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***TULIP – The Fundamentals of
the Faith by which we are Saved***

***Sermon #8 – Perseverance of the
Saints***

February 13, 2022

Sermon Text: Romans 8:28-30

Scripture Reading: Psalm 38

Rom 8:28-30 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (29) For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (30) And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

This morning we come to the 5th and final point of TULIP. We have considered:

T – total depravity

U – Unconditional election

L – Limited atonement

I – Irresistible grace

And now, P – the Perseverance of the saints. These five fundamental doctrines which describe God's saving work in Christ of people who were absolutely dead in sin, unable to take a single step toward being made righteous before God, and in fact who had no ability to even desire to be put right with God, whom they hated. The next three doctrines – U, L, and I – fall naturally out of the state of man in his sin. There is nothing in man that could merit him being chosen by God, Christ on the cross had to actually effect the redemption of the elect, and God's call to the

sinner to come to Christ in faith and repentance has to be an *effectual call*.

Now, this final doctrine, the perseverance of the saints, is taught clearly in Scripture, but it also logically follows the previous 4 points which tell us that *salvation is of the Lord, entirely*. We were dead in our trespasses and sins and we walked in them as a matter of our nature. We followed the devil and belonged to him. Our redemption is such that we can say – sola deo gloria – to God alone be the glory. There is no room at all for man to boast.

ALL aspects of our salvation in Christ are *of the Lord* –

- Election
- Calling
- Regeneration
- Justification
- Sanctification
- Glorification

...and this means that the Christian is *most assuredly going to be glorified* (ascended into heaven,

resurrected).

Look at Romans 8 again:

(29) For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (30) And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Just read on and Paul drives it home:

Rom 8:31-39 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (32) He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

(33) Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. (34) Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God,

who indeed is interceding for us.

(35) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

(36) As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." (37) No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

(38) For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, (39) nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Arminian theology insists that the chief thing that must be preserved at all costs is *free will*. Free will is the darling of the Arminian. Free explains why Arminian theology insists on just the opposite of the 5 points of TULIP. The sinner must choose Christ and has the ability to

reject Christ's calling. The sinner must choose to persevere in faith and can in fact decide against Christ at some later time and be lost. That is not the gospel and we reject those notions.

But aren't there numbers of indications in the Bible that in fact someone can be a Christian and yet fall away and be lost forever? As John Murray wrote, "the doctrine of perseverance is not a subject for the indolent." It takes careful study. Listen to Murray further: [Redemption Accomplished and Applied, Eerdmans, 1955] -

"Experience, observation, biblical history, and certain Scripture passages would appear to provide very strong arguments against the doctrine which has been called 'The Perseverance of the Saints.' Is not the biblical record as well as the history of the church strewn with examples of those who have made shipwreck of the faith? And do we not read that it is 'impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of

the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they fall away, to renew them against unto repentance' (Hebrews 6:4-6)?

Did not our Lord himself say, 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he takes away ...If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered' (John 15:1, 2, 6)? Yes, faced with the facts of history and with Scripture passages like those quoted it must be said that the interpretation of Scripture on this question is not a task for the indolent. What does apostasy mean? What does the Scripture mean by falling away?

And then Murray continues – listen very carefully:

In order to place the doctrine of perseverance in proper light *we need to know what it is not*. It does not mean that every one who professes faith in Christ and who is accepted as a believer in the fellowship of the saints is secure

for eternity and may entertain the assurance of eternal salvation. Our Lord himself warned his followers in the days of his flesh when he said to those Jews who believed on him, 'If you continue in my word, then are you truly my disciples, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:31-32). He set up a criterion by which true disciples might be distinguished, and that criterion is continuance in Jesus' word.

It is just what we find elsewhere when Jesus said, 'He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved' (Matthew 10:22). It is the criterion applied also in the epistle to the Hebrews when the writer says, 'We are partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end' (Heb 4:14). *The crucial test of true faith is endurance to the end, abiding in Christ, and continuance in his word.*

Professor Murray points us to the parable of the Sower:

Mat 13:20-21 As for what was

sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, (21) yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.

