

WHAT GOOD IS GOOD DOCTRINE

What Good is the Doctrine of Salvation?

TEXT: Ephesians 2:1-9

INTRODUCTION: What Good is the Doctrine of Salvation? How could there be a subject more important than this one? If you know everything else a Christian should know, but do not know this, of what benefit will it be? If you know everything else there is to know in the whole world, but do not know how to be saved, your understanding will be like the light of a camera flash in a room forever dark. If you enjoy life to the hilt with never a hint of sorrow, but miss spending eternity with God, your joy will be like the vapor of the candle blown away by the hurricane. Jesus asked in **Mark 8:36 NKJV** **“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”**

While no other subject matter could claim to be more important than this, this teaching could also lay claim to be the most perverted. Men have added to it and taken from it. They have twisted it and refashioned it more to their own liking and tastes. This is the work of the evil one who desires to deprive men of that which God desires them to have.

Even in those parts of our world where the gospel has been broadly proclaimed, there is confusion. If you went door to door here in America and asked the question, “What must I do to spend eternity with God?” I suspect that 9 out of 10 people would give you the wrong answer.

We should learn what God says about salvation not only for our own benefit, but also for the benefit of others.

Eph. 2:1-9 NKJV 1 And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

We see in this passage ...

I. THE NEED FOR SALVATION

A. We are all dead in trespasses and sins.

1. **We all have a sin nature inherited from Adam.** Romans 5:12 NKJV
Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, **because all sinned—**

Ephesians 2:3NKJV among whom also **we all** once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

2. **We all choose to commit sin.** Romans 3:23 NKJV for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God,

B. Sin brings death.

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

- **Physical death**
- **Spiritual death, the second death, separation from God in the lake of fire forever**

People today say, "Don't preach about hell and burning forever." Folks, what if I knew this roof was going to fall in and did not tell someone?

If a single sentence in this book is true, hell is real and we all need to be saved from it.

C. Sin brings death to all.

 Romans 5:12 NKJV Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and **thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—**

D. Therefore everyone needs salvation.

 This is why God tells us to share the gospel everywhere, from Panama City to the ends of the earth, because sin brings eternal separation from God to everyone.

But God, who is rich in mercy and overflowing with love, who does not want a single person to perish, has made a way for our sins to be forgiven and for us to live forever.

II. THE WAY OF SALVATION

A. God alone can determine the way of salvation.

Sometimes when I am sharing the gospel with someone they will say to me, "Well, I think," and then they describe how they think people should be saved. So what! Did they create us? Are they the Holy One who is offended by our sin? Will they be the One sitting on the throne on the Day of Judgment? What matters is what God says!

B. God has declared the way.

 John 14:6 NKJV Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

The reformers described the way of salvation accurately.

1. **By grace alone**
2. **Through faith alone**
3. **In Christ alone**

C. Why is Christ the only way to salvation?

- **He is the only God-Man. 100% God; 100% Man**

1. **He is the only sinless sacrifice.** Hebrews 4:15 NKJV For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as we are, **yet without sin.**

2. **He alone died to pay the price for our sin.** Isaiah 53:6 NKJV All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; **And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.**

2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV For He **made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us**, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

3. **Only His blood has been offered in heaven to make atonement.** Hebrews 9:12 NKJV Not with the blood of goats and calves, but **with His own blood** He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having **obtained eternal redemption.**

4. Let me offer you a brief summary of what Jesus did to accomplish our salvation.

- a. He laid aside the robes of His glory in heaven and came to earth.
- b. He became a man so that He could die for sin.
- c. He lived a sinless life so He could be the sacrifice without blemish.
- d. He allowed mere mortals to crucify Him.
- e. He agreed for the Father to lay the sin of the world upon Him.
- f. He suffered the break of fellowship with the Father caused by the sin of the world being placed on Him.
- g. He died for that sin.
- h. He was buried.

- i. He arose from the dead.
- j. He took His own blood to the heavenly Holy of Holies and offered it there to the Father to secure our eternal redemption.
- k. Now as our sympathetic High Priest and our Advocate, He intercedes on behalf of all who trust in Him so that their sin is forgiven and they are saved. Glory!

