

## The Last Word On Faith

### 1 John 5:11-13

July 20, 2003 9:15 AM • Dr. David McKinley

[Dr. McKinley, *The Last Word On Faith* ]

Well, Chris and Diane Machen you are loved here and we are so thankful every time that you bless our hearts with your music and song and we've all been encouraged and strengthened through the music and through you leading us in worship today and I'm certainly glad to see each and every one of you here, appreciate you coming today. I know that we are right in the dead heat of summer, a lot of people are fleeing trying to get out of this area right now because of the heat. In fact somebody said a..., I read the other day, that it's so hot in Texas right now that even the birds have to use potholders to get the worms out of the ground, and a..., so it is just hot and dry. But a..., hey, we are here and we are thankful for the opportunity to come together and to get together. I hope that you've had an opportunity or will get an opportunity to take a little bit of a break this summer and always it's good to get away, good to have time to travel and to see some new faces and some new places, a..., I was humored this week to a..., be handed a story about a..., a group of people who had been traveling through the Denver Airport, they were flying on United Airlines and apparently a..., on one particular occasion there'd been a series of a..., problems, of confusion and scheduling and there was one single travel a..., person, who was there, one flight attendant, one check-in agent who was there trying to handle a long line of people who had been inconvenienced in their travel by some problems in their flight. But as I understand it, a..., one passenger in particular decided that he was not going to go through the line and the process and so he just pushed his way to the front of the counter, slammed his ticket down and said I have to be on this flight and I have to have a 1<sup>st</sup> Class seat. Well, the person who was there trying to handle all of these passengers simply looked at him and smiled and said, "Sir, I'll be glad to ~~have you~~ help you but I'm going to have to help all of these people first." Well, the man was undeterred in his dogma about his need to be on the flight and so he stepped back a little bit, lifted his voice and said, "Do you know who I am?" And the very wise flight attendant reached over picked up the microphone and said, "Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, but we have a man standing at the counter who it seems, to have lost his identity." [pause for congregation laughter] "If there's anyone here who can help him would you please step to the counter. [pause for congregation laughter] Well, all the people in line just started laughing, [pause for slight congregation laughter] and the man said a few things I can't repeat here at the pulpit this morning. [pause for slight congregation laughter] She looked at him and she said, "Sir, I'm sorry you'll have to wait in line for that too." And she went back to helping the other passengers. Well, it was a true story and as it turned out they had to cancel the flight but all the people who were flying with United were happy that day because they thought that they were

in very good hands with someone who could handle such a difficult situation like that.

I was humored by that story because just a few days ago, in fact Thursday a week ago I was over on the east coast trying to make my way back to Dallas. It was actually on the same day that our group of students who had been on the a..., Bear The Name Mission Tour, were trying to get back and those of you who are parents know that they were delayed about 5 hours in their return flight because of some weather patterns that were going across the eastern seaboard of the United States and a..., so they were late getting in. But I happen to have one of those flights, where not only did I have to come from the east coast to Dallas, but I had to go through Atlanta. Heh! Living there for 15 years on the east coast I literally began to believe I'd have to go to Atlanta to go to heaven someday. It was just the nature of a..., of travel and so I was on the east coast and I was trying to come back and I have to tell you that one of the most incredible experiences of my entire life as a traveler occurred Thursday a week ago when I a...landed in Atlanta at about 12:15 AM, stepped off of my flight and literally stepped in to the biggest zoo you can imagine in Atlanta. I mean all of the flights that had been canceled were there still on the ground, people tryin to get out. All the flights that had been held from other cities were suddenly starting to flood in and it literally looked like 9 o'clock on one of the busiest days of travel of the year and yet it was after midnight. People were standing around the gates and the counters and you could tell they were tired and they were frustrated and then there were people lining the hallways sitting up, many of them just laid out napping, trying to sleep until they would get news of a flight and then there were a line of some 160 people right through the middle of the corridor there who were waiting to get rebooked on other flights and I looked at this scene and all the faces and all the frustration an...and all the challenges I was humored by the fact that every now and then, someone would pick up a microphone and they would say, "Ladies and gentlemen we'd like to confirm the departure of flight..." so and so to Denver or to Cincinnati of whatever it may be and when they announced the city literally the entire gate of people would erupt in applause and cheers, whistles, because finally they were going to make their destination and as I stood there in the mixture of all of that confusion that night and looking at all the different faces and expressions and experiences I thought about the fact that, heh, airports and churches often have a lot in common. They have a lot in common because people from many different journeys in the path of life come together and along the way they pick up the baggage looking as though they're all fellow travelers going to the same destination. Some of them are casual as they travel and some are more formal as they travel but they're very focused on their gate and on their group, but if the truth were known, many of them are living unsure, unsettled in an upheaval about what lies ahead and I wanna say to you this morning that that is not God's plan for His people. God's plan is not for us to go through life stressed, anxious, frustrated, instead it is God's plan for us that we as His children, instead of spending our lives wandering and wondering about what lies ahead that we would live with a sense of confidence and of assurance. When you get a sure word, when you

