

God's Promises: Take Them to the Bank Chief of Sinners

We can *finish* stronger than we began. The promise of God, that we can stand firmly on despite our sinfulness, is that Jesus saves sinners. We saw this in the life of Paul, who at the end of his life, was able to make this declaration: *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost* (1 Timothy 1:15). Like Paul, it is critical in our relationship with Jesus that we acknowledge that we *are still being saved*, that in humility we need Jesus just as much today, if not more, than when we did at the beginning of our faith journey.

GET THINGS STARTED

In the Bible, followers of Jesus are those who *have been saved*, are *being saved*, and *will be saved*. Why do you think all three phrases are used for believers in Jesus? Is our salvation in and through Jesus a single point in time, an ongoing process, or both?

GO DEEPER

1. From 1 Timothy 1:12-20, why does Paul, towards the end of his life, call himself the *chief of sinners*, even after all that he had accomplished (and suffered) for the sake of sharing the gospel of Jesus? Why is this significant for us in our faith journey?
2. And yet as the chief of sinners, Paul is able to say in 2 Timothy 4:7 that he fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith. How and why was he able to make these claims as the sinner he was?
3. According to Philippians 1:6, what does it mean that God, who began a good work in us, will carry it on to completion? What is our role and responsibility in our relationship with Jesus, and what is His role?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. If you are honest, what do you still need to be saved from, or saved for? What sinful inclinations do you find still surfacing in you?
2. What does humility look like in your faith journey and in your relationship with Jesus? If you have confidence that you are secure in your salvation, why does humility and an awareness of your sinfulness matter?
3. Each of us have seen the destruction that sin can cause. How do you guard against shipwrecking your life?

PRACTICE IT NOW

Spend some time as a group thanking God for His gift of salvation. Ask Him to grant you daily humility as you seek to follow Him. For those in your family or those you know that have yet to surrender to Jesus, ask God to reveal to them His true heart for them. Take time to pray for those that you know that have shipwrecked their faith. Finally, ask God to help you finish strong, to grow in your faith, and to seek Him more daily.