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How Saved Are We? - posted by ServantJohn (), on: 2008/10/27 18:15

How Saved Are We?

The American Church at the end of the twentieth century is experiencing a crisis. For years we have preached a cheap gospel and peddled a soft Savior. We have taught salvation without self-denial and the crown without the cross. We have catered to the unsaved and compromised with the world. Now we are paying the price.

Our "instant salvation" message has dishonored God and deluded men. Our faulty seeds have produced a flaky harvest. What a pitiful crop we are reaping!

As American "believers" we:
 spend hours watching television but minutes watching in prayer;
 are hungry for the sports page but have little taste for the Word;
 spend more money on pet food than on foreign missions;
 love to feast but hate to fast;
 welcome God's blessing but are wary of His burdens.

Is this what Jesus died for? Is this our "new life" in Him?

Stop for a moment and think:

Anyone who spends more time playing video games than seeking God in prayer has no right to call Jesus Lord.

Anyone who takes delight in today's perverted soap operas is serving another god.

Anyone who cannot die to sports for a season is worshiping idols.

"If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him... because friendship with the world is hatred toward God" (1 John 2:15; James 4:4).

In reality, whose friends are we?

It's time for some serious soul searching. What kind of "born again" experience have we had if it calls for almost no personal sacrifice, produces virtually no separation from the world, and breeds practically no hatred of sin? How can we claim to be "born from above"? Where is the evidence of our "new nature"?

We call ourselves "citizens of heaven" - yet our hearts are caught up in earthly treasures. We sing, "We're the people of God" - but we are entertained by the worst of the devil's children. We claim to be "dead to the world" - yet we are more interested in temporal fashions than in eternal souls. Something is wrong with our "salvation" experience! Bad fruits mean bad roots.

We say, "Just confess Jesus as Lord and you're in!"

He says, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven but only he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

We say, "Just pray this prayer and it's done!"

He says, "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me" (Luke 9:23)

We say, "Just come to the altar. It will only take a minute!"

He says, "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to" (Luke 13:24). Who do you think is right?

Jesus made it painfully clear to the large crowd who were traveling with Him:

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brother and sisters - yes, even his own life - he cannot be My disciple."

"Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple."

"Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26,27,33)

Who do we think we're fooling? It's time to count the cost!

Maybe we have truly, "come to Jesus"; but can we say we are following Him? Maybe we have believed the "Good News"; but are we daily carrying our crosses? Jesus commanded us to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). Maybe we need to become disciples first.

Yes, salvation is "by grace through faith," and we can add nothing to it. But it is the grace of God that "teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age" (Titus 2:11-12). And true faith is known by what it does, since "faith without deeds is useless" (James 2:20).

Paul warned the Ephesians not to let anyone deceive them with empty words. "Of this you can be sure," he said. "No immoral, impure or greedy person - such a man is an idolater - has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Ephesians 5:5). Do we think that God's standard has changed? Do "carnal Christians" get to carnal heaven? No. "Without holiness no one will see the Lord.... Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.... You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (Hebrews 12:14; Galatians 5:24; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). We must come to terms with these words!

Discipleship is not optional. Neither is it cheap. Peter said, Lord, "we have left everything to follow You!" (Mark 10:28). What have we left to follow Him? "Every material gift increases its value if it comes not from money you can dispense with, but from the sacrifice of something you would love to have" (Richard Wurmbrand). How much have we really given for Him?

Johanna Veenstra went as a single woman missionary to Africa in 1920. She lived in a primitive hut with dirt floors, plagued with white ants and rats. "When having my evening meal," she reported, "Here were those in swarms, sticking fast in hand, dropping in the food - and I concluded a plague was upon us. There was no 'shutting' them out because in these native huts we have no ceiling." But there were no complaints from her lips; and in spite of very little initial success, she had no second thought. "There has never been a single regret that I left the 'bright lights and gay life' of New York City, and came to this dark corner of his vineyard. There has been no sacrifice, because the Lord Jesus Himself is my constant companion."

Like the disciples of old, she was saved.

What about us? How saved are we?

-Michael Brown

Re: How Saved Are We? - posted by tjservant (), on: 2008/10/27 18:47

Thanks for posting this and...Welcome to SI!!!

Grace and peace

Re: - posted by ServantJohn (), on: 2008/10/27 20:54

Thanks for the warm welcome. I hope the message will be edifying to the body of Christ and cause us to make our "calling and election sure".

God be with you!

John

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2008/10/27 21:24

Welcome brother!!

I appreciate your post!!

Mike

Re: How Saved Are We? - posted by itg3712 (), on: 2008/10/28 7:25

For over thirty years, I've been lamenting the theology of "ask Jesus into your heart" and never doubt that you were instantly saved.

I've been hesitant to speak because I knew that raising doubts about it would be "rocking the boat" of popular evangelicalism. I'm glad to see others now speaking against this doctrine of "salvation by easy believism" and in favor of recognizing the need for Almighty God to do a supernatural work of regeneration.

I'm feeling neglectful that I didn't say more sooner.