are made confident about where you're headed and what lies ahead it's amazing how it adds to the joy and the cheer and just the ability to focus every single day. And just as a group of people erupted it is...as an announcement was made that night in an airport about the fact that the flight was a go, I want today to help you to be encouraged and to be an announcer, as though it were, of the future and to help you to know that you can be confident about what lies ahead in your walk with Christ. God doesn't want you living with question marks in the mind. He wants you living with exclamation points in your heart. And so today I want us to open the Bible and look at God's last word on faith. God has the last word on faith and you're not gonna be stranded, you're not gonna be delayed and you're not gonna be forgotten because God has a plan and a purpose for your life and today you can hear and you can know for sure what lies ahead, what's in your future and that you can be confident because of the sure and the final word God has given us. We're gonna look together in 1<sup>st</sup> John chapter 5 and so if you take your Bible and be finding the little book of 1<sup>st</sup> John, actually there're 3 of them, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> John all toward the end of the New Testament. You gonna find that in this book there's one word that's repeated 39 times throughout the book. It's a common theme in the book, it's a word that's featured in the text that we're gonna read this morning and so as you get to 1<sup>st</sup> John chapter 5, I want us to open the Bible and begin to read together these words that will cheer and that will bring rest to our hearts. 1<sup>st</sup> John chapter 5, verse 11, the Bible says:

*<sup>11</sup>And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. <sup>12</sup>He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. <sup>13</sup>These things were written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may...*

Hope, is that what your Bible says?

No!

That you may desire?

No!

That you may guess?

No! What does it say?

*...that you may know...*

Did you read it? Let's say it one more time together.

*These things are written, have I written to you who believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may...*

What?

*...know that you have eternal life and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*

39 times we find that word, know, in the book of 1<sup>st</sup> John. It is something you can know, it is something you can be confident about. God has given us a word, the last word on faith, so that we don't have to live in confusion but that we can live with confidence. It is a truth to be embraced. But how do we understand this truth and how do we embrace this truth and what is this Scripture saying to us about the way of faith? Well, I believe that it's saying 2 very simple things and I want to emphasize them for you today and highlight them in your heart.

Number 1: the truth is based on this fact that the testimony is that God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. If I could take that one verse and simply paraphrase it, it says this: **JESUS SAVES!** Jesus Saves! Now for most of us we've become familiar with that phrase as though it were some form of graffiti, heh! You've seen it on a bathroom wall, you've seen it, maybe, on a poster board in a stadium, you've seen it scribbled and written and said here and there, sometimes being carried around by some crazed fanatic, the idea that Jesus saves! But I want you to know that that's not graffiti, ladies and gentlemen that is a reality and the greatest reality that you can ever know in your life is that Jesus Christ saves from sin and gives hope and confidence for the future. It is the very heart of the Christian message. It is the core of the gospel that we proclaim and I want you to know that as I stand before you today, I have come to boldly and confidently and absolutely declare that Jesus saves! But what does that mean? What does that mean? We see it, we've heard it, we know it, but what does that mean?

Well, a few days ago I was reading an article in a newspaper and was absolutely fascinated by the picture. In fact it's been in several papers in recent days across America, but it's the story about a man who managed on March the 19<sup>th</sup> to slide into the icy waters of the river making it's way to Niagara Falls. As you can see there on the far left side of that picture, this man was literally just feet from Horseshoe Falls and the great cascade that would take him to his death. I looked at that picture and I thought, how in the world is he standing there. It's the time of year when ice and snow has covered the area and the water is a little bit more shallow than, than usual and so he got into the water, he was freezing, he managed to lodge his feet and to, and to catch himself, but the reality is, is that he is in a position where he is helpless, where he is desperate. The water temperature is about 33° and he's man who found himself at the point of life where unless someone intervened he was about to face his death. But if you're like you, you look at that picture and you immediately think, how in the world did he get there? And you're gonna be amazed to find out, gambling, you say really? Yeah gambling! He was a 48 year old accountant who had become a compulsive gambler. It seems that he had borrowed his money from his father and managed to go to a new casino that had been opened over on the Canadian side of Niagara and he man...amounted \$600,000 in personal debts over a period of days and so desperate and so frustrated and so ashamed of what he had done, he slide

