

AV version of Perseverance of the Saints Sermon

Main Text:

John 10:27-30

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them,
and **they follow me.**

28 I give them eternal life,
and they will never perish,
and **no one will snatch them out of my hand.**

29 My Father, **who has given them to me,**
is greater than all,
and **no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.**

30 I and the Father are one.”

Main Idea: Sheep Follow the Shepherd

Outline:

1. Christians FOLLOW Jesus
 - a. NOT Once Saved Always Saved
 - b. Perseverance means we KEEP FOLLOWING
2. Christians are KEPT by God
 - a. The Son Keeps us
 - b. The Spirit Keeps us
 - c. The Father Keeps us
3. Christians Persevere through God's Preservation
4. Christians Perseverance Looks Like This
 - a. Be obedient
 - b. Be diligent
 - c. Be relentless
 - d. Be brave

Good Morning!

As Pastor Jody said, my name is Onan Coca, and I am one of the elders in training here at Highlands Community Church.

I hope that y'all are having a wonderful Lord's Day and that you've spent the last week contemplating God's goodness and being thankful for His many graces to you and your families. Today, we're going to spend some more time considering God's grace as we open His Word together, and hopefully, we'll all be filled with Thanksgiving again.

Today, I have the awesome privilege of wrapping up our series with one of the most beautiful, comforting, and uniquely Reformed doctrines. All of the Doctrines of Grace, rightly understood, lay a foundation for the believer's understanding of all of life, human history, and every existential thought that will ever be considered. The Doctrines of Grace are that BIG.

Let's begin by looking back at the ground we've covered over the last month.

We have been studying the Doctrines of Grace – sometimes referred to by the acronym "TULIP."

And as Pastor Jody has discussed, the Five Solas (Sola Scriptura, Solus Christus, Sola Fide, Sola Gratia, and Soli Deo Gloria) are the soil in which TULIP grows. We are reformed people; the Five Solas, along with TULIP, are not the totality of the truths we cling to, but they are vital elements of how we understand the Gospel.

These doctrinal truths remind us of God's utter Sovereignty over all of creation. We proclaim with the theologian Abraham Kuyper that, ***"There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!"***

Simply put, TULIP reminds us that God is Sovereign, and He lovingly and providentially rules His creation. So what does TULIP stand for again?

T – stands for “Total Depravity.” Man is dead in sin. Since the Fall, we have all become enemies of God and are **incapable of saving ourselves**. Total Depravity does not mean we are as evil as we could be, but it does mean that we are run through with sin and unable to bridge the gap between God and us.

U – stands for “Unconditional Election.” Before the dawn of creation, God chose a specific people for Himself **based solely on His good pleasure and for His own glory**. The decision had **nothing to do with the goodness or merit** of each person, and his decision was **final**.

L – stands for “Limited Atonement.” Other reformed thinkers have called this “definite atonement,” “particular atonement,” or “particular redemption.” The names may change, but the underlying meaning is the same. For me, the best way to think of it is this - Christ’s work was **perfect. It was complete**. And as He said on the cross, **“it is finished.”** If this is the case, and His atonement is perfect, then His work was to save the elect and **NOT** to provide atonement for every human who has ever lived, that would be universalism, and we know the Bible clearly does not teach that. In this way, the perfect atonement is “limited” to God’s elect.

I – stands for “Irresistible Grace.” If the Doctrine of Election is accurate, then it stands to reason that every one the Lord has elected will be saved. **The grace of regeneration is irresistible and effective**. When God chooses to raise a dead sinner to new life in Him, they are as incapable of resisting as Lazarus was when Jesus raised him from physical death.

So, now we’re caught up, bringing us to today’s letter. **P**. P stands for **Perseverance of the Saints**. The word perseverance is a big one. The New American Heritage dictionary defines the word as **“steady persistence in adhering to a course of action, a belief, or a purpose.”** The doctrine essentially says that when God chooses to save one of the elect, He will never lose that person, and He will bring them safely into His presence one day. We praise the Lord as we consider what we’re told in [1 John 5:11](#), **“this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”**

Let's look back at **our handy comparison chart** that Pastor Jody introduced us to a few weeks ago:

5 Points of Arminianism	5 Points of Calvinism
1. Human Free Will / Human Ability	1. Total Depravity / Total Inability
2. Conditional Election	2. Unconditional Election
3. Universal Redemption / General Atonement	3. Limited Atonement / Particular Redemption
4. Resistible Grace	4. Irresistible Grace
5. Fall from Grace	5. Perseverance of the Saints

The last point the Remonstrants made in their argument for Arminianism was that since man's will was free and he could choose good or evil, and since God's grace was "resistible," then it followed that some Christians could change their minds and reject the salvation that they had once embraced. As such, someone could become saved but then deny that salvation and revert to an unsaved condition.

