

TITLE: Satisfaction in the Sovereign Joy of Our Salvation (Part 4)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 1:3-5

THEME: The Sovereign mercy of God fuels the sovereign joy of our salvation

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Read Passage

One of the concepts that flows right out of this passage is God's Preservation of those who have been called by His name. God will complete t/work he began in us.

We get a taste of it in v. 2 [=>]

We find it much more explicit in our passage in vv. 3-5. While I said this is God's preservation of us (He keeps us safe or saved if you will) t/other side of t/coin is that he preserves us in order that we will persevere in t/faith (doctrine of perseverance).

"Those whom God has accepted in His beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit can neither totally or finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end and be eternally saved." [1646 Westminster Confession of Faith, Article 17]

Compare what Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:3-5 [=>]

If there was ever anyone who knew the reality of that statement it was Peter. Peter's life exemplifies what the doctrine of perseverance means in t/life of a believer.

Go back in time to Luke chapter 22 Jesus says to Peter==>

"The rooster will not crow today until you three times deny that you know me."

Did that happen? Did Peter deny that he knew his Master? Yes. But He also recognized his sin, repented, & became most influential leader of early CH—a man who would later, as tradition affirms, pay for his faith w/his life.

Noteworthy to highlight t/fact that Jesus, just a few moments before he predicted Peter's denial, also proclaimed that Peter' would be preserved & persevere ==>

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers. " (Luke 22:31-32)

T/Eternal SOG not only prayed for Peter, but according to John 17 he prays for us in same way. In fact I would assert that what Jesus prayed for in regard to His 1st c. disciples applies to us as well. Listen to what John writes in 17th chapter of his Gospel. Jesus, praying to t/Father==>
11 "And I am no more in the world; and yet they themselves [his disciples] are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, the name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are. 12 "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

Jesus says, keep "them in your name" and "I guarded them." You say, how do you know that applies to us as well?" Verse 20==>

"I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word."

So God, by his power keeps us unto the final day of our salvation.

Let me tell you what this doesn't mean . . .

This doesn't mean that everyone who makes a profession of faith in JC & those who may even give initial evidence of that faith are genuinely redeemed.

My concern is with Popular Bible teachers like Charles Stanley who hold to a bizarre man-centered form of E.S. that says if you profess faith in X God is stuck with you & has no control over the final process of your life. You may never grow one iota. You may even cease to believe, but you're still saved and will still go to heaven. To support this antinomian heresy, Stanley and others claim that Xns will be disciplined in

t/millennial kingdom. In this regard, Stanley has written about t/parable of t/Talents in Matthew 13 that the place of outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth isn't hell, but is in t/KD - of God!

"To be in the outer darkness is to be in the kingdom of God but outside the circle of men and women whose faithfulness on this earth earned them a special rank or position."

Yes! According to those who hold this position (Stanley is by no means alone) the place described in Rev. as t/realm where God will wipe away every tear, a place of no more death or sorrow or crying or pain will nonetheless have room for carnal Xns who spend their time doing just that - weeping and crying out in pain! [cf. Christ the Lord, Michael Horton, ed.]

Do I believe a true Xn can lose his or her salvation. Of course not. No theologian or preacher standing in the tradition of t/reformation & Scripture does. But there is an issue as to whether all who profess X possess Him. Bible does address t/concept of non-saving faith & false professions of salvation (Matt. 13).

As Dr. Wayne Grudem warns==>

While a genuine Christian who sins does not lose his or her justification or adoption before God . . . there needs to be a clear warning that mere association with an evangelical church and outward conformity to accepted 'Christian' patterns of behavior does not guarantee salvation. Particularly in societies and cultures where it is easy (or even expected) for people to profess to be Christians, there is a real possibility that some will associate with the church who are not genuinely born again. If such people then become more and more disobedient to Christ in their pattern of life, they should not be lulled into complacency by assurance that they still have justification or adoption in God's family. A consistent pattern of disobedience to Christ coupled with a lack of the elements of the fruit of the Holy Spirit such as love, joy, peace, and so forth (see Gal. 5:22-23) is a warning signal that the person is probably not a true Christian inwardly, that there probably has been no genuine heart-faith from the beginning and no regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. . . A long-term pattern of increasing disobedience to Christ should be taken as evidence to doubt that the person in question is really a Christian at all. [Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 506.]

