
Sermon Notes

October 11, 2020

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

God is For Us: Perseverance

John 10:28-29, 1 Peter 1:3-5

Doubts and Questions

- ❖ A fire that burns higher and hotter despite the water that gets poured on it (from Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*)
- ❖ From time to time we all have questions and concerns about the nature of our faith
 - how will my faith hold up if I face devastating loss, trial, illness, financial trouble, persecution, etc...?
 - will I have the strength to keep trusting Christ?

A Foundation For Our Faith

- ❖ It is essential for us to know what God's Word teaches so we are not overwhelmed with fear and despair when difficulties come
- ❖ Jesus' promise in John 10:28, ... *they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand*
- ❖ The nature of the inheritance God keeps in heaven for those who belong to Him (1 Peter 1:3-5)
 - the inheritance belongs to ALL who are truly born again
 - God makes promises in His Word to all who belong to Him

False Faith

- ❖ Clear labels and terminology can help us think more precisely about the promises God gives us in salvation
 - use Scriptural categories and terms to describe what it means to have saving faith in Christ
 - sometime non-Scriptural categories and terms are used to convince ourselves or others that salvation has occurred based on a past experience, action, or decision
- ❖ However, Scripture makes it clear that someone can give all the outward signs of faith in Christ without being saved
 - the seed sown on rocky ground in Jesus' Parable of the Soils (Matthew 13:5, 20-21)
 - we must be realistic and not sentimental about the lengths and heights temporary faith can carry a person
 - John 15:6, 2 Peter 2:20-22
- ❖ The Bible knows nothing about making a profession of faith at some moment in your distant past and then never building on that foundation

Persevering Grace

- ❖ The inheritance God holds in heaven for all who are His is imperishable, undefiled and unfading
 - everyone who is united to Christ **WILL** persevere to the end and receive this inheritance
 - all those who persevere in their faith are those who **ARE** saved (Matthew 24:13, John 10:28, Phil 1:6)

- ❖ all those who persevere in their faith are those who You can be confident in your hope of enduring to the end because it is GOD who does the keeping
 - God keeps your inheritance
 - God keeps you
- ❖ The believer's inheritance
 - an **imperishable** inheritance is not subject to death or destruction
 - an **undefiled** inheritance is unpolluted, flawless and perfect
 - an **unfading** inheritance will never lose its magnificence
 - your inheritance is kept in heaven, the safest, most secure place in the universe!
 - God is guarding your inheritance
- ❖ You are being protected by the power of God from doing anything that will either forfeit or cause you to be severed from your salvation
 - God holds onto you with His omnipotent, protecting power as He gives you the persevering grace you need to safely reach the finish line of this life
 - Jesus' words in John 6:40 provided the needed confidence, hope and assurance
 - God's purpose will not be thwarted or derailed
- ❖ Trust what Jesus is doing in your life, He will not let your "fire" go out (John 6:39)

Now What?

- ❖ It is always a good idea to perform a personal, spiritual audit (2 Corinthians 13:5)
 - ask the Holy Spirit to encourage you by showing you what fruit God's persevering grace is producing in you
 - what's different/changed in my life because God called and justified me?
- ❖ If at the end of your personal spiritual audit you have doubt or uncertainty, commit yourself to believing God's promises about salvation, turn from sin and faithfully follow God with humble, Spirit-empowered obedience
- ❖ If you come through your audit with renewed confidence that God is working in you, rejoice, give thanks and worship!
- ❖ Hold on to the truth of Jude 1:24

Personal Application

1. How does knowing that God guards your inheritance in heaven and that He is holding onto you bring you comfort and assurance that He is accomplishing His perfect work in and through you?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 13:5 and set aside the necessary time to do the kind of personal spiritual audit recommended in this message. Commit any resolves you make as a result of your audit to the Lord in prayer, praise, and worship.
3. End your time of self-reflection by rejoicing in the promises made in Jude 1:24.