

*Redemption
Accomplished
and Applied*

by John Murray

Seventeenth Lecture

Presented by Dr. Richard Spencer

Review

- Here is Murray's order of the events in the application of redemption:
 1. Effectual calling
 2. Regeneration
 3. Faith and Repentance
 4. Justification
 5. Adoption
 6. Sanctification
 7. Perseverance
 8. Union with Christ
 9. Glorification

Biblical Warnings Against Apostasy

- The Bible contains a number of admonitions to persevere, which are sometimes phrased as conditional promises; for example,

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:31-32

All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. Matt 10:22

We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. Heb 3:14

Biblical Warnings Against Apostasy

- And also,

But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.

Col 1:22-23

Biblical Warnings Against Apostasy

- Elsewhere we see direct threats; for example,

*I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.
He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit*

John 15:1-2

*If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch
that is thrown away and withers; such branches are
picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.*

John 15:6

Biblical Warnings Against Apostasy

- Perhaps the most frightening passage of all is in Hebrews 6:

It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

Heb 6:4-6

Biblical Warnings Against Apostasy

- So, what are we to make of these passages?
- Arminians and Catholics will say that these passages show it is possible to lose our faith
- But we have labored to show that true believers cannot lose their faith, those whom God has chosen, he will save
- Nevertheless, we must deal with these passages

Biblical Warnings Against Apostasy

- Murray notes the following:

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.

RA&A, pg 151

- So, the most important question a professing Christian can ask is, “Am I truly born again?”

Why Does the Bible Warn Us?

- Murray notes,

The crucial test of true faith is endurance to the end, abiding in Christ, and continuance in his word.

This emphasis of Scripture should teach us two things.

(1) It provides us with the meaning of falling away, of apostasy. It is possible to give all the outward signs of faith in Christ and obedience to him, to witness for a time a good confession and show great zeal for Christ and his kingdom and then lose all interest and become indifferent, if not hostile, to the claims of Christ and of his kingdom. ...

(2) We must appreciate the lengths and heights to which a temporary faith may carry those who have it. RA&A, pg 152

- Let's look at both of these further

The Meaning of Falling Away

- The true meaning of falling away, or apostasy, is illustrated by the parable of the four soils

A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ...

Mark 4:3-6

The Meaning of Falling Away

- Jesus himself explained the parable,

Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

Mark 4:16-17

- These people respond to the gospel with joy, display the fruits of the Spirit for a time, but they have no root; in other words, they are not born again

The Meaning of Falling Away

- John confirms that those who fall away were never born again, he wrote

They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. 1 Jn 2:19

- Those who ultimately fall away from the faith were never saved to begin with
- It is also important to examine his second point: “temporary faith” can look very real

Temporary Faith

- In addition to Hebrews 6, 2 Peter is also frightening:
If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."

2 Peter 2:20-22

Temporary Faith

- Murray notes,

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.

RA&A, pg 153

Temporary Faith

- Consider just two biblical examples:
 - Judas: the other 11 apostles did not recognize Judas as false; when Christ said “*one of you will betray me*” they did not all turn to Judas!
 - Demas: Paul did not recognize him as false; he sent his greetings in Col 4:14 and Phil 1:24, and yet in 2 Tim 4:10 we read, “*Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me*”
- It is also possible to have a counterfeit “faith”
 - We noted last time that our obedience must be motivated by true love for God or it is not indicative of real, saving faith

What is True Love for God?

- Henry Scougal points out that self-love can motivate a person to do many good things (because life will be better) and even to diligently study the Bible (curiosity), so what is true love for God?

The love of God is a delightful and affectionate sense of the divine perfections, which makes the soul resign and sacrifice itself wholly unto him, desiring above all things to please him, and delighting in nothing so much as in fellowship and communion with him, and being ready to do or suffer any thing for his sake, or at his pleasure.

Scougal, Henry (2010-11-19). *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (Best Navigation, Active TOC) (p. 5). Forward2. Kindle Edition.

What is the True Doctrine?

- We have discussed what the doctrine does not mean, but what does it mean?
- Wayne Grudem's gives a succinct definition:

The perseverance of the saints means that all those who are truly born again will be kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives, and that only those who persevere until the end have been truly born again.

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, IVP, 1994 pg 788

The True Doctrine

- Because some refer to “The Security of the Believer” rather than “The Perseverance of the Saints”, Murray notes,

it is utterly wrong to say that a believer is secure quite irrespective of his subsequent life of sin and unfaithfulness. The truth is that the faith of Jesus Christ is always respective of the life of holiness and fidelity. And so it is never proper to think of a believer irrespective of the fruits in faith and holiness.

RA&A, pg 154

What Does the Bible Say?

- Even Paul, to whom Jesus himself had appeared and to whom God had granted a vision of the third heaven, knew that he needed to persevere to the end,

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Phil 3:13-14

The True Doctrine

- Murray notes,

The perseverance of the saints reminds us very forcefully that only those who persevere to the end are truly saints. ... The scriptural doctrine of perseverance has no affinity with the quietism and antinomianism which are so prevalent in evangelical circles.

RA&A, pg 155

- Quietism was a Christian mystic movement that stressed passive self-annihilation through meditation and contemplation of God and ethical antinomianism

The True Doctrine

- Murray also wrote,

However weak may be the faith of a true believer, however severe may be his temptations, however perturbed his heart may be respecting his own condition, he is never, as regards consciousness, in the condition that preceded the exercise of faith. The consciousness of the believer differs by a whole diameter from that of the unbeliever. At the lowest ebb of faith and hope and love his consciousness never drops to the level of the unbeliever at its highest pitch of confidence and assurance.

