

INFO

Following the talk there will be tea/coffee served in the foyer, after which there will be time for Q&A in the main auditorium.

Any questions you would like answered can be sent to **078 5070 8674** at any point throughout the evening.

SUGGESTED READING

Books

The Five Points of Calvinism: Edwin H. Palmer

Chosen by God: R. C. Sproul

Five Points: John Piper

The Doctrines of Grace: James Montgomery Boice & Philip Graham Ryken

Gentle and Lowly: Dane Ortlund

Knowing Christ: Mark Jones

Feedback

We'd love to hear from you about series 1 of Equip. Please fill out the feedback form made available.

Next up:

We plan to hold a second series of Equip (D.V.) commencing in September 2026.

Find out more

hello@equip-academy.org

www.equip-academy.org



Series 1

What we believe about...

LOSING OUR SALVATION

Rev Nigel McCullough

17th March 2026

In 1st Ahoghill Presbyterian Church

equip-academy.org

1. Discuss

Can a Christian lose their salvation?
How do we explain those who fall away?

2. The Reformed Position

Perseverance of the Saints (or Preservation of the Saints): True believers, accepted in Christ, will neither totally nor finally fall away, but will persevere to the end.

WCF 17:1

They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

3. Biblical Foundations

A. Jesus' Teaching

John 6:37–40 — All the Father gives will come; Jesus loses none; all are raised on the last day.

John 10:27–30 — Jesus gives eternal life now; His sheep never perish; no one can snatch them from His or the Father's hand.

B. Paul's Teaching

Romans 8:29–30 — The Golden Chain:

Foreknown → Predestined → Called → Justified → Glorified

Philippians 1:6 — He who began the work will complete it.

C. Peter's Teaching

1 Peter 1:3–5 — Believers are “shielded by God's power” until the final salvation.

4. God's Work and Our Responsibility

WCF 17:2

This perseverance of the saints depends, not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit and of the seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

Yet Scripture also calls believers to endure (Matt 24:13), confirm their calling (2 Pet 1:10), and remain steadfast (James 1:12). God keeps us — and we keep going.

5. The Reality of Struggle

Believers may fall into grievous sin, neglect the means of grace, wound conscience, grieve the Spirit, harm others, and experience discipline .

WCF 17:3

Nevertheless they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and for a time continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit; come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

Examples: Peter, David. True believers may fall for a time, but they will be restored.

6. Problem Passages

A. Hebrews 6:4–6 — Strong descriptions, but understood as referring to those in the visible church, not regenerate believers.

B. Hebrews 10:26–31 — “Sanctified” can mean set apart, not necessarily regenerated.

C. 1 John 2:19 — Those who leave show they were “not of us.”

Apostasy = falling away from a profession, not losing true salvation.

7. “Once Saved, Always Saved”?

Use with caution. Not: “If someone once prayed a prayer, they are safe regardless of their life.” Scripture insists on perseverance (Heb 3:14; Acts 26:20). Reformed position:

The perseverance of the saints tells us that **real saints persevere**.

8. Assurance of Salvation

Assurance is confidence that we are right with God now and will be saved in the end. 1 John 5:13 — “that you may know...” Romans 8:1 — “no condemnation...”

Grounds of Assurance (WCF 18:2):

1. The Promises of God (Primary) — Objective, unchanging.

2. Evidences of Grace — Growth in obedience, love, holiness.

3. Testimony of the Spirit — The Spirit witnessing with our spirit (Rom 8:16).

9. Why Believers Struggle with Assurance

WCF 18:4 lists causes: neglect of spiritual life, falling into sin, temptation, God's temporary withdrawal of felt comfort. Yet believers are never abandoned; God preserves and restores assurance.

10. Final Encouragement

Perseverance is God's work from beginning to end. Believers may stumble, but God keeps them. Assurance is possible, normal, and pastorally precious. The Christian life is lived in