

WHAT IT TAKES TO GET SAVED

By Pastor Arthur L. Watkins

Salvation is the most important subject in the Bible as far as sinners are concerned for without it we will never see God nor have our sins forgiven. Without salvation we cannot be saved from sin, hell and the wrath to come. Most reasonable people know they need salvation, but are confused as to how to get saved. Many people assume they can devise their own plan of salvation to suit their own tastes with God's approval.

In this country there are nearly three hundred different denominations and they all have their own plan of salvation and the plan differs from one denomination to the other. If you were to attend ten different denominational churches in your city you would probably hear ten different ways to get saved.

Like it or not, we cannot devise our own plan of salvation. We can't create a way to be saved and expect God to put His stamp of approval on it just because we are sincere. God has a plan and a way of salvation and unless you follow His plan you cannot be saved. You can't pick and choose the way you want to be saved. There is only one way to get saved and it's God's way and unless you get saved God's way, you will end up in hell.

God says it takes a certain kind of **Faith** to be saved; do you have that kind of Faith?

It takes a certain kind of **Grace** to be saved, have you been saved by that Grace?

It's a certain **Gospel** that saves, have you believed that Gospel?

It's a certain **Person** that saves, has that Person saved you?

It's a certain kind of **People** God saves, are you one of them?

THE FAITH THAT SAVES

Faith is absolutely necessary for salvation, for without faith, it is impossible to please God. But the faith it takes to get saved is not just any kind of faith. A person could have faith and still be lost, if he didn't have **saving faith**. What is saving faith? Saving faith is defined in Romans 4:5 which says:

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

According to this verse a person who has saving faith is one who does not work to be saved, but who believes only to be saved. The faith that saves is a faith free from works. True saving faith is **total faith** in Christ alone for

salvation. There are many people who have faith in Christ, but they are not saved because they don't have **total faith** in Christ alone to save them. They have faith in Christ, but they also have faith in *other things* in addition to Christ to save them.

For example; every Roman Catholic has faith in Christ. They believe in his virgin birth. They believe He is the Son of God. They believe that He died for sin, was buried and rose again from the dead. Their problem is, they do not believe that faith in Christ **alone** will save them. The Catholic Church teaches their members they must also take the 7 sacraments, keep the laws of the church, live a good life and then when they die they must go to purgatory to suffer for their sins, with hope they may get out one day. All Catholics are taught that salvation is obtained by faith and works and they are taught that faith alone in Christ will not save them.

There are also Protestant churches who preach salvation by faith and works. Many believe you must believe, be baptized for the remission of sins, live a good life and be faithful unto death to be saved. The Catholic and many Protestant Churches do not believe that faith alone in Christ will save you.

Let's be scripturally right about this: If you have faith in something in addition to Christ, you are still unsaved for God says when it comes to salvation there isn't but one thing He counts and it's faith, not works. Saving faith is total faith in Christ alone for salvation. It is not Christ and water baptism that saves. It is not Christ and the sacraments that save. It is not Christ and living a good life that saves. **It is faith in Christ alone that saves.**

In Romans chapter four God gives us an example of saving faith. The faith that saves is the kind of faith Abraham had. Romans 4:2-3 says:

For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Abraham was justified and declared righteous by simply believing what God said. In Genesis 15 God made a promise to Abraham about his children and Abraham believed what God said and God declared him righteous because he did.

Abraham is important to us today because God has singled him out as an example of true saving faith. In Romans 4:23-25 Paul wrote;

Now it was not written for his (Abraham) sake alone, that it

(Righteousness) was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

What was written about Abraham in time past applies to us today for we are justified the same way as Abraham.

Note these similarities:

As Abraham was justified by faith alone without works, so are we.

As he was justified without the Law, so are we.

As he was justified without water baptism or keeping the laws of some church, so are we.

As he was justified without taking one sacrament or joining a church, so are we.

The message we believe is different, but the principle is the same. The principle is faith alone in what God has said to us about His Son. God said He delivered Christ up on the Cross for our offenses and sins and raised Him again for our justification. If any man will believe this and this alone, God will save him. True saving faith is total faith in Christ alone for salvation, pardon and eternal life. It's when you place the salvation of your soul into His hands and take your hands off of it.

Read the following verses and notice what they say about faith and about works when it comes to being saved.

Romans 4:5 says; **But to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.**

Titus 3:5 says; **Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.**

2 Timothy 1:9 says; **God hath saved us, and called us with an 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.**

Romans 5:1 says; **Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Galatians 2:16 says; **Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in**

Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Romans 4:6 says; **David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.**

Acts 16:31 says; **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.**

When it comes to salvation the Bible is crystal clear; faith is the one and only requirement to be saved today. There is no work you must do and there is no sacrifice you must make to be saved. God did the work, you do the believing. God made the sacrifice, just believe on the sacrifice.

