

“Born Again!”

(1 Peter 1:3-5)

Introduction

- It's been humorously stated that there are three kinds of people in the world: Those who can count and those who can't. When it comes to salvation, there are truly four kinds of people: 1) Those who believe they are saved, and are saved (saved and know it); 2) Those who doubt their salvation, but are saved (saved and doubt it); 3) Those who believe they are unsaved, and are unsaved (unsaved and know it); 4) Those who believe they are saved, but are unsaved (unsaved and do not know it).
- While this may be too simplistic, and over-generalized, it does raise an important distinction between the “security” of salvation and the “assurance” of salvation. The security of salvation is the objective reality that one is saved. The assurance of salvation is subjective feeling that one is saved.

It is possible to have the security of salvation and not the assurance of salvation. That is, a person can be truly saved and – due to bad doctrine, anxiety or doubt, unconfessed sin, etc. – not feel or believe they are saved. Conversely, it is also possible to have the assurance of salvation but not the security of salvation. A person may not be truly saved and – due to bad doctrine, self-righteousness, arrogance or ignorance – feel or believe that they are saved.

- The truth is, it is possible to have eternal security – to be saved and know it. For God's salvation is based on the truth of His character and Word:

John 5:24 ~ “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”

John 6:37-40 ~ “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. ... ³⁹And 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. ⁴⁰For 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 10:27-29 ~ “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My 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.”

1 John 5:13 ~ “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.”

1 John 2:19 ~ “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.”

2 Tim 1:12 ~ “... But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.”

2 Tim 1:12 ~ “... But I am not ashamed, because I know the one in whom my faith is set and I am convinced that he is able to protect what has been entrusted to me until that day.” [NET]

- True Christians have the security of salvation, and they also can have the assurance of salvation. Our assurance of salvation, however, ought not to come from confidence in ourselves – our religious works, moral goodness, self-righteousness, personal holiness, etc. Nor should it come from our feelings or experiences. Feelings (experiences) are not a safe storehouse for one's assurance. The assurance of our salvation must not come from a past experience, but from a present-day obedience.

Salvation is by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. To be saved, one must have a true faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. No one is saved by a mere profession of faith. But all those who possess a true faith in Christ will be saved. True Christians repent of their sins, and follow Jesus as their Lord and Savior. While we are not saved by good works, we are saved unto good works (Eph.2:8-10).

- The assurance of our salvation must only come from our confidence in the character and promises of God, through the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ (His life, death and resurrection). Eternal security is not a license to sin (Rom.6:1-2; 2Cor.5:17; 1Jn.2:4), nor should it lead to spiritual apathy or complacency. Rather, it is incredible confidence in the person and work of Jesus Christ, and the immutable and inerrant character of God. It is the unshakable trust that God's Word is true, and all His promises will come true. It is our *"living hope"* (1Pet.1:3) that Jesus indeed is the one and only Son of God, and our one and only Savior from God.
- God is not fooled by any false profession of faith, by "carnal" or "nominal" Christians, or by wolves in sheep's clothing (see Gal.6:7). The omniscient Lord knows those who belong to Him (and who does not).

Matt 7:21-23 ~ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²²On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' ²³And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"

John 10:27 ~ "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

2 Tim 2:19 ~ "But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are his,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.'"

- As Christians, our love for Christ will not be perfect but they must be real; our faith in Christ will not be perfect but it must be genuine. We are not saved by the merit or purity or depth of our faith, but by the veracity of our faith in Christ (Rom.3:28; 5:1-2; Gal.2:16; Eph.2:8).
- This is an essential truth for us to consider, particularly as we celebrate "Resurrection Sunday." In the passage before us this morning (1 Peter 1:3-5), the apostle Peter outlined three different aspects of the believer's true salvation in Christ.

1 Peter 1:3-5 ~ "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

1. The praise for salvation (vs.3)

- First and foremost, Peter directs all praise to God for our salvation: "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!*" (vs.3a). This statement is intended to be an expression of praise to God. Literally, the expression could be translated "Blessed the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" [there is no verb "be" in the original Greek text].

