Lifetime Guarantee

I'd like to begin this morning by reading two very important verses of Scripture. In fact, without these verses we would not realize how crucial and significant and essential it is to our eternal salvation to believe what they say and to actually do it.

The first verse is in **Deuteronomy 8:3** where it says, speaking of Israel, "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by **(what?)** every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live."

And the second verse is **Matthew 4:4** where Jesus, speaking to the devil, says the same thing we just read from Deuteronomy. He said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Then there's one more in **Luke 4:4**, but it says the same thing as **Matthew 4:4**, so we won't take time to read it.

Some time ago, one of the prisoners we studied with in the Texas prison system wrote something on the outside of his return envelope, and what he wrote has become the inspiration for this sermon today. At the top of the backside of the envelope he wrote in big bold letters "Lifetime Guarantee," and under that was a Bible text, which I'll read in a moment, and in the middle of the envelope was this poem: "Sweetest of all life's blessings, communion with Christ above, assurance of His presence, His matchless, eternal love." Then at the bottom of the envelope were these words: "Every promise of God comes with an eternal guarantee."

I think all of us would probably agree with that statement, at least on the surface. In fact, the whole Christian world today would probably agree with that statement, wouldn't you say? But I'd like to add something to that statement that would make it more complete. It goes like this, "Every promise of God comes with an eternal guarantee, but there are conditions to every guarantee."

Every lawyer will tell you to always read the fine print, and you can get in a lot of trouble by failing to do so. When you purchase something, as long as you don't violate the manufacturers instructions, he is bound by his promise to make sure his product performs as stated. But if there's negligence on your part, or if you fail to take care of it the way you're suppose to, the guarantee is null and void. Are you listening?

Most professed Christians today see God's promises in big bold letters, but the

conditions to these promises they see as the fine print and don't think it important enough to read and consider. They're not willing to get out the magnifying glass and spend a little time reading the part that most people overlook, and that which is every bit as important, if not more so. They say, "Ah, I know how to take care of this thing and I'm not going to waste my time reading about how to maintain it," and sad to say, because of their own carelessness, most will take their broken product to the manufacturer expecting his guarantee to be honored, but it will be too late. Because they didn't bother to read all the paper work, the maker will say, "Sorry, you have no grounds for your claim. My instructions were explicit, but you didn't become acquainted with them. You are responsible for your own loss." And that's how it will be when human probation closes.

Turn in your Bible with me please to **Deuteronomy 31** and we'll read the verses that the Texas prisoner wrote on his envelope. Israel was on the very borders of the promised land, and Moses was about to take a short nap and Joshua was to be his successor. And in an effort to encourage the people before he died, Moses spoke the following words in their hearing:

Deuteronomy 31:6-8, "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them **(that is, the heathen nations that surrounded them)**: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed."

Now, did Moses mean to teach the people here that God would go before them, that He would be with them, that He would not fail them, neither forsake them NO MATTER WHAT? Did he mean to say that they need not be fearful or concerned because God had given them His lifetime guarantee and that He would make good His promises even if they failed to follow His instructions? Absolutely not!

If you read on it tells us what Moses said at the conclusion of his speech in **verses 24-26** where it says, "And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee."

In other words, when things would not go well for the Israelites because of their disobedience, God would be able to say, "I told you the conditions of My guarantee, I warned you of this day. Didn't you hear the words of my servant Moses? Don't you remember, he read them in your hearing? They are my witness against you. Because you have made My guarantee useless through disobedience, therefore I cannot honor your request of blessings for rebellion."

And did God reveal to Moses that Israel would rebel? Yes. In verses 27-30 it says, "For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death? Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to record against them. For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands."

