



Why Faithful Unto Death

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Many churches teach that once a person is saved he/she can never be lost, no matter what. If that is true, why did God guide the writers of scripture to include so many exhortations to saved Christians to remain faithful? Why Jesus, in His letter to the church at Smyrna, instruct those Christians to *“Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Rev. 2:10)?* He said He would give them *“the crown of life” (eternal life, synonymous with salvation)* after, as a result of, their having remained faithful unto *(up until and even including dying for their faith)* death. Why *“faithful unto death”* if, having already been saved, they could not be lost?

That was not the only time Jesus spoke along this line. Matthew quotes Jesus twice saying, *“But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” (Matt. 10:22; 24:13).* Mark recorded that same statement **(Mk. 13:13)**. Jesus placed ultimate salvation at the end of a life of enduring *(patient)* faithfulness. Luke recorded Jesus as saying, *“By your patience possess your souls.” (Lk. 21:19).* If saved followers of Jesus cannot be lost, why the need

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he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” (Jas. 1:12). The message of this verse matches that of those noted above. James is writing to Christians, referring to them as *“My brethren” (1:1; 2:1; 3:1).* The *“man who endures temptation”* is a brother in Christ who faithfully endures, without succumbing to, whatever temptations the devil throws at him. At the end of his life of faithful endurance, *“he will receive the crown of life.”* The same basic thought is expressed in **Jas. 1:25**. The Christian who continues to live by the gospel of Christ, *“and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed...”*

Peter’s second letter gives the same instruction. He’s writing to Christians, *“those who have obtained like precious faith with us...” (2 Pet. 1:1).* He instructs, *“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election (their eternal salvation) sure...”* He goes on, *“for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet. 1:10-11).* The phrase *“for so”* carries the meaning *“as a result of.”* Their diligent faithfulness would result in their being given a home in Heaven.

What of John, writing about a brother in Christ committing a sin *“leading to death” (1 Jn. 5:16)?* Earlier John stated, *“if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just*

January 2020
December 2019
November 2019
October 2019
September 2019
August 2019
July 2019
June 2019
May 2019
April 2019
March 2019
February 2019
January 2019
December 2018
November 2018
October 2018
September 2018
August 2018
July 2018
June 2018
May 2018
April 2018
March 2018
February 2018
January 2018
December 2017

is death..." (Rom. 6:23).

Peter also warned to be sober and vigilant, *"because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."* (1 Pet. 5:8). But how can the devil *"devour"* a saved Christian if that Christian cannot be lost once he is saved? Obviously, the warning is that a person can lose his/her salvation if they do not remain diligently faithful. That is why Jesus emphasized being *"faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life."* (Rev. 2:10).

- July 2017
- June 2017
- May 2017
- April 2017
- March 2017
- February 2017
- January 2017
- December 2016
- November 2016
- October 2016
- September 2016
- August 2016
- July 2016
- June 2016
- May 2016
- April 2016
- March 2016
- February 2016
- January 2016
- December 2015
- November 2015
- October 2015
- September 2015
- August 2015
- July 2015
- June 2015

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 - [December 2014](#)
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 - [September 2014](#)
 - [August 2014](#)
 - [July 2014](#)
 - [June 2014](#)
 - [May 2014](#)
 - [April 2014](#)
 - [March 2014](#)
 - [February 2014](#)
 - [January 2014](#)
 - [December 2013](#)
 - [November 2013](#)
 - [October 2013](#)
 - [September 2013](#)
 - [August 2013](#)
 - [July 2013](#)
 - [June 2013](#)
 - [May 2013](#)
 - [April 2013](#)
 - [March 2013](#)
 - [February 2013](#)
 - [January 2013](#)
 - [December 2012](#)



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-
- [July 2012](#)
 - [June 2012](#)
 - [May 2012](#)
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