



LESSON TWELVE - SALVATION IS A PROCESS

Text: Hebrews 6:1-2
2 Corinthians 1: 9-10

Introduction

We are now returning to the very beginning of this series of lessons. First of all this is a review, but secondly we will now begin to tie all that we have learned together to get a complete picture of “Salvation as a Process”. Salvation may seem instantaneous to many because a genuine miracle may happen in a life that is extraordinary. Paul had a meeting with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3). A light shone from heaven and Jesus spoke to Saul – “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me.” The light blinded him and he fell to the earth. However, that was not Paul’s salvation. I know that many Christians can point to a time when the Spirit of God spoke forcibly to them – or an earthquake, or a miraculous healing, or some other event that was dynamic and could be said to give an immediate change of direction. Some call that “salvation”. Some might say – “God spoke to me and I was saved.” Or “I accepted Jesus and he changed my heart that night.” Or “He /She accepted the Lord while on their death-bed, and they were saved.”

Sadly, many will deceive themselves believing that this moment in time was complete salvation. Others will be told that what happened to them the moment they believed in Jesus Christ was salvation. One very common scripture that some will use is Romans 8:16 which reads, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” The interpretation by most – “The Holy Spirit tells me I’m saved because I can feel him in my spirit.”

If all that a person received was one miraculous incident in their life, as life changing as it is, to point to and to say – that was when God saved me – it would be a wonderful event, if indeed that

were all there was to salvation. But there are many more who never had a near death experience, or who were never in a fox hole, or who never had a heavenly vision. Should we conclude that they did not have a “salvation experience” if they did not have that kind of miracle, awakening, or heavenly vision?

What really is salvation then? It is a changed life, brought about by faith both in God and in His Word, in which the power of God working through the Word of God makes us new creatures, and then continues to keep us by this same power of God working through the Word of God.

This definition assumes that there are three “must haves” in order to be saved:

- Faith
- The Word of God
- The Power of God

Not one of these can be absent and there be a true salvation.

Faith, the Word of God, and the Power of God

Everything that has to do with salvation requires that faith exist in the heart of a person being saved. But so many have taught that all a person has to do is have faith in Jesus Christ. But what people are being taught is to believe in Jesus as a person, or believe in Jesus as historical figure – in simple terms to believe that Jesus exists. This is called “mental assent”. Like so many – they believe that God exist. “There is a God.” Saving faith, however, is not simply believing in a historical Jesus – we are asked to believe in two things:

- The “works” of Jesus Christ (his power, miracles, death, burial, and resurrection - here we have the “power of God”)



- The “words” of Jesus Christ (his commandments, teachings, instructions) – and here we have the “word of God”

It is impossible to be saved therefore without faith coming from the “Word of God” which gives us both his “works” and his “words”. Believing in his “works” alone would be like us trying to be saved by our “works” alone.

Why couldn't I be saved just by reading my Bible

As I mentioned, salvation takes both the “Word of God”, and the “Power of God”. Salvation does not just “leap” out of the pages of the Bible and save you. First of all, God said that it required the preaching of God’s Word:

1 Corinthians 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Romans 10:13-17 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 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? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Whether a person wants to believe it or not, God calls men and anoints them to the ministry. Not everyone is a preacher, nor should everyone try to be a preacher. Just speaking words out of the Bible is not going to be effective unless the “anointing” or power of God resides in the ministry that is doing the preaching. Satan can quote scripture and the Lord used a donkey to speak. But the key in Romans 10:15 is “how shall they preach except they be sent?” This is essentially where the “power of God” comes when it comes to the preaching of God’s word. It is through the anointing that God gives to those that preach the gospel. God honors that calling with the “power” of anointing. Now God does anoint testimony, he anoints prophecy, and he gives gifts of the spirit for other works of ministry, but the Bible plainly states that God required preaching and He required the kind of faith that comes through preaching for salvation. Can a person be saved without the church or without the ministry of God’s Word? The truth is NO.

Hosea 12:13 And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.

Hebrews 10:24-27: And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.



Which comes first -- believing in the Word of God or the Power of God

In one sense, one might believe in the power of God before he ever hears the word of God (Romans 1:20). But for salvation purposes, one must hear and believe the “Word of God” before he /she can be saved by the “power of God”. Since faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God – what is preached will determine what one will believe.

- Often times one will hear of Jesus’ healing power first – they get healed and then they want to know how to follow Jesus. When the disciples preached about Jesus’ healing power – they were preaching the “word of God”
- Or someone may hear about Jesus’ power to provide food and raiment and believe the Lord for miracles – now that is not salvation – but it is faith in the power of God
- But the power to save requires us to hear about and believe in the Lord’s power:
 - Over sin and death (through His death, burial, and resurrection)
 - The power of his blood – that only comes with preaching about Jesus’ name
 - The power of the Holy Spirit
 - The power of deliverance and sanctification
 - The resurrection – the power of glorification
- All of these parts of salvation require the Power of God – but to believe in them, we must first hear them as a part of the Word of God

The Road to Salvation

One of the reasons why men get confused about salvation is most teach that salvation is a one time or perhaps initial event. In reality salvation is a

process that begins with faith but does not stop there. I have often used the “road to heaven” illustration to show the correct way to view salvation.

