



## Assurance and Perseverance

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### Romans 5:6-11

Throughout Romans, Paul has been building a case that salvation is an utterly gracious act of God; an act full of mercy and compassion toward rebellious people who are enemies of God. In chapter 5 we see that we access this salvation not by co-laboring with Christ, not by being good enough, not even by seeking him; rather God seeks us and grants us faith, which is a gift from God.

Two things we can derive from this, from God's act of kindness toward us in the gospel, are assurance of salvation and perseverance of our faith.

#### 1. We can have assurance of salvation (Romans 5:6-8)

- Paul talks about the hope that we have because “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (v. 5)
- “To have subjective feelings without the objective anchor of the cross will deprive my assurance of any stability; for I will be at the mercy of my feelings. But to have the objective truth without the subjective ministry of the Spirit will leave the cross as theoretical truth.”<sup>1</sup>
- We have the subjective experience of having the Holy Spirit poured into us. (v. 5)
  - One of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to remind us of God’s love.
  - The Spirit moves both our affections and our intellect in ways that draw us closer to God and provides assurance of His love and His goodness.
- We have the objective truth of what God has done for us through Christ’s death.
  - The word “die” is used four times in verses 6-8 drawing our attention to the necessity of Christ’s death on our behalf.
  - A few observations:
    - When it comes to salvation, God doesn’t wait for us to move toward him – “At the right time,” “while we were weak (v. 6),” “while we were still sinners (v. 8).”
      - This timing refers to the fact that Christ died for us when we were weak. Jesus does not wait for us to get our act together but rather at the right time, in our time of great need - when we were weak, he died for us.
    - Jesus is our perfect substitute. He died in our place in judgment. He took on our sin and paid our penalty with his life.
      - He was the only one who could satisfy God’s wrath toward sin. When he died for us, he not only paid for our sins but he also gave us his righteousness.
      - Not only have our debts been forgiven but we have been given an inheritance.
    - The magnitude of God’s love for us remarkable.
      - “Righteous person” (v. 7) - someone “whose uprightness is cold, clinical, and unattractive.”<sup>2</sup>
      - “Good person” (v. 7) - someone “whose goodness is warm, generous, and appealing.”<sup>3</sup>
      - So the logic could go like this:
        - Human love might compel someone to die for a good person, maybe even the upright self-righteous, outwardly moral type of person.
        - Jesus did not come to die for the self-righteous, outwardly moral person. He did not come to die for the good person. He came to die for rebellious sinners who had no hope apart from him.
        - Therefore, God’s love far exceeds any iteration of human love.
    - We have a positional relationship with God that is not dependent on our works.

#### 2. We can rest in the perseverance of our faith (Romans 5:9-10)

- Our past justification guarantees our future salvation (v. 9).
  - Justification – This is a legal term of being declared innocent.

- This is a one-time declaration. If by faith you believe in the work of Jesus Christ, you are pardoned from your sins and from the judgment they deserve.
  - In the eyes of God, justice has been served. How?
    - “By his blood”
      - The consequence of sin is death. (Romans 6:23)
      - It is just when a sinner dies and is punished.
      - It is mercy when a sinner is pardoned and granted life.
    - The wrath of God has been satisfied in Christ.
      - Jesus took our place. It was the death of the perfect substitute.
        - Christ stood in our place and atoned (covered, paid the penalty for, made us right with God) for our sins.
    - The debt that we owe has been paid. There is no outstanding balance.
  - We can look to our justification in Christ as a guarantee that we will persevere until the end.
    - There is not one person whom Christ died for, whose sins have been forgiven, who will not be saved from God’s wrath. In other words everyone whom has been justified will be glorified (Romans 8:30).
    - This is true because whomever has been justified has been called by God and been granted faith to believe – faith that leads to our justification.
- Our current reconciliation with God guarantees our future salvation (v. 10)
  - Because we are justified, we now are reconciled to God.
  - The guarantee: if through his blood we have been reconciled to God, we can know for certain that we will persevere in the end because reconciliation with God is not temporary.
  - What about those who lose their salvation?
    - Salvation is completely in the hands of God and we cannot circumvent that.
    - The visible church – those who profess faith and their children.
      - Not all those who are a part of the visible church have actually been reconciled to God.
    - Sometimes people go through great seasons of doubt and it feels like they’ve lost their salvation. In the end their faith is preserved and they return.
    - “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup> For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” (John 6:37-40)
    - If you believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins you will be saved.
  - His resurrection from the dead is the guarantee that death is not the end for those that believe. Because he lives, we will live. (ch. 4:25)
  - And once again this leads us to the summary of this section in verse 11 - “we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”
- If God, the judge, has declared us innocent, reconciled us to himself, and brought us into his family, it is a certainty that he will keep us and bring us to himself into our eternal home.
  - This should free us up from guilt based living and from works based living.
    - Guilt-based living – I’m not good enough. God can’t love me.
    - Works-based living – I’m pretty good. God should love me.
    - Grace-based living – I’m not good at all and God loves me fully in Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Ash, *Teaching Romans: Volume 1* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications Ltd., 2009) p. 199

<sup>2</sup> John Stott, *Romans: God’s Good News for the World* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1994) p. 145

<sup>3</sup> Stott, p. 14