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Rescued for the Heavenly Kingdom

"The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen." — 2 Timothy 4:18

Summary:

Paul's confidence did not imply he expected freedom from suffering. He trusted that Christ would preserve him from spiritual ruin, sustain him through every temptation, and bring him safely into the heavenly kingdom. This assurance rested on God's promises, past deliverances, and Christ's unfailing ability to save completely. Such preserving grace should produce confident dependence and enduring gratitude, expressed not only in words but also in a life that advances God's glory for generations to come.

Outline:

1. **Deliverance does not mean freedom from trial**
   - Paul expected suffering but trusted Christ to keep him from apostasy and backsliding.
2. **Christ preserves believers for his kingdom**
   - The heavenly kingdom is prepared by Christ and shared with those who continue with him.
3. **God's people may rejoice in final salvation**
   - The God who begins the work of grace will perform it until the day of Christ.
4. **Former mercies strengthen present confidence**
   - Past deliverance is a pledge of future help because the Lord remains the same.
5. **Preserving grace calls for lasting praise**
   - Gratitude should appear in our affections, speech, conduct, influence, and legacy.

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Text

Here he expresses complete hope after enduring his friends' desertion and receiving his Saviour's support. He expected not freedom from trials, but suffering; bonds and afflictions awaited him. Yet the Lord would deliver him from every evil work, keep him from apostasy and backsliding, strengthen him to resist temptation, continue his course, finish it with joy, and preserve him for his heavenly kingdom. What a destination!

Nothing less than a kingdom—his heavenly kingdom, procured and prepared by him, which he enjoys and his followers will share with him, as he promised: *"You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom"* (Luke 22:28-29). But what good is this glorious prospect if we are destroyed before we reach it? Clearly, the Apostle believed he would persevere and be finally saved.

His words express certainty, not a man wavering between hope and fear. He is assured of divine grace in every respect: "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). Christians, rejoice in hope of God's glory; He has provided for all your needs.

He will keep you safe through every danger. Sin will not rule over you. The God of peace will soon crush Satan beneath your feet. You have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. Indeed, in all these things you are more than conquerors. It is clear that the Apostle drew encouragement for his hope from past experience: the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, and I was delivered from the mouth of the lion; and the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for his heavenly kingdom. The evidence of his mercy and grace that we have experienced should strengthen our reliance on him, for he is always the same, and one blessing assures us of another. An old soldier's victories nourish his courage.

David faced his dreadful conflict with confidence, trusting the Lord Jesus to deliver and preserve him: "the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom." The Lord is committed and able to save completely. David trusts him through every season and outcome. "I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to

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guard until that day what has been entrusted to me" (2 Timothy 1:12).

What wonder that he exclaims, "To whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen." Christian, will you make this Amen your own? The just should be thankful; praise becomes the upright. It is religion's most unselfish exercise and will endure forever, becoming heaven's work and joy. You say, "I hope I am grateful." Hope? Surely you can determine this. Would your conduct toward an earthly benefactor seem grateful? Consider your thoughts, affections, words—and above all, your life. Actions speak louder than words. Like Paul, grow in gratitude, ensuring your praise lasts as long as God's goodness and his glory endures forever.

Advance it throughout your life—even in death and beyond—through the institutions you establish or support, your example, the children you teach, and the sinners you turn from error. They will serve him as a generation, proclaim his righteousness to a future nation, and declare that he has done this.

This sermon is taken from William Jay's devotional, Morning and Evening Exercises (February 2, Evening), first published in 1854.