Assurance

- Murray wrote,

But that the full consciousness of the implications of the change, the infallible assurance of being in a state of grace and salvation, is of the essence of a state of salvation is not apparent from Scripture. The exhortation to make our calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1:10), and John's care directed to the cultivation of this assurance (1 John 5:13), would be unnecessary if all Christians were fully persuaded of their own salvation.

Can You Lose Your Salvation?

- Arminians and Roman Catholics believe you can lose your salvation
- They look to some of the scriptures we have already looked at, like John 15 and Hebrews 6, and say that it is clear a believer can fall away; a phrase used in Galatians,

I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

Gal 5:3-4

Can You Lose Your Salvation?

- Are Arminians correct? No! Murray writes,

It is just as important to deny the Arminian tenet that the saints may “fall from grace” as it is to counteract antinomian presumption and licence.

RA&A, pg 156

- In Gal 5:4 Paul is referring back to circumcision

What Paul is saying in effect is that if we seek to be justified by the works of the law in any way or degree whatsoever then we have abandoned or fallen away entirely from justification by grace.

RA&A, pg 156

Can You Lose Your Salvation?

- Murray makes the key point clear,
no one tenet of our faith is more important in the promotion of perseverance than the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone.
RA&A, pg 156
- The fact that our salvation does not depend on our works makes it secure; it is God who saves his people!
- But all who are saved *will have good works!*

What Does the Bible Say?

- Our perseverance is the result, not the cause, of our being truly saved

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1:3-5

Can You Lose Your Salvation?

- The critical point to grasp is that in the Bible, “saints” are those who have been called by God to belong to Christ:

you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:6-7

- And Romans 8:28-30 tells us clearly that those who are called, will be justified and will be glorified ...

Can You Lose Your Salvation?

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Rom 8:28-30

- Murray notes,

Is it possible to conceive of God's predestinating purpose as being defeated? Not even an Arminian will say that.

RA&A, pg 157

Can You Lose Your Salvation?

- Paul tells us explicitly in 1 Corinthians,
Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.
1 Corinthians 1:7-9
- Our security rests on the faithfulness of God!
- Jesus himself told us the same thing ...

Can You Lose Your Salvation?

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:37-40

- Who are given to Christ?

Can You Lose Your Salvation?

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:37-40

- Who are given to Christ? Believers!

Can You Lose Your Salvation?

- Jesus also said,

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one.

John 10:27-30

- The sheep are given to Christ and are believers
- Paul wrote to the church in Philippi of their final destiny and of their need to continue working ...

Can You Lose Your Salvation?

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

Phil 3:10-12

- We will “*attain to the resurrection from the dead*” but we must “*press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me*”

Biblical Warnings Against Apostasy

- Let's look at that frightening passage from Hebrews 6, how are we to interpret it?

It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. Heb 6:4-6

Conclusion and Application

- The conclusion is clear: All who have truly been born again will persevere to the end and all who do not persevere to the end where never born again
- This doctrine emphasizes the importance of our making our calling and election sure
- Henry Scougal's book *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* contains some very useful counsel in this regard:

We Must Ask: “What Are We Doing?”

Amidst all our pursuits and designs, let us stop and ask ourselves, For what end is all this? At what do I aim? Can the gross and muddy pleasures of sense, or a heap of white and yellow earth, or the esteem and affection of silly creatures like myself, satisfy a rational and immortal soul? Have I not tried these things already? Will they have a higher relish, and yield me more contentment tomorrow than yesterday, or the next year than they did the last?

Scougal, Henry (2010-11-19). *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (Best Navigation, Active TOC) (p. 26). Forward2. Kindle Edition.

And, Don't Give Up!

- Scougal points out that, even though true religion can be faked, we must continue doing all that we can to live a godly life

These external performances are of little value in themselves, yet they may help us forward to better things. ... Nor need we fear the imputation of hypocrisy; though our actions do thus somewhat outrun our affections, seeing they do still proceed from a sense of our duty; and our design is not to appear better than we are, but that we may really become so.

Scougal, Henry (2010-11-19). *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (Best Navigation, Active TOC) (p. 27). Forward2. Kindle Edition.

How to Grow in Our Faith

I shall mention but two other means for begetting that holy and divine temper of spirit which is the subject of the present discourse. And the first is, a deep and serious consideration of the truths of our religion, and that, both as to the certainty and importance of them.

... There remains yet another means for begetting a holy and religious disposition in the soul, and that is, fervent and hearty prayer.

Scougal, Henry (2010-11-19). *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (Best Navigation, Active TOC) (p. 27, 31). Forward2. Kindle Edition.

How to Grow in Our Faith

if we desire to have our souls moulded to this holy frame, to become partakers of the divine nature, and have Christ formed in our hearts, we must seriously resolve, and carefully endeavour, to avoid and abandon all vicious and sinful practices. There can be no treaty of peace, till once we lay down these weapons of rebellion wherewith we fight against heaven; nor can we expect to have our distempers cured, if we be daily feeding on poison.

Scougal, Henry (2010-11-19). *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (Best Navigation, Active TOC) (p. 22). Forward2. Kindle Edition.

How to Grow in Our Faith

Let us frequently remember the shortness and uncertainty of our lives, ... Let us sometimes represent unto ourselves the terrors of that dreadful day, ... The love of the world, and the love of God, are like the scales of a balance; as the one falleth, the other doth rise

Scougal, Henry (2010-11-19). *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (Best Navigation, Active TOC) (p. 23). Forward2. Kindle Edition.

- Let's all tip the scale in the direction of holiness!

To Prepare for Next Session

- You should read Chapter 9 of Part II (on Union with Christ)