

Articles and Sermons :: What is Salvation?**What is Salvation? - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/3/27 23:47**

What is Salvation?

by Jimmy Humphrey

What is salvation? What does it mean to be saved? How do you get saved? Is it possible to lose your salvation? These are all great questions that every Christian should ask, and seek to answer.

But with that said, I believe we can often get too technical when trying to answer these questions. Our answers to such questions are often so mechanical, that whatever salvation is, we are often guilty of often reducing it to a mere mathematical equation, and then simply preaching that equation as if the equation itself were the gospel message. And in doing such, we rob the gospel of its saving power, and lose forever those whom we are preaching to.

What is the nice, evangelical, classic, textbook definition of salvation? Salvation is the free gift of God in His grace, whereby He pardons guilty sinners of their crimes. In this pardon, God shows mercy towards people who deserve to be punished for their sins, because the sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ, received their punishment on the cross, and died in their place. Because of this, the sinner can now be declared to be righteous before God on the basis of faith, not because of anything they did to deserve that status, but because of what Jesus did for them on the cross.

That's good stuff no doubt. It will even preach. It is something we need to understand and teach to others. It is after all, what the Scriptures teach from cover to cover. And much heretical teaching has crept into the Church over the years because of the inability of people to properly understand the "plan of salvation." But with that said, a dead orthodoxy has been introduced because, time and time again, and the gospel message is reduced to a mere formula, with the result that nobody is ever saved... or worse, somebody is lead to believe they are saved because they somehow showed mental agreement to a formula, and prayed a prayer in response to agreeing with a formula.

Although I am in total agreement with the classic definition of salvation, I would like the propose in this essay a definition, that while less scientific, perhaps has a little more bite to it. To do that though, I want to look at a verse that, so far as I know, has never been used by anybody to define what salvation is. It is never used, because it doesn't have all the usual buzzwords associated with verses used to support God's plan of salvation. This might make a professor in seminary scream, but that's ok, because I haven't turned a paper into a seminary professor in about three or four years, and have no immediate plans on doing so in the near future.

Quote:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. (Matthew 23:37; NASB)

In recent months, I have really come to like this verse, and think it is one of the best verses one could select in trying to understand the essence of what it means to be saved. No, this passage does not use words like grace, mercy, faith, forgiveness, or even saved. But that's ok, it still works just the same. Here, in this verse, Jesus stands looking at Jerusalem, and laments over its fallen spiritual condition. The Lord has done everything He can to speak to His people, and bring them to a saving knowledge of Him. He has sent prophet after prophet to speak to them, only to see prophet after prophet stoned to death. The Lord then invokes a powerful image of what God has been trying to do with His people. Like a hen who gathers her chicks under her wings, the Lord has tried to gather His people unto Him, but sadly, they have been unwilling.

Based on this verse, what can we conclude salvation is? Salvation is when God gathers you to Him, like a hen does her chicks. Or to be more blunt, salvation is when Jesus Christ takes a hold of you and your life. That is ultimately what the Lord was after in regard to His people in this verse, was it not? God wanted to take hold of His people, and gather them unto Him. But sadly, His people didn't want anything to do with that. Instead of allowing God to take hold of their lives, the

y stoned the prophets God sent to them.

Yes, in saying this, I still agree with the classic evangelical definition of salvation. Salvation is still all that stuff. But, having personally experienced the salvation of the Lord, whereby He has forgiven me of my sins because of what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross, as I have grown in my faith over the past decade, I have come to realize that, "Jesus taking hold of my life," is ultimately what that plan of salvation looks like. That is, when the plan is actually applied to a real life person, and not merely kept in a theological laboratory. This too, is the clear teaching of Scripture, from cover to cover.

And if we would understand salvation in these terms, then I believe controversial questions over whether a Christian can lose their salvation become moot, if not altogether irrelevant. In salvation, God has taken a hold of you. Anybody who God has not taken hold of and gathered unto Him, therefore, is not saved. It matters not if they've sincerely prayed a sinners' prayer, or claim to have been born again sometime in the past. What matters is if Jesus Christ has taken a hold of their life.

For if He has taken hold of their life, then the proof of that will ultimately be in the pudding. For if the Lord had taken hold of the Jews, and gathered them unto Himself, then they would not have stoned the prophets sent to them time and time again, and Jesus would have had no reason to lament over their spiritual condition. But, because they continued to do such, it is evident the Lord had not taken hold of their lives, and as a result, Christ had a reason to lament for Jerusalem. For, if He had taken hold of them, a supernatural change would have come to their lives, and they would not continue to stone the prophets God sent to them.

For ultimately, when God does take a hold of our lives, a supernatural transformation occurs, one that dominates who we are, and how we live our lives. The Lord cannot take a hold of us, and we remain who we once were. And how could we? Jesus died for our sins, forgave us our debt, declared us righteous, and washed us of the stain that colored our life. He broke the power of sin once had over our lives, and freed us from its tyranny. Life simply cannot be the same after that, because God has done all these things to us and for us. He has caused us to be born again, to pass from death to life, and from walking in darkness to walking in light. He bought us with a price, with the result that we are no longer our own, but His. And in our salvation, He has taken hold our lives, and gathered us unto Him, as a hen does her chicks.