While it makes logical sense in their system, that is not what Scripture teaches, as we'll see today. *(Just as an aside, I'd like to point out that most evangelical churches today mix the five points of Arminianism with the five points of TULIP, which is something both our Reformed fathers and the Remonstrants would have thought was ridiculous. Because both systems are logical in their order and each point is built upon the other 5. Mixing the two systems is not only illogical but is self-refuting.)*

Instead, Highlands Community Church would say, along with the [1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith](#) (Chapter 17 Section 1 in the Modern English), that ***"Those whom God has accepted in the beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, and given the precious faith of his elect can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace. Rather, they will definitely persevere to the end and be eternally saved because the gifts and callings of God cannot be taken away. God, through his gifts and callings, continually grants and nourishes in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit that lead to immortality."***

Now, if you have your Bibles, turn with me to [John chapter 10, verses 27-30](#). Please stand with me out of respect for the reading of God's Word.

John 10:27-30

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

30 I and the Father are one."

This is God's Holy, Infallible, and Glorious Word. Let's pray.

Holy Father, we thank you for your goodness toward us. We thank you for the opportunity to gather today, freely, with our brothers and sisters to worship you in Spirit and in Truth. Please, fill this place with your Spirit. Use your servant to speak only what you have said. Soften the hearts of your people to hear your message from Scripture today. I pray that your Word would be front-and-center, that your Son would be glorified for the work that He has done on our behalf, and that we, your people would leave here today renewed in the power of your Spirit to carry your Gospel into our community and beyond.

For we love you and we thank you for first loving us. Amen.

I was raised in a small Independent Baptist Church in central. It was a nice place, with good Godly people who loved Jesus and disciplined me to love Him too. Was it perfect? No. But the Lord greatly used that church body in my life, and I am thankful for their faithfulness.

Growing up in that church, I was taught this idea of “once saved, always saved,” or it was sometimes called “eternal security.” It was an idea that brought great comfort to a teenage boy who was worried about the horrors of hell and was anxious to be always in God’s will. What I didn’t recognize was the danger to the souls of men that that little sentence presented.

I don’t want to scare you. I’m not going to jump off any theological cliffs here. I wholeheartedly embrace and believe the idea of “once saved, always saved, “... **depending** on what is meant by the person saying it.

Here in John 10, we have just one instance (there are many) of the Scripture’s insistence that, as [Romans 8](#) says, **“those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”** Yes, those He elected He calls, those He calls, He justifies, and those He justifies, He glorifies. Case closed. Once saved, always saved, right? Let’s see.

Our working title today is, **Sheep Follow the Shepherd**, and if it’s not immediately apparent what that has to do with the idea of eternal security, we’ll get there.

Let’s read [John 10:27](#) again - **“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”**

Our first point today is this, **1. “Christians FOLLOW Jesus.”**

Have you ever been to a funeral where the preacher stands at the front of the room, near the casket of the recently deceased, and says something like, “I thank God that Fred is now resting in peace with Him in Glory!” But in your head, you remember that Fred was a rough and tumble kind of guy who liked to cuss, carouse, and fight and you were sure that you hadn’t seen him darken the church door in many years. You might have been thinking, “Really? Fred’s in Heaven?” The preacher, reading everyone’s mind, might then say something like this, “Now, I know Fred wasn’t the nicest guy, and he had run-ins with a lot of folks. But I remember when he walked down the aisle of this church as a young boy and accepted Jesus into his heart!”

And there it is. This is the heart of the problem with the idea of “**eternal security**” that many of us were brought up with. In my youth group, we called it “fire insurance.” We weren’t supposed to look at it that way, but at the end of the day, that’s exactly what it was.

So our question should be, **is this what Scripture teaches us?** No, beloved, while Scripture assures the believer of their eternal security, the doctrine of **A. Perseverance of the Saints is NOT Once Saved Always Saved**, and it most certainly does NOT mean, “**As long as you say a prayer, you’re secure no matter what you do!**”

Turn to [1 Corinthians 15:1-2](#) with me.

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

“If you hold fast” and “unless you believed in vain”? That doesn’t sound too sure.

How about [Colossians 1:21-23](#)

21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under Heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Again, we have a qualifier for eternal salvation – ***“if indeed you continue in the faith.”***

Is Paul arguing like the Arminians that we can lose our salvation? Some Christians read these warnings as being written to people who are “almost” Christians, and others say the warnings are to “real” Christians but about the loss of rewards, not the loss of salvation.

