

PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

To persevere means to continue to do something even when it is hard to do. The Bible tells us that we must persevere in holiness otherwise we may lose our salvation.

In this article I would like to do two things:

Firstly, I will give two examples which show that Christians can lose their salvation if they don't persevere.

Secondly, I will explain how to persevere.

The first verse I would like to look at to show that a Christian can lose his salvation was written to Timothy, a church leader. The Apostle Paul wrote to him with the following warning: *"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers"* (1 Tim. 4:16). Paul told Timothy, in very clear words, that if he wanted to save himself then he must persevere in his lifestyle and his teaching. This means that if he wanted to get to heaven then he must be careful to continue to live a godly life and be careful about what doctrines he teaches.

The second example is in Heb 10:26-27. These verses say, *"If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God"*. The first thing to notice in these verses is that writer of Hebrews uses the word *"we"* so this means that he includes himself in this warning. What he is saying is, *"If any Christian, including myself, deliberately continues to sin then he will be condemned and consumed in God's fire"*.

So, these two examples tell us that both Timothy, a church leader, and the man who wrote Hebrews knew that they had to persevere in holiness if they wanted to get to heaven. There are many more examples that I could use but I think that these two are enough to show that we can lose our salvation.

Now I would like to look at what perseverance is and how we persevere.

Persevering is something that we must choose to do because God does not force us to do anything. God doesn't control us but instead His Spirit works within us to strengthen and encourage us to do what is right. When we sin, the Holy Spirit takes our peace away and we then have the choice of either repenting of that sin or ignoring it.

- ➔ If we choose to ignore the Holy Spirit and deliberately continue in sin then we may lose our salvation as the verses in Heb. 10 have already told us.
- ➔ However, if we repent of our sin then God will forgive us and that is how we persevere to be holy. Perseverance is simply using our self-control to resist sin and live a holy life but if we do sin then we confess it to receive forgiveness.

There is no reason why anyone should fear losing their salvation. It is only when we ignore God and refuse to repent of our sins that our salvation is at risk. There is a big difference between sinning occasionally and deliberately continuing in sin. We all sin from time to time and receive forgiveness when we confess it. This type of sinning is not ongoing in our life, that is, it is not part of our way of life and it does not put us in danger of losing our salvation.

The type of sinning that leads to salvation loss is deliberate, ongoing sin. This is the type of sin referred to in the verses we just looked at in Heb. 10:26-27. It is sin that is not repented of but allowed to go on and on. It can be any sin but some common examples are drunkenness, lust, hating, stealing and lying. We must be careful to repent as soon as the Spirit convicts us otherwise our heart will become hard and we may never repent and end up in hell.

An important point I would like to mention is that a believer may struggle with a sin, even for a long time. The fact that they are struggling shows God that they have a repentant heart but are too weak to stop. Struggling with sin is not the same as deliberately sinning. Struggling means that we don't want to do it but we do not have the self-control to stop because we haven't yet come to hate the sin enough. If anyone

is struggling with a sin then continue to confess it and ask God to strengthen you to resist. God hears your prayers and His promise is that when you confess, He will forgive you and cleanse you of all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Don't give up, resist it with all your strength and God will deliver you.

I believe that, from what I have said in this article, that it is clear that Christians can lose their salvation if they fail to remain in Jesus by persevering in their faith. However, there is no reason for any of us to fear losing our salvation as long as we confess and repent of our sin whenever the Holy Spirit convicts us.

I would like to finish off by saying that no one can live a sinless life. The fact is, we all sin occasionally but we will be condemned if we continue to live in a sinful lifestyle.

Do you have a sin that they need to confess?

If so, then please get on your knees and take it to the Lord.

If you have been struggling with sin for some time then please talk to a man or woman you trust so that you can pray over it together until you come to hate the sin. When you do finally hate the sin, God will deliver you from it and give you the strength to resist it in the future.

Remember that all things are possible with God and there is no sin too big for God to cleanse you of.

This is a condensed version of my article at
<http://www.christianissues.biz/perseverance.html>

This article was downloaded from <http://www.christianissues.biz/pdf-bin/blogarticles/perseverance.pdf>
The article is online at <http://www.christianissues.biz/blog/wordpress/?p=175>

Mick Alexander
leeandmick@gmail.com
www.ChristianIssues.biz