The question is not, "Have you been saved?" Rather, the question is, "Has Jesus Christ taken a hold of your life?" If He has, then you are saved. If He has not, then you need to be.

Re: What is Salvation?, on: 2010/3/28 3:28

How can we know whether it really has been Jesus taking hold of our lives rather than the moral improvement of living in a religious environment and that the changes that come through being more responsible would have been realised if I had say, joined the Jehovah's Witnesses instead? They have the same stories of changed lives and get up and witness to each other about them.

No, to be saved means more than this - in simple terms it means that we have been saved from sin through baptism and not just saved from the guilt of it, which would make God unholy Himself if He allowed His people to continue in sin. Everyone knows when we have been saved because they see a person in front of them who does not sin. The better question is, do the people around me say I have been saved?

Re: What is Salvation? - posted by Lysa (), on: 2010/3/28 7:07

Quote:
-----Everyone knows when we have been saved because they see a person in front of them who does not sin.

To me, this is so legalistic because the Word says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John 1:8

Quote:
-----The better question is, do the people around me say I have been saved?

Brenda, I'm not picking on you but what???? Are you saying that the people around us are to be the litmus test by which

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How do we judge if we are saved or not?? I need some scripture references for that one! (friendly grin) Because I see passing the test THROUGH others as legalistic, because people's whims are as feeble as their emotions.

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. (1 John 3.14) (1 John 5.2)

And I lovingly remind you of all the people that so called loved Jesus, (loved the only man who walked the earth and NEVER sinned - didn't help him any, did it?), these people who loved getting healed, loved hearing the gospel preached to them; these were the exact same people that yelled "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

And finally, another loving addition is to remember the pharisees... that we can do everything perfect on the outside that people see and be so commended by men only to be eaten up by lust or whatever in our mind (where no one sees) and still be guilty before God.

(paraphrased) It's not he who man recommends but he who God recommends! (2 Cor 10:18)

God bless you sister!

(edited to correct chapter and english)

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/3/28 7:48

Quote:

No, to be saved means more than this - in simple terms it means that we have been saved from sin through baptism and not just saved from the guilt of it, which would make God unholy Himself if He allowed His people to continue in sin. Everyone knows when we have been saved because they see a person in front of them who does not sin. The better question is, do the people around me say I have been saved?

I would encourage you to re-read the last several paragraphs of my essay. I don't talk about being merely saved from the guilt of sin. I talk about being saved from the power and tyranny of sin in our lives as well.

Re: , on: 2010/3/28 8:37

KJ

Yes but not from the presence of sin.

Re: , on: 2010/3/28 8:39

Lysa

Read my thread on 1John for the answer.

No I did not mean it to be the first test or the only test. But it is an important factor.

God bless you too

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/3/28 12:22

Quote:

Yes but not from the presence of sin.

So long as you and I have flesh in this life, the presence of sin will continue to exist in us. That doesn't mean we have to sin, or live in sin. We can live a victorious life, free from the power of sin. But, that doesn't undo the presence of our carnal sinful nature, which is always trying to lure us back, and entangle us in the deceitful web of sin. Instead of living according to our carnal, sinful nature, we need to live now by the new spiritual nature we have been given in regeneration.

Re: , on: 2010/3/28 12:33

KJ

Well we obviously disagree about this. I don't think your position is scriptural as it says in Romans 6:6 that the old man is destroyed not subdued.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/3/28 12:37

We do disagree. It does not say that it was destroyed, it says it was killed. Big difference. Which is why we must be careful, according to Romans 6:12, to not let sin revive in us, and reign in our mortal bodies, so that we obey its lusts. If the sin nature has been eradicated, there is no chance such a thing can happen. Which is why we must continually mortify our sinful nature, and instead, live by the Spirit. For if we live by the Spirit, we will put to death our sinful desires.

Re: , on: 2010/3/28 12:47

Dead is dead KJ though it can come back to life, we can always get back down from the cross but in its position as dead, it is out of action and is kept out of action through faith not works. The new nature does not include unintentional sin. Purity of heart is that exactly - no impure thoughts.

Of course - you are going to go by your experience.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/3/28 12:59

Quote:

Dead is dead KJ though it can come back to life, we can always get back down from the cross but in its position as dead, it is out of action and is kept out of action through faith not works.

I totally agree with that. But that does not change the fact we still have a sinful nature in our flesh, even if it has been crucified with Christ.

Quote:

Of course - you are going to go by your experience.

Whenever possible, I try to go simply by Scripture. But, when Scripture and my experience agree, I like that too.

Re: , on: 2010/3/28 13:02

So why not say we have been delivered from the presence of sin? Are you?

