those who believe in "falling away" would say of a professing Christian who has denied the faith and is living in unrepentant sin, that he has "fallen from grace" and has "lost his salvation." In contrast, those who believe in "eternal security," while no more tolerant of such conduct, would say of the same person that probably Christ "never knew him"—he was never a Christian. We must give the comfort and assurance of Scripture to those who are saved; but at the same time we must not give false and un-Biblical comfort to those who merely say they are saved but deny with their lives what they profess with their lips.

Are we not then saved by our works? Indeed not! In I Corinthians 3:12-15 every Christian's works are tried by fire at the "judgment seat of Christ" before which "we must all appear" (2 Cor 5:10). Good works bring rewards; a lack of them does not cause loss of salvation. The person who hasn't even one good work (all of his works are burned up) is still "saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor 3:15). We would not think such a person was saved at all. Yet one who may seem outwardly not to be a Christian, who has no good works as evidence (if he has truly received the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior), is "saved as by fire" and shall never perish in spite of his lack of works.
Do we then, on the basis of" once saved, always saved," encourage Christians to "sin that grace may abound?" With Paul we say, "God forbid!" We offer no comfort or assurance to those living in sin. We don't say, you're okay because you once made a "decision for Christ." Instead, we warn: "If you are not willing right now to live fully for Christ as Lord of your life, how can you say that you were really sincere when you supposedly committed yourself to Him at some time in the past?" And to all we declare with Paul, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Cor 13:5).

Our confidence for eternity rests in His unchanging love and grace and the sufficiency of God's provision in Christ—nothing in our worth or performance. Only when this is clear do we have real peace with God. Only then can we truly love Him and live for Him out of gratitude for the eternal life He has given to us as a free gift of His grace—a gift He will not take back and which He makes certain can never be lost!"

In Christ,

Joe

Re:, on: 2008/4/17 14:59

I can simplify Joe's well addressed and scripturally referenced post here.

If you fall away you were not ever saved to start with.

They went out from us because they were not ever with us!!

1 John 2:18-19
19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.
(from New International Version)

Re: - posted by JoeBenson (), on: 2008/4/17 15:15

Amen Brother! I do not think that we can lose our salvation. It doesn't make sense doctrinally. You made a good point. We must first ask ourselves: Are we truly converted? Most "shim-sham" religions believe in buying your salvation by works. That is a false doctrine and is heresy! I don't care who tries to justify that works will save you; they are flat out wrong! It is only by God's grace by faith that we are saved and you cannot be saved over and over again! Heresy at it's fullest!
People need to be very careful at stating their conditions for salvation.
Thanks for the word moe. Be strong my friend!

Joe