God is deserving of all praise and glory for our salvation, because He is the one who sovereignly initiates and ordains salvation. God is the author, perfecter and protector of salvation. Salvation is not the result of any human achievement, but of divine accomplishment. God alone is to be praised for our salvation because He alone can raise the dead sinner to spiritual life; He alone can empower the godless (unrighteous) to live godly (righteously); He alone can give wisdom to the foolish; He alone can reconcile those at enmity with Him; and He alone receives the blessing for those whom He has saved.

Rom 4:2 ~ "For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God."

1 Cor 1:28-31 ~ "God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹so that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'"

Gal 6:14 ~ “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

Eph 2:8-9 ~ “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

➤ The command to *“bless God”* (vs.3) is repeated throughout Scripture (in regard to salvation), and this exact phraseology that Paul used in his letter to the church at Ephesus:

Eph 1:3-6 ~ “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.” (see 1Chron.29:10-13; Ps.41:13; 72:18-19; 2Cor.1:3)

➤ This doxology also affirms the deity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Peter declared that God is the *“Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!”* (vs.3). Jesus is the (one and only) incarnate Son of God (see Jn.1:14; 3:16, 18; Rom.8:32; 1Jn.4:9). Jesus repeatedly declared this to be true:

John 5:17-18 ~ “But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father is working until now, and I am working.’

¹⁸This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.”

John 10:30 ~ “I and the Father are one.” (cf. Jn.1:1-3, 14; 14:10)

➤ Notice the three-fold descriptive title given to the Savior: *“Lord”* (identifying Him as sovereign Ruler), *“Jesus”* (identifying Him as incarnate Son), and *“Christ”* (identifying Him as anointed Messiah-King).

a) The basis:

➤ Our salvation is a result of God’s mercy (*“According to his great mercy”*; vs.3). In His sovereignty purpose and pleasure, God chose to show us mercy and not give us what our sins deserve (Rom.6:23). To be sure, believers are saved by God’s grace and His mercy. Grace is getting what we do not deserve (salvation, eternal life), mercy is not getting what we do deserve (condemnation, eternal death).

◆ Mercy is not getting what we deserve

◆ Grace is getting what we do not deserve

➤ God’s saving mercy is the pity and compassion that He has shown on us as sinners. Scripture pulls no punches when describing our sinful condition before God – we are hopeless, helpless, blind, naked, wretched, poor, foolish, damned, children of wrath, hateful, hostile, idolatrous, deaf and dead! (see Rom.1:28-31; Col.1:21; Tit.3:3; Rev.3:17). Sinners are completely deserving of God’s just and eternal punishment. It is only by His mercy (and grace) that we can be saved.

Eph 2:1-5 ~ “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience – ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved” (Eph.2:8-9)

Titus 3:4-6 ~ “But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior”

2 Tim 1:9 ~ “who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began”

1 Peter 2:10 ~ “Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

- It is because God is merciful that sinners can be saved. We can never be good enough, or do enough good, to earn (or be found deserving of) God's salvation.

Rom 9:15-16 ~ “For he says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.’ ¹⁶So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.”

- It is important to note that Peter refers to God's mercy as His “*great*” (vs.3; *polus*; abundant) mercy. This is mercy in abundance, overflowing. “Great sins need great mercy.” Our sins are great requiring great mercy from God. As with His grace, God's mercy covers all of our sins. The well of God's mercy to those who believe is both infinitely deep and overflowing (Ps.103:11; Rom.5:20; 1Jn.1:9)!

b) *The means:*

- God's salvific mercy is what led Him to initiate His plan of salvation in which He sent His one and only Son to die on the cross for our sins, and to rise from the dead conquering both sin and death. Christians are born again, to a living hope, “*through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*” (vs.3c). The resurrection of Christ was the final step necessary to secure our salvation. Without the resurrection, there would be no forgiveness of sins, no new life, no living hope (1Cor.15:17-19).

