

Lecture 5 - God, Our Salvation

The Bible has two major themes: the walk to God and the walk with God. In our first four lessons we talked about God Himself as our Maker, our Creator, the One who knows us intimately as human beings and who designed the universe and everything in it. He deserves not only our full worship as we studied last week, but also to be acknowledged as our King, our Monarch, the very source of all Wisdom and Knowledge. He is God Almighty! He is the Lord!

He alone is also the Savior of our eternal souls as well as the only One powerful enough to save us from the forces of evil in this world that would seek to destroy us spiritually and even sometimes physically! So that is what this lesson was all about . . . the God who saves.

There is no other doctrine in all of Scripture more important than that concerning the salvation of your eternal soul. **First** I'm going to address that in plain, simple language so they'll be no misunderstanding about it, and then we'll look at some application from the psalms in today's lesson. I know I'm "preaching to the choir" so to speak because most of you have already made Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior. However, I also know as believers we never get tired of hearing the strong gospel message of salvation because it blesses our soul.

Everyone has eternal life . . . God created us that way. The question is – where will you spend eternity? In heaven with God or in hell with Satan and those who have rebelled and rejected God's offer of love and mercy and grace? You do know that the choice is yours, right?

Beginning in Genesis when sin entered the world and fellowship was broken between God and mankind, and throughout the Old Testament Scriptures, there has been God's promise of the Messiah; the Savior, the One who would become Jacob's ladder between God and man. . . a bridge if you will. The Bible, both Old and New Testament, is a book about redemption and deliverance as God Himself initiated reconciliation to draw us to Him.

Just being born doesn't mean you'll spend eternity with God. Neither does belonging to a church or synagogue or a mosque, neither does living a moral lifestyle by society's definition, neither does your heritage or your ancestry take care of the root problem that separates us from God . . . and that is the issue of sin.

In David's day when most of these psalms were written, the sin problem for those who believed God and wanted a right relationship with Him was temporarily taken care of by the blood sacrifice of animals. The Day of Atonement was a very special time . . . a reconsecration of the devout to holy living.

But in the fullness of time, it pleased God to take care of the sin issue once for all by sending the Messiah, Jesus Christ, to be the Lamb of God whose blood would take away the sins of the world. **John 1:29, "The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"**

John 3:16 - 18, "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. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. 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."

Now the blood of God's Lamb, the blood of Jesus Christ, became all the sacrifice that God's justice demanded.

Jesus paid it all . . . God's ultimate gift to His fallen people. We call it the finished work of Christ. The way is open, the temple veil was torn apart so that all mankind had an open view to the Mercy Seat of Almighty God and might confidently enter directly into the very presence of God in full confidence of acceptance and forgiveness because the sin problem was fully atoned for by Jesus on the cross at Calvary.

Jesus said, "It is finished." The resurrection was God saying, "Amen!" So be it . . . Jesus sat down in heaven at the right hand of the Father until He shall come again . . . next time in judgment.

The way, the bridge is narrow – "No man comes to the Father except through me," Jesus said. (John 14:6) So **each one** of us must make a decision sometime during our life to believe that . . . it's called **conversion**. You don't have to give up something, start something, stop something to be worthy of salvation. You can't buy your way in or earn your way in. It is called **grace**. The only way you can come is by simply taking the gift of God's Son, Jesus Christ, as your personal Savior and inviting Him into your heart and making Him Lord of your life.

Alan Redpath says, "The conversion of a soul is the miracle of a moment. The making of a saint is the task of a lifetime." Conversion (salvation if you will) passes us from death to life, from debit to credit, from lost to found. Your claim for entering heaven is – "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the cross I cling" as we sing in Rock of Ages.

Ephesians 2:1 "You were dead in trespasses and sins." Vs. 4 "But God made us alive/raised with Christ." Vs. 8 "By grace you are saved through faith, not of yourselves, it is a gift from God, not of works that no one should boast."

Titus 3:5 says "He saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but in accordance to His grace."

Romans 5:8 "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." It wasn't when we tried to clean up our lives, got moral, became pure of thought that Christ noticed us. It was while we were spitting at His name, hating, despising, running away from Him. While we were engaged in sinful behavior and a sinning lifestyle, God stopped – stooped and made a way. He accepted us and justified us . . . Justification is that sovereign act of God whereby He declares us righteous while we were still in a sinning state. And declaring us righteous by His grace, we are then brought on a level of His holiness and perfection, not because of who we are or what we have done but because of Christ.