In other words, it is quite possible (and frequent) for a person to exhibit an *outward appearance* of a Christian, and to even be quite zealous and joyful and then at some point walk entirely away from Christ or even be an enemy of the gospel.

And it is very, very possible for a person to exercise this *temporary faith* and be carried to great heights of apparent spirituality, to offer wonderfully eloquent and doctrinally sound prayers, to even (as 1 Cor 13 says) preach with the tongue of an angel, exercise tremendous sacrificial acts. To quote Murray once more: “*There was the blade and sometimes there may be the ear. There is not only germination; there is also growth.*”

Perhaps the most amazing description of the apostate is given in that Hebrews 6 passage. Listen to it again:

Heb 6:4-6 For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been **enlightened**, who have **tasted** the heavenly gift, and have **shared** in the Holy Spirit, (5) and have **tasted the goodness** of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, (6) and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

“It staggers us to think of the terms of this description as applicable to those who may fall away. They advise us, however, of forces that are operative in the kingdom of God and of the influence these forces may exert upon those who finally demonstrate that they had not been radically and savingly affected by them.” [Ibid, Murray]

The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints (aka eternal security),

does not deny that there are people who do become apostate, who exercise this temporary faith and who even experience illuminating operations of the Holy Spirit, but who do not persevere to the end and in fact are revealed to have been one of those seeds that sprouted and even grew, but never set down deep roots and ultimately withered and died.

Look at the same thing here in 2 Peter 2 –

2Pe 2:20-22 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. (21) For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. (22) What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the

mire.”

And here is Murray once more summing this matter of apostasy up with crystal clarity:

“The Scripture itself, therefore, leads us to the conclusion that it is possible to have very uplifting, ennobling, reforming, and exhilarating experience of the power and truth of the gospel, to come into such close contact with the supernatural forces which are operative in God’s kingdom of grace that these forces produce effects in us which to human observation are hardly distinguishable from those produced by God’s regenerating and sanctifying grace and yet be not partakers of Christ and heirs of eternal life.” [Ibid, p 153]

Quite often you will hear critics of these 5 points of Reformed doctrine, claim that they teach “once saved, always saved, no matter what.” No matter how a person lives, they are secure. But that is now what Perseverance of the saints means. Christ’s true

people *persevere in Christ, in obedience to Him, in walking in the leading of the Holy Spirit, in exercising faith and repentance, in loving one another and evidencing the fruits of the Spirit.* There is no assurance of salvation apart from this perseverance.

“This means that the saints, those united to Christ by the effectual call of the Father and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, will persevere to the end....The perseverance of the saints reminds us very forcefully that only those who persevere to the end are truly saints.” [Ibid, pp 154-5]

Let’s go back still one more time again that that unbreakable chain of salvation “links” the Apostle Paul lists in Romans 8 –

Rom 8:28-30 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (29) For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the

firstborn among many brothers. (30) And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Consider the chain carefully:

- Foreknown (ie, chosen and loved by the Father)
- Predestined – the destination is pre determined, and it is *conformity to the image of the Son.* All those foreknown/chosen/elected *will be so conformed to Christ*
- Every one of the elect is effectually called
- Every single one of the elect is justified
- Every one of the elect is glorified.

If it be true that the elect can be justified before God by the righteousness of Christ and then fall away and be lost forever, then this chain of predestined events would be broken – which is precisely what Paul’s point is here – *it cannot be broken.* Every single

one of the elect is justified AND glorified.

There are other plain scriptures on this matter as well:

Joh 6:39-40 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. (40) 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.”

Joh 10:29-30 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. (30) I and the Father are one.”

Joh 17:6 “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

This topic then is not some mere academic exercise up for debate between people who enjoy that sort of thing. This touches YOU and

me, and let me show you one fundamental, practical way that it does.

The longer you are a Christian, the more that you grow in Christ, as you are – to use the Bible’s word – sanctified, the more you are going to see your sin. The Holy Spirit in you is going to be at work exposing what the Bible calls “the flesh,” and leading us and enabling us to put it to death and walk the way the Spirit leads so that we bear the fruit of the Spirit instead of the deeds of the flesh. This is Christ being formed in us. And that process is painful.