D. What confirmation do we have that Christ is the only way?

- 1. **Jesus is the only One with God's affirmation.** Luke 9:35 NKJV And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, **"This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"**
- 2. **Christ alone is the firstfruits of the resurrection.**
- 3. **Only Christ ascended back to heaven with angels testifying.**

III. HOW SALVATION COMES TO PEOPLE

A. Salvation comes as a gift.

Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; ***it is the gift of God***, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

- 1. **Grace is a gift.** Grace is God's unmerited favor. The English word grace provides a helpful acrostic. God's Riches at Christ's Expense.
- 2. **Faith is the gift of God also.**

B. God provided the grace through Christ's death upon the cross.

C. How does God provide the faith?

- 1. **Through the Word of God.** Romans 10:17 NKJV So then ***faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.***
- 2. **The Word is brought by preachers (not just clergy but all proclaimers).** Preach = Proclaim Romans 10:14-15 NKJV 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And ***how shall they hear without a preacher?*** 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ***"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"***
- 3. **What do they preach to bring them to faith? The above passage says, "The gospel!"**

D. What exactly is the gospel?

- 1. What the gospel is not:

- a. a mere invitation to follow Jesus
 - b. an invitation to turn your problems over to God
 - c. an invitation to come to God
 - d. an invitation to prosperity in this world
2. **What the gospel is:**
- a. It is good news that counters the bad news that we are all sinners.
 - b. It is described in **1 Corinthians 15:1-4 NKJV** **1** Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, **2** by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. **3** For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4** and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,
 - 1) **Christ died for our sins and was buried.**
 - 2) **He rose again on the third day.**
 - 3) **God offers forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life to all who trust Jesus as Savior and Lord (master).**

Mark 1:14-15 NKJV **14** Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, **15** and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. **Repent, and believe in the gospel.**”

I so urge you to learn these three statements that contain the essence of the gospel. My learning to summarize the gospel in this way has been so freeing to me in witnessing to people because I have a confidence that I can tell them the gospel. I can tell them how to be saved.

I can use a tract if I want to, but I do not have to have a tract.

I can use a memorized presentation if I want to, but I don't have to.

I am free to share in any way I desire, because I know that I know the most important thing that has to be shared.

When I began to learn Portuguese for the sake of furthering my ministry in Brazil, I confess to you that the first things I learned how to say was “black coffee” café preto o café puro and “without cheese” sem queijo, because I do not like to eat cheese.

But having mastered the critical words to sustain life with food and drink, the first sentences I learned how to say were these three sentences that explain the gospel.

Learn them. They will free you to witness more often.

E. As we saw when we studied the Holy Spirit, when the gospel is preached, the Holy Spirit convicts lost people

1. **Of their sin**
2. **That Christ is the only way to forgiveness and righteousness**
3. **Of the certainty of judgment to come** John 16:8 NKJV **And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:**

F. When the gospel is preached,

- **and the Holy Spirit is convicting,**
 - **and God is giving faith,**
 - **then a person has the opportunity to receive salvation**
 - **by trusting Jesus as his Lord and Savior.**
1. **Believe means “trust,” to lean totally upon.** John 3:16-18 NKJV **16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him** should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 “**He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already,** because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**
 2. **A person must trust Jesus as Lord.** Acts 16:31 NKJV **So they said, “Believe on the **Lord** Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”**

Acts 20:21 NKJV **testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our **Lord** Jesus Christ.**

Romans 10:9-10 NKJV **9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**

Romans 10:13 NKJV **For “*whoever calls* on the name of the **LORD** shall be saved.”**

Let me be clear,

3. **Trusting Jesus as Lord involves a surrender of one's life to Jesus as the Lord, the master, the boss, the one who is in charge.**
 - a. **A person cannot trust Jesus merely as Savior without trusting Him as Lord, because He is both. You trust Jesus for who He is, or you do not trust Him at all.**
 - b. **Trusting Jesus does not mean perfectionism.**
 - c. **Trusting Jesus does not mean instant sanctification.**
 - d. **Trusting Jesus does mean a willingness to yield to Him and a desire to obey Him.**
4. **A very important note: A person cannot receive salvation just any time he chooses. The Holy Spirit must be convicting him, and God must be giving faith to the person. Remember, salvation is the gift of God, not of the works of man. John 6:44 NKJV No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.**
5. **The gift must be received.**