

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

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My friend, do you know that if you died today that heaven would be your home? Now, notice I did not ask you, “Are you religious?” I did not ask you, “Are you a good person?” I did not ask you if you are a good family person. No, I have not even asked if you paid your taxes. I have not asked, “Have you been confirmed or baptized?” No, I am not asking you any of those questions but rather, “Do you know that if you died today that heaven would be your home?” Now, if you could know that, would you not want to know it? In 1 John 5:13, the Bible says, ***“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, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”*** Now, is that not interesting? God says that you may know that you have eternal life. How does one come to eternal life? Well, first of all, he must realize that God loves him.

The Bible says in Romans 5:8, ***“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”*** When God says ***“while we were yet sinners,”*** He means in the very worst state we are. Now, some people have done worse things than others in our sight: we could talk about drug use; we could talk about murderers; we could talk about thieves; we could talk about adulterers; we could talk about sexual perverts, and on down the line we could go. And are those good things? Of course they are not, but He said that ***“while we were yet sinners,”*** even in our worst state, ***“Christ died for us.”*** As a matter of fact, Romans 5:20 says, ***“But where sin abounded, grace [that is, God’s grace] did much more abound.”*** God is greater than all of your sin, and God is able to change your life.

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, we find an interesting passage. It says, ***“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, [those that worship idols] nor adulterers, [those that cheat in marriage] nor effeminate, [speaking of homosexuals] nor abusers of themselves with mankind, [those that are sexual perverts] Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, [those that social drink and party often] nor extortioners, shall inherit the***

kingdom of God.” Now that is a list that God says does not inherit the His kingdom, but now listen to this next verse, *“And such were some of you.”* It says *“were.”* He says, *“but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”* In other words, these people were saved from that sin, from that lifestyle, and God can do the same thing for you.

The Bible says in Romans 3:23 that, *“all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”* That includes me, and that includes you. The glory of God is Jesus Christ. We all come short of Him, and yet He is the measuring stick. So we have all sinned. Sin means that we have missed the mark. We have all done bad things. Then the Bible goes on to say in Romans 6:23, *“For the wages of sin is death,”* which means final, complete separation forever from God in the lake of fire. Now, my friend, that is the wage that we owe. A wage is something that you earn. We have earned, every person born into this world has earned, to go to hell. That includes this preacher. I do not deserve to go to heaven. If I go to hell, I will get exactly what I deserve, strict justice. If I go to heaven, I am not getting what I deserve, I am getting what Jesus deserves and that speaks of His grace. *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* God has a gift and that gift is eternal life.

Now, my friend, the Bible says in 1 Peter 2:24 that Jesus Christ *“bare our sins in his own body on the tree.”* He did that for you and me. He loves us. The Bible says that *“while we were yet sinners,”* which we just read earlier, He died for us. My friend, I am just trying to share with you that Jesus Christ, when He was dying on the cross two thousand years ago, was shedding His blood for every sin you ever have or ever will commit.

You see, Jesus Christ was different than we are. He always existed before, but He was a spirit. The Bible says God is a spirit. He was in heaven where all the angels wanted to do His will. He sat on the high exalted throne. But He left all of that glory in heaven, came to this earth, and became a human. He was born of the virgin Mary. Mary was a sinner just like we are, but she was chosen to carry Him. She bore him, and He was born that day in Bethlehem. He lived thirty-three and a half years on this earth, and then He died on the cross. In those thirty-three and a half years, He never sinned one time. You know, it was important that He not sin because He had to be a perfect sacrifice. He was on the cross for six hours, and the last three hours the skies turned dark. That is when the almighty wrath from the Father in heaven was poured out on Jesus Christ. Do you know God’s attitude about sin did not change even when Jesus was on the cross? The Bible says of God’s own Son, *“it pleased the LORD to bruise him,”* because He saw my sin and your sin on Him. All the wrath of God was poured out upon Jesus, so He suffered more than the man in hell.

The man in hell, however, is chained. He will be in a lake of fire forever! He is separated from loved ones. There is no rest day or night. It is a flame. He cannot eat, and yet he is hungry. He cannot drink, and yet he is thirsty. He has no hope. He has unanswered prayer. He cannot cease to exist. That is terrible, and yet, as bad as that suffering is, Jesus suffered more than that spiritually.

