

**Special: Spring 2024 #4**

**April 7, 2024**

**Series Title: Behold Our King!**

**Today's Message: The Doctrine of Salvation; Romans 3:23-24; Ephesians 2:1-10**

The doctrine of salvation has little bearing on our lives if we do not understand the wonderful privilege, the grave predicament and the problem of man. A good way to describe the predicament and problem of man is best summed up by a saying of the Puritans, Man is at odds with God and God is at odds with man!

What predicament? What problem? Didn't God say that everything was good, even man? Yes, He did. Genesis 1:31a tells us so: "God saw all that He had made, and it was very good."

Adam's Privilege: Listen to this beautiful description of the privileged position of mankind at creation. The Westminster Larger Catechism answers the question, "Why did God create man?" The answer is beautiful. "After God had made all other creatures, He created man male and female; formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground, and the woman of the rib of man, endued them with living, reasonable and immortal souls; made them after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; having the law of God written on their hearts, and power to fulfill it, and dominion over the creatures; yet subject to fall." (WLC, Q and A #17)

Adam's Predicament: Adam was privileged with rightful dominion and authority over God's creation! To rule it, reign over it, tame it and cultivate it (Genesis 2:15). So wonderful his privilege so very rewarding his work and so sweet his fellowship with God the Father...yet there was a weakness in Adam: God created him with the ability to choose to do both right and wrong; to obey fully or disobey God's one and only commandment. God commanded blessing for Adam with only one prohibition. Here's how Genesis 2:16-17 describes this: "And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.'"

Adam's Problem: Who would ever think that *freedom of the will* would present a predicament for Adam. After all God gave Adam expansive freedom in the Garden. Life was good. His wife was good. God was good. He had no experiential knowledge of death or corruption or deceit or anything evil or contrary to God's law. God's law was experienced positively as Adam enjoyed God's blessing and the freedom which accompanied obedience. However, Adam was soon to test the truthfulness, righteousness, and holiness of God through just one act of disobedience. In that singular moment Adam freely imposed his self-will. Disaster ensued.

Super-sadly, when Satan tempted Adam and Eve they did eat of the tree; they sinned and fell from their original righteousness and communion with God. At that very moment, as he exercised his own free will, the trespass with damnable. Instantly they became dead in sin, and wholly defiled. This means that they died spiritually. Their fellowship, communion and peace with God was ruined. The separation between the infinitely holy God and his creature was firmly fixed. We know this separation was instantaneous because when God called to Adam, Adam hid from God because he was uncovered before God and felt shame. In time they would discover and reap the pain and sorrow of their own moral darkening and intellectual futility. Romans 1 describes that this darkening and futility would express itself through idolatry (1:21-23), sexual immorality and a craving for all things sensual in nature (1:24-27), and through every kind of evil and perverseness (1:28-31) and with no natural sense that their actions were perverse and offensive to God their creator (1:32).

So, with that background we are going to look at 1) the necessity of salvation, and 2) the application of salvation.

**I) The Necessity of Salvation (Genesis 3:1-13)**

A) The *honorable* Man *dishonored* himself. (Genesis 3:1-7)

- 1) Honorable: The great Puritan, Stephen Charnock, says, [At creation God regarded man as very good] “adorned with His own image, beautiful with His graces, embellished with holiness and righteousness, and furnished with a power to stand.” (from *A Puritan’s View of Atonement*)
  - (a) “...to stand” honorably in willing obedience as God’s vice-regent or ruler over the earth.
- 2) Dishonorable: He dishonored himself by *publicly objecting* to his Creator God’s rulership.
  - (a) His *public objection* to God’s rulership brought instantaneous spiritual death and separation from God. From that moment forward, salvation would be of the Lord and Him alone!
  - (b) The Man likely did not nurse private outrage within his heart. But “sin seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment” leveraged his weakness leading to disobedience rather than trusting in the Word, warning, and goodness of God his creator.
    - (i) Salvation would have to come from the Lord.
- B) The Sinful man would not seek God. (Genesis 3:8-10)
  - 1) Why? You can see the instantaneous darkness and willful aversion to God in Genesis 3:8.
    - (a) “Then the man and His wife heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord.”
      - (i) His thinking was futile, his heart darkened, his judgment jaded, his will stubborn!
      - (ii) Instead of seeking God, his creator, he ran and hid!
        - (a) “No one seeks God. All have turned away” (Rom. 3:11b-12a).”
          1. Salvation must come from the Lord!
- C) Sinful man blamed God (3:11-13)
  - 1) The Man and his wife were no longer inclined to honor and exult in God.
    - (a) Their first reaction to God’s voice was to **blame** God (3:10-12)
      - (i) *You frightened me and startled me* “because I was naked, so I hid.”
        - (a) Blaming God for his nakedness, causing him to hide. No confession of guilt, although his actions indicate a guilty conscience.”
      - (ii) “The woman You put here with me” *she made me eat of the fruit.*
        - (a) To blame our superior: in this case blaming God
        - (b) To blame our *subordinates*.
          1. (I cautiously use the word. Adam was the head of his wife.)
    - (b) The second reaction was to shift blame to the instigator/ tempter (3:13)
      - (i) To blame something outside of ourselves reveals the *darkened understanding*.
  - 2) Salvation must come from the Lord.
- D) Adam’s sin brought sin, death, guilt, and God’s condemnation to all of Adam’s *race* (humanity).
  - 1) For an explanation of Adam’s responsibility and “federal headship” see Romans 5:12-19).
  - 2) Salvation must come from the Lord. **Ruined sinners cannot do what they will not to do!**

