

Assurance

Unwrapping the Perfect Gifts – Part VI

Romans 5:9-11

Introduction

Queen Victoria, who reigned over Great Britain in the late 1800's, once attended a service in St. Paul's Cathedral and listened to a sermon that interested her greatly. Afterwards, she asked her chaplain, "Can one be absolutely sure in this life of eternal safety?"

His answer was that he knew of no way that one could be absolutely sure. This incident was published in the *Court News* and came to the notice of a minister named John Townsend. After reading of Queen Victoria's question and the answer she received, he prayed and then sent the following note to the queen:

To Her Gracious Majesty, our beloved Queen Victoria, from one of your most humble subjects: With trembling hands, but heart-filled love, and because I know that we can be absolutely sure now for our eternal life in the home that Jesus went to prepare, may I ask Your Most Gracious Majesty to read the following passages of Scripture: John 3:16; Romans 10:9-10. I sign myself, your servant for Jesus' sake, John Townsend.

John Townsend was not alone in praying about his letter to the queen. He took others into his confidence, and they offered up prayer to God in Her Majesty's behalf. About two weeks later, he received the following letter:

To John Townsend: I have carefully and prayerfully read the portions of Scripture referred to. I now believe in the finished work of Christ for me, and trust by God's grace, to

meet you one day in that place He has prepared for us in heaven. Victoria

After Queen Victoria was converted to Christ and discovered the assurance of salvation in the work of Jesus Christ alone, she began carrying copies of a small booklet to give away. It was a booklet on the plan of salvation and the assurance one could have in Jesus Christ. The title of the book was, *Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment*. These were the things she had discovered in Christ.¹

Assurance – A Perfect Gift From God Alone

As we come to the end of our series on the perfect gifts of God, detailed by Paul in the first paragraph of Romans, chapter 5, you could easily outline the last three verses of the paragraph, verses 9 through 11, with the three title words of Queen Victoria's little book.

Safety

You could write in the margin of your Bible text, next to Romans, chapter 5, verse 9, the word "safety". Look at that verse.

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

Certainty

Beside verse 10, you could write the word "certainty". Continue to that verse.

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Paul is using the greater to lesser argument. In other words, if God can reconcile us while we were enemies through Christ's death, how much more likely it is that God can save us through Christ's life.

Enjoyment

Then, beside verse 11, you could write the word "enjoyment". Look at that verse.

And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . .

Safety, certainty, and enjoyment. I believe that all three words could easily be categorically arranged under one word – a word that summarizes one of God's perfect gifts. It is the word that Queen Victoria discovered and it is a word that many people do not have. It is a controversial word that has created distinct denominations. Some call it, "eternal security". In a word, it is simply, "assurance".

Words of Assurance

In verses 9 through 11, Paul will inform us of our wonderful assurance in Jesus Christ with three statements.

Safety from judgment and hell

1. The first statement revolves around the idea of safety. This is the wonderful assurance that we have been saved from somewhere – namely, judgment and hell!

Look at verse 9 again.

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

Types of God's wrath

Now there are several types of God's wrath in the Bible. Let me give them to you.

Immediate wrath

- First, there is immediate wrath.

Immediate wrath is the penalty that someone experiences when they sin. Not all sin results in

consequences that are experienced during a lifetime, but much of it does.

This is like cirrhosis of the liver in the alcoholic or sexually transmitted diseases that inflict men and women who refuse to follow God's pattern for sexual relations in marriage alone. Add to that the myriad of psychological and emotional penalties that come from marriages being broken and homes being split apart; the stress and guilt experienced when men and women hide their infidelities and double lives. The effects of lust, greed, anger, lying, and many other sins exact a high price in the body and mind of the individual.

Solomon wrote in Proverbs, chapter 14, verse 30, that even envy eats away at the bones.

This is the principle of sowing sin and reaping the penalty of sin, which is the immediate wrath of God.

Ultimate wrath

- Secondly, not only is there immediate wrath, but there is ultimate wrath.

This is eschatological wrath; that is, the future, promised wrath that exhibits itself against unbelieving mankind during the Great Tribulation and the reign of the Anti-Christ and later, through the penalty and wrath experienced by the unbeliever in an eternal hell.

This is the wrath of God that is referred to by Paul in Romans, chapter 5, verse 9. And what does he promise in that verse? Look at the last part of that verse again.

. . . we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

Would you notice that he did not say, "we hope to be saved from the wrath of God through Him," or "we would like to think we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him," or "we are doing the best we can at Christianity so we can be saved from the wrath of God through Him." No! He said,

. . . we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

Why? Because we have been justified (past tense), we shall be saved (future tense) from the wrath of God. We are safe, even now.

