

Salvation

- *Acts 4:12*

- **It is a tremendous joy to see each of you here this morning. I appreciate the worship from our choir this morning & now as we focus our attention on the Lord for a few minutes this morning, I want us to talk in depth about our salvation & specifically what salvation brings to the table.**
- **The Bible reminds us that “this is the day that the Lord hath made” and “we should rejoice and be glad in it.”**
 - Why should we find joy today? What should be a reason for us to rejoice?
 - Blessings of God
 - Answered prayer
 - His provision
 - But above all today, we can rejoice b/c our sins have been forgiven! Are you glad you're saved today? The better question today is this, do you know for sure that you have been born again?
 - People will often wonder if they have ever been saved & I think the answer to that question can often times be found just by simply looking in our spiritual mirror.
 - The things we do, our actions, the changes in our lives, these are often times true indicators of being born again & being saved by God's marvelous grace.
- **In our passage of scripture this morning, Paul speaks of this great salvation by reminding us that it comes only by one means, the precious name of Jesus Christ & His blood that was shed for the remission of our sins.**
- **But this morning I would like to ask you a question, and as we go through several points this morning, we will in turn answer this question. The question is, “What is salvation?”**
 - Is salvation just a prayer,
 - Is it just a decision made at camp or at the altar?
 - Is it just joining a church?
 - Or is it something more?
 - This week, I looked up the definition of salvation online & here was the reply:
preservation from destruction or failure; deliverance from danger or difficulty.
 - Salvation certainly has in its meaning a deliverance or a rescue from destruction, but we all know that salvation is much more than just being saved from hell. When a person cries out to Christ & accepts Him as Lord of their life, being saved from hell is a part of the package, but it includes much, much more than just being spared from hell.
 - Hell is a real place folks. If I am honest with you, I got saved at an early age not b/c I wanted to serve God or be used of Him. I got saved b/c I was scared of hell & didn't want to go there.
 - But salvation has so much more than just an fire escape.
 - Lets look at this salvation in detail this morning ...
- 1. Salvation Involves A Response**
 - What you & I needed was a sacrifice, someone to buy our pardon b/c of the sin & wickedness that has enslaved us spiritually.
 - The Bible gives us the picture that we were spiritually bankrupt. In and of ourselves we had absolutely nothing to offer God.

- As a matter of fact, we had no reason for God to ever love us. But His love reached down to where we were. His love reached us, even in the depths of our sin, and His love cried out to turn to Him from our sin.
- We have sinned against ourselves, against others, but more than anyone else, we have sinned against God.
- But God loved you & me, He loved the world enough that He sent His Only Begotten Son to come to this earth, live a perfect, sinless life, & go to the cross where His blood would be shed & His life would be given a ransom for many.
- God has done His part. All that is left is the response that every person will have to make in this life, to either accept this gift, or reject it.
 - John 1:12 – “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:”
 - John 3:18 – “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”
 - You see each of us were born condemned b/c we were born into sin. Our parents sinned, our grandparents, our great-grandparents, and on down the line all the way back to Adam & Eve. So we were born condemned.
 - But when we believed on His name, when we accepted His sacrifice as payment for our sin, our names were blotted out of that condemned list & instead placed in the Lambs Book of Life by the blood of Jesus Christ.
 - John 3:36 – “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”
- Our response requires faith in the One who was sent to save us from our sins. But God always initiates the first step in the salvation process.
 - John 6:44 – “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”
 - Luke 19:10 – “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
- Salvation is us responding in faith that Christ will do what HE has promised He would do.
 - When I get on a plane, I trust the pilot, even though I have never met him, that he will see me through to my destination.
 - I trust that he knows how to fly, that he knows how to get me to my destination, that he has the ability to carry me through the storms & turbulence that we might encounter during the flight.
 - This is exactly what we do with the Lord Jesus Christ. You are trusting everything to Him.
 - “Lord, I know I am a sinner, but I know that you died for me. You said that you would save me if I come to You, so Lord I am trusting in You that You will do what You promised. I am placing my faith in You.”
- Now, if we get no further this morning, I am OK b/c now you have been given the Gospel message. Salvation involves a response that we must make towards the gift of salvation that only Christ can offer.
 - Our salvation cannot be passed down from our parents,
 - It cannot be earned by good deeds,
 - If you are saved this morning, it is b/c you accepted God’s free gift of grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Salvation is a response. But secondly ...