Psa 32:4-5 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah (5) I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

Psa 38:2-4 For your arrows have sunk into me, and your hand has come down on me. (3) There is no

soundness in my flesh because of your indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin. (4) For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.

In those times we can cling to the certain promise of Christ that He will never cast us away –

Rom 8:31-34 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (32) He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? (33) Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. (34) Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

The devil will rage against us. He will remind us of our sin and accuse us. He will lay his lies on us – but we have the certainty of the Promise:

Heb 6:13-20 For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, (14) saying, “Surely I will bless you and multiply you.” (15) And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise.

(16) For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. (17) So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, (18) so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.

(19) We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, (20) where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of

Melchizedek.

Let's end with a good word from Matthew Henry:

"We are in this world as a ship at sea, liable to be tossed up and down, and in danger of being cast away. Our souls are the vessels. The comforts, expectations, graces, and happiness of our souls are the precious cargo with which these vessels are loaded. Heaven is the harbor to which we sail.

The temptations, persecutions, and afflictions that we encounter, are the winds and waves that threaten our shipwreck.

[2.] We have need of an anchor to keep us sure and steady, or we are in continual danger.

[3.] Gospel hope is our anchor; as in our day of battle it is our helmet, so in our stormy passage through this world it is our anchor.

[4.] It is sure and steadfast, or else it could not keep us so. *First*, It is sure in its own nature; for it is the special work of God in the soul. It is a good hope through grace; it is not a flattering hope made out of the spider's web, but it is a true work of God, it is a strong and substantial thing.

Secondly, It is steadfast as to its object; it is an anchor that has taken good hold, it enters that which is within the veil; it is an anchor that is cast upon the rock, the Rock of ages. It does not seek to fasten in the sands, but enters within the veil, and fixes there upon Christ; he is the object, he is the anchor - hold of the believer's hope.

As an unseen glory within the veil is what the believer is hoping for, so an unseen Jesus within the veil is the foundation of his hope; the free grace of God, the merits and mediation of Christ, and the powerful influences of his Spirit, are the grounds of his hope, and so it is a steadfast hope.

Jesus Christ is the object and ground of the believer's hope in several respects.

1. As he has entered within the veil, to intercede with God, in virtue of that sacrifice which he offered up without the veil: hope fastens upon his sacrifice and intercession.

2. As he is the forerunner of his people, gone within the veil, to prepare a place for them, and to assure them that they shall follow him; he is the earnest and first fruits of believers, both in his resurrection and in his ascension.

3. And he abides there, a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, a priest for ever, whose priesthood shall never cease, never fail, till he has accomplished its whole work and design, which is the full and final happiness of all who have believed on Christ.

Now this should engage us to clear up our interest in Christ, that we may fix our hopes in him as our forerunner, that has entered thither for us, for our sakes, for our safety, to watch

over our highest interest and concerns. Let us then love heaven the more on his account, and long to be there with him, where we shall be for ever safe, and for ever satisfied.”

We Have an Anchor

1. Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift and the cables strain,
Will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

- *Refrain:*

We have an anchor
that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure
while the billows roll,
Fastened to the Rock
which cannot move,
Grounded firm and
deep in the Savior's
love.

2. It is safely moored, 'twill the storm withstand,
For 'tis well secured by the Savior's hand;
And the cables, passed from His heart to mine,

Can defy that blast, through
strength divine.

3. It will surely hold in the
straits of fear,
When the breakers have told
that the reef is near;
Though the tempest rave and
the wild winds blow,
Not an angry wave shall our
bark o'erflow.
4. It will firmly hold in the
floods of death,
When the waters cold chill
our latest breath;
On the rising tide it can never
fail,
While our hopes abide within
the Veil.
5. When our eyes behold
through the gath'ring night
The city of gold, our harbor
bright,
We shall anchor fast by the
heav'nly shore,
With the storms all past
forevermore.