THE GRACE THAT SAVES

Did you know it is possible to believe in salvation by grace and still be lost? How is that possible? Because the grace that many folks believe in is the wrong kind of grace. Not just any kind of grace will save you. What is saving grace? In Ephesians 2:8-9 Paul defines saving grace.

He wrote: ***For 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.***

The grace that saves today is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. Men have always been saved by Grace, but the grace hasn't always been the gift of God. Grace is God bestowing favor, blessing and salvation upon someone, but the grace hasn't always been unmerited or unearned. God's grace can be found in both Testaments, but there are differences.

Under the Old Testament, grace was not received the same way it is under the New Testament. Old Testament Grace was obtained by *faith and works*.

Psalms 84:11 says: ***For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.***

According to this verse, under the Law God bestowed grace, glory, and favor upon those who *walked uprightly*. Grace was conditional upon the walk and behavior of the person God gave it to. If the person walked uprightly God was gracious unto him. If the person did not walk uprightly God withheld His Grace from him.

A good example of Old Testament Grace is the salvation of Noah. Noah was saved from the flood by grace for Genesis 6:8 says; **Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.** But why did Noah find grace in the eyes of the Lord when the rest of the world perished? The next verse tells us why. Genesis 6:9 says: **These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.** Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord because he walked uprightly, was a just man, perfect in his generations, and walked with God. Even though he did not live under the Old Testament Law the grace he was saved by is typical of all those saved under the Law of the Old Testament.

The grace many denominations preach today is Old Testament Grace. They all claim to be saved by grace, but they believe a person obtains the grace and favor of God today by their works and behavior. That kind of grace will not save you today. The grace that saves sinners today is the gift of God, not of works. True saving grace is unmerited and undeserved today and that's proven to be so by the ones He gives it to.

The Gentiles in Ephesus are good examples of New Testament Grace. They were saved by grace according to Ephesians 2:8, but what kind of people were they when God saved them? Were they like Noah? No! They were just the opposite. Here is what Paul says about them in Ephesians 2:1-2: **And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And according to Acts 19 they also **worshipped idols.****

These are the kind of people God is gracious to today. They did not earn, deserve, or merit the grace of God. God bestowed grace upon them freely and unconditionally in spite of their condition. There is no comparison between them and Noah. If they resembled anyone it was those God destroyed with the flood in Noah's day. Today, God is bestowing grace, favor and salvation upon men that in times past He destroyed.

Saving grace today is unmerited, unearned and undeserved. The reason God has made grace a gift today is so anybody can be saved, no matter

who or what they are. The grace of God has opened the door of salvation wide enough for any one to get saved, no matter how wicked or vile they may be. The apostle Paul is proof of this for when God saved him he said he was a blasphemer and a murderer. (1 Timothy 1:12)

THE GOSPEL THAT SAVES

Every church, denomination and cult in America professes to believe a gospel today, but many are still lost. Why? They believe the wrong one. You can believe in a gospel and still be lost, if the gospel you believe is the wrong one. The devil has a gospel for every taste, appeal, appetite, ego, religion and pocketbook. If you can't find a gospel you like, he will customize one especially for you.

There is only **one Gospel** that has the power to save you from sin and hell today. In Galatians 1:8-9 Paul wrote: ***But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than ye have received, let him be accursed.***

The only Gospel that has the power to save you from sin, hell and the wrath of God, is the one Paul preached. All other Gospels are false and those who preach them are accursed.

The Gospel that Paul preached is called the Gospel of the Grace of God according to Acts 20:24. There are four outstanding facts about Paul's Gospel.

(A.) *His Gospel declares that men are saved by Faith alone in the death and shed blood of Christ.*

See Rom. 4:5, Eph. 2:8-9, Tit. 3:5

(B.) *His Gospel declares that God forgives all sins and all sinners.* This means there is no unpardonable sins or sinners today. See Acts 13:39-39

(C.) *His Gospel declares that salvation is a present possession, not a future attainment.*

See 2 Tim. 1:9, Eph. 2:8, Tit. 3:5, Rom. 5:11.

(D.) *His Gospel declares that all believers are unconditionally and eternally secure in Christ.*

See Eph. 1:13, 4:40, 1 Cor. 1:8, 2 Cor. 5:5, Philp. 1:6

These are four of the most important facts about the Gospel of the Grace of God Paul preached. If you have believed this gospel you will believe these four facts. And if you do not believe them, you have not believed Paul's Gospel, and you are either lost, or in a state of confusion like the Galatians. Let's be clear about this issue so there will be no confusion. Any man who believes works are necessary to gain or keep salvation has believed the wrong Gospel.

Any man who believes there are unpardonable sins or sinners God cannot pardon today has believed the wrong Gospel.

