

I Stopped Trying to Be Sure I Was Saved

How Orthodoxy replaced my anxiety with peace in Christ

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Introduction

ONE of the things I noticed after converting to Orthodoxy was that I was no longer anxious about my salvation. Before, I was constantly concerned about my status. I kept asking myself: “*Am I saved?*” “*How do I get saved?*” “*How can I be sure I’m going to heaven?*” These questions weighed heavily on me.

But now that I’m Orthodox, those questions have faded. So I began asking myself: *Why?*

It wasn’t because I had made great spiritual progress—I’m certain of that. And it wasn’t because I stopped caring about my salvation. If anything, I care more now. The answer, I realized, was rooted in my background.

Background

As I’ve written before, I grew up Roman Catholic, but I didn’t take my faith too seriously. That only changed when a Protestant friend of mine helped me take Christianity more seriously and taught me the basics. But even before that, something had already been formed in me as a child.

I remember growing up, every time I did something “bad” or “wrong,” I was told that it would make God *mad*. And so, in my mind, my relationship with God became very simple:

When I do bad, God is angry.

When I do good, God is happy again.

So I learned to “balance things out.” If I did something wrong, I would try to make up for

it—to do something good so that God would not be upset with me anymore. Even if I didn't think about it consciously, it shaped how I saw Him.

God became someone I had to keep satisfied.

Looking back now, I can see how this connects to what is often called *Satisfaction Theory*. This is the idea that because of sin, God's justice must be satisfied—that something must be paid or made right before we can be accepted by Him. And even though I didn't understand it clearly as a child, I lived as if that were true. I lived inside its logic.

And it created a quiet anxiety in me.

Because if my standing before God depends on whether I've done enough, then how can I ever be at rest? There is always that lingering question: *What if it's not enough?*

Later on, when I started taking my faith seriously again, I was introduced to what seemed like the solution to that anxiety: *"once saved, always saved."*

At first, it felt like relief. Finally, I didn't have to constantly question whether I had done enough. If I was saved, then I was secure. But over time, that relief turned into something else. It became emptiness.

Because if everything is already settled—if I am already "saved"—then what is left? My spiritual life slowly became passive. There was no real striving, no deep longing, no sense of movement toward God. It felt like the story had already ended... even though I was still living in it.

And deep down, I knew something wasn't right.

Because I still struggled. I still sinned. I still felt distant from God at times. But I was told that none of that ultimately affected my salvation. Instead of anxiety over losing salvation, it produced a kind of forced certainty—one that didn't always match the reality of my spiritual life.

So I found myself caught between two extremes:

On one side, anxiety—always trying to earn God's favor.

On the other, emptiness—having nothing left to seek.

And then I encountered Orthodoxy.

Orthodoxy

Everything began to change when I read *Wounded by Love*:

“Christ is our love, our desire. Christ is joy, the true light, happiness. Christ is our hope. Our relation to Christ is love, eros, passion, enthusiasm, longing for the divine. Christ is everything. He is our love. He is the object of our desire. This passionate longing for Christ is a love that cannot be taken away. This is where joy flows from. Fast as much as you can. Make as many prostrations as you can. Attend as many vigils as you like. But be joyful, have Christ joy. It is the joy that lasts forever, that brings eternal happiness. It is the joy of our Lord that gives a short serenity, serene delight and full happiness. Christ desires and delights in scattering joy, in enriching his faithful with joy. I pray that your joy may be full. This is what our religion is. This is the direction we must take. Christ is paradise, my children. What is paradise? It is Christ. Paradise begins here and now. It is exactly the saying ‘those who experience Christ here on earth experience paradise.’”

—**Wounded by Love, On Divine Eros**

When I first read that, it left a deep impression on me. It was like seeing a kind of beauty I had never encountered before. Because for the first time, I saw that salvation is not about managing God’s anger, and it’s not about securing a status.

It is about **love**.

What changed most for me was not that I stopped thinking about salvation, but that the question itself changed. I no longer found myself asking, “*Am I saved?*” Instead, a different question began to take its place: “*What can I do to love Christ?*” And that question felt entirely different. It wasn’t anxious or restless. It didn’t make me look inward to measure my status. It made me look toward Him. Toward prayer, repentance, fasting, the sacraments—not as ways to earn something, but as ways to draw closer to Him. My focus shifted from trying to secure an outcome to pursuing a relationship. And in that shift, I realized that this is what salvation actually looks like: not a constant checking of where I stand, but a continual movement of the heart toward Christ.

What I had often encountered before was a view of heaven that felt almost separate from God—a kind of reward given if you believe the right things and follow the right rules.

But in Orthodoxy, the Kingdom of God is not something separate from Him.

It is Him.

It is not a place you earn, it is a life you enter into.

It is not about being declared something, it is about becoming something.

A heart that loves Christ.

God is not waiting for us to perform well enough so that He can finally be pleased with us. He is already reaching out. He is already knocking at the door of our hearts.

And this is why those questions I once had began to disappear.

Not because they were answered in a formula. . .
but because they were no longer the right questions.

Salvation is no longer something I try to calculate.
It is something I live.

And in that, both extremes were healed:

I no longer feel the need to constantly earn God's favor.
But I also no longer feel spiritually stagnant.

Because now, there is something to move toward—
or rather, Someone.

And in that movement, I found something I didn't have before: **peace**.

End

It's not that Orthodoxy ignores salvation or avoids speaking about it. In fact, it takes salvation very seriously—perhaps more seriously than I ever did before. But it speaks about it differently. Instead of reducing it to a single moment or a fixed status, Orthodoxy understands salvation as a living, ongoing reality: a continual turning of the heart toward Christ, a life of repentance, communion, and love. It's not something we casually assume, nor something we anxiously calculate. It is something we participate in. And in that, I didn't find indifference toward salvation—I found a deeper reverence for it, one that leads not to fear or emptiness, but to a steady and enduring peace in Christ.

This is the beauty of Orthodoxy, in the center of your spiritual life it is to be in union with Christ. This is not to attack the Catholics or the Protestants but to make my experience clear. Now I understand what it means truly to have a relationship with Christ.

Thank you for reading!