The word translated "we shall be saved," is what Greek students call a "temporal future". That is, it is something you have right now, and it is something you are going to experience fully at a later time.ⁱⁱ

We are already safe!

Certainty of salvation through Jesus Christ

2. The second word of assurance is, certainty. We have not only been saved from something, but we have been saved by Someone!

Look at verse 10 again.

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved . . .

(again, temporal future),

. . . by His life.

Would you notice, in this verse, we are told that something has happened because of Christ's death, and that something has happened because of Christ's life. Read it again.

. . . we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, . . . we shall be saved by His life.

Salvation has everything to do with the death and resurrection of Christ. It is all about Jesus Christ!

The Bible says, in Hebrews, chapter 7, verses 24 and 25,

. . . Jesus, because He continues forever . . . is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

In other words, we were saved by Christ, the Lamb of God who died; we are kept saved by Christ, who lives to represent us.

Writing to Christians, the apostle John said the same thing, in I John, chapter 2, verse 1b,

. . . if [a believer] sins, we have an Advocate with the Father [One who speaks to the Father in our defense], Jesus Christ the righteous

The person who believes that they can somehow lose their salvation understands only one side of redemption. The death of Christ has *redeemed* us . . . but the life of Christ *preserves* us.

We can come to the Lord's table with smiles on our faces. Why? Because His death guarantees our redemption, and His resurrection from the dead guarantees our glorification.

We are saved by His *death* . . . we are kept saved by His *life*!

So, we are saved from somewhere and we are saved by Someone.

Enjoyment of salvation for a purpose

3. The final word that Queen Victoria often shared with others was the word, enjoyment. That is, we have been saved for something!

Look at verse 11 again.

And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

To rejoice in God is the greatest of all human activities.

What is the chief end of man? The Westminster Shorter Catechism said to its students, ". . . man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

So . . . are you enjoying God?

Paul would remind you that you have been saved *from* the penalty of sin; you have been saved *for* the praise of your Savior.

We have been saved *from* the wrath of God; we have been saved *for* the worship of God. And we exult with fervent, passionate adoration. Say, "Praise God! Praise God! Praise God!"

Would that our city would echo the sound of our praise. Like the city of Ephesus, which shook with the chanting of allegiance to their false god. Would that our city would resonate with the sound of our praise to the one and only, true and living God.

Would that our city would see it in our lives. Would that they would hear it from our lips; from the lips of people who know . . . who know . . . who know that they have been redeemed because of the death of their Savior and that they will forever reign because of the life of their Savior.

Albert Einstein, the great physicist who was honored by *Time* magazine as the Man of the Century, was once traveling from Princeton on a train. The conductor came down the aisle, punching the tickets of each passenger, and came to Einstein. Einstein reached in his vest pocket and could not find his ticket. So, he reached in his other pocket, and it was not there. He then looked in his briefcase, but could not find it. He looked in the seat by him, but still could not find it. The conductor said, "Dr. Einstein, I know who you are. We all know who you

are. I'm sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it."

Einstein nodded, but did not seem relieved. The conductor continued down the aisle punching tickets. As he was ready to move to the next car, he turned around and saw the brilliant physicist down on his hands and knees looking under his seat for his ticket. The conductor rushed back and said, "Dr. Einstein, Dr. Einstein, don't worry. I know who you are. You don't need a ticket. It's not a problem."

Einstein looked at him and said, "Young man, the problem isn't that you might not know who I am, the problem is I can't remember where I'm going."ⁱⁱⁱ

This is your ticket!

Paul has simply reminded us of who we are . . . and where we have been . . . and where we are going. Imagine it!

Can we do anything less, in light of it, than do what Paul says to do at end of this paragraph,

. . . but we also exult . . .

That means exult with passionate enjoyment, excitement, and fervency. We praise our God through Jesus Christ, our dying Deliverer and our living Lord.

Ladies and gentlemen:

- You have been saved from somewhere . . . don't forget that!
- You have been saved by Someone . . . don't forget Him.
- You have been saved to something . . . don't fail to praise Him because of it.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 2/16/2003 by Stephen Davey.

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ⁱ Raymond, Ferreira, www.PreachingToday.com (Durban, South Africa).

ⁱⁱ Douglas J. Moo, *Romans (NICNT)* (Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), p. 310.

ⁱⁱⁱ John Huffman, "Who Are You, and Where Are You Going?" Preaching Conference 2002.