

## PRESERVED not PICKLED

TEXT: **1 Thessalonians 5:23-24:**

***23 And the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

***24 Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it.***

### 1. The PROMISE of our PRESERVATION

**We find it in the Old Testament benediction:**

***Numbers 6:26: The LORD lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.***

**We find it again in the Psalms and Prophets:**

***Psalms 121:5: The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.***

**Even to poor, unsteady Jacob, He swears:**

***Genesis 28:15: And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.***

**Of His vineyard, He declares:**

***Isaiah 27:3: I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.***

**Hannah sings in her song of triumph:**

***1 Samuel 2:9: He will keep the feet of His saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.***

**And even in our halting, David declares that:**

***Psalms 37:4: Delight thyself also in the LORD: and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.***

For those who abide in closer fellowship, Isaiah declares:

***Isaiah 26:3: Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee.***

This was also the Saviour's prayer before He left the disciples:

***John 17:11b: Holy Father, keep thru Thine Own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are.***

***John 17:15: I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.***

And so, Peter declares:

***1 Peter 1:5a: Who are kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation . . .***

Paul tells us of the peace of God:

***Philippians 4:7: And the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.***

Jude dedicates his epistle to them:

***Jude v. 1b: to them that that are Sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:***

And Jude closes with a doxology to Him Who is:

***Jude v. 24: Now unto Him Who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the Presence of His Glory with exceeding joy,***

The great Apostle Paul opens his last epistle with the triumphant confession:

***2 Timothy 1:12b: Nevertheless, I am not ashamed: for I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.***

He closes with the yet bolder declaration:

**2 Timothy 4:18a: The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His Heavenly Kingdom: -**

Such are some of the promises of God's preserving Grace.

**The Lord made provision for our preservation:**

**Hebrews 10:14a: by one Offering . . .**

**Continuing, we are told:**

**Hebrews 10:14b: He [The Lord Jesus] hath perfected forever them that are Sanctified.**

**The death of Christ has purchased our complete, final salvation if we are wholly yielded to Him, and do not willfully take ourselves out of His hands and renounce His Grace and faithfulness.**

## **2. The INTERCESSION of CHRIST**

**It is said, it is because He ever liveth to make intercession that they are kept.**

**Hebrews 7:25: Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.**

**This is the Apostle's meaning when he declares:**

**Romans 5:10: If, when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His Life.**

**And so, in the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans, he declares:**

**Romans 8:34: It is Christ Who died, yea rather, Who is risen again, Who is even at the Right Hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us.**

**And then comes the shout:**

**Romans 8:35: Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ?**

### 3. The BLOOD of CHRIST SECURES our PRESERVATION

**John declares:**

***1 John 1:7: But if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship one with the other, and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.***

The old ordinance of the red heifer in Numbers 19 is a beautiful type of Christ's cleansing Power. The ashes were preserved and mixed with water, and used as a water of separation, sprinkled upon the unclean, separating from defilement which has been contracted after the cleansing. It did not refer to the original cleansing, but to the taint which came from the touch of the dead.

And so we, the wholly separated from evil and dedicated to God, are constantly coming into contact with evil and are incurring defilement from the elements which surround us on every hand. **We need constantly a fresh application of His Blood.**

***1 John 1:7-9:***

***7 But if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.***

***8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.***

***9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***

It is an appropriation of His Life to our being, for the Blood is the Life.

So, the Blood of Jesus is His risen, divine life imparted to us by the inbreathing of the Holy Spirit, and the absorbing power of a Living Faith. His pure life fills us, expels all evil, and continually renews and refreshes our entire being – keeping us pure, even as the fresh oil in the lamp maintains the flame, or as the running stream washes and keeps the pebble pure which lies at the sandy bottom.



4. The ABIDING PRESENCE of CHRIST and the INDWELLING of the HOLY SPIRIT are GOD'S CHIEF SOURCES of PRESERVATION of HIS trusting people.