Now let me ask you, did evil befall Israel in her latter days as God's chosen people? Yes, without question and it continues on today. Not only have the Jews suffered tremendously through the years, but God finally had to utterly reject them as a nation; and by the way, God continues to work upon the same principle today. He gives no lifetime guarantee to any church without conditions. After much longsuffering He finally came to the point when He could no longer go before Israel; He could no longer be with them, and He forsook them because they had forsaken Him, and sad to say, by their rebellion and disobedience they released God from the binding claims of His lifetime guarantee.

Notice what God told Jeremiah to tell the people, **Jeremiah 17:19-27**, "Thus said the LORD unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; and say unto them, hear ye the word of the LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates: thus saith the LORD; take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction. And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein; then shall there

enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain (for how long?) for ever. (That is, they would forever be God's people. Wow, what a promise!) And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the LORD. But (uh oh, here it comes) But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched."

And of course we know that this dreadful prophecy was fulfilled to the very letter, because in 70 AD a Roman soldier, despite the fact he was told not to, threw a firebrand through an opening in the temple and it did burn to the ground. Kind of like what happened to the Review and Herald office in 1902 because they were printing literature that was worldly and in error in order to make more money for the "Lord's cause."

2 Chronicles 15:1, 2 have something very interesting to say that speaks to this, and something that is just as true today as it was back then. "And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: and he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; the LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." And this goes for individuals as well as institutions.

After God rejected the Jewish nation as His peculiar people, the Christian Church was then chosen to take the gospel to the world. And because of apostasy within Christendom as a whole, we are down to the remnant now, those "That keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus."

God will have a small group of people in these last days, who will not make void His lifetime guarantee! Through the power of the Holy Spirit they will not violate the conditions of the agreement with their manufacturer. All the promises God made to ancient Israel now belong to those who have read all the fine print, and agree with, and obey God's commandments in every particular. The question is, are you going to be one of them? Not as if you're going to do it in your own strength, but because you're going to take hold of the strong for strength.

Not only are there conditions to God's eternal guarantee of life everlasting, but there are also term limits to that guarantee. Someone once said, "There's a line drawn unseen by men, when God's patience ends and His wrath begins." How true that is! There is a limited time offer in order to get your name registered in the Lamb's book of life and have it retained there. Human probation has a time limit known only to God, and when that limit is reached, it's over! And there won't be any second chances. And since we don't know when it's over, we had better be ready by being obedient all the time. Is that even possible? you might ask.

Most people that call themselves Christians today would say no, it's not possible for a person to be obedient all the time, therefore God will overlook our littler transgressions and be merciful to us. But friends, that's only true if we confess and forsake our sins and avail ourselves of the Holy Spirit to keep us from falling back into sin once we've been pulled out. Not only is it possible to stop sinning, but it's essential if we're going to end up on the inside of the walls of the Holy City.

Let me read you one of my favorite paragraphs from *The Desire of Ages, page 668*, "All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us."

And friends, when sin becomes hateful to us, it won't be so difficult to stop doing it. In order to come to this place in our experience, we must die to self continually and let Jesus live within continually, because it's only dead people that don't sin. That's the only way to stop it. This is what the apostle Paul meant when he wrote what he did in **Galatians 2:20**, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

I went to the dictionary to look up the word "Term", and I found a couple interesting definitions. The first one said, "In law, a term is the time in which a court is held or open for trial." And when did the heavenly court term begin? Oct. 22, 1844 according to **Daniel 8:14** with the cleansing of sanctuary, or the investigative judgment. Also in **Acts 17:31** it tells us that God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world. October 22, 1844 marks the beginning of that day of judgement and it continues on today, and when every case has been decided for life or death, the Holy Spirit will

bother wicked men no longer. Just think of it, the investigative judgment has been in progress for 172 years. The term limits are nearly over. It's not only time to get right, but to be right and to stay right with God. And so, here we're talking about that continual obedience again, aren't we?

The other definition to the word "Term" is as follows: "In universities and colleges, a term is a time during which instruction is given to students." Aren't we all students in the school of Christ? It could be that we have entered the last term, and we only have a short time to prepare our character for the finals. So we better make the most of it if we expect to graduate and pass the test so we can then pass through the time of trouble and finally through the pearly gates into the Holy City someday soon.

