

“A Plan to Stay”
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Pastor Thomas has told us many times: “Get saved, stay saved, and see others saved.” This is one of the more well-known landmarks we have in the church and in Christianity in general. Today I’m going to be focusing on the staying saved portion of this statement.

This message had three parts:

What keeps us?

What hinders us?

How do we know where we are at?

What keeps us?

Thankfulness, forgiveness, and endurance.

Colossians 3:14-16 *Let the peace of God rule in your hearts and be ye thankful*

So what do we need to do in order to remain in the faith? Well, one part of our plan starts with being thankful and it’s a lot like that verse that says, Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, rejoice. Only it says, “Be thankful in the Lord always and again I say, be thankful.” I remember the still small voice of God speaking to me on one particular occasion. It wasn’t any grand profound booming declaration from above but it had my attention, that’s for sure. These were the words, “If you remain thankful, you’ll never go wrong.” That was in 1994 which I wouldn’t say is a long time ago but it certainly wasn’t yesterday. And I’m thankful to still be here. The point here, though, is that this being thankful is something that applies to all of us. I’m convinced it will keep all of us if we want to be kept.

Matthew 6:9-15 *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*

There’s also a lot to be said about being forgiving if our plan is to stay in the faith. Our General Pastor in the church, Pastor Paine, shared a few years back about a couple who’d been married for fifty years and when the gentleman was asked what was the key to their success as a couple his response was simple yet poignant, **“Forgive fast.”** I’m not saying it’s always easy and more than likely it’s going to be difficult more often than not. But we need to be able to dig deep to find that extra measure and ultimately realize that it’s for the good of our own soul more than anything.

Matthew 24:12-13 *He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.*

To me there’s an entire sermon in this verse but that’s not going to be my sole focus this morning. But it’s definitely a component. What does it mean to endure?

Well, it's pretty simple and it's not as though its definition is of any private interpretation. We have to keep ourselves in Christ and continue to plan every day to serve God. We have the choice of whether or not to serve God, but we have to be aware of the consequences if we choose to walk away. We also have to realize that we can't force anybody else to live this life either. Everybody will be judged only according to the things they've done individually.

What hinders us?

Complacency, Lust of the Flesh, Disobedience

Revelation 3:14-19 Because thou art lukewarm I will spue thee out of my mouth

God spoke to John the apostle and said He would rather that people were hot or cold, because, if we're lukewarm, He will spew us out of His mouth. Being complacent in Christ is the most dangerous condition to be in because we're in between carnality and spirituality. But there are always warning signs that God will give us whenever we need correction. It's not like He finalizes our judgment without warning us. God's will is that nobody perishes but that all would be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. It's important for us to know that God cares for us greatly and that He will guide us and direct us in all things.

Luke 21:34-36 Take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be overcharged with the cares of this life

The opposite of what was shared in the first part of this message is going to be what hinders us most. Being unthankful, unforgiving, unholy, and all other manner of sin that is listed in Galatians 5 will keep us from running the race. But the truth is that it pays to know that in our flesh dwells no good thing. That's why we have to yield ourselves to the leading of the Holy Ghost in order to overcome the lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.

Psalms 106:13-15 And God gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul

What's interesting about this passage is that it's God word to Israel, not the pagans, or the unbelievers, or the enemies of God at the time.

Galatians 5:7-9 Ye did run well, who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth?

And what's interesting about this passage is that **it's God word to us in this modern time**, not the church down the street, or the Muslims, or the Buddhists, or the Atheists or whoever else we can think of. This message is to us in 2009 and soon to be 2010.

How do we know where we're at?

We need to know where we stand with God otherwise our emotions could dictate wrong information. Life is enough of an emotional roller coaster ride that we can't let the highs and lows of everyday life adversely affect us. Trying the spirits is important discernment that we need to understand.

1 John 4:1-3 Try the spirits

So is knowing the voice of God.

John 10:27-29 My sheep hear my voice

So is having a made-up mind to take hold of eternal life and know that we have to make the choice as individuals and that's where the expression, "I'm not going to go to hell for anyone" comes from. Don't make the mistake of compromising the message to accommodate others. It's not being selfish, it's called deliverance. I want to put some emphasis on that again. **We're not doing anybody else any favors by compromising the gospel for them.**

Ezekiel 14:12-20 Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness

Recap:

We can't walk away from the truth and expect God to bless us. I'm not saying that as soon as people walk out the door and decide that this life isn't for them anymore or even to start with, and that the cursing from God process begins. The Bible says it rains on the just and the unjust and that he is still kind to the evil and the unthankful. So who really knows what will happen? But one thing is for sure and that is I know that God has a lot more to offer than the world. And there are a lot more things to be thankful for than things to worry about.

So what kind of plan do we have? Is it a plan to get saved, stay saved, and see others saved? Or is there something else that we think is more important? Oh, there is plenty in life that's important, make no mistake. But remember, God gave us this life in the first place and so there is no second place. If we trust in the Lord with all our heart, take one day at a time, and make sure that our plan is to do the will of God for however long it takes we will never go wrong.