

Sermon Notes
“Salvation”

Material for this message was drawn from a series of sermons by Dr. Calvin Wittman (2009)

Focal Scripture Reference: John 14:6

Of all the doctrines of the Bible, every Christian must be very clear in his or her understanding of the doctrine of salvation. Not only does our own salvation depend upon it, but we have also been charged with sharing the Gospel message with the lost. Here is what the Baptist Faith and Message says in reference to the doctrine of Salvation:

"Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace, whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed."

For the purpose of our study, we are going to examine salvation within the context of three points. We will begin with our need, move to God's provision and then conclude with our response.

1. Our Need

Adam and Eve willingly chose to sin against God.

Romans 5:12 says, “**Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.**”

So, you see, we are all born with a natural bent toward sin. Understanding the nature of sin, we should consider some of the consequences of sin. Sin does several things. First, sin separates us from God.

A. Separation

Isaiah 59:2 assures us that our sin separates us from God. It says, “**Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.**”

In the Garden of Eden, before the fall, Adam and Eve had fellowship with God, but after they chose to sin, their fellowship with God was broken. Because of sin in our lives, we too fall out of fellowship with God.

The Bible clearly tells us that there is nothing we can do within our own ability to restore our relationship and fellowship with God.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith— and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.**”

We are sinners and that sin separates us from God.

B. Condemnation

Not only does sin separate us from God, it condemns us before God.

Romans 6:23 says this, “**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in a Christ Jesus our Lord.**”

Now remember that when we consider any one doctrine, we must also be consistent with all other biblical doctrine. For instance, when we examine the doctrine of salvation, we must be consistent with the doctrine of God. God is righteous and perfectly just. Therefore, He must punish sin. To do anything less would not be in keeping with His character.

Therefore, our understanding of how and why God saves us must agree with what God has revealed to us about Himself. Because God is righteous and just, He must punish sin and because we are all sinners, we are condemned before Him. And knowing that we cannot do anything in and of ourselves to escape our just punishment, our plight is really rather desperate. That's why the Bible tells us that salvation is also rooted and grounded in the character of God. Not only is God just, but God is loving and as a loving God He wants to save sinners.

The Bible tells us in **2 Peter 3:9** that the Lord is, “... **Patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**”

This brings us to God's provision.

2. God's provision

Remember that God created us for His glory and for fellowship. As long as we remain in our sin, we can neither be in fellowship with Him, nor can our lives give Him glory. In order for us to live for our created purpose, we must be reconciled to God.

The Bible states this very clearly in **2 Corinthians 5:19** when it says, “**God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.**”

Salvation, then, comes from the Lord. If it were left up to us, we would forever be lost. God is the one who initiates and consummates our salvation. It is His work alone. Here are several things about salvation every Christian should understand.

A. Why?

First, we need to consider the WHY of our salvation. Why did God save us? The Bible tells us that God is merciful.

Lamentations 3:22 says, “**Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.**”

You see, it is God's mercy that stays His hand of judgment. It is because He is loving and compassionate. Not only is God merciful, but He is gracious showing us His unmerited favor. We do not deserve it. We did nothing to earn it. It is grounded in God's character. Because God is merciful, loving and gracious, He offers us salvation.

Because of God's mercy He does not punish us the minute we sin, and because of His grace, He offers us forgiveness of sins, salvation from the penalty of sin and eternal life.

B. How?

Now let us consider the HOW of our salvation. How did God make it possible for us to be saved? This is where we want to talk about the doctrine of atonement. There are many people who don't like to talk about the cross or the shed blood of Jesus. They say it is bloody, violent and barbaric. Instead, they would rather talk about the example Jesus set for us or the love that He wanted us to share with each other. However, without the blood atonement, we would have no hope of salvation.

John 3:16 says, **“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”**

You see, God's justice demanded a sacrifice that would pay the price for our sins. Without the shedding of blood, our sins cannot be forgiven. Only a sinless person could pay the price and be an acceptable substitute for us. That's why God sent Jesus to die on the cross for us. When He died on the cross, He died in our place. Therefore, we need to understand that it was absolutely necessary for Jesus to shed His blood on the cross. Otherwise, the just demands of a holy God could not have been met and we would have no hope of salvation.

Many of our great hymns attest to this fact. What can wash away my sins? What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Jesus said in **John 14:6**, **“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”**

One of the foundational truths of our doctrine of salvation is that there is no other way to be saved except through Jesus. There are many who have a problem with that truth. Some say that there are many roads to God. After all, they reason, how could God love the world and yet allow so many people to die and spend eternity in hell? Their problem, of course, is that they are not basing their beliefs on what the Bible teaches us about God.

The truth is God would be justified in sending us all to hell. None of us deserves to be saved. The love of God the Bible speaks of is evident in that He has made it possible for any of us to be saved. And, it is only through faith and trust in Jesus Christ that this can happen.

John 3:18, says, **“Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”**

That means anyone who fails to put his or her faith in Jesus Christ alone, has no hope of heaven. The Good News is that salvation is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Romans 10:13 says, **“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**

So, how do we receive this gift of salvation? While it is freely offered to all who will believe, what is the process whereby we become recipients of God’s grace and become Christians?

3. Our Response

A. Repentance

The first thing the Bible says is that we must repent of our sins. Repentance means to stop going one way, to turn around and to go another way.

R. L. Scarborough, defined repentance this way. “... Repentance ...is turning away from your sins. It is giving up the love of your sins, your affection for everything that you know to be wrong in your life. It is turning right about with a new view and a new vision of God.”

Repentance, however, is not popular these days. Many people want to get to heaven without having to change who they are. They simply want to add Jesus to the many other things in their lives without giving anything up. But Jesus tells us that we cannot come to Him that way. We must take up our cross and follow Him. In repentance, we turn away from sin, and in faith, we turn to Jesus Christ as our Savior. That brings us to the subject of faith.

B. Faith

The Bible tells us that salvation comes by grace through faith. That is, God's grace makes it available, and we must accept it by faith. Faith means to believe. It means to put your trust or confidence in someone or something.

In order for us to receive the salvation offered to us in Christ Jesus, we must abandon any hope we might have in our own goodness, or in our ability to get to heaven on our own merit, and we must put our faith, our confidence, and our trust, in Jesus Christ alone and in what He did on the cross. This brings us to what happens when you trust Him.

C. Regeneration

By repenting of your sins and placing your trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, the Bible says you become a new creation. You are instantly given spiritual life as you are made new in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!**"

And once you are saved, you can never lose that salvation. When you ask Jesus to forgive your sins and place your trust in Him, He places His Holy Spirit within you, and He will never leave you nor forsake you. He writes your name in the Lamb's book of life and when the roll is called up yonder, you'll be there. Until then, He will work in your heart and your life to grow you into greater spiritual maturity. This is what we call, sanctification.

D. Sanctification

Once you place your faith and your trust in Jesus Christ, He begins a process of growth and spiritual development in your life that will be ongoing.

Philippians 1:6 says, "**Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.**"

This means that God, who has begun the work of transforming you into the image of Jesus, will continue to do His work in you until you are called home to be with Him or until Jesus returns.