

## GOING ON TO MATURITY

God is bringing forth a people today who are embracing a walk with God rather than a theology or a doctrine. The study of doctrine differentiates between Calvinism and Arminianism.

The Calvinist doctrine originally based upon John Calvin's teachings, claims that those who in the foreknowledge of God are predestined to be saved, will be saved, so they had no altar calls for salvation.

Arminianism was advanced by Jacobus Arminius, a Dutch theologian who was burned at the stake as a heretic by the Calvinists. The Methodist church came forth under that teaching. The Methodists preach the grace of God and have many revivals with altar calls, because they believe salvation might be lost, and the Christian had better check up on it and have it revived every once in a while.

The Baptist thought that if one had salvation they would never lose it, but some of them were not really sure if they had it. The Methodist thought, "It's easy to get salvation, but I could lose it," and was constantly afraid they had lost it.

When we enter into a walk with God, the issue of losing our salvation never comes to mind. We have grown to the point of having too much of God in our lives that we have no desire to go back into the world and do our own thing. The only thing that satisfies us is the presence of God, and our desire is not to go to heaven when we die, we want to go there now, so we are dealing with the things in our heart that are veiling us from the unseen realm.

When we first get saved, the issue of salvation and whether or not it can be lost is of major importance. So this teaching will shed some light on it.

The doctrines I have mentioned above take into account only the fact that a person believes into Christ, and from that they try to determine their status. However, when a person comes into Christ they become a babe, and as a babe they are vulnerable; they must be fed and cared for, and they can sin. *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin* (this is always a possibility for the spiritual babes), *we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.* I John 2:1. This indicates that the spiritual babes are being drawn and held, but their position is not secure.

Then John addresses those who have grown up: *I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.* I John 2:14b.

The believer can reach a place of security—where it is I do not know exactly; every person must find it for themselves—a place where they enter into sonship, and when they enter into sonship, they are secure. In the mature growth of full spiritual sonship, there is eternal security; but until that time the believer does not have it.

I do not like to teach on this subject because it causes controversy. People get into debates upon it which does not produce godliness.

God is not willing that anyone perish but all come unto repentance, which is a gift from God, giving us the mind of Christ.

Jesus said all that come unto me I will not cast out. Jesus is not going to reject a person who wants to have a relationship with him; and

therefore they keep coming to him. But there are some who will not come unto him that they might have life.

Jesus said the Father had given to the Son to have life in Himself; and to whomsoever He will, He gives that they may have eternal life in themselves (John 5:21,26).

This indicates that our spiritual life is resident in Christ up to a certain point, and we grow into a place where we are no longer fed or sustained as when we were a babe.

We might compare it to the status of a baby in the womb who is nourished through the cord by which they are attached to their mother. When the baby has developed fully, they are cut loose from their mother and have life inherent in themselves. However, it is still the life of the mother that has come into them, and even then they are still not independent of her.

The real position of security is what God is bringing us into. Those who are growing in God and have not reached full sonship should be told how they can maintain their experience and their relationship to God without disconnecting from it. I am not saying that a person cannot be lost. They can, but they do not need to be lost because of sin. They can be a continual partaker of the sacrifice that Jesus made for them, as long as they have repentance in their spirit and faith in Christ. Their worthiness or unworthiness has nothing to do with it.

This is a strange teaching. A person can fall into sin frequently and deeply, but if they scramble out and repent and call upon the Lord, their fellowship with God will never be broken. Another person who has walked almost perfectly before the Lord yet has one sin in their life of which they are unrepentant, is in danger. Somewhere along the line

they will meet a situation that will defeat them and cause them to miss out completely.

It is not a matter of how good or how bad a person is; it is a matter of their attitude toward the Lord and the repentant attitude in their heart. How willing are we to get down on our knees and repent? How easily are we entreated by the Lord? How sensitive are we to Him? Our weakness is not the determining factor. The problem of sin is not the determining factor.

There are people who have sinned frequently and deeply who will make full mature sonship; their sins will be gone completely. Others who have stumbled along with a kind of self-righteousness will never make it; they will be lost.