Let’s look at another passage, [Hebrews 2 verses 1-3](#):

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. 2 For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?

Hebrews 2 has the first of five “warning passages” that appear in Hebrews, and many an Arminian has argued that they are proof positive that a Christian can lose their salvation. In reality, the collective point of all five warning passages is ***“If you do not endure in persevering, fruit-producing faith, you will not be saved.”***

Several years ago, our Pastor preached through the book of Hebrews and actually did a mini-series focused just on the “warning passages” in Hebrews, and I’ve linked ([Hebrews weeks 4, 5, and 6](#)) to them in our bulletin today. Please, take time this week to go back and read through those because he covered a lot of ground there and explained what these passages are *actually* saying. I’m not going to rehash all of that because I only have about 30 minutes.

Instead, what I’ll say is this. These passages we’ve just looked at do **NOT** say Christians can lose their salvation. Instead, they are warnings, or reminders, that we believers must continue to fight our sin and live in faith. **The warning passages in 1 Corinthians, Colossians, and Hebrews, along with similar warning passages in the Gospels, 2 Peter, 2 John, Revelation, and in other of Paul’s epistles, are meant to be a tool that God uses to remind us of the truth, to sanctify us in holiness, and to ensure His children persevere.**

As Theologian Thomas Schreiner says in his book, *Run to Win the Prize*, “the writers in these texts... do not accuse their readers as if they have fallen away. They admonish them so that they will not fall away. The warnings are prospective, not retrospective. They are like road signs that caution drivers of dangers ahead on the highway. They are written so that readers will heed the warnings and escape the threatened consequence.”

So what does the perseverance of the saints really mean? **B. Perseverance of the Saints means we KEEP Following**. Remember, John 10:27. Sheep follow the Shepherd. If you are a Christian, perseverance means that you will keep following Jesus. It means you’re not going to be like Fred. **The doctrine of perseverance says, “You’re secure because God won’t let you make shipwreck of your faith.” (1 Timothy 1)**

You might ask, “what do you mean **follow Jesus**? If asking Him into my heart isn’t a magic bullet, what is?”

[Galatians 5 verses 19-21](#):

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Following Jesus means **fighting** our sin. It means actively killing those sins in our lives. Following Jesus means instead of doing the things that Scripture says are evil, we should do the things that Scripture tells us glorify God. If you’re not fighting your sin, if you are wallowing in your unbiblical desires, then it’s time to ask yourself the hard question.

[1 Corinthians 6:9-11](#)

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Those who wallow in their immorality and sin **WILL NOT** inherit the kingdom of God. Those who have turned from their sin through repentance and have been washed clean will.

Are these helpful? Do we see the picture?

Throughout the New Testament, we see similar exhortations to holiness. Just in case you were wondering where the Apostles got their information, our Lord Jesus had some things to say on this topic during his earthly ministry, as well.

In Matthew 13, Jesus describes four groups of people, three of which hear the Word with varying degrees of understanding, some even receive it with joy, but none of whom **persevere**. Only one group, those who are in the good soil that hear with joy and then produce good fruit, perseveres.

[In Luke 8](#), Luke also tells this story but writes it like this, ***“As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.”***

“With patience” here literally means **“with perseverance.”**

Let's turn elsewhere in Matthew. Matthew chapter 7:15-23.

In [Matthew 7](#), we read two short stories and hear some of the most terrifying words ever uttered.

15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 **So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.** 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 **Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.**

First, Jesus warns his disciples to beware of false believers. He calls them false prophets who come in "sheep's clothing." How does He tell us to recognize them? **By their fruit.** If the tree bears bad fruit, then it's a bad tree. **If a person is marked by a life of bearing bad fruit, brothers, and sisters, Jesus tells us that they are not one of His sheep.**

But wait, He gets even firmer. Turn back to Matthew 7 again. Now in verse 21.

21 **"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in Heaven.** 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, **'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'**

Family, not everyone who says Jesus is Lord will enter Heaven!

Have you met those neighbors of yours who say, "I'm a Christian," yet never attend church, read their Bibles, pray, or talk about their love for the Savior? My friends, just because someone says Jesus is their Lord does not make it so. **The one who will enter the kingdom is the one who does the will of the Father,** which correspondingly means that those who do not do the will of the Father will **NOT** enter the kingdom.

Pity them because on the last day, they will hear those terrifying words, ***"I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness."***

This idea that the true sheep follow the Shepherd continues in [1st](#) and [2nd John](#) and the early chapters of Revelation.

So, eternal security is real, and we **can** rest in it, but it's not fire insurance church. Perseverance of the Saints tells us that Christians follow Jesus.