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/3/28 13:07

Quote:

So why not say we have been delivered from the presence of sin? Are you?

I am forgiven of my sins, cleansed of my sin, and released from the power of my sin. But though I am not living in any sin (that I'm aware of), I still recognize that though my sin nature has been crucified with Christ, and is dead, I still recognize its presence is there. I am aware of its existence anytime I am tempted.

Re: , on: 2010/3/28 13:18

But if you recognise its presence it is not dead. You might feel it is dead but your actual experience of it is that it is still around - and when tempted you feel it definitely. That is not the testimony of many who said it is dead and the new life is one of behaving according to one's nature. The temptation in that state is not of sin but of acting from the natural part, the human part which is not the sin nature. This is where denial of self comes in - way past temptation of sin is concerned. When one is crucified one no longer is tempted by sin but there is temptation agreed.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/3/28 13:22

Quote:

But if you recognise its presence it is not dead.

That is totally illogical. I can go to a funeral home and see dead people are still there, even though they are dead.

Quote:

That is not the testimony of many who said it is dead and the new life is one of behaving according to one's nature.

I live according to my new nature, not my old. But I still recognize my old nature, though dead, is still there.

Quote:

When one is crucified one no longer is tempted by sin but there is temptation agreed.

When I am tempted, I am tempted by the lusts of my flesh to sin. That is the sin nature at work, trying to find a place to reign in me. But I don't have to let it reign. But because it is there, it has a place to reign, should I allow it to do so.

Re: , on: 2010/3/28 13:38

So our sanctification depends on whether we recognise sin or not in order to avoid it?

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/3/28 13:41

Quote:

So our sanctification depends on whether we recognise sin or not in order to avoid it?

Romans 6:11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Paul seemed to think it was important for us to recognize the sanctifying work Christ accomplished in us. He spent an entire chapter of Romans asking us to recognize what was accomplished in our salvation, so that we could walk in it.

Re: , on: 2010/3/28 13:47

What you are describing is not the freedom that Christ came to give us - if we are constantly watching. Freedom is just acting according to our nature knowing that we will not sin because Christ will keep us from falling (Jude)

To sin after we are saved from it is very serious

1Cor 3:16-17

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/3/28 13:52

Quote:

What you are describing is not the freedom that Christ came to give us - if we are constantly watching.

Who said anything about constantly watching? I seek to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit on a continually basis. If I set my mind on the Spirit, I will live. But if I set my mind on the flesh, I will die. Daily, temptation does come up, but when it does, God has equipped me to deal with it, having put on the full armor of God. We must nurture our new nature.

Quote:

To sin after we are saved from it is very serious

No doubt. But when it happens, we must deal with it appropriately.

Re: , on: 2010/3/28 13:57

Well Jim all I can say is that your experience of daily temptation to sin and polluting the temple although still being allowed to be in it is not what myself and others understand by holiness.

What you describe is little more than what God's people had under the old order.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/3/28 14:02

Quote:

Well Jim all I can say is that your experience of daily temptation to sin and polluting the temple although still being allowed to be in it is not what myself and others understand by holiness.

oh.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2010/3/28 14:02

Paul spoke of crucifying the flesh after conversion, God killed our old man with christ on the cross, and yet we daily need to take up the cross, crucify the flesh. By Gods grace we have a work to do. I always liked the illustration of the old man that was sitting in our hearts throne, and every time sin, the world, and the flesh came knocking on the door, the old man very happy would rush to the door and open, God killed this man, and a new man was put on the throne, and he will keep the door shut, but sometimes he may be weak, maybe have not eaten the food properly, or was not on guard, so when they come knocking even tho he does not want to open he is not strong enough to hold them out.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/3/28 14:06

Whatever the case about all these things, as I said in the article at the beginning of this thread... salvation is when Jesus Christ takes a hold of you and your life. For there is a reality in these things.

Re: , on: 2010/3/28 14:07

These are very low views of what holiness is. How about speaking of the positive side - like victorious living despite circumstances ie not being defeated, hearing Christ speak intimately and having His mind and having the promises manifested in our lives.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/3/28 14:12

Well... we could speak about those things if you wish. But, that is probably better for another thread, as the purpose of this one was to look at our definition of salvation. No doubt, we will experience those things, when Jesus Christ takes a hold of our lives.

Re: What is Salvation? - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2010/3/28 14:18

Quote:
-----For ultimately, when God does take a hold of our lives, a supernatural transformation occurs, one that dominates who we are, and how we live our lives.

I think here is a wonderful truth, whether we are weslyan holiness doctrine in our understanding or reformed or whatever, this is the truth, when God comes, and lay hold of us, the transformation begins. And holiness is nothing other than Christlikeness when it comes down to it. This is the end that we have been predestined towards. And slowly or faster sometimes perhaps, he will work in us changing us more and more.

Thank you brother for the article. You have shared much good lately!

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/3/28 14:24

Quote:

And holiness is nothing other than Christlikeness when it comes down to it.

Amen.