As long as a person is in motion and has repentance in their spirit, they will make it, going along from one victory to another. The righteous man falleth seven times (Proverbs 24:16), but the Lord upholdeth him with His hand (Psalm 37:24).

I am not too concerned about people's sins; I am concerned about their attitude towards them. That sin will either destroy them or it will be a completely irrelevant factor that God will wipe away and that they will overcome. They will go right on and overcome it, and it will not be a problem to them anymore. God will take care of it.

However, sin is dangerous, inasmuch as it could utterly destroy us if we do not have repentance in our spirit. This refers to the babes, to the little children, to anyone who still falls short of full sonship. This teaching does not give us an excuse to sin; it deals with our attitude toward God and our openness toward God. That is the determining factor.

If the deceitfulness of sin enters a person's spirit, then a hardening process begins, and then it seems impossible to reach them or do anything for them. There are people who have fallen away, and if you speak to them you realize how hardened they have become. They go along until they meet some difficult situation and then they are shattered by it. However, if we have a repentant spirit we are not shattered by the difficulties, for our hearts have not become hardened.

We have to examine ourselves, let the Holy Spirit search our heart. We need to look into our heart to see what kind of a heart we have. We do not want bitterness or the deceitfulness of sin to creep into our spirit and cause that hardening. *Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me.* Hebrews 3:15b.

We need to be very careful how we react to the testing's we go through in the spiritual battles. We need to constantly seek the Lord. Some people are hardened through the pressures to which they are subjected. After a while they become bitter. They harden their hearts and you cannot reach them. Not only the deceitfulness of sin, but also the pressure of battle can cause the heart to become hardened.

We need to keep a quality in our heart of being deeply repentant and self-searching. I am not saying that you should always be deeply introspective, but it is good to dig down and find out if something is wrong. Get some help if you cannot find it by yourself. When we start coming under pressure, it is surprising how things begin to grow. The sunshine comes down and makes the thorns and weeds grow, as well as the good seed. We must be vigilant because the bad seed that lies dormant in our heart will also grow during those times of pressure.

In times of stress, when we discover that our weaknesses are coming out, we need to begin to seek the Lord to find out why we are reacting

that way. The same sunshine which hardens the clay will melt the wax. We cannot harden our heart and become bitter; we need to keep our heart sensitive.

Many ministers become bitter, to the point that you cannot reach them. They never seem to get blessed. They could preach and tell everyone else what to do, but they cannot do it themselves. They have no walk with God because somewhere along the line they had hardened their hearts. Too many experiences had made them bitter. It should have had the opposite effect, for it was God's way of ordering their lives to bring them to sonship. Instead, they hardened their hearts and were cut off.

Whether we make it or not is not a result of sin or weakness; it is the result of our attitude of heart. A right attitude of heart opens the door for God to deal with sin. Theoretically, that was all taken care of when Jesus shed His precious blood on the cross. It is ours; we have only to appropriate it and we can be free from sin. The blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse us from all unrighteousness, when we learn how to apply his blood to our heart. There must be the openness toward God that allows our spirit to be purged.

Can a believer be lost? Absolutely! Not, however, after they reach a certain level of spiritual maturity. But before that, it is possible. In this passage, Hebrews speaks of those who were enlightened, who had tasted the heavenly gifts, who had been made partakers of the Holy Spirit and had tasted the good word of God—a real living word—and the powers of the age to come; yet they fell away. It was impossible to renew them again to repentance.

What is an unpardonable sin? Is it unpardonable because God cannot forgive it? No, it is unpardonable because the heart has reached a place where it cannot repent. In Hebrews 6:6 , they could not repent

because they had reached the place where the whole issue of their lives was to crucify Christ rather than to bring Him forth in honor and glory; they crucified Him afresh. They publicly judged Him an imposter and worthy of death. That is, they do not believe in Him or His atonement any longer.

*For ground that drinks the rain which often falls upon it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned. Hebrews 6:7,8.*

When a person has received much from God and still refuses to repent, the thorns and weeds come forth, but they are not concerned about getting rid of them. They have lost the capacity for repentance and are near to being cursed. They have not gone on to maturity.