Rom 5:8, 10-11 ~ “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ... ¹⁰For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”

- But Jesus did indeed rise from the dead – conquering both sin and death – eternally securing salvation for everyone who receives Him as their Lord and Savior (see 1Cor.15:20-28, 47-49, 54-57).

Eph 2:5-7 ~ “even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

Rom 6:4 ~ “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

- Without the resurrection, Christ's crucifixion (as well as His birth) would have been in vain. If Christ was not raised from the dead, we would have no salvation; nor forgiveness of sin; no life after death; no victory over Satan. Without the resurrection there would be no “Good News”; only the bad news of God just and eternal wrath. Jesus is the risen Savior, who – through His sinless life, His substitutionary death, His supernatural resurrection – has completely and eternally conquered sin, Satan, and death!

c) *The result:*

- From the infinite well of His mercy, and “*through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*” (vs.3,) God “*has caused us to be born again*” (vs.3b). This is the doctrine of regeneration – at the moment of their conversion to Christ, believers are reborn in Christ (see Jn.3:1-16). This is not a superficial change, but a radical transformation. Once a person truly receives Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior, they are fundamentally and eternally new – new desires, affections, allegiances, commitments, purpose, passions, relationships, priorities, and a new destiny! To be “*born again*” is to be truly and eternally saved, and this is “*caused*” by God alone.

2 Cor 5:17 ~ “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

John 1:12-13 ~ “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”

John 3:3 ~ “Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born [*gennaō*] again [*anōthen*] he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”

- It has been rightly said that the Christian is one who is born twice and dies only once, and the non-Christian is one who is born only once and dies twice. Peter describes this new life as “*a living hope*” (vs.3b). The Christian’s hope is anchored to the character and promises of God (cf. Heb.6:13-20). This hope is not wishful thinking, but a resolute assurance in something not yet realized. The hope of the Christian is in the living God, and therefore that hope is a living hope.
- Biblically, “*hope*” (*elpis/elpizō*) is not fingers-crossed wishful thinking, but the confident assurance in something not yet received (see Tit.2:13; Col.1:5). Hope and faith/trust are distinct but closely related in Scripture. For true hope is trusting in the character and promises of God.

1 Peter 1:13 ~ “Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope [*elpizō*] fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

1 Peter 1:21 ~ “who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope [*elpis*] are in God.”

Rom 8:24 ~ “... Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?” (1Cor.13:13)

- All hope apart from Christ, that is not ultimately in Christ, is dead hope. The Christian’s hope is “*living*” (*zaō*) in the sense that it is neither empty (false) nor inactive (dormant). It will never fail, never falter, never die. It is true, certain, lasting, and operative – actively working in our lives. The Christian’s hope is alive (or lively) for it comes from God, through salvation in Christ. It rests not human or religious merit (Gal.2:16) but in the nature and character of God – on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Heb 6:19 ~ “We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain”

2. The perfection of salvation (vs.4a)

- The believer’s salvation is also referred to here as “*an inheritance*” (*kleronomia*; vs.4). As in our English vernacular, an inheritance refers to something that is passed down from one family member to another (typically, a parent/grandparent to a child/grandchild). In our day – with the epidemic of divorce, the dismantling of family, and the idolatry of materialism – the practical concept of inheritance is almost lost. Thinking generationally – leaving an inheritance to our children’s children (Prov.13:22) – is mostly a forgotten vestige of ancient times.
- In Biblical times, however, the concept of inheritance was a common and anticipated practice. The New Testament reveals that the children of God will receive an inheritance from God as they are part of His heavenly kingdom (see Gal.3:18; Eph.1:14, 18; 5:5; Col.3:24; Heb.9:15).

Rom 8:15-17 ~ “For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ ¹⁶The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”

Gal 3:29 ~ “And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.”

