Can the salvation be lost? This is an argument that has been discussed a lot of times. And we are not going to say nothing new regarding the matter, but we will just try to be as biblical as we can and we will let you decide by yourself. We need to consider and listen to all the opinions and examine. What you are going to see here is just an opinion and I'll try to present it as much as biblical as I can. I personally know that both of the groups, the ones that state that it can be lost and the other stating that it can’t, are right, because they are both biblical. And this fact doesn’t mean that the Bible contradict itself, but on the contrary, it means that is complete and warns us regarding all situations and aspects in life.

In this sermon we are not discussing just this matter, but all the rest of facts that accompany these beliefs, that are found in the Bible. We can start with a verse in 1Corinthians 10:13

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

 We can see here a promise to those who received already this precious salvation. We need to underline that the salvation is a gift obtained only and exclusively by faith in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. By faith in His blood that was shed for us. We are all debtors, because of our sin, it doesn’t matter how much we've sinned, we cannot pay it by ourselves, we cannot pay it by any good deed done by us, as the good deeds don’t and can’t give anything to God. We are debtors and the solution is found by faith in Him through His blood. We need to ask for forgiveness. But the reason why we receive this forgiveness is because He paid for it. We had to pay, but by having faith in His name, He takes the punishment instead of us.

 So, in this verse of 1 Corinthians 10:13 we find that no temptation has overtaken us except such as is common to man and God is **faithful**, meaning that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that we may be able to bear it. It means that He is faithful and He is in control. And we can rest on this promise. I am speaking for those who have been redeemed that we can trust in this promise. By this verse we see that we cannot lose our salvation, because there is not such a temptation that He can allow to happen that we cannot overcome through faith. I'll add to this that there is a requirement. And this is to be in Him, to have faith in Him, because He is the one that overcomes. Out of Him we can’t. He is the one that takes all the glory.

Let’s see some other verses.

“This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.” 2 Timothy 2:11-13

It clearly says that He remains faithful. This is His permanent condition. But we need to see that He remains faithful to Himself, to what He is, because the verse says that He cannot deny Himself. He is faithful to what He says. **In this way we can see that there is a security in Himself**. **So we can conclude that out of Him we cannot find this security.** I don’t think this verse says exactly that if we are faithless, He will bear with that and will be still faithful toward us, but rather that He is faithful to what He is. Of course He is faithful toward us, but He is much more faithful to His word. So the best for us would be that we can be found in Him.

With the next verse we can see the other side of the way God works.

“I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me.” Proverbs 8:17

 Here we see that He will show His love to those who love Him. Therefore here we see something that He requires from us. Once that we experienced His love, this is for us in order to continue to live in it and have experiences with Him. He pursues and doesn’t let go those people who somehow have this kind of attitude. I’m not speaking about people who succeed in this, because no one can succeed or love God by his own strength. And this verse is for those who have experienced already His salvation, because how can someone love God if he doesn’t experience His love first?

“We love Him because He first loved us.” 1 John 4:19

 Obviously He loves us and He gave His life for us, but this is for us in order to enter into this love, to make part of this promise.

 In this sermon we will see the two possibilities of what can happen with the salvation. We will see what the Bible says about it. This doesn’t mean that we find contradiction here. We can rest on the promises of God that He will accomplish what He has started, but in the same time we need to be careful as well and listen to the warnings. One thing is sure. And this is that “in Him” we are saved and all the promises are accomplished.

“For of Him and trough Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.” Romans 11:36

 I need to seek **Him** for salvation. He is the rock of my salvation. It comes from Him. In this way He takes all the glory. God looks for the glory, because He really deserves it.

 One of the issues as well is that people think that they can be saved through their works and **boast** because of them. And God cannot bear and He resists to the proud people.

“But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” James 4:6

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Ephesians 2:8,9

 There are people who trust in their own works to be saved. We can generally divide the people in two groups. Those who trust more in their works and those who trust more in their faith. In this way are those who work to preserve their salvation and they give more importance to what they do, while the Bible says that it is by grace alone. And these people can boast for what they do. And we see that the Bible speaks about both – works and faith. There are also those who will tell you more about the faith and they will believe that they are chosen by God to inherit His blessings (which might be right, because God is the one who really choses and shows mercy), but if this is taken in the wrong way, it is similar to the attitude of certain Jewish people that we find in the Bible. They were saying that they are chosen people and God’s nation. We can see that they were also boasting in a way about those things, thinking that they are something more and special.

“Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.” Matthew 3:8,9

 This is what John the Baptist said to the Jewish, because as we see they were boasting for being sons of Abraham, for being God's nation. Therefore even those who say that everything is by grace and God has particularly chosen them, can have the attitude of boasting.

 By this we see two limits and both of them can be wrong and in the same time right. It depends on how and with which attitude we are taking them. Better for us is to take both of them. So the solution is that we need to be in Him and this is where He is the centre of all.

 Let’s see something about the salvation. It is His work. We cry out to Him, but **He** saves us. It is not a simple cry, but one that comes from the deepest part of our soul and heart and it is His work to show us our condition, so that we can see our need. The Holy Spirit comes to us to convict us in our sin.

 Just imagine that someone is drowning into water. Won't he cry all heartedly for help? His cry won’t be simple, but it will be really intensive. This is what happens when someone sees his condition. This is the kind of cry we need to have toward God. Maybe some persons can’t see their need, can’t see their real condition that they are drowning. We need to ask Him to reveal it to us. Maybe He is already doing it, so what we need to do is be attentive to hear Him. So trough this we see that salvation is His work in us. In the same time we see some people saying: “I will not believe until He doesn’t show me something.” Are they right? I don’t think.

Speaking about the two realities and teachings in the Bible we can see

 Psalm 85:10.

“Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed.”

 We can see here how the two realities of the Bible meet together. The mercy and the truth, the righteousness and peace. Jesus Christ is all of these things together. God is all of these things together and in consequence His word teaches them as well. Here we see the mercy and the truth (law), the faith and the works. There are these realities in the Bible that by themselves alone they are truth, but they also meet together. In this way we can see that these things don’t create division or contradiction as someone might state, but they complete each other. Together they complete the truth in its fullness. To these ones we can add as well the topic of the salvation. For those who say that the salvation cannot and those who say that it can be lost.

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, and you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be my disciples.” John 15:1-8

 Here we see that every branch non bearing fruit is being taken away by the Father and in verse 6 we see that those branches are even gathered together and burned. We can see that something is required from us and this is to bear fruit. And this fruit doesn’t come from us and doesn’t glorify us, but it comes from Him. We are not capable of bearing this fruit. This is possible only by Him working in our life. These are other verses that indicate that we need to be in Him, so that something can happen in our life. John 15:5 says that we have to abide in Him. Someone might state that whatever we do might bring glory to ourselves, but here we see that we need to abide in Him, so that we can bear fruit. And this fruit comes from abiding in Him, therefore it brings glory to Him.

 We can also add here that we cannot do anything about the work of salvation into the others. We cannot save the people, God is the one who does that, but certainly we can ask God to show us the way we need to approach the others with the gospel. There is only one right way and this is His way. Nothing of what we know or what we’ve learned can help or can bring more fruit than His way. Even doing our best we cannot really help others regarding the gospel. It is needed His work and His wisdom with which He can show us what to do in approaching the others. In this way we see that, even if there is fruit in what we do, it is because of His work and way, because He showed us how and we obeyed. All the glory be to Him!

We also need to be careful, so that it doesn’t happen to us what is written in Hebrews 3:6-8

“But Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. **Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts** as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness”

 We mustn’t harden ourselves. God is warning us specially for this kind of attitude. It looks like this is the condition where He cannot work much in us, if we have it. Obviously He is almighty and He can soften the hardest heart, but there are attitudes and conditions and I think that there is also our side on the matter that is important. For someone to harden his heart, it means that he persist, he keeps on walking in the wrong direction, and God is warning him, and he knows, but he still persist on going there.

 And we need to know that God doesn’t force. He is leaving us a choice, and He can keep on warning us, but He will never force us completely against our will. He will help us to understand also the purpose of why we must accept something and this is the way we agree, when we somehow understand the purpose, but we will never be able to accept something if it is completely against our will.