## II) The Application of Salvation

- A) First Principle of Salvation: Salvation is of the Lord: It is all of God, by God and for God!
  - 1) **But God**, who being under no obligation to pacify His wrath and anger and to restore a righteous remnant, did, from before the foundation of the world according to His eternal determinate counsel—“enacted in heaven, resolved before time, though done in the fullness of time”—have in mind the saving of precious human souls. In Christ alone is God’s requirement for justice satisfied and His immense love and grace glorified! “Herein is love: Not that we loved God, but that He first loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins! (1 John 4:10)”
    - (a) **That is the glory of the Gospel of our salvation! Salvation is all of God to our benefit!**
- B) The First Gospel promise of salvation:
  - 1) God revealed the Gospel almost immediately upon Adam’s sin of disobedience.

- (a) **Genesis 3:15:** God put the serpent on notice that his usurpation was to be short-lived as His promised Seed, born of a woman would destroy the serpent and his seed!
  - (i) Like the seed of a plant or tree, this promise is the *germ* that contains the whole Gospel, which will sprout, grow and mature in the fullness of time! Out of it will spring forth the eternal fruit of the Gospel in the person and work of Jesus Christ!
- C) Salvation Applied: How God saves His people: Its process and majesty.
  - 1) First, God chose His people before the foundation of the world according to His eternal determinate counsel.
    - (a) Election: God elected His people, whom He foreknew (foreloved)
      - (i) “Appointed for eternal life,” Acts 13:48); “Called,” “foreknew,” Romans 8:30
      - (ii) “Predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ Jesus,” Romans 8:29
    - (b) God elected His people according to His initiative (grace) motivated by His love.
      - (i) The comfort of election: God initiated salvation and is therefore “for us” (Rom.8:31).
        - (a) There is “no condemnation” and there is no *separation* (Rom. 8:1, 39)
  - 2) Second, God calls and regenerates His people.
    - (a) The Gospel call goes out to all, but is received by His choice ones, who through faith in the message of Gospel, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:8-10, 14-17).
      - (i) 1 Peter 2:9: God “called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”
    - (b) The Effectual calling and regeneration: The call of the gospel through preaching is made effectual through regeneration by the Holy Spirit. This is what is known as “new birth.”
      - (i) The act of regeneration is not independent from the preaching/hearing of the Word!
        - (a) 1 Peter 2:23: “For you have been *born again*, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.”
  - 3) Justification is solely the work of God (Rom. 8:30,33: “It is God who justifies.”
    - (a) God is responsible for this judicial act toward those He called. Here He pardons sin and imputes the righteousness of Christ, not according to any work of the sinner, but only as the “obedience and satisfaction of Christ” is imputed to them through faith (see Rom. 5:1)
      - (i) God justifies those who have faith in Jesus, according to Romans 3:26.
      - (ii) God justifies the sinner by crediting them with righteousness through faith (Rom.4:5).
      - (iii) Justification assures the believer that there is now “no condemnation.” (Rom. 8:1)
  - 4) The Conversion of a sinner having heard the word and believed through regeneration.
    - (a) Conversion is a two-fold response of saving faith to the message of the Gospel:
      - (i) Saving faith produces sorrow for sins and an earnest reception of Christ as Savior. (see Luke 18:9ff; Acts 2:36-41; 2 Corinthians 7:10: “Godly sorrow brings repentance...”
      - (ii) Saving faith also produces a new desire and motivation to love and obey Christ.
  - 5) Adoption: God has chosen to make a permanent relationship with His chosen ones by adopting them into His family at the moment we are regenerated and justified!
    - (a) John 1:12, 13c: “Yet to all who rec’d Him, those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become the children of God—children...born of God.”
    - (b) Galatians 3:26: “You are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”
    - (c) 1 John 3:1-2: “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!...now we are children of God.”
  - 6) Sanctification: the two-fold nature of sanctification.
    - (a) When we are born again God sets us apart for Him, being freed from the dominion of sin and brought under the Lordship of Christ (See Colossians 1:13-14).
    - (b) A cooperative work wherein we grow into maturity as we obey Christ. A Lifelong practice.