Therefore, Jesus could warn those Jews who made an empty profession of faith in Him==>

"If you abide in My word, *then you are truly disciples of Mine.*" (John 8:31)

The Apostle Paul could echo that same sentiment==>

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 . . . (Colossians 1:22-23a)

What's interesting in this passage is that in v. 23 Paul uses a first class condition: εἰ γε ἐπιμενετε . . . Paul was confident that the Colossians would persevere by nature of the genuineness of their conversion.

"But, but, but!"

What about those who become Xns & fall away. There is no such thing as people who become Xns & fall away - not in t/sense of a willful rejection of t/faith! John addressed this, didn't he?, in 1 John 2:19 ==>

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*, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us.

Those who give initial evidence of faith in X who later walk away from that faith can be identified, biblically, as bogus believers. Never genuinely saved in t/first place.

You say, "What About Carnal Christians?"

"Aren't there some Xns whom t/Bible describes as being fleshly, they look just like unbelievers but they are still saved?" How would I answer that? Well, at any given moment a Xn may look like a non-believer. Problem is when those moments become a lifestyle. Another issue here, what I call "Carnal Christian Theology."

I have to give you a little history lesson here

This view of two classes of Xns (carnal and spiritual) from what I can

tell was unknown until the 19th c. It was birthed and popularized at Keswick (name may be fam. to some of you).

Keswick refers to a movement spawned by an 1875 evangelical meeting in England. Its aim was for a "deeper" or "higher" Xn life. From this movement came the "carnal Christian" doctrine, based upon the supposed three types of people described in 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:3. From Keswick this theory made its way to the "Victorious Life" movement of America and, later, to the teaching of dispensationalists such as Lewis Sperry Chafer. From there it has become part of American pop. theology. (second-class Christian, or the "Carnal Christian")

So as far as 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:3 is Concerned

I *don't* believe that there are 2 classes of Xns described there. In 2:14, Paul describes the "natural" man which refers to those who are unregenerate. He later refers to those who are "spiritual" & chides t/Corinthians for fact that he could not speak to them as "spiritual" men, but as to babes in Christ, or "fleshly" men (the insinuation is that he *should have* been able to speak to them as such!).

Have to look at the context

Paul is not introducing a new class of Xn (carnal). No, what he's saying is that t/Corinthians were acting carnally in a specific area, namely by dividing themselves around human leaders. Does not mean that they were acting fleshly in every area of their lives. If they were then they wouldn't have been Xns in t/first place.

The Bible nowhere indicates that there are two classes of believers, but rather one class of believers (company of t/redeemed) who are at different points on t/road to conformity to Christ. All of us struggle with, and evidence, "carnality" of one degree or another (Romans 7).

The Christian is *simul iustus et peccator*, that is, at once righteous and

sinful. His righteousness is outside himself, in the imputed righteousness of Christ. However, imparted righteousness results in the struggle with sin—the struggle within himself.

TAP only recognized & affirmed two classes of people, a point he makes clear in passages such as Rom. 8:1-9 and Gal. 5:17-24 which divide men into two categories: the unregenerate and those who walk after the Spirit/are led by the Spirit (the regenerate). Paul does the same in 1 Corinthians 2:14-15. There is no allowance for a sub-class of Christians.

We could say the same thing about 1 Cor. 3 -

"saved but singed theology" (based on 3:15 - "If any man's work is burned up he will suffer loss but he himself will be saved as through fire") Like you get to heaven where you find a group of Xns w/clothes that smell like smoke. "How did you get here (sniff, sniff, "oh you were one of those!"). That's not what this passage is talking about at all. Paul has in mind Xn leaders and not ordinary Christians or back-sliders (evident from t/context).

Here's the issue: Is there a faith that stops short of saving faith?

That spurious faith exists is repeatedly affirmed by authors of NT. Therefore, there is no warrant to conclude that when the Bible speaks of falling away it must be a defection from genuine belief.

To quote NT scholar D.A. Carson commenting on 1 John 2:19 ==>

"John presupposes that spurious faith is possible, but that genuine faith, by definition, perseveres." [D.A. Carson, "Reflections on Christian Assurance" The Westminster Theological Journal Vol. 54, No. 1, Spring 1992, 18.]