➤ Peter describes this inheritance using three qualitative terms (adjectives): *“to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading”* (vs.4a).

a) Imperishable:

➤ The word *“imperishable”* (*aphthartos*) can literally be translated incorruptible or even immortal. In other words, the believer’s inheritance is not subject to decay or death – it will not be worn out with the passage of time, it will not change, or deteriorate in any way. All earthly possessions will ultimately decay and be destroyed, but not the spiritual inheritance the believer has in the kingdom of God. It is eternal.

✓ Illust: “When we’ve been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun / We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise, Than when we first begun” (hymn: *Amazing Grace*; by John Newton; 1779; this verse by John P. Rees).

b) Undefiled:

➤ Secondly, not only is the believer’s inheritance *“imperishable”* it is *“undefiled”* (*amiantos*). That is, it is incorruptible, unpolluted and unstained by sin or any impurity. The inheritance (salvation) that God gives to His children is not only eternal it is holy.

c) Unfading:

➤ Thirdly, our inheritance in Christ is not only eternal and holy; it is glorious. The Greek word (*amarantos*) translated *“unfading”* describes something that will never fade or weaken in any way. The believer’s salvation will never lessen in beauty or lose its glory. It is impervious to change; it will not depreciate over time, nor will it ever dim or be diminished.

➤ True Christians will receive an inheritance from God because they – being born again – are children of God. This “inheritance” is synonymous with salvation. Christians are children of God, and heirs of His spiritual and eternal kingdom.

3. The permanence of salvation (vs.4b-5)

➤ The security of our salvation is the objective reality of being saved (i.e., whether a person is saved or not). The assurance of our salvation is the subjective reality of being saved (i.e., whether a person believes/feels they are saved or not). As it is possible to have the security of salvation without the assurance of salvation (e.g., bad teaching, doubt, emotionalism), it is also possible to have a false assurance of salvation and no security of salvation. Consequently, there are those who believe that no one can ever know for sure whether or not they are saved. But the Bible rejects such a notion (see Jn.6:37-4-0; 10:27-29; Phil.1:6; 2Tim.1:12; 1Jn.2:19; 5:13; Jd.24-25).

In 1 Peter 1:4-5, we read that not only is the believer’s inheritance secure in Christ, but the believer is also secure in Christ.

a) The security of the inheritance:

➤ The reason why our *“inheritance”* (salvation) is eternally secure is because it is *“kept in heaven”* (vs.4). The Greek word translated *“kept”* (*tereo*; perfect passive participle) indicates a completed past activity that continues to bear present results. God Himself has “stored up”, “reserved” or “guarded” this inheritance *“in heaven”* (vs.4) for His children. Not only will this inheritance not change (“imperishable, undefiled, and unfading”), it cannot be stolen or destroyed (“kept”). Heaven is the securest place in all the universe, and God is the greatest watchman!

2 Tim 4:8 ~ “Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.” (see Matt.6:19-20)

b) The security of the heir:

- God has not only kept (is keeping) salvation in heaven for His children, but He is also guarding them as His children: *“who by God's power are being guarded”* (vs.5). *“[G]uarded”* (*phroureo*) means to keep safe, to protect, and was frequently used in a military context. God is the one who is continually guarding His children, and He is doing so with nothing less than His omnipotence (“God’s power”; vs.5). As the *“who”* would indicate, Peter is stating that those who are saved are the ones who are being guarded by God’s *“power”* (*dynamis*). So, God is not only keeping the believer’s salvation but guarding those whom He has saved.

John 6:37-39 ~ “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. ... ³⁹And 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.”

John 10:27-30 ~ “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My 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. ³⁰I and the Father are one.”

Jude 1:24 ~ “Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy”

- It is important to note that God’s power to protect our salvation is not working autonomously. Rather, Christians are *“by God's power ... being guarded through faith”* (vs.5). God is working through the faith of all who believe in Him. In other words, those who are truly saved will persevere in their faith as God strengthens and sustains their faith in Him. True Christians persevere, and those who do not persevere are not true Christians (Matt.7:21-23; 10:22; 13:20-22; Jn.8:31). This will all be fully and finally *“revealed in the last time”* (vs.5).