**It is He Who keeps, and He keeps from within.**

***Ezekiel 36:27: I will put My Spirit within you, and will cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them.***

***John 15:5b: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.***

***1 John 3:6a: Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not:***

***Psalms 121:7: The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul.***

***1 John 5:18: We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.***

**The very Presence of Jesus comes between us and every temptation, and meets the adversary with vigilant discernment, deliverance and victory.**

5. The CONDITIONS on which GOD'S KEEPING DEPENDS

**There are conditions. All God's Promises are linked with certain attitudes on our part. It is the willing mind and the surrendered heart that are assured of God's protection and grace.**

***James 4:6b: God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.***

***1 John 3:6a: Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not:***

***2 Timothy 1:12b: For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.***

**The principle of spiritual perseverance has never been better stated than in Samuel's language to Saul 3,000 years ago:**

***1 Samuel 12:14: If ye will fear the Lord, and serve Him, and obey His voice, and not rebel against the Commandment of the Lord, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the Lord your God:***

### **Let us expect to be preserved.**

If we go out expecting failure, we shall have it. At least we shall never know for certain if the next temptation we meet is the one in which we are to fall. The chain is never stronger than its weakest link – we shall be sure to fall. The prestige of an army secures its victory; the quickening assurance it has never been defeated carries it irresistibly against the foe.

It is right – believing in the Power of Christ.

### **Let us expect to be tempted.**

Most persons, after a step of faith, look for sunny skies and unruffled seas. Then, when they meet a storm and tempest they are filled with astonishment and perplexity. But this is what we must expect to meet if we have received anything of the Lord. The best token of His Presence is the adversary's defiance. The more real our blessing, the more certainly it will be challenged.

It is a good thing to go out looking for the worst; and if it comes we are not surprised; while if our path be smooth, our way will be unopposed.

**What do we mean by temptation?** You who have stepped out with assurance that you have died to self and sin may be amazed to find yourself assaulted with a storm of thoughts and feelings that seem to come wholly from within. You will be compelled to say, "Why, I thought I was dead, but I seem to be alive." **This is the time, beloved, to remember that temptation has power to penetrate our inmost being with thoughts and feelings that seem to be our own - - but they are really instigations of the evil one.**

***Ephesians 6:12: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.***

**That is to say, these temptations twine themselves around us as wrestlers do about the limbs of their opponents until they seem to be**

**a part of ourselves. This is the essence of temptation: we are almost constrained to conclude that the evil is within ourselves; that we are not cleaned and sanctified as we had believed.**

Do not wonder if you are assaulted with temptation that comes in most subtle forms, most insinuating feelings, and apparently thru your inmost being and nature?

**Temptation is not sin, unless it is accompanied with the consent of your will.**

There may seem even the inclination, yet the real choice of your spirit is fixed, immovable against the temptation. God regards this simply as a sollicitation and credits you with obedience, all the more pleasing to Him because though the temptation was so strong your spirit is immovable.

We know little how evil finds access to a pure nature. It seems to incorporate itself with our thoughts and feelings – while at the same time we resist it, overcome it, and remain pure.

**The truth is: these inner tempting thoughts and suggestions of the evil one do not spring from our own spirit at all, if we are truly sanctified. They are the voices of the tempter. We must learn to discriminate between the suggestions of the evil one and our choices. Declare,**

I do **not** accept.

I do **not** consent.

I am **not** responsible,

I will **not** sin.

I **reckon myself still dead indeed to sin**, and

**I am alive unto God thru Jesus Christ.**

### **A Beautiful Maiden in Antioch by Mrs. Jamieson**

There is a most beautiful incident related in the annals of the early church by Mrs. Jamieson.



It tells of a holy and exceedingly beautiful maiden in Antioch. She became the object of the sinful passion of a heathen nobleman. Unable to win her affection, he employed a magician to throw a fatal spell over her, to win her in the toils of his snare.

The magician himself became enamored of the fair girl. He sold himself to the devil, on condition that he should be given power to captivate her with unholy passion.

So he began to apply all his arts, and to throw over her mind the fascinating spell of his own imaginations.