 **That’s why the Bible speaks about love, it tells us to love God and love is not something forced, but it comes out of the will of an individual. On the contrary, the love is the one that compels, that forces, but the love on itself is not forced. People love God because they really feel it.** Because they felt the love of God first and they feel really grateful, but someone cannot feel forced to love God, otherwise it wouldn’t be love. So from this we see that God doesn’t force someone, but rather makes Him to understand why is that really important. When I say that He makes Him understand, I say that He really does that, deep in someone’s heart. There He touches us and opens our eyes to see really the purpose.

 A Cristian who is truly being saved never loses His salvation by chance, or because He didn’t pay attention to something, but because he persisted in the opposite direction, he hardened himself. He will definitely pay the consequences of not being careful about something, but I think that He will not just lose everything. It can happen if He still continues there over and over. That’s why God warns us in this way about the danger of hardening our hearts.

 There is a sin we can compare to a “banana peel”, meaning that I can walk on the street and without paying attention I can step on that peel and fall down and hurt myself. I don’t wish it to anyone, but in the same time it is much better for us if the sins that we commit can be like that “banana peel” and not because we looked for them. And obviously we can’t find excuses in front of God and we need to ask Him for forgiveness for all the sins we do. He knows the deepest part of our heart and the intentions with which we perform each action.

**The phrase “in Him” that we find in various places in the new testament, by itself brings all the things, all the opinions together. The one of the works and the one of the faith, because we can be “in Him” only by faith and we can do works that glorify His name only if we are in Him.**

“For all the promises of God In Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.” 2 Corinthians 1:20

 From this verse we see that **in Him** all the promises are Yes and Amen. This phrase brings together as well those who say that the salvation can be lost and those who say that it can’t, because “in Him” we can’t lose it and “out of Him” we can.

 So, we see that there are those two limits that often are pushed over board. One is that we need to do something about our salvation, that we need to do the hardest, we need to sacrifice over and over. The other one is that we mustn’t and we can’t do anything, that we just need to wait on something to happen. We need to find an equilibrium between these two. Both of them are found in the Bible and this means that we need to consider all two of them.

Let’s see chapter 9 of Romans where we can find something more on the topic.

There is something about the nation of Israel in v.27

“Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved.” Romans 9:27

 By this we see that even though they are His nation, only a remnant will be saved and it will be saved by mercy, same as us. It is not by the fact that they are His nation they will be saved. It is truth that God has placed His sight on them, because they belong to Him and they are special for Him, but they as us as well, need faith in order to be saved. If it is not in this way, then it is not by faith in Him, but by merits and works, something that Jesus and the apostles strongly opposed to. We see Jesus saying in Matthew 8:11,12 “And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

This is one of the examples that speaks about Israel, referring to them as “the sons of the kingdom”.

 This is the way God has appointed this to happen. By faith. In chapter 11 of Romans where it continues speaking about Israel, the author gives an example with an olive three.

“For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive three, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

You will say then, “Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.” Well said. Because of unbelieve they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spear the natural branches, He may not spear you either. Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.”

Romans 11:16-23

 We see that some of the branches were broken off and in their place others were grafted in. Those broken off were Israel and they were broken off because of their unbelief. The new ones are those from the gentiles who believed, but there is a warning that if they boast against the other branches they may be cut off too. Notice that here it speaks again about boasting. This is something that God cannot bear and support. We need to know that if we are something, it is because of Him, because of this root that supports us and makes us holy. Out of the plant we are nothing. And us, same as the nation of Israel can be broken off, because of our unbelief. If we are grafted (the same applies to those from Israel), it is because of faith.

In the whole chapter 9 of Romans we can see that it speaks about the mercy and how God shows it. In v.16 we see also that He alone shows mercy and it doesn’t depend on who wills o runs, but of God who shows mercy.

“So then it is not of him who wills, nor of who runs, but of God who shows mercy.” Romans 9:16

 This certainly is true, because the one who gives and the one from whom it depends to who and how much is going to be given is God. He alone has this authority and we need to recognise it. And this here is about His authority and sovereignty and how are we going to submit to it and recognise it. We need to ask Him to open our eyes, so that we can be able to acknowledge it.