Do you remember what the apostle Paul said about the preparation, and energy, and training required to successfully run the race for eternal life?

In **1 Cornthians 9:24-27** he said this, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

If Paul could end up being a cast away, sounds to me like he was saying he could end up being eternally lost if he didn't do what he just said, doesn't it? It doesn't sound like Paul believed in a lifetime guarantee without conditions and terms, does it? No!There is no question that Paul was saved when he invited Jesus into his life and became an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, but he made it clear that he could become unsaved, or rejected by the Lord because that's what the word castaway means.

In spite of a lot of inspired counsel, there are still many today who believe there is no striving, no struggle, and no training required on our part in order to prepare to inherit eternal life. And when you think about it, that's what celebration worship is all about. They're celebrating a completed work at the cross without realizing the work of atonement is still going on right now in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary. And until Jesus stands up and says, "It is finished," we have a work to do to make our calling and election sure.

My Bible tells me there's a preparation needed if we expect to be taken to heaven when the Lord comes. The Bible tells us what the work of John the Baptist was, and if it was his work, then it's our work as well, because notice what's said about him in **Luke** 1:17: "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of

the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; (and get this) to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." And isn't that our work as well?

And so yes, there is a preparation and a readiness that must take place. There are conditions to God's lifetime guarantee. God is preparing something wonderful for those who are prepared to receive it. Does that make sense? Just think about the amount of preparation God is making to insure our eternal happiness, to say nothing about what He has already done to redeem us.

Let's just look at a few texts about this along with the incentives and the reasons for having a preparation. **John 14:1-3**, "In my Fathers house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that were I am there you may be also." What a beautiful promise!

A few years ago a Baptist man came to my door to invite me to his church, and as we visited, we started to talk about what happens when you die, and of course he believed one goes directly to heaven or the other place. And so I quoted **John 14:1-3** to him, because I had it memorized, and then I asked him, "If we go directly to heaven when we die, why would Jesus have to come back to get us so we can be with Him where He is if we're already there?" And he scratched his head and said, "Huh, I never thought of that before," and then he had to go all of a sudden.

You see friends, sometimes we won't have the opportunity to grab our Bibles to help people understand, but if we have at least a few key texts stored in our mind, the Holy Spirit can then convict people of the truth, and then hopefully they will continue to think about it until they surrender their false ideas and take hold of the truth.

In **Matt. 25:34**, Jesus said, "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

And so, this preparation has been in the works for a long time, hasn't it? It wasn't an afterthought on God's part when sin entered our world, but was something He made provision for long before it happened. You know, there's one thing that God has never experienced, do you know what it is? He has never been surprised or caught off guard; never, because He already knows the end from the beginning, and you would think that that would be a pretty boring way to live, because there would never be anything we didn't already know. Have you ever thought about that?

Do you know what makes God happy? Do you know what He lives for, if I can put it that

way? Do you know why all heaven was poured out in the gift of Jesus Christ for our redemption? It's very simple; God is love and He wants us to love Him back. That's it! That's why Jesus said, "If you love me, (love me back by keeping) My commandments." God gets pleasure from our faith and trust in Him, and when we show our love for all He has done, is doing, and will do for us, that's what makes Him happy, and as our Creator, is that asking too much, is it? Surely it's not asking too much.

In **Revelation 4:11** the 24 elders mentioned in the previous verse said, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

God made you for His pleasure friend! Not as a selfish thing, but with a desire to make you happy. It gives Him pleasure to please and to love His creation. That's why you're here, to let God love you and for you to love Him back in return. And not only that, but He wants us to love each other that same way. That's what Jesus prayed for in **John 17**, that we might love one another as He has loved us, and that we might be one as He and the Father are one.