The Past, Present, and Future Salvation

Take a look at 2 Corinthians 1:9-10. In this scripture, we learn that men have the sentence of death over their lives because of sin. However Paul lets us know that salvation doesn’t just happen:

9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

10 Who delivered us (past salvation) from so great a death, and doth deliver (present salvation): in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us (future salvation)

Salvation begins by faith, but it continues throughout our lives. When Paul wrote the book of Romans, it was a doctrinal book for Christians to learn about how salvation works. It covers for example the *Doctrine of Condemnation* in that “all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God”. But the three major parts of salvation are covered by these three doctrines:

The Doctrine of Justification – we were saved

Justification begins when we believe:

Romans 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

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

Galatians 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us



unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

This corresponds to our “Faith In God” part of the basic doctrines that we studied in Hebrews 6. However, we must remember that when Abraham was justified by faith, righteousness was “imputed” to him. In other words, God counted him as righteous even though he really was not. However, when we are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ because we believed in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ – we received “actual” righteousness or justification. Justification doesn’t mean the same things as being guilty then forgiven. Justification means we are counted as never having been guilty. We always were innocent in God’s eyes, and Jesus was the guilty party. Remember that Abraham and others under the law could never receive real “remission” or forgiveness of sins. The sins were rolled forward to Calvary. However we get the reality of forgiveness, but even more because we are “justified”.

The biggest debate the men have is when does remission come – when we believe or when we are baptized. The Bible answers that question in Acts 2:38 among others. Our actual “remission” or forgiveness happens when we are baptized in Jesus’ name IF we have believed. When a person has been baptized in Jesus name, he arises to walk in newness of life. He /she has become a new creature in Jesus Christ.

The Doctrine of Sanctification – we ARE BEING saved

Sanctification begins the moment we arise from the watery grave of baptism, but requires the baptism of the Holy Spirit in order to be completed. To be sanctified means to be “set apart” – it is another word for being “made holy”. No one can really become holy without the baptism of the Holy Spirit – but God by his grace begins the work in the believer once they have repented and have

been baptized. An un-baptized believer cannot possibly be in the process of sanctification simply because without being buried, how can you arise to walk in newness of life. This is why we are concerned about Christians who preach that water baptism is not essential for salvation. But if a person has been forgiven, the Lord has promised the Holy Spirit and as new creatures we are set apart for the Lord work in us until we have received it and after we have received it.

Sanctification (the “we are being saved”) requires the baptism of the Holy Spirit in order to do the following things for us:

- It like water baptism is a part of the New Birth (John 3:5, Acts 2:38) and the holy spirit puts us into the body of Christ. I Corinthians 12:13
- If we are “put into the body” then we are separated from the world (sanctified)
- The spirit gives us “access to the father” (Eph 2:18)
- We are “translated” into the kingdom of the son (from darkness into light) – that means the spirit takes out of one kingdom and puts us into another (i.e. placed, set apart, removed from darkness – sanctified)
- He shall “guide you into all truth” John 16:13 and it is the truth that sanctifies us (John 17:17 – 19)

More than anything, people need to realize that sanctification comes by truth, which can only come by the Holy Spirit working by the Word of God. Truth is what “sets us apart”.

Sanctification and Holiness are the same thing

Being set apart is being separated from our sin and from the world. This is not something that happens over night and this is why “we ARE BEING saved”. Holiness and sanctification does mean that we have to be “separated” from the world –



which is necessary to avoid the sins of the world. Holiness is essential and it is the part of saving us which takes God “perfecting” us and it also requires our part

I Corinthians 14–17: Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Ephesians 4:24 and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 to the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Holiness is essential if we are to be saved (Hebrews 12:14) – *but* holiness comes through God’s discipline (the sanctification process) and through

our willingness to be a separate people. Notice the following passages from Hebrews 12:

Hebrews 12: 4-11: Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a **few days chastened** us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, **that we might be partakers of his holiness**. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless **afterward** it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

The Doctrine of Glorification – we SHALL BE saved

Glorification takes place “if we endure to the end”. To put this into perspective, we have to realize that there is a part of our salvation that we won’t get until we have been changed into a glorified body. After all – salvation saves us from sin and all the consequences of sin. The consequences of sin in-



cludes death, sickness, sorrow, pain and suffering, and other things that Christians continue to endure while they exist on earth.

Is it wrong to say, “I hope that I am saved”? The answer is absolutely not. Although many will absolutely try to get a person to say “I know I am saved” as trying to build faith in the assurance of salvation – we need to remember that this is often used to promote the “once saved always saved doctrine” which is not truth. What does the Bible say about the “hope of salvation”? This comes under the part of “we will be saved” or the doctrine of glorification.

Romans 8:18-25: For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Here the Bible talks about an event that is yet to happen. Notice verse 24, “we are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” In other words, we have already been saved completely – than why are we waiting to be saved completely?

Salvation yesterday was based on the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ – and then we also died, was buried, and arose again to walk in newness of life. Salvation today means we are walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, being separated from the world, and receiving chastening as we need it. Salvation tomorrow means that we will endure to the end, and then one day be resurrected in a “glorified” body (glorification).

You Cannot Park Along the Road and Make It to Heaven

