

THE KNOWLEDGE AND JOY OF SALVATION

Of course you know that once upon a time a man by the name of Jonah spent three days and three nights in the belly of a big fish. "Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly." "Salvation is of the Lord." Jonah 2:1 and 10. Jonah was sure that no one but almighty God could save him from his awful predicament. "Salvation is of the Lord."

The whole world today is full of trouble and sorrow. All men everywhere should agree with Paul's statement or question, "hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" O, that every human being would cry out with Jonah, "salvation is of the Lord." Today how true are the words uttered more than nineteen hundred years ago, "a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." John 3:27. Every man on this earth should lift up his head to heaven and thank God for the truth of Romans 6:23, "the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." But he should do more than thank God. He should, by simple faith, receive that free gift by receiving the Lord Jesus as his own individual, personal Saviour. Hear the wonderful words of that Saviour, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3.

Perhaps you have heard the testimony of the simple but wise lad after he had heard a gospel message on John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoso, ever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The lad thus summed it up: "God said it; Christ did it; I believe it; that settles it."

We have undoubtedly been greatly impressed with the statement in Titus 1:2; "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began." God cannot lie. Eternal life is God's free gift for receivers. And of course with this profound and glorious Divine truth we link the good news of II Timothy 1:9 and 10: "God, Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel."

God calls sinners to trust and rest in Christ's perfect work.

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, The Man Christ Jesus Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." I Timothy 2:3 to 6.

Has any servant of the Lord testified this saving message to you? Perhaps you have heard it many times, but you have ignored or repudiated it. This is very good news for all men, women and children. As an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ, may I beseech you, persuade you, plead with you to hear this all-important truth, to consider it seriously and diligently, and to believe it for yourself even unto the saving of your precious soul? Surely it is one thing to know that Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary to be the Saviour of the world; but it is quite a different thing for you to know that He is your personal Saviour. Salvation is very personal. Are you saved? Will you believe this Divine truth, a message from the holy God in heaven to unholy, ungodly sinners on earth: "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath be, foreordained that we should walk in them?"

Ephesians 2:8 to 10. And note this blessed truth in the same chapter: "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Ephesians 2:13.

Almost every person will say, "I am a sinner." But so few are sufficiently exercised concerning their precarious spiritual state to say, "I am a lost sinner." God's Word plainly states that no unrighteous man shall inherit the kingdom of God. The same Word plainly declares, "There is none righteous, no not one." But over against this sad news God's Word declares some good news for sinners; for God's Word tells plainly how an unrighteous, lost sinner can be saved and become righteous.

We learn, in I Corinthians 1:30, that Jesus Christ is the believing sinner's righteousness, holiness and redemption. We learn, in Ephesians 2:14, that Jesus Christ is the believer's peace. We learn, in I Timothy 1:1, that Jesus Christ is the believer's hope. We learn, in Colossians 3:3 and 4, that Jesus Christ is the believer's life. We learn, in Colossians 2:10, that the believer is complete in Christ. We learn, in Ephesians 1:3, that the believer is blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. We read, in Acts 13:39, that believers are justified from all things through Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God. How wonderful to stand in the presence of the Holy God with all our sins pardoned, forever put away, and as though we had never committed one sin! This is good news; the gospel. This is the grace of God. This is what the precious shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ does for the guilty, condemned sinner when that sinner, by simple faith, receives the Lord Jesus Christ as his own personal Saviour.

In II Corinthians 5:21 we read that God made Jesus Christ, on the cross, to be sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. We read, in Romans 4:4 and 5, that ungodly sinners can be justified by faith without working for salvation. Believers should abound in good works after they are saved by grace through faith in the good work of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Romans 10:9 and 10.

If righteousness could be gained by works or religion, then Christ died in vain. Galatians 2:21. For many centuries man, under the law, was a miserable failure. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Romans 10:4. Last night I heard a very interesting conversation between two well-dressed, intelligent-looking men. Among other remarks, one said to the other, "I really believe religion is a good thing for a man, if he doesn't get too much of it." The other replied, "Not for me. Morality is a splendid thing; but I balk when it comes to religion." Of course, the question that came to my mind was, "just how much religion is too much, or how much is too little, or how much is just right?" Then of course, my heart went out in sympathy and pity to both of them, a little bit more for the man who was satisfied with his own morality. He should read Isaiah 64:6 and Ezekiel 33:13 and Romans 3:19 and Romans 8:8 and Romans 4:4 and Romans 7:18 to 24. In these Scriptures we learn how utterly futile are man's best endeavors and religious labors to even help to save him. When a lost sinner turns to religion, instead of to Christ, for pardon and salvation, he is twice dead, plucked up by the roots, and then he needs to be saved from religion as well as from sin. In Romans 3:24 to 26 we read that because of the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who was both God and man, God can be both just and merciful in His dealings with the believing sinner. He can be just and the justifier of the believer, and can declare him righteous without a cause, by His grace. God is a great Giver. Man is a poor receiver. Man is incurably religious, and Satan is accused of the crime of deceiving the whole world. He deceives the religious, unsaved man, causing him to believe that if he needs Christ at all, it is as a helper and a teacher, but not as the Saviour. Christ's once-for-