Suddenly, the girl found herself like a charmed bird. She was possessed by feelings, and apparently by passions to which she had been a stranger. Her pure heart was horrified by constant visions from which her whole being recoiled.

It seemed to her that she must be polluted and degraded. She began to lose all hope and to stand on the verge of despair. She was being compelled to throw herself away in hopeless abandonment to the power which possessed her.

In this condition of mind, she went to see her bishop. It is recorded that this good man, with quick discernment, immediately pointed out to her that these influences and feelings were not from her own heart at all, but were spells from the will of another.

**Their only power consisted in her fears, and in her self deceiving recognition the feelings my be hers alone.** If she would stand firm calling on the Name of the Lord, refusing to acknowledge them as her thoughts and feelings, she could remain firm - disdaining to fear her adversary or fall prey – the power over her would be totally broken.

Unutterably comforted by this wise counsel from the bishop, she returned home and set her face in the strength of Christ, against these allurements of evil. Immediately, she found herself broken free from the evil one's enticement!

Soon after, the magician himself became conscious that his power was ended. He came to her in deep contrition, confessing his sin, asking her forgiveness and prayers.



It is said that afterwards he yielded himself to the Lord, convicted by the triumph of the grace of Christ through a pure trusting will.

This incident tells the whole story. **Let us never reckon any temptation to be our own sin, but stand steadfast in our purpose. God will give us the Victory.**

### Reckon ourselves dead unto sin

Let us continually remain of the opinion that we are dead indeed unto sin. Detach our spirit from every evil thing that touches it.

Sail on, not fearing – as long as temptations do not get a hold of our little vessel.

***Romans 6:11: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.***



### Above all, recognize the Lord as the Indwelling Life and Keeper of our Spirit, Soul and Body



This is a great principle – that –

Where we recognize God;

There - God will meet us.

Recognize HIM in the Heavens -

HE will meet us in the Heavens.

Recognize HIM by our side -

HE will speak to us from beside us.

Recognize HIM in our inmost heart - HE will meet us there.

### Abide [live] in the Love of Christ

If we would be preserved blameless, let us abide in the love of Christ. He loves us infinitely and perfectly. He delights in us continually. He is wholly

committed to carry us through and to fulfill in us all the good pleasure of His Will.

Let us not think we must squeeze from Him the blessings which our faith impels, by hard constraint and persuasion. Remember, He has set His heart on our highest good. He is working out for us, in His loving Purpose, all that we can receive of blessing.

The true secret of pleasing God is to trust Him . . . to believe in His love to us, to be artless children . . . to count ourselves beloved of God.

### **God knows our strength and capacity, and Jesus tells us**

His Will is adapted to our growth.

***Matthew 11:30: For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.***

God is pressing us forward by His Spirit to higher reaches.

Let us not be content with less, for **we shall not be blameless unless we press forward** – that we may apprehend all for which we are apprehended of Christ Jesus.

With many of us, God is not finding fault for actual disobedience, perhaps, but for short-comings . . . a too easy contentment with past attainments.

The great question is: Are we obedient to the Voice of His Spirit as He calls us onward, step by step?



### **Implicit Obedience**

Absolute obedience to the Voice of God, and every conviction of duty, is essential to a blameless life.

One moment's hesitation to obey; one act of willful disobedience, will plunge us into darkness and will withdraw His conscious Presence from the heart. The soul will be disarmed – exposed to temptation and sin.

**Those who have become wholly sanctified have given up the right of self-will and disobedience forever.** It is not to be thought of even for a moment that we should hesitate to say “yes” to His Voice.

True, we may not know His Voice at all times, but in such cases, He will always give us time.

When we are convicted of His Will, and convinced of His way for us – there is no alternative but obedience, or a fearful fall and a complete loss of the divine communion.

### **Ceaseless Communion with God**

If we would be preserved blameless, we must HAVE ceaseless communion with Him, and abide in the Spirit of prayer and fellowship through the Holy Spirit. In this shall we be led out into all the stepping of His Will, and be kept blameless and remain fully obedient.