Positionally, when we come to Christ we are placed into Him. In Christ, His death became ours/His resurrection is ours. His victory over sin and death is ours. We're no longer a slave to sin.

God sees us as perfect and holy as we are seen through the blood of Christ. He gives us the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit to begin to conform us into the image of Christ.

So the simple question is . . . what must I do to be saved and have the assurance of my salvation?

Romans 10:9-13 says, "If you confess with your mouth "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your

heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, "Everyone who trusts in Him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses **all** who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

So we say a simple prayer of faith something like, "Lord, God, I confess that I am a sinner and need a Savior. Right now, I invite Jesus Christ to come into my life. I believe He is the Son of God who died to pay the full penalty of sin for me. Thank You, Jesus. I give my allegiance to You. I accept You as the gift of eternal life, my Lord and my Savior. Amen."

That appropriation of grace puts you "in Christ." And **then when** we have those doubts about how easy that was and "am I really saved?" – then turn to 1 John 5:11-13 and read, "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

Your repentance and commitment is followed by baptism as the sign and seal of your faith in the risen Lord. As circumcision was the sign of God's Old Testament covenant with His people, baptism is the sign in the New Testament.

Think about this for a moment:

First, salvation is an individual responsibility, not a group plan. There are three truths about this responsibility:

- a) The Christian is responsible to pray for and share his faith with non-Christians.
- b) Non-Christians are responsible to accept/reject the free gift of salvation.
- c) The Lord is responsible to save whoever comes to Him through Christ by faith alone.

Second, there is no alternative if you're not ready. No second chance after death. It's the hard truth of Scripture that without Christ as Savior, you will go to hell. Today may be last time you'll have opportunity to accept. 2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

Third, there is no warning preceding Christ's Second Coming. It could be before we go to bed tonight. The time to prepare is now. Today is the day of salvation.

Frances Havergal wrote these lyrics: "Nothing to pay! Yes, nothing to pay! Jesus has cleared all the debt away. Blotted it out with His bleeding hand! Free and forgiven and beloved you stand."

Listen to these thoughts of the gifted writer Arthur Bennett in his book of Puritan prayers titled *Valley of Vision*:

O Lord God,

Teach me to know grace precedes, accompanies and follows my salvation,

that it sustains the redeemed soul,

that not one link of its chain can ever break.

From Calvary's cross wave upon wave of grace reaches me,

deals with my sin,

washes me clean,

renews my heart,
 draws out my affection,
 kindles a flame in my soul,
 consecrates my every thought, word, work,
 teaches me thy immeasurable love.
 How great are my privileges in Christ Jesus!
 Without him I stand far off, a stranger, an outcast;
 in him I draw near and touch his kingly sceptre.
 Without him I dare not lift my guilty eyes;
 in him I gaze upon my Father-God and friend.
 Without him I hide my lips in trembling shame;
 in him I open my mouth in petition and praise.
 Without him all is wrath and consuming fire;
 in him all is love, and the repose of my soul.
 Without him is gaping hell below me, and eternal anguish;
 in him its gates are barred to me by his precious blood.
 Without him darkness spreads its horrors in front;
 in him an eternity of glory is my boundless horizon.
 Without him all within me is terror and dismay,
 in him every accusation is charmed into joy and peace.
 Without him all things external call for my condemnation;
 in him they minister to my comfort,
 and are to be enjoyed with thanksgiving.
 Praise be to thee for grace,
 and for the unspeakable gift of Jesus.

Isn't that beautiful!?

Scriptures call David "a man after God's own heart." They had an intimate relationship. In our memory verse for today, Psalm 62:1, David writes, "My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him." Hopefully you've understood what I've had to say about salvation as it pertains to eternity in the presence of God. It is a rest from works to gain merit with God and instead, it is a dependence on His character and the truth of His Word. Please, please don't leave here with even a shadow of a question in your mind about what salvation is, why you need it, or how you receive it. It's the most important thing you'll ever need to know.

Now I want to look briefly at the psalms chosen for today's lesson from the viewpoint of what application we can find from them for our day to day living.

Psalm 16 — Is remarkable! Right here we have a messianic psalm that is quoted in part by Peter in Acts 2:24 and by Paul in Acts 13:35 referring to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. David is writing prophetically . . . a millennium before the reality of Jesus' death.