all sacrifice on the cross is man's one and only hope. If we are to reach God's heaven, we must come to God in God's way, by Christ and Calvary.

It is well for every saved person to become identified with some group of believers and assemble regularly for worship and hear the Word of God expounded, but no one is saved by "joining the church." Salvation is of the Lord; and by grace; the gift of God. Before God will accept a person's work, that person must first be the workmanship of God. Ephesians 2:10.

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Hear these two wonderful verses of Scripture:

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life." I John 5:13.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13.

How sad to know that many conscientious, sincere religious people feel satisfied and secure, although they are headed for a Christless and hopeless eternity, because they have never been regenerated by faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ. Christ, by His own blood, entered once into heaven, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Hebrews 9:12. It was this Christ Who said, "marvel not that I said unto you, ye must be born again." John 3:3 to 7.

It is likewise sad to know that there are many fearful saved people, who have not the assurance of their salvation. They are trusting in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, but they doubt and fear because of the wrong interpretation of some Scripture or because they think they have to supplement the perfect work of Christ, or because they are depending upon their feelings. No person and no thing can ever separate the believer from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:38 and 39. Every believer should be careful to maintain good works and should know that Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Titus 3:14 and 2:14. But no believer should trust in himself for salvation, but in the glorified Christ, Who is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God, through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:25.

God cannot lie. God will have all men to be saved. God's Word says, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may KNOW." God wants every believer to KNOW. "KNOW that he has eternal life." That is why it is so important to know that we are living in God's "grace" dispensation; that believers are saved by grace, and not by religion, nor by any mixture of religion with Christ and grace. If you are a believer, do not discredit or dishonor God by doubting. Endeavor each day, by God's grace and power, to walk worthy of the calling wherewith you are called, and thus be, have as becometh saints. But keep in mind the truth that you are not saved by behaving. You are saved by believing. Then you are to behave, because you believe. So far as the adults on this earth are concerned, there are just two classes, "dead sinners" and "living saints." When the dead sinner believes the gospel of grace he passes out of death into life and becomes a living saint.

If your trust is in the Lord Jesus Christ and you are relying upon Him and His redemptive work, say from your heart, with the lad, "God said it: Christ did it: I believe it: that settles it."

Now, concerning the joy of salvation, let us think of the five F's of salvation; The Fact; the Faith; the Fruit; the Feeling; the Future. The great fact is, that Jesus Christ, the God-man,

obtained eternal redemption for us. This salvation is appropriated by faith. "By grace are ye saved, through faith." The end of your faith is the salvation of your soul. I Peter 1:9 to 12. Christ said, "herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." John 15:8. Christians or saints are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus, unto good works which God before ordained that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10. Believers are told to rejoice because their names are written in heaven. They are to be filled with all joy and peace in believing. Then think of the glorious future, when Christ shall appear, we are going to appear with Him in glory. Colossians 3:3 and 4. So shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. I Thessalonians 4:17 and 18. Surely believers have a glorious future; eternal bliss and eternal glory, with the eternal Lord. Believers are to be rewarded for their labor of love. Believers are to receive crowns. Their labor in the Lord is not in vain. I Corinthians 15:58 and I Corinthians 3:11 to 16. Surely we have a wonderful and glorious future. Note Ephesians 2:7; "That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus."

While we are waiting for God's Son to come for us we are told to "rejoice in the Lord always . . . and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:4 to 7.

So we are to be filled with all joy and peace. How? In believing. Who is to fill us? The God of hope. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit Who is given unto us. Romans 5:1 to 5. By this indwelling Holy Spirit we are to abound in hope. We have a hope laid up in heaven. We are looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Titus 2:13. He is our hope. He is our peace. We are to experience eternal joy, because we are in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

Surely you have decided that you will receive God's free gift, eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.