down an embankment into Terrapin Point and into the icy waters of the river. But as soon as he hit the water he was frightened and shocked and realized that this wasn't an answer and he started to try to put his feet into the ground and literally managed to lodge into a rock and to stand up. The rescuers who gave a report talked about how amazed they were that, that the man was able to a..., sustain himself there in the water and of course as you can see it was a very heroine effort for a group of people to try to come and they did ultimately manage in the final seconds, to save this man and to pull him out of the water. One of the rescuers simply said, God was with that man in that river that day, and as I read that pass...as I read that article I thought about the fact that that's what it means when the Bible says, Jesus Saves! You see because every one of us are caught in a river called sin. It is a river that has as it's end, death, for the Bible says: [Romans 6:23]

*...the wages of sin is death...*

And while every one of us may not have come into the river from the same condition, maybe you're not a gambler, but I can assure you that every one of you, every one of us in this room today holds the common imprint of sin, it's a part of all of the human race. The reality is, is that we all face the same outcome and the outcome is that of death and apart from someone who will intervene, someone who will save, every one of us are lost and are faced with the jeopardy of death. But the message of the Bible and the message of the gospel is that the Son has come to give us life. In fact Jesus said:

*"...I've come that you might have life and have it abundantly."*

Jesus came to snatch us from the river of sin and of destruction and to allow us to experience the power that He offers and the gift of eternal life. Jesus is the lifesaver and therefore when we say that "Jesus Saves" we are simply talking about the wonderful truth, that God saw our condition and intervened into the river of sin by coming to snatch us out and to give us the gift of eternal life. It's a marvelous truth, it's one truth, but it's woven in 3 cords and so I want us just to take a minute and think about the cords that come together that build this truth, Jesus Saves! What does it mean Jesus Saves?

Well, one of the things it does is that when we say "Jesus Saves" **IT POINTS TO A PAST EVENT**, a past event. That is, there's a moment, a place, a point in time when God stepped out of heaven and stepped into human history and it was of course when Jesus Christ came into the world. Jesus is the One and only Savior because Jesus is the One and only Son of God who came and intervened in the human race in order that He might redeem us from our sin. He is the **ONE MAN** who in **ONE MOMENT** accomplished the mediation as the **ONE MEDIATOR** between God and man. Listen to what the Bible says about the One Man, the Bible speaking of Jesus says: [Romans 5:12]

*Therefore just as sin entered the world thru one man...*

Who is the one man through whom sin entered the world, what's his name?

Adam!

*...just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all have sinned—*

*<sup>17</sup>how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the One Man,...*

What is His name?

Jesus Christ! He's the One Man. He is the One Man who entered history in a past event in order that He might redeem us of sin. The Bible says that He came to do something in one moment. You see I would spend eternity paying for my sin but Jesus through His death on the Cross, through His payment for sin has accomplished in one moment what I would spend a lifetime of suffering in eternity. Listen to 1<sup>st</sup> Peter, chapter 3 in verse 18, the Bible says:

*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but being made alive by the Spirit.*

You see once for all Jesus came and became the sacrifice for sin on the Cross. So there was One Man, who in One Moment on the Cross, accomplished the one thing that I needed most. He became the One Mediator between God and man. The Bible says in the book of 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy, chapter 2: [verse 5-6]

*<sup>5</sup>For there is one God and One mediator between God and man...men, the Man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who gave Himself a ransom for all men...*

You see Jesus is the One and only who could intervene, the One and only who could save each and every one of us and so when we say "Jesus Saves" it points to a past event, where One Man, in One Moment, became the One Mediator and therefore the Bible says absolutely that there is only One Way to be saved. It's in Christ and Christ alone. Acts chapter 4, verse 12 says:

*"Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved."*

Would you hear me today? Jesus is the only way to heaven. Jesus is only way out of sin. Jesus is the only answer and Jesus is the only hope. Now I know people don't like that message today. People want to say there are many roads to God. You take your path. I take my path. But let me tell you today that if you came up to me and said, "Would you tell me how to get to the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport?" I would simply say to you, you need to go right out of our church property and you need to take a right on Park, or that is Hebron Parkway and just follow it, if you will, to the west. If you'll follow it out to 121 you'll take a left and if you will just stay

on 121 all the way as though you were going to Fort Worth, when you get over there 121 will merge into International Parkway and if you will stay on 121 right into International Parkway you will go right in to the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport. You can't get to the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport from the north side unless you get on the merger of 121 and International Parkway. You say to me, "Well, that's fine but I'm gonna take I75. [pause for congregation laughter] You have it your way I'll do it my way." You say, "That's fine for you but I'm gonna go take I35." You see ladies and gentlemen we got a lot of great roads, but let me tell you there's only one road that's gonna take you to the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport from the north side and that is 121, Internat...merging into International Parkway and what I'm saying to you today is, is it's not that everyone takes their road, goes their way, does their thing; there's only One way and His name is Jesus, "Jesus Saves" and it points to a past event when Jesus died on the Cross for you and for me.