 That’s why it doesn’t matter how much and how hard I’m running or doing something. What we need to do is to run in the right way and to will in the right way. If we see this chapter 9 of Romans, it speaks about the nation of Israel and how they failed, trusting in their own way and righteousness. So from this we see that the problem wasn’t that they were willing or running, but it was that they were doing it in their own way. Paul said for them: “For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” Romans 10:2

 Here we see why does it say in the verses before that is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. It is of God. He is the one to whom all the blessings and power belong. It means that His authority is important. And we need to submit ourselves to it.

 Look at something. If you are asking for something from God and you don’t find any answer, then there are various possibilities of what might be happening.

1. Perhaps what you are asking is wrong or it is not according to God’s will for your life
2. Perhaps what you are asking is right, but it is not time yet for you to receive it.
3. What are you asking is right, but you are not asking for it in the right way. Maybe it is humility or more faith needed in these moments.
4. The question is how can we know which one of these is our situation? It is through Him that we can know, through His Holy Spirit. He is sent here to guide us in all the truth and He can also show us our condition.

 Obviously many times the one asking God to work in his life, hasn’t come to repentance yet. In this case, before doing any other work in his life, God will desire for him to repent first and then to accomplish the work in his life. I saw many persons asking God to accomplish things in their life or to bless them, but they maybe haven’t come to repentance yet and don’t listen to His voice calling them to it. **God is not so interested for other things in our life, as much as He cares for our salvation. That’s His first priority for us. And He cares for it, more than we do.** Once that this is accomplished in someone's life, He starts to work and provide for other purposes, always and only for His glory. Until this moment He will work in someone’s life with the only direction and purpose to bring him to this salvation.

Going back to the topic of the nation of Israel we can see a verse in Romans 10:3

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.”

 Here we see the main issue the nation of Israel was having. And this is to try to follow God’s righteousness in their own way, establishing their own righteousness. We see again why to “run” or to “will” only is not the most important. Because when we run, we need to do it in His way. This is **His righteousness.** He is the one that shows mercy, so it means that it depends on Him. And this means that His rules are above everything else.

In these chapters of Romans (from 9 to 11), we find that it speaks a lot about God’s will, God’s sublimity and His election. We find the story of Jacob and Esau mentioned, where we see that God choses Jacob instead of Esau (Romans 9:10-13) and we find also the story of Pharaoh where we see that he was hardened by God. Concerning the election of God, of how He has established His will and how this comes to pass and our choices in the midst of all this, we can exclaim together with apostle Paul:

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements and His ways past finding out!” Romans 11:33

 But here in these situation we can also see to whom is that God has hardened the heart and whom is that He has chosen. His choice over someone is obviously by mercy, but we can see that those who were hardened were having certain qualities, if we can say so. Pharaoh for example was continually rejecting to free the nation of Israel and at the end God Himself hardened His heart. For Esau for example we see that he never gave as much value to the blessings of God in his life, as he sold his birth right for a plate of stew, because he was hungry at that moment. I am not saying that the people who were chosen have done something or not, for this to happen, I’m saying that those who were not, were having a certain attitude.

We can also see another part in Romans 9:19,20

“You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?” But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, “Why have you made me like this?” Does not the potter have the same power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?”

 The Bible says that He is the potter and we are the clay. And I think that not by chance this verse speaking about the clay is found here in this chapter that speaks so much about God’s election and His will. It is because we need to submit under His hand so that He can mould us into His image. There is no other way. He needs to make a space in our hearts for Him. It is a process. It doesn’t happen in our way.

 I see God like a sculptor or better said a woodcarver that works in our hearts, taking out what is not needed and making a space for Him, so that He can dwell there. This is just my opinion, but I think that those who are elected leave themselves to be moulded by Him and those who are not, don’t do it. This is the way for us to persevere in His way and in His salvation. In this way we don’t and we can’t lose it, but in our way the story is different. Most of the times He works in us while we go through trials and tribulations. In the moments when you can’t see God around you and maybe you think that He is not working are many times when He does that the most. We need in these moments also to keep on asking Him for that.