1 John 2:19 ~ “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.”

Phil 1:6 ~ “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

- True Christians persevere because they are enabled and guarded by God’s sovereign power.
✓ **Illust:** “The inheritance is kept for you, and you are kept for the inheritance. The word is a military one, it signifies a city garrisoned and defended. Think of a city besieged ... that is an emblem of your condition in this world. The enemy pour in their shot, they keep up the fire day and night, and set the city on a blaze, and even thus Satan bombards us with temptations, and beleaguers us with all the hosts of hell.

Our great enemy has determined to raze [i.e., destroy] the citadel of our faith even to the ground, his great guns are drawn up around our bastions, his sappers and miners are busy with our bulwarks. Even now it may be his shells are tearing our hearts, and his shot is setting our nature in a blaze.

Herein is our confidence, our great Captain has walled us around, He has appointed salvation for walls and bulwarks. We are safe, though all the devils of hell surround us, for we are garrisoned by omnipotence” (Charles Spurgeon; sermon *“A String of Pearls”*; Aug. 28, 1870).

- The Bible assures that those who have truly received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are saved, and that salvation is eternally secure in Christ by God. As Christians, we can have the unwavering assurance that what God says is true, and all His promises will come true. God – who lacks nothing – is not ignorant about those who will be saved, nor is He powerless to save (or to secure the salvation) those who are His children.

Rom 8:35-39 ~ “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ... ³⁷No, in all these things we are more

than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor 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.” (see Rom.8:28-34)

Conclusion

➤ The true Christian is completely saved and eternally secured in Christ. Salvation is made possible *“through the resurrection of Jesus Christ”* (1Pet.1:3) – if Christ were not raised there would be no salvation (1Cor.15:14, 17) – and is given to all who truly receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The promise of salvation is given by God to all who truly believe in Jesus as the one and only Son of God and one and only Savior from God.

1 Cor 15:14-19 ~ “And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ... ¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.”

➤ Without the resurrection of Christ, Christianity is a fraud, Christ is a liar (or lunatic), and those who profess a faith in Christ are delusional. To have faith in a dead savior is tragically (idiotically) meaningless. If Christ had not risen from the dead, every Christian who has ever professed a faith in Christ would have believed in nothing and for nothing. And (if Christ had not been raised) those who were martyred for their faith, foolishly died for nothing. If the Gospel is a sham, those who believe it are deceived. If the Gospel is empty so is the faith of those who believe in it.

➤ The resurrection of Jesus Christ is absolutely central and foundational to the Christian faith. The resurrection is the crowning event in God’s redemptive history. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not merely *part* of the Gospel story, it is an essential part of the Gospel story. It is not just tacked on to the end of Christian doctrine but woven throughout it. Without the resurrection of Jesus, there is no Christianity – no forgiveness of sin, no salvation, no reconciliation with God, no eternal life in heaven.

➤ As we seek to faithfully apply the teaching of these verses, we must ask ourselves a crucial question: “Am I really a Christian?” or “Am I truly in Christ?” Again, our love for Christ will not be perfect but it must be real; our faith in Christ will not be perfect but it must be genuine. God is not fooled by “carnal” or “nominal” Christians. He is not deceived by a person’s false profession of faith or duped by a self-righteous (Christless) religion (Matt.7:21-23; 25:11-12). He is neither impressed by nor pleased with people who pretend to be followers of Christ. True Christians are not saved by good works, but unto good works (Eph.2:8-10) – their lives will reflect that Jesus is their Lord and Savior.

The Lord knows those who truly belong to Him (Jn.10:14, 27; 2Tim.2:19). Everyone who is truly in Christ – who has truly received Jesus as their Lord and Savior – is completely and eternally saved. Conversely, everyone who rejects Jesus as Lord and Savior is completely and eternally condemned (Jn.3:18, 36; 14:6).

1 John 5:11-12 ~ “And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

¹²Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”