

Saved: God's Plan of Salvation

Week 10: Faithful Unto Death: Continuing in the Faith -- Revelation 2:10; Hebrews 10:19–39

A runner who collapses at mile twenty does not get a medal for the miles she ran. A ship that turns back within sight of the harbor never reaches home. Some things are only completed at the end. The Christian life, the New Testament insists, is one of them. To the suffering church in Smyrna, facing prison and worse, the risen Christ does not say, "You prayed a prayer once, so relax." He says something far more bracing and far more hopeful: "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life." Not faithful for a season. Faithful unto death. The crown is real, and it is given at the finish line.

This is where our whole study has been heading. We have traced the plan of salvation from our need, through the gospel heard and believed, through repentance and confession and baptism into Christ, into the new life of grace. But salvation is not only a doorway we pass through; it is a road we walk to the end. The writer of Hebrews knows this, and he writes to Christians who are tired, discouraged, and tempted to drift back to their old life. He does two things at once, and we must learn to hold them together as he does. He offers them staggering assurance, and he gives them sober warning.

The assurance is glorious. "We have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus." We can "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." This is no anxious, white-knuckled religion that never knows where it stands. Through the blood of Christ we may come boldly to God, sure of our welcome. But in the same breath the writer warns, with words that should make us tremble, that those who "go on sinning deliberately" after knowing the truth, who trample the Son of God underfoot and turn away, face "a fearful expectation of judgment." He will not let us rest in a false security that says it does not matter how we live or whether we go on.

So how do we live? Not in dread, and not in presumption, but in faithful, enduring trust. "Do not throw away your confidence," he pleads. "You have need of endurance." The same blood that opens the way also keeps us, as we keep holding fast. This is real assurance for those who keep believing, keep obeying, keep drawing near, and keep meeting together to spur one another on. The race can be finished. The crown is real. So this week we ask the final question of the whole study: not only how we begin with Christ, but how we stay with Him to the very end. Read these verses slowly, and set your face toward the finish line.

Group Discussion: To a church about to suffer, Jesus says, "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). Why do you think the New Testament places such emphasis on remaining faithful to the end, rather than treating salvation as something settled

once and never to be considered again? How do we hold together confident assurance and the call to endure?

Personal Reflection: Think about where you are in your own walk with Christ right now. Are you pressing forward, holding steady, or quietly drifting back toward an old life? Be honest about what is pulling at you, and what it would take to set your face toward the finish line again this week.

Read Revelation 2:10; Hebrews 10:19–39

Study Questions

1. The writer says we have “confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus” and may “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (vv. 19–22). What is the ground of this assurance, and what does it teach us that a Christian can come before God boldly and with full confidence rather than in constant fear?
2. Many believers live with a nagging uncertainty about where they stand with God, while others grow careless and presumptuous. Which way do you tend to lean, toward anxious doubt or toward casual presumption, and how does the assurance grounded in Christ’s blood speak to your particular tendency?
3. The writer urges us to “hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering” and to keep “not neglecting to meet together... but encouraging one another” (vv. 23–25). Why does he tie holding fast to our faith so closely to gathering with other believers, and what does this teach us about how Christians actually persevere?
4. The command not to neglect meeting together is given precisely because some were drifting away from the assembly. What pulls at you when it comes to gathering faithfully with God’s people, and how might consistent fellowship be one of God’s key means of keeping you faithful to the end?
5. The writer gives a sobering warning: “if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment” (vv. 26–27). What does this passage teach about the real possibility that a Christian can fall away, and why is it so serious to turn deliberately back to a life of sin after knowing Christ?
6. This warning is meant to be taken personally, not used to judge others. Where in your own life is there a deliberate, ongoing compromise you have been excusing rather than repenting of? What would it look like to take this warning seriously this week?
7. After the warning, the writer pleads, “do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward,” and reminds them, “you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised” (vv. 35–36). How do these verses keep the warning from leading to despair, and what role does endurance play in receiving the promise?

8. The writer points the discouraged believers back to “the former days” when they endured hardship for Christ (vv. 32–34). What hard seasons has Christ already brought you through, and how can remembering His faithfulness then strengthen your endurance now?
9. Hebrews holds together two truths that people often pull apart: real, full assurance for those in Christ, and the genuine possibility of falling away for those who “shrink back” (vv. 38–39). How does this passage guard us against both the error of “once saved, always saved,” which treats perseverance as guaranteed, and the opposite error of an anxious faith that is never sure of anything? How is our salvation truly secure in Christ and yet preserved through a continuing, faithful, obedient trust that endures to the end?
10. Look back over this final passage and over the whole journey of this study, from our need for salvation to faithfulness unto death. Name one specific way Jesus is calling you to keep holding fast this week. What is the next step in setting your face toward the crown of life He has promised to those who are faithful to the end?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Hebrews 3:12–14, taking care lest any have an unbelieving heart that falls away, holding our confidence firm to the end; 2 Timothy 4:6–8, Paul finishing the race and the crown laid up for him; Galatians 5:4–7, the danger of falling from grace and running well to the end; 2 Peter 1:10–11, making our calling and election sure; Philippians 1:6, He who began a good work will bring it to completion.