Did you hear that? Genuine faith, saving faith, by definition perseveres! As such, perseverance is a gift of God's grace. It is the "Response of the Redeemed based upon the Grace of the Redeemer." It echos t/promise given through the prophet Jeremiah==>

And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. (Jeremiah 32:40)

"See how foreign it is from the truth to deny that perseverance even to the end of this life is the gift of God. . . . He makes the man to persevere to the end."
[Augustine, On the Gift of Perseverance, 41]

Could Go a Step Further: Perseverance is both a gift AND a responsibility

God's grace insures our persevering, but does not make it any less our persevering. We cannot acquire "the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" unless we "press on toward the goal" (Phil. 3:14). As we "work out our salvation with fear and trembling" (2:12), we will find that it is "God who is at work in us, both to will and work for His good pleasure" (2:13). And you can be confident that "He who began a good work in you will complete it unto the day of Christ" (1:6).

What about assurance?

Can we be sure that we possess eternal life? I would answer that with a resounding "YES!" (1 John 5:13). I would go so far as to say that t/assurance of our salvation is a direct result of true saving faith

Hebrews 11:1 **Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**

Faith is assurance // conviction. Not to say that because someone lacks assurance, they don't have saving faith. It is to say that because faith is t/assurance of things hoped for, & because one of those things hoped for is t/finality of our salvation, our faith & our assurance share a direct link.

Let me also say that our assurance rests squarely on t/person & work of JC - not on our works. As Calvin himself said, to drive a believer to his or her works for assurance of salvation is to drive them to despair.

Doctrine of perseverance isn't intended by God to give us unwarranted doubt about whether or not we stand in grace. It serves as an encouragement to believers that God will cause you to persevere. It serves as a warning to those who have or are thinking about falling away from t/things of Christ.

After quoting Heb. 3:12, Wayne Grudem in his Systematic Theology writes about how this relates to assurance and self-doubt==>

". . . in all of the passages where continuing to believe in Christ to the end of our lives is mentioned as one indication of genuine faith, the purpose is never to make those who are presently trusting in Christ worry that some time in the future they might fall away (and we should never use these passages that way either, for that would be to give wrongful cause for worry in a way that Scripture does not intend). Rather, the purpose is always to warn those who are thinking of falling away or have fallen away that if they do this it is a strong indication that they were never saved in the first place. Thus, the necessity for continuing in faith should just be used as a warning against falling away, a warning that those who fall away give evidence that their faith was never real." [Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, 793-94]

"Tony: Why are you telling us all this?"

"What does this have to do with 1 Peter?" Absolutely nothing, I just felt like talking about perseverance this morning! Seriously - Because I think it's a real issue that needs to be clarified today. Also, because it's so relevant to our passage & our theme of sovereign joy. (know it's mother's day & I apologize if you came to hear a mother's day message).

I. The Elements of the Sovereign Joy of Our Salvation (3-9)

Main idea in our passage==>

The Sovereign mercy of God fuels the Sovereign joy of our salvation.

By God's design our salvation is to be enjoyed by us to God's greatest glory and praise!

That's why it's sovereign joy. It stands in juxtaposition to false joy. It's what St. Augustine wrote of in his confessions==>

"How sweet all at once it was for me to be rid of those fruitless joys which I had once feared to lose . . . ! You drove them from me, you who are the true, the sovereign joy. You drove them from me and took their place, you who are sweeter than all pleasure" [Aurelius Augustine, Confessions, IX, 1]

The first element of t/sovereign joy of our salvation ==>

A. It was Prompted by God's Great Mercy (3a)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ACCORDING TO HIS GREAT MERCY has caused us to be born again . . .

That's where it starts: God's Mercy moved Him to act on our behalf for our sov. joy. This actually parallels t/earlier thought of vv. 1-2

. . . chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father . . .

Was in t/past annals of eternity when God chose to set his love upon us.

B. It is Accomplished Through Our New Birth (3b)

... [he] has caused us to be born again...

There's a parallel here to t/sanctifying work of the HS in v. 2

. . . by the sanctifying work of the Spirit . . .

1. A New Birth that Gives us Hope for the Present

"... to a living hope through (διὰ) [genitive of means - by means of] the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

Parallel here to v. 2 ==>

...that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with his blood...

2. A New Birth that Gives us a Future Inheritance

. . . born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance [that is] incorruptible and undefiled and unfading . . .

There's also a parallel here to v. 2==>

. . . May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.

a. Something I just discovered this AM

There seems to be a bit of a parallel between vv. 1-2 and vv. 3-4

Parallel Ideas?