Any man who believes salvation is a future reward and not a present possession has believed the wrong gospel.

Any man, who believes you can lose your salvation and must do certain works to keep it, has believed the wrong gospel.

You can't pick and choose what parts of the Gospel you want to believe and reject the rest. Paul's Gospel is made up of the sum total of its parts. His Gospel declares these four facts and if you refuse to believe them, you have refused to believe the Gospel as far as God is concerned.

It Makes a Difference What You Believe

What you believe will determine where you will spend eternity. When it comes to salvation, sincerity doesn't count, **accuracy does**. There are millions of people who sincerely believe all kinds of gospels, but they are lost because they have believed the wrong gospel. The most important thing you can do in this life is to find out what the true Gospel is and then believe it. It's the only hope you have of escaping hell and the wrath of God.

THE PERSON THAT SAVES

Ephesians 1:12-13 says: ***That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.***

When the Ephesians believed the Gospel ***they trusted in Christ***. They not only believed the message of the Gospel, but they put their trust in the One the message told them about. There is a difference between believing the *message* of the Gospel and *trusting* in Christ. Just believing the Gospel message will not save you, for it's not the message that saves, it's the person behind the message who saves.

Salvation is not in words, messages, or creeds, but in a **PERSON**. There are multitudes who believe the gospel message. They can even quote 1

Cor.15:3-4, but they are still lost because they have not fully trusted in Christ alone to save them. I could tell people what the gospel was many years before I got saved. Just because you have memorized and can quote 1 Cor.15:3-4 does not mean you are saved.

Salvation is not in knowledge, study, or your ability to quote 1 Cor.15:3-4. Salvation is in a person and you must have that person living in you to be saved. 1 John 5:11-13 says; ***And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.***

Those who have life have it because they have the Son of God living in them. Salvation is not in creeds, confessions, quotations, but in the man Jesus Christ. You must be in him and he must be in you to be saved.

The question is: Do you have the Son? Are you in the Son and does the Son of God live in you? Only those who have the Son have life. When did you receive the Son? When did he take up residence in you? When did you pass from death to life? When did you come to an end to yourself and receive Christ as your Savior and Lord? When did you put all of your trust in Christ alone to save you? Remember, salvation is not in things, creeds, messages, words, or verses, but in a person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Be Sure Of Your Salvation

Do you know when you were born? Can you remember when you were married? If you can remember when these events happened in your life, can you remember a time in your life when you as a lost sinner trusted Christ alone to save you? When did you receive Christ as your savior? When did Christ save you from sin and hell? If you can't remember, then you could be still lost.

If salvation is the most important event in a person's life, how could a person be saved and not know a time when he or she got saved? I've never known a person who was truly saved who could not tell you *how* and *when* they got saved. If you can't point to a time in your life when you got saved, more than likely you're not. And if I were you, I would not rest until I got this matter settled.

THE PEOPLE GOD SAVES

Contrary to popular opinion, God does not save just anybody. There is a select group of people God saves. They are found in Romans 5:6-10 which

says: ***For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.***

In Mark 2:17 Jesus said that He did not come to call the righteous, but ***sinners*** to repentance. Luke 19:10 says; ***For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.***

According to these verses, God saves sinners, the ungodly, the lost and His enemies. And unless a person admits they are one of them, God cannot save them. Contrary to what most people think, God saves bad people, He saves sinners, He saves His enemies, He saves ungodly people and lost people. If you are willing to admit before God that you are an ungodly sinner who deserves hell there is hope for you because that's the kind of people God saves.

When it comes to salvation the worst thing a person can do is to deny they are a lost sinner who deserves hell. God cannot save anyone who denies they are lost sinners. Hell is filled up with people who were too proud to own up to the fact that they were ungodly, lost sinners. Pride keeps people from being saved. That is why the Bible says: *that pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall*. People are so proud that they would rather go to hell than to own up to the fact that they are ungodly lost sinners.

The best thing you can do in this life is to admit you are what God says you are; an ungodly sinner who deserves hell. Once you take that step the rest is easy. The next step is to believe with all your heart that on the cross Christ suffered, bled and died for all of your sins and was raised again for your justification. And when you believe it, put all of your trust in Jesus Christ to save you and keep you saved. Call on the Lord in prayer and ask Him to save you for God has promised that; ***whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.***

The night that I got saved I knew two things; That I was a sinner who deserved hell and that Christ had died for my sins. That night in November 1966, I put my total faith and trust in Christ's death and shed blood to save me. And when I believed on Him I called on the Lord and asked Him to save me, and He did. God will save any man today the same way.

Don't let the Devil drag you into hell to suffer forever for your sins when Christ has already paid for them. Right now, where you are, as you are, ask

the Lord to save you and believe with all your heart that Christ died and paid for all your sins and was raised again for your justification. God help you to believe and call today.