At this point, you might say that this sounds like salvation by works. "I better be good, or I'll get in trouble." No, it's not salvation by works because, as we've learned over the last month, if it were, we'd never be able to do a good enough job to accomplish it.

No brothers and sisters, the doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints is a comfort precisely because it does not rely on our work but on the promises of our Triune God.

Our second point today is that **2. Christians are KEPT by God.**

Let's look back at our main text in John 10 again.

John 10:27-30

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

30 I and the Father are one."

In verse 28, we learn that **A. The Son Keeps us**. Jesus gives His sheep eternal life, and they will **NEVER** perish, and No one will snatch them out of His hand.

Hallelujah, praise the LORD.

Notice **there is no wiggle room** in this statement from our Savior. Eternal life is, by definition, something that can not be undone, and he underscores it by repeating it three times in different ways. There are no conditions, no if/then statements, and no "unless, but, or maybes"... the Son promises that He will keep His sheep.

In case you wonder if He means it, let's turn to [John 6](#).

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. 36 But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. 37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from Heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

Again, we read Jesus' heartfelt promise to His sheep. *"All that the Father gives me will come to me, and **whoever comes to me I will never cast out.**"*

Believers, you can trust your Savior. He will do what He has said He will do. The Son Keeps us.

But not the Son only, church. The Spirit has a role in this too, that's right, ***B. The Spirit Keeps us*** as well.

Just a few minutes ago, we read a long list of sins from 1 Corinthians 6, but right at the end, in verse 11, we read this, *"11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."*

Folks, we used to be one way but then, we "were washed," and the process of sanctification, which Paul tells us in [Romans 15](#) is the work of the Holy Spirit, began in us. When God calls us to Himself and, through His grace, gives us a heart of flesh so that we can see our sin and respond to Him in faith, the Spirit moves in and begins the lifelong process of sanctification.

What does this work look like?

In [Romans 6:15-23](#), Paul reminds the church in Rome that true believers, true sheep, no longer wallow in their sin but instead they follow their Shepherd. And then he explains that we do this through the keeping power of sanctification.

15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. 19 I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The fruit you get leads to sanctification, and its end, eternal life. **AMEN**. Through His sanctifying power, **the Holy Spirit Keeps us**.

There's one more member of the Trinity who's at work in keeping us. **C. The Father Keeps us**, as well.

Let's look back to John 10, and in verse 29, we read, *"My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."*

Notice that verse 29 mimics the language we saw about Jesus protecting us in His hand. Jesus reminds His listeners that God the Father is greater than all. **All is a big word**. He is the **Greatest**. He is **absolutely Sovereign**.

How great is greater than all? [1 Peter 1:3-5](#) describes it,

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in Heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

He has **caused us** to be born again to a living hope, to an inheritance, kept in Heaven for us, and it's being **guarded** through the power of the being that we just learned is greater than anything, anywhere, ever.

Brothers and sisters, believe and be convinced that the Father will do what He said He would do. We can trust our great God. The Father has told us that He will keep us, and His Word is true.

As you can see, the New Testament repeatedly promises Christians that they are **KEPT by God**. There is no doubt. There is no gray area. True believers, true sheep, cannot lose their salvation, for the Triune God Himself keeps them.

So, now we've heard that perseverance isn't just fire insurance but means that Christians FOLLOW Jesus. And we've learned that Christians are KEPT by God. This leads us to our last point, which is closely related to point 2, we need to see that perseverance isn't our work because **3. Christians Persevere through God's Preservation**.

As we learned with the first four doctrines of TULIP, on our own, we simply don't have the strength, fortitude, or ability to do these things on our own. You don't persevere on your own. In fact, all we can really say about perseverance is, "**BUT God!**"

We persevere because God **the Father's Will is that we Persevere, and His Will WILL be done.** Let's look one last time at John chapter 6.

37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from Heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day...

So, again we see Jesus repeating Himself in three different ways to underscore the seriousness of what He is saying. **God's will is that every sheep will be saved and live with Him forever.** But to do so, we must persevere. So the question is, how?

Wonderfully, Christians can **Rest Easy because the Father Does the Work** of preservation for us. He's been planning it for a very long time. In [Jeremiah 32:40](#), the Lord tells His people that a New Covenant is coming, and the benefits will be incredible. *"I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me."* God promises that He will put the fear of God into our hearts so that we will not turn away from Him. **Perseverance means we must not turn from Him, and He promises that we won't!**

Paul tells the Philippians the very same thing he said to Timothy, *"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."* ([Philippians 1:6](#))

Again, we see that it is God who keeps us, and He does it to present us to Himself on the last day.