2. Salvation Involves A Change

- Now a lot of people have a lot of different explanations of what kind of change takes place in a person's life. But ultimately, when Christ moves into your life, when the Holy Spirit takes up residence, there has to be a difference, there has to be a change in your life.
 - Teenagers, if your parents were with you every second of the day, can you imagine how stressful life would be, right? But I wonder if we would change some of the things that you do?
 - Adults, if I walked with you every minute of your day, would it change the things you listen to, say, or do?
 - But more importantly, when Christ comes into your heart & life, there is a great change that must take place b/c now the Holy Spirit is dwelling within you.
- When you accept Christ, when you confess your sins, repent (turn from your sins), & invite Him into your heart & life & call upon Him as Lord of all, there is a change personally as well as spiritually.
 - There should be a desire to grow closer to God.
 - Bible reading
 - Prayer
 - Service
 - Cleaning up our life & living holy before Him.
- When we are born again, we should desire to grow & be moving & involved in the work of the Lord.
 - When the soldiers of ancient Persia went into battle, history records that they had to be driven by their generals into battle. In the midst of the battle you could hear the lash of the whips as they forced these soldiers to fight & do their part.
 - But with the Greeks it was a different story. They willingly rushed into battle & fought bravely for their country. What made the difference?
 - The Greeks loved their country, their temples, and their homes. They fought bravely b/c of their love.
 - If you are truly saved this morning, if you have been born again, you love for God not b/c He makes you, but b/c of your great love for Him & for all that HE has done for us.

3. Salvation Involves An Exaltation

- Exalt: means to lift up or to raise above all others.
- Why is it that Christianity is not growing like it once was? Why is it so many people around us do not go to church & have no thought of God or a relationship with Him?
- Could it be that the church is not what it should be? Could it be that people do not see Christ in us? Is it possible that they see no difference in our lives & theirs?
 - Our walk should be different. People should see a difference in our talk. The world should see a difference in our Facebook chatter. What about our character, our morals, our standards ... are they any different from those that don't know Christ?
- If you & I exalted Christ & lifted Him up as He should be, I wonder if more people would see a difference in our lives?
 - Many times the world will look at a "Christian" and reply, if that's what Christianity is, I don't want any part of it, or it is no different than the way I am already living."
 - What if we lived in such a way that instead they would say, "I want what they have?"
 - "Well Pastor, times are different. Our world has gone too far for us to make a difference." Please tell me you don't believe that! If you are truly living for God in this sinful world, your life should make a greater impact.

- Even worse for us to say, “I am just weak. I’m not perfect. I make mistakes.” We need to quit soothing our conscience with that kind of junk. Instead we need to choose to do right instead of doing wrong, Amen?
- An Indian was speaking to others in the village about the sin nature we are all born with & the new nature we are given through Christ. He compared these 2 spirits to a black dog and a white dog always fighting against each other. Someone asked him, “Which dog wins?” And the Indian replied, “The one I say ‘sic em’ to wins!”
- This Christian life is a billboard for Christ. How are you advertising the love of Christ tonight?
- God help us to exalt Him with our lives each & every day so that the world will see Jesus in us.

4. Salvation Instills In Us An Expectation

a. He Will Be With Us on Earth

- What a privilege & an honor it is for the Lord to walk with us while here on this earth.
 - We often times thinking of the presence of God as a daunting or troubling idea, but in all honesty it should give us comfort in knowing that He is ever with us.
 - Hebrews 13:5 – “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”
 - God does not save us & then leave us to walk alone. Instead He promises that He will be with us every step of this journey. That is an expectation we can count on.
 - What a comfort to know that we can cast all our care upon Him, b/c He cares for us.
 - We can trust in His everlasting arms.
 - The One who made Heaven and earth,
 - The One who has all power,
 - The One who can do all things, is ready to help us in our time of need.

b. He Will Be With Us in Heaven

- Have you ever heard someone say, “I have nothing worth living for”? As sad as that statement is, for those living only for themselves or for the moment, that statement is sadly true.
- But if you are saved tonight & the blood of Christ has been applied to your life, you have a very different outlook. You have something worth living for tonight.
 - If this world is all that we had to look forward to, what an empty & hopeless life we would live.
 - Paul said this in I Corinthians 5:19 – “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”
- This life we live will certainly bring us moments of pleasure & happiness, but this life is NOT what I am living for, and I trust neither are you.
 - If we are to find true happiness & joy in this life, it will be through Jesus Christ & what He has promised for His own.
 - Do you realize all that we have to look forward to?
 - Your children & my children get so excited about birthdays & Christmas. They live in anticipation sometimes for the day they get to celebrate & more importantly receive some presents. And there are times where one of these events may be months from happening & they will begin talking & anticipating that day.
 - As great as some of the events are in life, and as much as we long for somethings to come, there is none more compelling or more exciting than when we talk about Home.
 - We look forward to a life where there is no sin or disappointment.
 - We anticipate seeing Jesus & our loved ones who have gone on before us.
 - We anticipate spending eternity with Christ in a Home called Heaven.

- Whether He calls us through death or whether He comes to receive us of His own, what a great anticipation we have to look forward to & it's all b/c of the saving blood of Jesus Christ.
- **Salvation. What a sweet & precious gift God has given to us. The fact that God loved us enough that He made a way of escape for us is a tremendous thought, but salvation is much more than this:**
 1. **Involves A Response,**
 2. **Involves A Change,**
 3. **Involves An Exaltation**
 4. **Instills In Us An Expectation**
- **Are you glad that you are saved tonight?**