

Special: Spring 2024 #5

April 14, 2024

Series Title: Behold Our King!

Today's Message: The Doctrine of Salvation, pt 2; Romans 3:23-24; 1 John 4:13- 5:12

The doctrine of salvation is most wonderful. There is not another doctrine in the entire Bible that can better make known the Nature and Character of God more than the doctrine of salvation. On the other hand, no other doctrine better confirms and defines the abject ruin of humanity, while at the same time revealing and demonstrating the incomparable love of God toward us! And it must be said that the focal point of this vast doctrine finds its epicenter at the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, the fountainhead of redeeming love!

The doctrine of salvation is eternally wonderful considering the truth about man. Scripture doesn't hide the truth about the sinfulness and neediness of humanity. From Adam to the present generation death reigns with hellish fury striking the dying hearts of men with the fear of death and dying. Hebrews 2:14-15 relates that the reason Christ Jesus shared in our humanity was so that "by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."

I once heard that in the olden days the magistrates ruled by law and the guilty were sentenced to merciless days, weeks, or years of confinement in dark and damp dungeons. It is said that for many prisoners the sound of keys clanking was the sound of death. To others the most hopeful sound to their ears was the sound of the jailer's keys clinking as he walked toward a prisoner's cell.

The message of the cross of God's salvation is like the sound of the clinking keys of a jailer. To some people the clinking of the keys of the Gospel is annoying; the sound interrupts their spiritual slumber. To others the sound of the Gospel keys awakens hope, opening the eyes of the sinner once blinded now alive to the light of the glory of the Gospel of God in Christ! And in a moment the awakened sinner leans with their full weight upon the Savior, having learned that eternal life has been given and the sentence of death for sins is reversed because of the willingness of that One, Jesus Christ the Lord, to suffer the penalty and pay the price. The keys of the Gospel, having unlocked the doors to a new life lead the new creature to a life of purpose and godly direction: a new life, no longer as a slave but as a son having been adopted into God's family as a child of God with no fear or threat of abandonment; and a new life empowered by the Word and Spirit in order to live a life for Christ abounding in the spiritual fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control.

One of the foundational teachings of the Bible is that "salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9). From before the foundation of the world, [God 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. Because God's righteous requirements could never be fulfilled by fallen sinners, God, in love, sent His Son to the propitiation for our sins. As the Scripture says, "Herein is love: Not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:10)" And this, my friends is the glory of the Gospel of our salvation: It is all of God, and none of us!

Today we will divide the sermon into two parts: 1) The Unilateral responsibility of God in our salvation; and 2) Our cooperative response to God's gift of salvation.

I) The Unilateral responsibility of God in our Salvation

- A) First Principle of Salvation: Salvation is of the Lord: It is all of God, by God and for God!
 - 1) Salvation and deliverance begins and ends with God.
 - (a) God (The Triune God) exercised His eternal determinate plan in time through His Son.
 - (i) Acts 2:23, "This Jesus was delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God; and you crucified and killed [Him] by the hands of wicked men."

- (a) Predeterminate counsel (definite plan) and foreknowledge
 - 1. In eternity *past* the Trinity determined that the Lord Jesus Christ should be given over into the hands of sinful men to be crucified.
 - a. More than foreseeing, but foreordaining; a deliberate choice of God!
 - b. God's set purpose: God appointed Christ to be crucified in advance.
 - 2. John Phillips: "The death of Christ was foreknown of God in a past eternity. When God acted in creation, He also acted in redemption. Jesus is described as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8)"
 - a. 2 Timothy 1:9: "...who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity."
- 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!
 - 2) From Eternity but in the fullness of time:
 - (a) 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!
 - (i) Galatians 4:4, "At just the right time (in the fullness of time, God's time), God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under the law..."
- C) Salvation Applied: How God Unilaterally saves His people: The steps [of God's] salvation.
 - 1) Election: 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
 - (a) The force of the Greek word presses the matter as *something fixed by God*.
 - 1. The same as the word *foreknowledge*, which is something *foreordained*.
 - (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) Election and God's Sovereign love are twins. Because God is the *most free* and sovereign being, He is therefore under no obligation to anybody and is free to love whom He chooses. He declares as much when it came to Jacob and Esau.
 - (a) Romans 9:13: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."
 - (b) In Scripture there is no cause for God's love. In other words, there is no outside force which causes God to love and save anyone but those He chooses.
 - 1. It is always that "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" and "in love He predestined us to be His sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with *His pleasure and will*, to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely bestowed on us in the Beloved." (Ephesians 1:4, 5-6)
 - (c) The Certainty of the Elect: God applies His electing grace independent of the elect.
 - (i) John 1:12-13 declares that those who become "children of God" become so "not of human descent nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God."
 - (d) The comfort of election: God initiated salvation and is therefore "for us" (Rom.8:31).
 - (i) There is "no condemnation" and there is no *separation* (Rom. 8:1, 39)
- 2) The Gospel Call and Regeneration: 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 occurs when, having heard the word through regeneration by the Spirit, believes, by faith, in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This is the first step of *repentance* in the life of a regenerate believer!
 - (a) Saving faith, like grace is a gift of God bestowed upon His elect.
 - (i) Eph. 2:8-9: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—so that no one can boast.”
 - (b) Repentance is a gift of God as well.
 - (i) 2 Timothy 2:25 informs us that repentance is a gift of God leading to a knowledge of the truth.
- 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 is two-fold: A divine setting aside and the willingness to grow and mature.
 - (a) Having been born again God sets that person aside for Himself by freeing us from the dominion of sin and bringing us under the Lordship of Christ (see Colossians 1:13-14).
 - (i) “For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son.” (Romans 8:29)
- 7) Glorification is the future fulfillment of salvation, at which time we are free once and for all from the presence and the pleasure of sin and made like our Lord Jesus (**see 1 John 3:2-3**)

II) Our Cooperative Response to God’s Gift of Salvation

- A) Conversion also carries the idea of personal repentance in action: The Spirit works and we work.
 - 1) 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...”**)
 - 2) Saving faith also produces a new desire to love and obey Christ, motivated by the Spirit.
- B) Sanctification also carries with it the personal transformation by the Word of God.
 - 1) “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is...” (Romans 12:2)