Three days later Jesus rose up from the abode of dead spirits, re-entered His body, and rose up completely from the dead. Because of this, the Bible lets us know in Revelation 1:18 that Jesus has ***“the keys of hell and of death.”*** He is the only way to heaven. This is why Jesus says in John 14:6, ***“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*** We do not get to heaven the Baptist way, the Methodist way, the Catholic way, the Muslim way, or any other religion’s way. Jesus says that He is the way, the only way to heaven, and so, my friend, **if you are going to go to heaven and have eternal life, it must be through Jesus Christ.**

Now, let us look at what we have said so far. We realize all of us are sinners, and we deserve to go to hell for our sins. The only way we do not go to hell is to be saved. Now, let us say that you want to save yourself. What must you be able to do just to save yourself without the help of God, without God saving you? Well, you have got to be able to do this: you have got to be able to die, to go to hell with your spirit, and then by your own power, to rise up from hell, re-enter your body, and make your body eternal. If you cannot do that, you need a savior, and if you are reading this right now, you need a savior. Jesus Christ is that Savior, and He is the only Savior.

We read earlier that there are some very bad people- homosexuals, murderers, drunkards and on down the line- that God saved and changed. He did that without psychology and without counselors. He just came into their lives at their invitation as their God and Lord. Now, in the Bible we have famous people like Moses who killed a man and Mary Magdalene who had seven devils and was in witchcraft! We could talk about the woman at the well who had five husbands and was living with another who was not her husband. God saved all of them. Jesus saved their souls, and He changed them.

You see, the Bible says in Romans 10:9, ***“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”*** In other words, you must believe that Jesus did, in fact, pay your penalty in full. You cannot work for it. You cannot earn your salvation. It is the gift of God. So believing He did this for you, you repent and believe the Gospel. The Bible says in Romans 10:10, ***“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”***

Now, my friend, there is a great difference between a head belief and a heart belief. As

we drive down the Ronald Reagan turnpike going towards Orlando, we will see, off to the south, the Radisson Towers. These towers, I would say, look to be close to twenty stories high. Let us just imagine there is a high wire going from the top of one to the top of the other. A man gets on top, and he walks all the way from one side to the other. Everyone claps. He then takes off and runs across; he does somersaults; and he rides a bicycle. Every trick imaginable, he does it up there. Then for his last trick, he has three hundred pounds lifted up to him. It is placed on his back, and he walks across. He does not stumble, slip, or fall, not even a little, and he gets to the other side. We are all down there, and we see it. We are giving him a standing ovation. Then he looks down at us and says, "How many believe I can carry a human being across here on my back?" We have just seen him carry three hundred pounds and all of his other tricks. All of us raise our hand. Then he looks at you, and he says, "All right, you come up here. I am going to carry you across here on my back." With fear, you look. The towers are so high, nearly two hundred feet. There is no net, and if he drops you it is over for you. Down at the bottom, all you can see is concrete. So you look back up at him, and you say, "No way!" He looks at you, and he says, "Wait a minute! You said you believed I could carry you across here on my back!" You might say something like this: "You know, I believe you can do it, but I am not going to trust you with my life!" That is the difference between a serious head belief and a heart belief. A heart belief trusts with the life. ***"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness."***

Now, let us imagine that you are back on those twin towers. You are on the roof, and every floor underneath you is on fire. Smoke is billowing up, so the helicopters cannot get to you. The fire trucks cannot reach you. Your only hope of being saved is that man who can carry you across that wire, and he says, "Do you want me to save you?" Now, all you have to do is say, "Yes," but you might say something like this: "Well, what do you want me to do? Do you want me to help you out? How can I help you?" He says, "Do not help me. You just get on my back and I will do all the work." He carries you across to the other side to safety. Now, my friend, that is what Jesus did. You just trust Him with your life. When you come to Jesus, you are not going to say, "Well, I want to see if this works out. I am going to try Jesus for a while." No, faith is not "trying Jesus." True faith is a commitment. ***"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."***

The Bible says in Acts 3:19, ***"Repent."*** The word *repent* means "to change your mind or to turn." You turn from your sin. You turn from depending on yourself, and you turn to Jesus Christ, giving your life to Him. He is now the Lord, not you. He is the Master of your life. He is your God, and you are inviting Him in to be your God and Father, to be your Savior. You ask Him to save your soul. And He says in Romans 10:13, ***"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."***

We are all sinners. We all need a savior, and Jesus Christ is that Savior. My friend, He will save you if you will call upon Him. God does not lie. If He said that, “*whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,*” my friend, you can do that right where you are right now. Here is a prayer. This prayer will only be words if you do not mean it in your heart. If you really mean it, however, God does not lie, and He says that He will give you everlasting life. Right now, right where you are, pray this prayer, “Dear God, I know I am a sinner, and I need forgiveness. Forgive me of my sins. I believe that Jesus Christ shed His precious blood for my sin and died on the cross. I believe that three days later He rose up from the dead. Please save me from my sin. Do what is necessary in my life to save me from the sins that control me right now. Come into my life. Come into my heart. Save me right now. Thank You for saving me. I pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

My friend, if you just prayed that prayer and asked the Lord to save you, by His promise, you are saved. Now, let me encourage you to find a good independent Baptist church and tell a preacher that you have asked the Lord to save you.