

# On God's Everlasting Love

John Welch

First, It is a ground whereupon thou layest no less than the endless salvation of thy soul; so the believer sees a condemnation, then he sees no remedy in the law, but in the gospel he hears that the believer shall never go to condemnation; faith then takes thy soul, and says to it, Thou art undone for evermore except thou believest. The heart answers, Hereon I lay my salvation on the certainty of this promise. Then faith answers, and says, I dare pledge the glory of God that thou shalt never perish. Next, faith will take thee to hell, and make it present to thee; to heaven, and it will make it present to thee; it will take thee to the decreed counsel of God, and make it present to thee; faith never casts thee off his word; the word says, Thou, Thou wast loved before all eternity; faith says, I believe. I see that the word says, The believer is justified; and faith says, I believe the word says, There is a crown of glory laid up for the poor sinner; faith says, I see that, and I will wait patiently for it; faith will lead thee to the very incarnation of Christ, and make it present unto thee; faith will do more for thee; for it, *first*, will make thy ground sure; *2dly*, It makes things eternal present; *3dly*, It makes thee stand, and set thy foot as an armed man against all the speats [floods] of the terrors of God against thee, so it gars [makes] thee stand, for it is the buckler that quenches all the fiery darts of the devil; thou hast that jack that will bide the proof of the cannon, suppose thou shouldst say, 'The Lord has set me up as a mark to shoot at,' suppose thou shouldst say with David, Psal. xxii. 1. 'The Lord has forsaken me,' and suppose thou shouldst say with Heman the Ezrahite, Psal. lxxxviii. 15. 'I suffer the terrors of God from my very youth;' yet faith will gar thee stand against all these, for it will say to thee, That the love of God is unchangeable, 'suppose thou shouldst slay me, yet I will trust in thee;' for a man that believes may have strong battles, and he must 'fight a good fight;' for the winds will blow, and the storms will set on the house, and faith must hold it up.

Besides this, faith is called, 'The evidence of things not seen,' it is the character and evidence of our inheritance; I have that blood sealed up to me, I have the Spirit within me, therefore I know this heritage belongs to me; as for the author, it is evident it is given you freely to believe, so it is the gift of God. God opens the heart of Lydia, and she believes. Faith is the work of God, 'look up to him who is the author and finisher of your faith.' He believed, and therefore he spake. So it is the Spirit, sent from the Father and the Son, that works faith: this is the thing that makes a man to believe. Thou wilt say, if thou hadst faith thou wouldst never doubt, but when thou lookest into thyself, and missest the power of believing, thou doubttest: but thou shouldst not do so, but thou shouldst look up to heaven, for it is as impossible for thee to believe, as it is to thee to open the eyes of the blind; for this power of believing is not within the compass of nature; for it was a mystery to the very angels, till it was revealed in the gospel by faith, says the apostle, 'which is according to the operation of God that raised up Jesus from the dead to life;' so that same power must work in thee the power of believing. The law will say, 'Do, and thou shalt live;' but it will never give thee power to do: but the gospel says, 'Believe, and thou shalt live,' and with the same breath it draws down the arm of God to thy soul, and gives thee power to believe. Next, the law requires perfection; but the gospel requires no more but faith in an honest heart, believing in sincerity, suppose it be mixt with doubtings, and suppose there be a hell in the nook of thy heart, as the apostle says, Rom. vii. 24. 'Who shall deliver me from this body of sin;' this was his misery: but he had not sold himself to sin; therefore he said, he consented not to it. What more? The gospel descends to thy infirmity, that if thou hast no more but a reiking tow [smoking flax], and if thou hast no more but an earnest desire to believe, and if thou hast no more but that thou canst pray for faith, then thou hast the same consolation of the believer.