Notice the superscription "A Miktam of David." One writer says *miktam* is from a word meaning golden. Martin Luther translated *miktam* as "a golden jewel."

I want to look briefly at Psalm 16 from two mindsets; the first from David, or we might say that of a believer . . . and secondly from Jesus' viewpoint. David identifies in . . .

Vs. 1-4 The marks of the believer (The Lord is the object of his trust, he takes refuge; the Lord is utterly sufficient; he acknowledges delights in fellowship of the saints; he shuns all false worship.)

Vs. 5-8 The present blessing of the believer (A satisfied heart, a purpose, counsel, correction and security.)

Vs. 9-11 The future for the believer (preservation from spiritual death, the path of life made known, and joy in God's presence).

Now look over it again quickly as if this was a prayer of Jesus one evening with the Father. He is trusting in the Father's plan, enjoying those who have a heart for God and seeing the futility of idol worshipers. He knows the portion and cup assigned to Him, and yet there is praise, confidence, and commitment because the grave is not the end but the path of life. Eternal pleasures wait at God's right hand. Perhaps this truly is a golden psalm because it speaks so plainly to those who are already in Christ and it speaks for Christ Himself, who is the true treasure hidden in the field of the Old Testament Scripture.

Psalm 27 – In this psalm of David he has an enemy, Saul. David had been anointed by Samuel to be king, but Saul was still on the throne and very jealous of David. In fact there was relentless pursuit to try and kill him. David was afraid. It is the wise man who realizes that he has enemies. If you think you don't, just try to stand up for your convictions and they'll identify themselves. Jesus loved His enemies, yet they murdered Him. In times when the enemy is hot on our heels, fear grips us; we want to be near God. We assure ourselves "The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?" David shows us something to do when we're afraid: 1) Declare what you know . . . claim it; 2) Express what you need . . . name it.

David wanted "one thing." Kind of reminded me of Curly's philosophy in the movie City Slickers. All of life was "one thing," remember? And he said it was different for everybody. You had to find that "one thing" for yourself. Paul tells us in Philippians 3:13-14 "But this one thing I do: Forgetting what lies behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." That was Paul's "one thing."

David's "one thing" was to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. What a heart for God! But even with a whole heart, fear prompted him to say, "don't reject me," "do not turn me over to the desires of my foes." In other words, save me.

The term **wait** in vs. 14 is from the Hebrew verb kah-wah, meaning "to twist, stretch." The noun form means "line, cord, thread." So a vivid picture emerges. It is a verb describing the making of a strong, powerful rope or cord by twisting and weaving ourselves so tightly around the Lord that our weaknesses and frail characteristics are replaced by His power and unparalleled strength. Some have termed this the "exchanged life."

As we wait, our weakness is exchanged for His strength. That's a beautiful picture. "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord." Sometimes when we talk to ourselves and we need to actually listen! Relax and enter into God's rest. Give Him time to work it out. Strength and courage are developed during a trial, not after it's over.

In Psalm 31 – David's world was falling apart. He turned to God. Vs. 2 "Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me."

This is a prayer of deliverance from trouble. Briefly, vs.1-8 express confidence in God; 9-18 is an appeal for help; 19-22 gives assurance and praise; and 23-24 is an exhortation to be strong and take heart. In any and all trouble God is our refuge.

Psalm 62 – Continues the theme of resting in the security of God as a rock, a fortress, my salvation, a refuge. In fact we could say this is a psalm about waiting. The NIV Bible that most of us use repeats the phrase "God alone." Most other translations say "God only." That is why this is often referred to as the "only" psalm.

In vs. 1-4 we see waiting in silence. Strength is drawn in rest. Waiting in silence implies utter trust that the rope will hold, the fortress will stand, the walls won't cave in. Not only does salvation come from God, but He gives us those still moments when we can gain strength for the next battle.

Vs. 5-8 shows trust in God . . . There's a personal relationship with God, an intimacy seen by use of pronoun "my." God is not an abstract theological concept to David but his source of hope, safety, deliverance and unshakable faith. Take a look at verse 8 "Trust in him at all times O people; pour out your hearts to him for God is our refuge." Two thoughts: 1) Waiting involves trusting and 2) waiting involves prayer.

