

LENT DEVOTION

Austin Christian Fellowship of India (ACFI)

April 5th 2019

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As we are aware, both righteousness and holiness are closely connected with each other. "The holy God will show himself holy by His righteousness" (Isaiah 5:16). A believer has been "made righteous" and "holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all" (Hebrews 10:10). Only righteousness exhibits and exalts holiness. A believer does not allow himself/herself to be corrupted by the systems and the values of the world. "If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then turn their backs. . ." (2 Peter 2:20--21).

This verse does not teach us that a believer has the potential to lose his/her salvation. A believer is saved by God's grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). It is the work of God and it cannot be undone what God has already done. If a believer has genuinely come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ then he/she gradually escapes the corruption of the world and knows the way of righteousness also. After some time if he/she turns away from the message and goes back to his/her old way of life, then his change could not have been genuine or true. His salvation is questionable. Because if a believer has been truly regenerated then he/she would have persevered. A righteous person perseveres not by his/her own strength and power but because of the power of God made available through the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself assured this: "My sheep listen to my voice, I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one" (John 10:27--30). "And those God predestined, He called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified" (Romans 8:28--39).

But a believer in whom the righteousness of God has been imputed, also, has the potential to 'backslide' but not to lose the salvation. A righteous person is not saved because he/she perseveres but he/she perseveres because he/she believer has been genuinely saved. That is the privilege of a believer. The mark of a genuine believer is that he/she perseveres. Whatever may be the condition you are in, even in the setback of your spiritual life, you can still persevere because of God's imputed righteousness in you. You and I need not be like the dog which returns to its vomit or the washed/cleaned sow that returns back to her wallowing in the mud (2 Peter 2:22).