

## Why Saints Persevere

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The hope which filled the heart of Paul concerning the Corinthian brethren we have already seen to be full of comfort to those who trembled as to their future. But why was it that he believed that the brethren would be confirmed unto the end? I want you to notice that he gives his reasons. Here they are: God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:9).

The apostle does not say, "*You are faithful.*" Alas! the faithfulness of man is a very unreliable affair; it is mere vanity. He does not say, "*You have faithful ministers to lead and guide you, and therefore I trust you will be safe.*" Oh, no! if we are kept by men we shall be but ill kept. He puts it, "*God is faithful.*" If we are found faithful, it will be because God is faithful. On the faithfulness of our covenant God, the whole burden of our salvation must rest. On this glorious attribute of God the matter hinges. We are variable as the wind, frail as a spider's web, weak as water. No dependence can be placed upon our natural qualities or our spiritual attainments; but God abideth faithful.

He is faithful in His love; He knows no variableness, neither shadow of turning. He is faithful to His purpose; He doth not begin a work and then leave it undone. He is faithful to His relationships; as a Father He will not renounce His children, as a friend He will not deny His people, as a Creator He will not forsake the work of His own hands. He is faithful to His promises and will never allow one of them to fail to a single believer. He is faithful to His covenant, which He has made with us in Christ Jesus, and ratified with the blood of His sacrifice. He is faithful to His Son, and will not allow His precious blood to be spilled in vain. He is faithful to His people to whom He has promised eternal life, and from whom He will not turn away.

This faithfulness of God is the foundation and cornerstone of our hope of final perseverance. The saints shall persevere in holiness, because God perseveres in grace. He perseveres to bless, and therefore believers persevere in being blessed. He continues to keep His people, and therefore they continue to keep His commandments. Thus it is free favor and infinite mercy which ring in the dawn of salvation, and the same sweet bells sound melodiously through the whole day of grace.

You see that the only reasons for hoping that we shall be confirmed to the end and be found blameless at the last are found in our God; but in Him these reasons are exceedingly abundant.

They lie first, *in what God has done.* He has gone so far in blessing us that it is not possible for Him to run back. Paul reminds us that He has "called us into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ." Has he called us? Then the call cannot be reversed; for, "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." From the effectual call of His grace the Lord never turns. "Whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified;" this is the invariable rule of the divine procedure. There is a common call, of which it is said, "Many are called, but few are chosen," but this of which we are now thinking is another kind of call, which betokens special love and necessitates the possession of that to which we are called. In such a case, it is with the called one even as with Abraham's seed, of whom the Lord said, "I have called thee from the ends of the earth, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee and will not cast thee away."

In what the Lord has done, we see strong reasons for our preservation and future glory, because the Lord has called us *into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ*. It means into partnership with Jesus Christ, and I would have you carefully consider what this means. If you are indeed called by divine grace, you have come into fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, so as to be joint-owner with Him in all things. Henceforth you are one with Him in the sight of the Most High. The Lord Jesus bore your sins in His own body on the tree, being made a curse for you; and at the same time He has become your righteousness, so that you are justified in Him. You are Christ's and Christ is yours. As Adam stood for his descendants, so does Jesus stand for all who are in Him. As husband and wife are one, so is Jesus one with all those who are united to Him by faith; one by a conjugal union which can never be broken. More than this, believers are members of the Body of Christ, and so are one with Him by a loving, living, lasting union. God has called us into this union, this fellowship, this partnership, and, by this very fact, He has given us the token and pledge of our being confirmed to the end. If we were considered apart from Christ we should be poor perishable units, soon dissolved and borne away to destruction; but as one with Jesus we are made partakers of His nature, and are endowed with His immortal life. Our destiny is linked with that of our Lord, and until *He* can be destroyed it is not possible that we should perish.

Dwell much upon this partnership with the Son of God, unto which you have been called: for all your hope lies there. You can never be poor while Jesus is rich, since you are in one firm with Him. Want can never assail you, since you are joint-proprietor with Him who is Possessor of Heaven and earth. You can never fail; for though one of the partners in the firm is as poor as a church mouse, and in himself an utter bankrupt, who could not pay even a small amount of his heavy debts, yet the other partner is inconceivably, inexhaustibly rich. In such partnership, you are raised above the depression of the times, the changes of the future, and the shock of the end of all things. The Lord has called you into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ and by that act and deed He has put you into the place of infallible safeguard.

If you are indeed a believer, you are one with Jesus and therefore you are secure. Do you not see that it must be so? You must be confirmed to the end until the day of His appearing, if you have indeed been made one with Jesus by the irrevocable act of God. Christ and the believing sinner are in the same boat: unless Jesus sinks, the believer will never drown. Jesus has taken His redeemed into such connection with himself, that He must first be smitten, overcome, and dishonored, ere the least of His purchased ones can be injured. His name is at the head of the firm and until it can be dishonored we are secure against all dread of failure.

So, then, with the utmost confidence let us go forward into the unknown future, linked eternally with Jesus. If the men of the world should cry, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?" we will joyfully confess that we do lean on Jesus, and that we mean to lean on Him more and more. Our faithful God is an ever flowing well of delight, and our fellowship with the Son of God is a full river of joy. Knowing these glorious things, we cannot be discouraged: nay, rather we cry with the apostle, "Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?"