Verses 1-2	Verses 3-4
<i>[chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father (1:1b-2a)</i>	<i>according to His great mercy (1:3a)</i>
<i>with the sanctification of the Spirit (1:2b)</i>	<i>has caused us to be born again (1:3b)</i>
<i>for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling with His blood (1:2c)</i>	<i>to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1:3c)</i>
<i>May grace and peace be multiplied to you (1:2d)</i>	<i>to an inheritance [that is] incorruptible and undefiled and unfading kept in heaven for you (1:4)</i>

If this is true, it's another way for God by way of Peter to reinforce t/same ideas or themes that actually reoccur t/o this letter==>

God's purposes for God's people will result in the fulfillment of God's Promises

God's promises to you are part and parcel of his covenant to you. That's the New Covenant - a guarantee of God's faithfulness to his people sealed with the blood of JC. God is faithful. Though the stars fall from t/sky // your little world seems to fall apart at the seams - God has your best in mind & rem. for t/Xn the future is always brightly lit w/the flame of God's grace.

It is He who {restate the parallels in the box above}

(That is our inheritance)

b. Peter in rapid fire succession uses three words to describe the nature of our inheritance

... [it is] incorruptible and undefiled and unfading ...

All 3 words are adjectives. All 3 are formed w/Alpha privative in Gk. (note the alliteration w/the letter "a"). Classic example of t/desire to emphasize that whatever is being described is undescribable.

i. "incorruptible" ((ἀφθαρτος)

Same word is used in 1 Cor. 9:25 of t/believer's future reward, an incorruptible/imperishable crown.

ii. "undefiled"

ἀμίαντος- pure. Undefiled in a religious sense.

iii. "unfading" (ἀμάραντος)

5:4 Peter uses related word ἀμαραντινος. of t/unfading crown of glory Xns will receive when the Chief Shepherd appears.

I. The Elements of the Sovereign Joy of Our Salvation (3-9)

A. It was Prompted by God's Great Mercy (3a)

B. It is Accomplished Through Our New Birth (3b)

Thirdly ==>

C. It is Preserved by God's Power (5a)

[you] . . . are being guarded by the power of God, through faith, for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Word "Guarded" was a military term: "garrisoned." Present tense verb. We are being guarded. 24/7/365. God is always on duty; he never sleeps; he never leaves his post. We are continuously guarded by his omnipotent power.

1. Again, that's relevant to the doctrine of perseverance

Relevant because this word (φρουρεω) is used of two kinds of guarding or keeping. It's used of guarding something or someone from getting in & it's used of guarding something/someone from getting out.

That's the grace of God in our lives, isn't it? God stands as sentry over

our lives to guard us against anyone or anything outside of us as well as to guard us from ourselves - that is from leaving t/fortress of t/faith.

That's what I mean when I say that we persevere by virtue of God's work of preservation.

He does so==>

1. Through Present Faith (5b)

[we] . . . are being guarded by the power of God, **THROUGH FAITH**, for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

a. God guards us by means of our faith

But even our faith isn't something that comes entirely from within us - God by nature of our new birth has given us eyes to see.

If you are genuinely a believer you have that faith because it comes as a gift - it's part of what it means to be a new creation in Christ // regenerated // have eyes opened // ears that hear.

A true Xn by nature of who he or she is can't lose that. It is inherent to what you are. In a sense it's like saying God can't ever cease to be faithful because it's inherent in who he is. If he could cease to be faithful, he would cease to be God (impossible). If we could cease to believe in X we would cease to be Xns, but God has made it so that those who genuinely are called by him will continue to believe by the very nature of that calling.

Light can't be darkness and still be light. Light by very definition is light. Xns by very definition are believers. If one ceases to believe or departs from the faith that indicates that this person never carried the inherent definition for if they had they would have remained (1 John 2:19).

(1) John 6:60-69

I. The Sovereign Joy of Our Salvation

C. Is Preserved by God's Power (5a)

1. Through Present Faith (5b)

2. For Future and Final Salvation (5c)

. . . for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

None are lost - all whom God calls continue in t/race, preserved by His power through faith unto glorification. Sounds a little like Romans 8=>
29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;30 and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Justification/Sanctification/Glorification. We are guarded unto that day.

I. The Elements of the Sovereign Joy of Our Salvation (3-9)

A. It was Prompted by God's Great Mercy (3a)

B. It is Accomplished Through Our New Birth (3b)

C. It is Preserved by God's Power (5a)

Fourthly (lastly) ==>

D. It will be Evidenced by Persevering Faith (6-9)

6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 in order that the testing of your faith, being more precious than fine gold which is perishable, being purified through fire, might pass the test and be found [true] to the praise and glory and honor of Jesus Christ at his coming. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