Oh, we have a long way to go, don't we? Is it ever going to happen? Yes it's going to happen; in fact, it has to happen, because if it doesn't, Jesus never will come back. But He will, because Paul tells us in **Ephesians 5:27** that the church Jesus is coming back for is a church, "Without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." And *Christ's Object Lessons, page 69* says, "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come and claim them as His own." So, the question isn't whether or not Jesus is coming back, but will we be among the number He comes back for? Will we have the love of God perfected in our souls? We will if we've been preparing.

Now here's another favorite verse of mine. **1 Corinthians 2:9**, "But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

The most wonderful thing that you have ever received in this life can't even come close to the joy you will experience when you see the things that God has waiting for you in heaven and the earth made new. Not even close. When we get there we're going to be able to see God, and not be consumed. While the wicked will be consumed by the brightness of His coming, the righteous will be able to say, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." [Isaiah 25:9]

Also **Hebrews 11:16**, speaking of the righteous who have died in the past Paul says, "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not

ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

We won't take time to do it this morning, but maybe you can do it this afternoon sometime. Read **Revelation 22** and **Isaiah 65** and you'll get just a small glimpse of the Holy City and the earth made new. I tell you friends, we have something wonderful to look forward to, and when we see it and experience it, all the trials of this life will fade into insignificance, and we will be so glad we made preparation and helped others make preparation to be there. Nothing else will be able to compare to it.

In closing I'd like to take a look at God's lifetime guarantee from another angle, because it's the papacy and her harlot daughters that are putting forth a counterfeit lifetime guarantee.

Turn to 2 Thessalonians 2:8-11, "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because (now listen carefully, because we're being told why people will be eternally lost. It's because) they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause (because they didn't love the truth) God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." Better translated "the lie." And what is the lie? The answer is in Verse 12, "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had (what?) pleasure in unrighteousness."

You may have heard me explain this in the past, but it bears repeating. It's not enough to just understand the truth; you have to love it, and if you love it, you'll have no problem obeying it. Do you have a hard time doing the things you love to do? Of course not! And that's the way it should be with the things God would have us to do. Otherwise it becomes mere drudgery and duty, and if that's the attitude, you will soon cease walking with God.

The word "Pleasure" in **verse 12** means "To approve", and the word "Unrighteousness" means what? Sin! **1 John 5:17** says, "All unrighteousness is sin." And when you put this all together; those that will believe the lie, are those professed Christians who believe they are approved of God even while they are engaged in sin. That's the big lie! And that's what's being taught by the papacy and her harlot daughters, the Protestant Sunday churches, and sad to say, the very church that was raised up in these last days to expose the man of sin for his big lie, is herself caught up in this lie, and we are warned not to go where error is being taught.

In *The Great Controversy, page 572* it says, "It (speaking of the papacy) is prepared for

two classes of mankind, embracing nearly the whole world—those who would be saved by their merits, and those who would be saved in their sins. Here is the secret of its power."

You wonder how the papacy has been able to achieve such success? It's because most people that want to go to heaven want to get there by fooling themselves into thinking that there is some goodness in themselves, and that they can do enough good deeds to outweigh the bad; and the other half are fooled into thinking that they can live as they please and still get to go because they believe God guarantees them eternal life simply because they acknowledged at some point in their past lives that Jesus is the Savior. Coming to Christ as the Savior is the first step to becoming a Christian, but there's more to it than that, and these two false views, we're told, cover nearly the whole world.

Think about it. There are about 1.2 billion Catholics; 1.6 billion Muslims; 2.2 billion Protestant Christians in the world, and nearly all of them believe they're either saved by their merits or saved in their sins. And then there are about a billion atheists and agnostics that have no faith in God at all. And what a terrible shock it's going to be for the larger part of all the 6-7 billion people when they hear Jesus say, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." And why is Jesus going to say these fearful words to the majority of those who think they're going to heaven? Let's read it, because it's important.