The interruption of our communion for an hour might lose a step. That lost step might lead us from the pathway of His perfect Will and the fellowship of His presence for days to come - - or, at least, leave us a step behind, and therefore, not blameless.

### **Dependent Spirit – free from care and strife**

Further, if we would be kept, we must maintain a dependent spirit free from turmoil and agitation of anxious care and inward strife - - and remain still enough to hear His Voice.

***Philippians 4:7: And the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.***

This is the soul's defense, if we would be preserved blameless. Therefore, let the Peace of God rule in your hearts.

### **Jealously - guard our heart and thoughts**

If we would be kept, we must jealously guard our hearts and thoughts. We must not feel at liberty to drift into the current of all the imaginations that are ever ready to sweep through the brain . . . and the idle words in which Christian people are always ready to involve us.

**When you walk closely with God and are listening for His Voice, you will be quickly conscious of a constraint upon your mind, a repression upon your heart, a deep and tender sense.**

***Proverbs 21:23: Whosoever keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.***

These outward gates are places of danger; the path of safety is a hidden one.

### **Live – Moment by Moment**

If we would be preserved blameless, we must not live by long intervals, but by the breath and by the moment.

Each instant must be dedicated and presented to God – a ceaseless sacrifice. Each breath is to be poured into His bosom, and received back from His being.

### **Recover instantly from failure**

If we would be preserved blameless, we must learn to recover instantly from failure – by frank confession, prompt faith, and re-commitment.

It is possible to catch ourselves before we really fall. God does not count it a fall if we do not yield to it.

There is something higher and better than this - namely - the Grace that is able to keep us from stumbling, and to check us even before the fall is accomplished. So He is willing to keep us, even as the apple of the eye.

### **Completely - Abide in Christ**

Finally, let us remember that the whole spirit, soul, and body must be trained to abide in Christ. **The life He gives is not a self-contained endowment, but a link of dependence.** Every part of our being must continually draw its replenishment and nature from our living Head - - and thus

***1 Thessalonians 5:23b: . . . be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

***Genesis 25:22: And the children struggled together within her [womb]; and she [Rebekah] said, "If it be so, why am I thus?" And she went to inquire of the Lord.***

**Genesis 25:23: And the Lord said unto her [Rebekah], “Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.”**

I have chosen the above Scripture because of its typical application to the believer. In the above mentioned experience of Rebekah, and in the birth of Esau and Jacob and their history, we have two types - the history and the experience of every child of God.

The struggle in **verse 22**, and Rebekah’s apparent dismay because of it, very clearly sets forth the conflict between the two natures in the believer. Because of this conflict, the young Christian is very often greatly dismayed. He wonders if it, after all, is a mistake. He wonders about his conversion. Very often he expresses himself in the very words of Rebekah,

**“If it be so . . .?”** (if I am a Christian – if the work of grace has been done in my soul),

**“Why am I thus?”** (And why am I continually doing things I should not do, and seem unable to live always to God’s Glory?)

My reader will also notice:

1. Rebekah went to the right Source in her dilemma.
2. She received a two-fold answer, a thorough diagnosis of her case, definite information regarding the ultimate outcome of the struggle.

Notice God’s “shall be”:

1. There was to be a separation – a distinct line of demarcation between the two. In other words, there was to be no fellowship between the two. The new nature of the believer will never act in collusion with the old nature.
2. There was to be absolute victory on the part of him who stands for the new nature in the Christian, and complete control of the other. Just so, it is God’s blessed Will, Purpose and Decree that the Christian who is walking with Him should be victorious in every conflict.

***1 Corinthians 15:57: Thanks be to God, Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

**Have we now emptied out the old pirate self-will and his crew of worldliness and sin?** And, also, have we now emptied out all the cargo of our own strength, faith, and religious experience, and made room for **Christ to be our ALL-in-ALL, always?**

Do we habitually cease from ourselves in EVERYTHING, and thus make it necessary for God to assume the responsibility and to supply the sufficiency in this – our spirit of self-renunciation and absolute dependence?

Are we growing stronger and richer every day?



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**So sour you won't spoil**

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