

**Lord, For Thy Name's Sake***Josiah Conder (1789–1855)*

Lord, for Thy name's sake! such the plea  
 With force triumphant fraught,  
 By which Thy saints prevail with Thee,  
 By Thine own Spirit taught.

Now, for Thy name's sake, O our God,  
 Do not abhor our prayer;  
 But, while we bow beneath Thy rod,  
 Thy chasten'd people spare.

Oh, for Thy name's sake, richly grant  
 The unction from above;  
 Fulfil Thy holy covenant,  
 And glorify Thy love.

**ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ***In the Nick of Time***Lord, Bless Kurt***Jon Pratt*

Remember the scene from *The Sound of Music* when the recently-hired governess Maria is praying for her new charges? She does well to remember six of the children's names but sadly forgets one of the boys, so she presumes on God's knowledge and blurts, "Lord, bless 'What's-his-name.'" While the situation is rather humorous, I think it reveals the rather simplistic way we can often pray for each other.

Please permit me to suggest one scriptural path we can follow, one modeled by our Lord and His followers. Of course, we can find many biblical examples showing us how to pray for others, but I will spotlight one in particular: pray for their *perseverance*, for their obedience and continuance in the faith. Before I give scriptural proof for this kind of prayer, I want to answer some questions about perseverance.

For example, why would I pray that God help believers to persevere in the faith if He has already elected them to eternal life? After all, isn't perseverance of the saints one of the doctrines of grace? Furthermore, we don't see any examples in the Bible where people are praying that God would help the elect to "stay saved," so why pray for their perseverance?

These questions come to mind and prompt us to understand the definitions of two important concepts. First, *eternal security* is the objective (biblical) guarantee of eternal salvation for all who believe in Jesus (John 10:28–29; Eph 1:13–14; 2 Cor 1:20–22). Second, *perseverance* is God's promise to enable all true believers to continue in faith and good works until their earthly journey is complete. The Second London Baptist Confession (17.3) states: "And though [believers] may...fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein,...yet they shall renew their repentance and be preserved, through faith in Christ Jesus, to the end." Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). Paul said, "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:6). Peter says that true believers rejoice and believe in Jesus so that they "obtain the outcome of [their] faith, the salvation of [their] souls" (1 Peter 1:9). Thus, God promises to help believers to persevere in the faith just like He promises to ensure that they will never lose their salvation.



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But herein lies an important distinction between *security* and *perseverance*. While God guarantees that the elect will never miss heaven, He does not use the same kind of language when speaking about perseverance in good works. In fact, while God does enable believers to continue in obedient living to the end, He also commands believers to continue in the faith. In short, believers *will* persevere (see the texts in the previous paragraph), but they *must* persevere. Hear again from Jesus in John 15:10: “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.” Hebrews 10:23 states, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.” Peter encourages faithful living in 2 Peter 1:10: “Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.” Finally, in 1 Corinthians 15:1–2 Paul writes, “Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.”

Some theologians refer to this tension between the promises of perseverance and the calls to persevere as the *indicatives* (facts or realities) of our salvation and the *imperatives* (commands) of our salvation. Fact: God enables His children to live obediently to the end. Command: believers must hold on to Christ and obey His directives.

Now all of this forms the basis for how we should pray for each other. In His high priestly prayer (John 17:11) Jesus begs the Father, “Keep them [his disciples] in your name.” When Paul and Barnabas re-visit Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch at the end of the first missionary journey, they strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to “continue in the faith” (Acts 14:22). We are always safe to pray in this way for our fellow brothers and sisters. Jude (20–21) exhorted his readers to “pray in the Holy Spirit” and to “keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.”

Thus, we have ample reasons for praying wiser and more scriptural prayers than Maria, even when we can remember the names of those we pray for. Do we want God’s blessing (health, success, flourishing, etc.) to rest on these people we bring before our Lord? Certainly. But if I want to pray like Jesus, Paul, Barnabas, and Jude, then *Lord, please keep my spiritual brothers and sisters in the faith and help each one to persevere in faith and good works until the day you return or call them home* will also be the prayer on my lips.



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