But the Bible also says that "Jesus Saves" and that means that it is a present experience. Not only is it pointing to a past event **IT SPEAKS OF A PRESENT EXPERIENCE**. Look again at 1<sup>st</sup> John chapter 5, verse 11:

*And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*

Literally, "Jesus Saves!"

<sup>12</sup>*He who has the Son of God has life;...*

Do you see that? It is a present possession.

*He who has the Son of God has life;...*

Would you just circle that word "**has**" in your Bible? In fact reach over and circle that in your neighbors Bible so they'll get it too. [pause for congregation laughter]

*He who has the Son...has life;...*

It's something that is yours right now. Eternal life isn't something you get when you die. It's something you either get while you're living or when you die you will face eternal separation and punishment in Hell. You see it's a present possession that becomes yours the moment that you put your faith and your trust in Jesus Christ. So:

*He who has the Son...has life;...*

John chapter 6, verse 47 says it again. Jesus was speaking.

*"Most assuredly I say unto you, he who believes in Me has eternal life."*

Do you have eternal life today? You say, well I hope so, I think so, I, I a..., I'm trying. No! You either have it or you don't. You either have the

gift or you've never received it and when the Bible says Jesus saves, it's not only speaking and pointing to a past event, it is speaking of a present experience and you can literally stand today, you can walk out of this building and you can know that you are going to heaven. You can say, "I am saved." I didn't say that, God said it. He has the last word on faith and therefore every single one of us in this building can know that we know, that we know that we are saved. You see He's working and moving in a present experience in your life. But there's one more thing that the Bible implies when it says Jesus saves. Not only does it point to a ~~past experience and not only does it speak of, excuse me,~~ of a past event and, and speak of a present experience but...

When the Bible says Jesus saves **IT LOOKS TO A PROMISED ESCAPE**. For the Bible says, you have eternal life. The Christian doesn't live fearing the dark door of death. Death is a gateway into the brilliance of eternal life and for every Christian, though certainly we grieve and certainly we morn and we need to morn and we need to grieve the loss of loved ones and of dear friends. The reality is, is that we look through the darkness of death to the hope and to the life that is in Jesus Christ and Jesus promises a deliverance, an escape because He is the life saver. That's why the songwriter said:

*We have heard the joyful sound—  
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!  
Spread the tidings all around—  
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!*

Do you believe that today? You see I think a lot of you believe that today. In fact I believe before I ever preached this message this morning that many of you would simply nod and say that's right, that's good, but let me ask you something, do you know that in your life today. Is that yours, is that your possession? Have you embraced that? Can you say I'm saved, I know that I'm saved? You see some in this room can. But some of you in this room are sitting there listening to me this morning and you're saying, well you know, I used to think I was saved, or you know I, I once was saved but I think I've kinda lost it. I wanna get it back but I think I've lost it. Really? Do you really think God's like that? Do you really think God's an Indian giver who gives us this incredible truth about what Jesus did and is doing and will do and yet God is saying okay I gave it to you for a little while but I've taken it back? Absolutely not! Because not only is it true that the Bible teaches that Jesus saves, the Bible tells us something else that is a part of the final word of faith. It is the other side of the coin and that is not only that Jesus saves.

But listen to me today, **JESUS KEEPS!** And that is the greatest thing you can know. It's wonderful to know that you are saved, but it's even greater to know that you are saved and that you can never loose your salvation. You say never? I mean never! Here's the question, if you could loose your salvation, what would it take to loose it? You didn't do anything to gain it, so what would you have to do to loose it? It was given to you as a gift of God by grace through faith, what would you have to do to forfeit



it? Would it be sin number 101? Would it be sin number 1001? How many sins would you have to sin before you'd lose your salvation? Would it be the level of sin? You see ladies and gentlemen, salvation is completely by the grace of God, through the simple act of faith or it is not at all, because salvation is a gift and when we say "Jesus Saves," the corresponding truth is this, "Jesus Keeps." And today I want you to understand how safe and secure you are in the hand of God. The same John who wrote 1<sup>st</sup> John chapter 5, wrote in John chapter 10 speaking the words of Jesus, John 10 in verse 28, listen to this, Jesus said:

*<sup>28</sup>"And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup>For the Father who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."*

Please hear me! You are not saved because you are holding on to Christ. You are saved because He is holding on to you. He has you, He keeps you! It's not, oh God help me get through it. Heh! It's, oh God thank You that You've promised You'll never let go. And the Bible says the hand of Christ is holding you. The Bible says the hand of the Father is holding you and today you can know that your saved and yes, that you will not lose your salvation because Christ has you and your security is in Him. He speaks of His hand, He speaks of the Father's hand, the Father, the Son, but listen the Holy Spirit gets in on the action. Look over in the book of Ephesians chapter 1, Ephesians chapter 1, verses 13 and 14, because the Bible tells us that not only are we kept by the power of God through His holding us with His hand, but the Bible says something else about the work of the Holy Spirit and in Ephesians chapter 1 and in verse 13 the Bible says:

*In Him..*

That is in Christ.

*<sup>13</sup>...you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup>who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the...purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.*

Do you see that word guarantee? Guarantee, in the Old King James it literally says, he is the earnest of our salvation. If you've ever bought a piece of property, you know that you can draw up a contract, you can put conditions in that contract, but the contract will not be executed until you submit the contract and the money. They want you to give some earnest money, some money up front that says, I intend to make good on this contract. If you back out of the contract you forfeit the money and the Bible literally is saying here that the Holy Spirit of God is God's down payment in you that He would have to forfeit His Spirit for you to lose your salvation. That's how secure you are in Christ. Jesus saves, hallelujah, but Jesus keeps and He keeps forever. That's why Peter said in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter chapter 1 in verse 3:

*<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that does not fade away,...*

Look at this!

*...reserved in heaven for you,*

Have you ever been in a hotel, walked up to the desk, said I'd like a room? What are they gonna ask you? Do you have a reservation? If you can't say, yes I have a reservation then you've probably had the experience I have on several occasions they said, "Sir I'm sorry we don't have any rooms." But when you say I have a reservation it's amazing, it gets personal, it gets immediate, you begin to get service and the Bible literally says that not only are you held by the hand of the Father and of the Son, that you are sealed with the guarantee of the Holy Spirit, but there is a place reserved in heaven for you. Hear me today! What is the last word on faith? Jesus Saves! Jesus Keeps! Do you know it in your life? Is it real to you? Is it personal? Do you believe? Have you believed on the name of Jesus? You see I know that many of you would say, yes I believe, but I wonder if you are secure, I wonder if there really is a sense of trust in the Lord Jesus in your heart.

I showed you the picture earlier of the man in Niagara. But there is a fascinating story back in the history of the falls, 1859. A man known as Blondin The Great began to wow audiences all over North America when he would walk a tightrope across the rivers and the falls leading to Niagara. People from all around would come and line the shores as Blondin would do his heroics and it appears that on one occasion that he literally was blindfolded and walked across the tightrope across the river above Niagara. On another occasion he literally went to the middle of the a..., rope there and cooked an omelet there in the middle. But one day the stakes went up, one day Blondin, before he made his walk stood before a crowd of people and began to say, "How many of you think that I could take a wheelbarrow across this tightrope?" And of course the crowds began to cheer and, and to raise up and to shout and, "You can do it! You can do it!" Blondin then said, "How many of you think that I can put a man in a wheelbarrow and go across this tightrope?" And the crowds got even louder and cheered and roared and they were all waiting a..., to see with, with earnest what would happen. And then Blondin said, "Who would like to get in the wheelbarrow." Heh! [pause for congregation laughter] Would it be you? Would it be you? Would it be you? Would it be you? Would you get in the wheelbarrow? You see a lot of people believed he could do it but not very many people were willing to trust him to do it.

That is the difference in being saved and being lost. You see a lot of people believe Jesus saves. Some have even been around church enough to know that Jesus keeps. But there are people who walk in and out of a building just like this, week in and week out who go out of life, yes they have all the baggage of the Christian life, they carry Bibles and go to

Bible Studies, they do many things, they believe a lot of things but they have never put their heart trust in Jesus. The Bible says: [Ephesians 2:8-9]

*<sup>8</sup>For by grace you are saved...*

That's the work of God.

*...through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup>not of works, lest any man should boast.*

And today I proclaim to you, Jesus, Jesus who saves and Jesus who keeps and today if you have never put your faith and trust in Him I am encouraging you, I am challenging you, I am urging you right now through faith to trust the Lord Jesus Christ and to make Him the King and the Lord of your life and to live your life confident, secure, joyful because you know that Jesus saves and Jesus keeps.