Matthew 7:21-23, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

What are the key words here for those that will be able to enter the kingdom of heaven? Did you catch it? They are the ones that, "Doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." And what is God's will? **Psalm 40:8**, "I delight to do thy will, oh my God, yea, thy law is within my heart."

Why should it be so difficult for people to see that the ten commandment law, written in the heart, is God's will for every human being, and that the transgression of that law is defined as sin in **1 John 3:4**. And according to **Romans 6:23**, "The wages of sin is death", that's eternal death! Why can't people grasp this simple truth? It's because they don't love the truth. It's more comforting for them to believe a lie.

The enemy has come to them as a wolf in sheep's clothing and convinced them that there's another way into the sheepfold than the one way Jesus prescribed. And what is that one way? Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life", and don't forget that

He also said, unless we're willing to take up our cross of self denial daily and follow Him, we can't be His disciple. And taking up our cross implies that there's a preparation that must take place, and that preparation includes obedience as long as we live, and not just an acknowledgment that we believe in Jesus.

And there's another thing that never ceases to amaze me. Every Christian acknowledges that God expects us to keep nine of the ten commandments, but that fourth one, the seventh-day Sabbath, well it has been changed to Sunday, they say, when there is not even one verse of Scripture that says so.

We need to understand that the Sabbath truth is the test for these last days, and every other teaching is to take a back seat to this one. Not that other things are unimportant, but that the Sabbath teaching should not be overshadowed by anything else.

There are many professed Sabbath keepers today that seem to camp out on a certain subject to the neglect of the Sabbath itself, but it's the Sabbath that needs to be brought to the front and how it's just as binding today as it was when it was first instituted in Eden. Yes, the three angels' messages are to be taught because they give a history as to how the seal of God and the mark of the beast develops, but the reinstitution of the forgotten Sabbath is to be our focus, along with a heart transplant that cause us to love this truth so we can truly keep it. The fourth commandment is the only one that starts out with the word "Remember," why? Because God knew ahead of time that it would be forgotten.

Again, can other things be taught? Of course, but everything should somehow bring attention to the downtrodden law; after all, aren't we supposed to be repairers of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in? I love to hear Christ centered sermons, because without Christ we can't do anything. We can't obey the law; we can't please God; we can't develop a character like His; and we can't be prepared for His soon coming. But keep one thing in mind, a Christ centered sermon cannot be separated from the law, because it's a transcript of His character. So, if you're in a church that's not teaching the necessity of keeping all ten of the commandments, or one that is nominal and teaches all ten, but also teaches you're saved while violating any one of them, then you need to get out of that church, because that's the teaching of Babylon and her harlot daughters.

By the way, being saved in our sins is the same as believing that God's lifetime guarantee comes with no conditions. We just read that if we don't have a love of the truth, we'll be deceived. And so, we need to understand that all the warnings of disobedience have eternal consequences, and that the terms and conditions to the guarantee are just as much truth as the guarantee itself and null and void without it.

Hebrews 7:22 tells us that Jesus Himself is our surety, or our lifetime guarantee, as long as we walk even as He walked; [1 John 2:6] as long as we have the same Spirit He had; [Romans 8:9] and as long as we have a healthy respect that His promises and threatenings are alike conditional, as it says in *Selected Messages, Book 1, page 67*.

Some time ago I did a sermon titled "Once Saved Always Saved If." The word if can be found 1595 times in the Bible, and it's used in one of two ways: It's used to introduce a condition with a promise, or to introduce doubt. God uses it to let us know there are conditions to salvation and the devil uses it to create doubt that God means what He says, just as he did in the Garden of Eden.

We know that God never introduces doubt into the minds of those He wishes to save, and that's everybody; He always uses the word if as a sign of a condition or as a warning, and most of the time in conjunction with promises or guarantees of eternal life. And so, may God help us not to neglect the fine print. Let's give everything in the Bible the respect and import it deserves, because, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word (even the neglected two letter ones) that proceeds from the mouth of God."