Or, [1 Thessalonians 5:23-24](#) which says, 23 Now **may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.**

He sanctifies us, He keeps us, He who called us is faithful, and **He WILL DO IT.**

These are so good church. Do you feel it? Do you see His goodness? Can you understand the depth of it all? How about one more?

In [Mark chapter 10](#), Jesus is approached by a “rich young man” who wants to know how to receive eternal life. Jesus first says to obey all the law, and the ruler says, “I have!” then Jesus says, “Sell all you have and follow me.” (**Because sheep follow the Shepherd 😊**)... but the rich young man goes away heartbroken. After he leaves Jesus explains to his disciples that it is very hard to get to Heaven. Now, look at verses 26-27. **26 And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?” 27 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.”** With man, it is impossible, **BUT God!**

Y’all. You can’t do enough work to get yourselves to glory. **But our Sovereign God can.** That’s what this last month studying TULIP has been all about. You can’t do it, **BUT GOD!** In fact, He’s already done it. Now, all you need to do is follow Him home.

Duane Edward Spencer is the author of an excellent little book called *TULIP*, which compares Arminianism with the Doctrines of Grace. He summed up the truth of TULIP like this, **“Perseverance of the saints is dependent upon irresistible grace, granted us because Christ died for us since the atonement we have by His blood was limited to the elect. That election, praise the Lord, was not based upon some condition of good foreknown to be in us since “there is none good, no not one.” By the grace of God it was an unconditional election because no condition could be found! No condition could be found because man is totally depraved, i.e., totally incapable of exercising good will toward God, wholly impotent to call himself to life or to free himself from the superhuman power of the god of the dead.”**

By way of application, to give you something tangible to think about, let me close with four things that **should mark your life as a TRUE sheep who Follows the Good Shepherd.**

1. **Be obedient:** [Philippians 2:12-13](#) *12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.* It is your responsibility to actively pursue obedience in the process of your sanctification, and the attitude you have with this process should properly involve a healthy amount of fear, awe, and respect for our Holy God because ***it is He who is working in you to fulfill His will and good pleasure!***
2. **Be diligent:** [2 Peter 1:10-11](#) *Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. 11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.* Works will not get you into Heaven, but the believer who is hard at work out of love for His Savior, evidencing His faith by producing spiritual fruit, **will confirm to himself the reality of his calling and election.** But there's more, in doing so, the Christian not only confirms to himself his election but a rich reward in glory!
3. **Be relentless:** [Philippians 3:12-16](#) *12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.* **Pursue sanctification with all your might,** and take ownership of your faith because our Sovereign God has taken ownership of you! **Be conformed to our Savior's image,** forget what you've accomplished or failed at in the past and keep your eyes fixed on our Savior and the future. **Fight the good fight** because doing so is worth giving up everything.

4. **Be brave:** [Romans 8:31-39](#) 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And [Matthew 28:18-20](#) 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Brothers and sisters, be brave because the Father loves you.

He did not spare His own Perfect Son but gave Him up for us all. Don't you know that He will also graciously give us all things with Him? No matter what comes for us in this life – wealth or poverty, feast or famine, privilege or pain, peace or war, comfort or death – we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. **NOTHING is able to separate we sheep from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. NOTHING.** Because of this, we can be brave and head out into the dark, scary, dangerous world, carrying His message in our hearts and on our lips. **Be brave and Tell everyone what He has done for you, dear ones. Tell everyone.**

Let's pray.

Closing Prayer

Sovereign and Heavenly Father, what a privilege to know you better. We know that if perseverance depended on us, with our fall nature, we would have no hope. What glorious news you've given us through your Word. To know that we will persevere because our Savior declares that He will persevere on our behalf. So now Lord, we pray, that you will grant us the faith, to rest solely on your preserving faithfulness.

Now to him who is able to keep us from stumbling and to present us blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Resources Used for sermon notes or bulletin?

[Run to win the Prize](#) by Thomas R. Schreiner

[TULIP](#) by Duane Edward Spencer

[Five Points](#) by John Piper

[The Potter's Freedom](#) by James R. White

[Reformed Dogmatics](#) by Geerhardus Vos

[Systematic Theology](#) by Louis Berkhof

[The MacArthur Bible Commentary](#) by John MacArthur

John Piper's seminars on Tulip ([Youtube](#))

Apologia Church seminars on the Doctrines of Grace ([YouTube](#))

RC Sproul on Perseverance (YouTube [here](#) and [here](#))

John MacArthur on God's Sovereignty ([YouTube](#)) and Perseverance ([YouTube](#))

Sermons from Hebrews by Jody May (Link [here](#) and [here](#))