

If We Don't Endure, We Won't Be Saved!

Many people who claim to know Christ seem complacent as if they do not need to be concerned about their salvation. At one time in their past, they may have “prayed to receive Jesus” and were told that they are heaven bound. They may have even experienced a change in their thinking and values. They may be members in good standing at a Bible-believing church. They believe that once a person is saved, they are always saved. Therefore, they need not be concerned about their salvation. It is a done deal in their mind. The Bible warns about complacency and teaches that salvation is conditional. Only those who “endure to the end” will be saved. If you started out engaged in the advancement of God’s Kingdom and but have subsequently shifted into neutral, just coasting along, take heed lest you hear on that day, “Depart from Me, I never knew you!”

Now I believe that if a person has been truly born from above, possessing eternal life, they will be glorified when Jesus returns. Jesus said, “*“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me **I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. “For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day”** (John 6:37-40). Paul said, “These whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified” (Romans 8:30). He also said that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. I believe that in the end, God gets all the glory because He initiates and brings to fruition every aspect of our salvation. It is all of grace and therefore, there is no place for boasting.*

Though I believe these things, I also take heed to the many biblical warnings to “continue in the faith” lest I hear on that day, “Depart from Me, I never knew you.” To some, this may seem to be contradictory. After all, if I am saved, I will be raised by Jesus in accordance with His firm promise. For someone who believes as I believe, there is only one conclusion that is not contradictory. No matter how strong a person starts out as a follower of Christ, he will not be saved in the end unless he continues in the faith.

*Although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— **IF indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.** (Col 1:21-23)*

Therefore, if a person starts out strong as a follower of Christ but fails to endure to the end, he really never possessed eternal life in the first place. Jesus never knew him and he never knew Jesus. Enduring is a necessary proof that a person’s faith is real. Following are other Bible verses that provide the same warning.

*Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap **IF we do not grow weary.** (Gal 6:9)*

*If we endure, we will also reign with Him; **IF we deny Him, He also will deny us** (II Tim 2:12)*

*Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, **if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.** (Hebrews 3:5-6)*

*For we have become partakers of Christ, **if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,** (Hebrews 3:14)*

*But My righteous one shall live by faith; And **if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him.** (Hebrews 10:38)*

They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us (I John 2:19)

Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, IF you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. (Romans 11:22)

"But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. (Matt 24:13)

"You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. (Matt 10:22)

"Strive to enter through the narrow gate" (Matthew 7:13).

If anyone had reason to assume he would be raised to live with Jesus forever, it was the Apostle Paul. He was used by God mightily to spread the gospel to the world. God worked signs and miracles through Paul. But instead of resting in the assumption that he would live forever with Jesus, he took nothing for granted. He kept striving to enter through the narrow gate to avoid hearing, "Depart from me, I never knew you." Consider his own words that demonstrate this.

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified" (I Cor 9:24-27).

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude (Phil 3:7-19)

If Paul had this attitude, then we should have it all the more! I believe that if a person does not share this attitude and feel the way Paul felt, he may likely not be a Christian. True believers are very concerned about whether or not they will be raised with Jesus. They shudder at the thought that they could hear the words, "Depart from me, I never knew you." These concerns are one of the evidences of regeneration.

All this begs the question, "If only those who endure to the end will be saved, then what does it mean to endure?" If a person continues to go to church all their life, does this qualify? If they tithe, does this mean they are enduring? If they read the "Daily Bread" or a few verses of the Bible each day, does this mean they are enduring? What if they also go on a two-week mission trip every year? The Bible teaches that a person can be doing all these things and still hear the words, "Depart from me, I never knew you."

Churches are filled with people who may have started out strong but seem to be the type of soil that is unfruitful. In the parable of the soils, Jesus describes them this way:

"The one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22).

A person can read a few Bible verses each day, go to church all their life, tithe and even go on a two-week mission trip every year and still be "unfruitful." I suggest that if a person really "believes," he will be extremely concerned to know if he is enduring. If a person is complacent, he should not have assurance that his faith is

genuine. He should be determined to know what it truly means to “endure” and then just as determined to ascertain whether or not he is enduring.

So, what does it mean to endure? From the parable of the sower, we know that the cares of this world the deceitfulness of riches can choke out the Word. To endure, a person must not be attached to this world or anything it holds dear. He must value his future reward so much that he looks forward to it more than anything else. Instead of fearing death and doing everything to avoid it, he should consider it gain to die because when he dies, he will be with Jesus. *“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21).*

What evidence in our lives might indicate that we are detached from this world and thus enduring? The Bible teaches that persecution and the world’s hatred of us is one of the evidences that we are truly enduring. Jesus told His disciples that the world would hate them and persecute them. And **IF** they continue in their faith while suffering the hatred and persecution of the world, they will be saved.

“There will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. “But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name’s sake. “It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. “So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute. “But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, and you will be hated by all because of My name. “Yet not a hair of your head will perish. “By your endurance you will gain your lives.” (Luke 21:11-19).

In the context of these instructions, Jesus warned them what they must continue to do in order to endure to the end. He said, *“Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. “But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:34 -36).*

He is not telling them what to do in order to avoid physical death. He is telling them what to do in order to escape the coming judgment. Let me paraphrase: “Be on guard that you do not end up like the third soil, weighed down with the cares of this life so that the word is choked out. Be on the alert at all times, praying that you escape the coming judgment so that ultimately, you may stand before the Son of Man.”

Are you experiencing the hatred of the world? Be warned, *“Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:4).* Are you praying at all times that God gives you the grace to stand firm in the faith when the world comes to take your life from you? If the thought of persecution and threats of death from the world seems foreign to you, maybe you are not even engaged in the advancement of Christ’s Kingdom. Maybe you “keep your faith to yourself.” If this is the case, you probably do not experience much hatred of the world and therefore see no reason to pray that God prepares you for the evil day that is coming. Churches are filled with people who have heard Jesus’ words, know them, and yet do not do them. The number one assignment Jesus gave to us is to GO and make disciples, baptize them and teach them to observe all that He commanded. (See Matthew 28:19-20.) Have you excused yourself from this assignment? Take heed to Jesus’ warning:

*“Everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. “And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. **“Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them,** will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. “The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.” (Matthew 7:25-27).*

Are you one of the millions of complacent people who just assume that your ultimate salvation is a done deal? If so, you need to wake up and realize that you are in a battle for your soul and right now, you are losing.