Psalm 85:6 asks, "Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?" The day of your salvation is a mountain top experience. Each time God "saves the day" in your life we're full of praise and jubilation. But you and I both know that between the mountain top experiences, we're often deep in the valley. We want to be up there with God, but we feel removed, maybe even dry or cold. What we want is revival! Revival or renewal begins with repentance. Down through history God's people have had Psalm 85 as an example.

Remember His former mercies: 1-3

We remember not only God's forgiveness of the ungodly as they turn to Him in penitence and faith for salvation, but also for His own sinning people. Because of the multitude of His mercies, God forgives again and again.

Request for revival: 4-7

Revival is the appropriate word for the saved who are backslidden. You can't revive anything that is dead. Revival implies restoring. Life is within, but it is faint and feeble and needs quickening. **The unsaved are dead in sin and destitute of the life of God within. They require regeneration.** There's a great difference between a hospital and a graveyard. The church a spiritual hospital for those spiritually weak and those in need of the reviving touch of the Divine Physician.

Revival, which the church must have if her voice is to be effective in the world, cannot be worked up. It must be prayed down.

It cannot be programmed even though evangelistic campaigns can be successfully arranged with advertising, money, preaching, singing to insure crowds. But a Holy Spirit outpouring of revival comes suddenly from heaven in overpowering conviction and mighty blessing from the Lord. And, of course, **there must be a prepared people ready for such a divine visitation.** Revival from God comes from God in answer to prevailing intercession of His saints and in response to their

unwavering faith and abandonment of all known hindrances of the movement of the Spirit such as unconfessed sin.

A revival then quickens God's people and increases the desire for sacrificial service. And likewise the God of salvation moves upon the unsaved, individually, convicting them of their sin. As they repent and believe, He reveals His mercy – removing guilt, extending forgiveness.

Righteousness the goal: 8-13

When Christians are revived, the church is ready to listen to God's voice and obey Him implicitly. His people should be at peace with Him and among themselves and heed the warning "but let them not return again to their folly."

Psalm 86:1-7 is the prayer of positive, optimistic man who affirms "In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer." That is hope – not in the sense we hope maybe God will be there when we need Him – but hope that knows intimately the character of God, and knows He will never leave us or forsake us.

Vs. 8-13 praises God our Savior and we read David's plea that we each want to echo – "Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name." (vs.13) "For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths of the grave." That is eternal salvation.

Lastly **Psalm 98** could be considered the Evangel of the Old Testament. The good news that God exists and that He has saved his people and all creation rejoices as it waits for Him to come again to judge the earth in righteousness and equity.

Well, we've covered salvation on a pretty wide scale in this lesson. We've learned what it is and what we have to do to have it.

Psalm 16 we saw the marks of a believer as well as his blessings and future.

Psalm 27 showed us how fear actually draws us closer to the Lord until we entwine ourselves so closely to Him that His strength actually becomes ours.

Psalms 31 and 62 reminded us God is our refuge . . . we need to trust Him at all times . . . and trusting often means waiting.

Psalms 85 and 86 pointed out that sometimes we hit a dry spell even as Christians, and we need revival. God will do that and honor our prayer as He did David's to give us an undivided heart.

Then **Psalm 98** affirmed that God is our salvation.

I want to close with a simple illustration. A leading manufacturing company developed a new cake mix that required only water to be added. Tests were run, surveys were made, and the cake mix was found to be of superior quality to other mixes available. It tasted good, was easy to use, and it made a moist, tender cake. The company spent large sums of money on an advertising campaign and then released the cake mix to the general public. But few people bought the new cake mix.

The company then spent more money on a survey to find out why the cake mix didn't sell well. Based on results of this survey, the company recalled the mix, reworked the formula, and released the revised cake mix. The new cake mix required that one add not only water, but also an egg. It sold like hot cakes and is now a leading product in the field. You see, the first cake mix was just too simple to be believable. People felt they must "need to add something." The same is true of salvation by grace.

People, Hear the good news . . . Jesus has mixed and baked the cake and He's offering you the perfect slice. You have only to reach out to Him, take it, and then (as it says in Ps. 34:8) "taste and see that the Lord is good."

Let's pray:

Father, you have provided the way of salvation for our souls and saved us from the fears that would overwhelm us if we had to walk through this world without You. We are grateful You are the God of salvation. In Jesus' name. Amen.