

## "Your Salvation"

Most people think that everybody is going to heaven, but the Scripture distinguishes the saved from the lost. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Does it matter whether we're saved? Stay tuned.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The New Testament devotes more than a dozen chapters to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now Jesus died upon the cross so that we might be saved. And we study the Scriptures, because we know that it tells about Jesus and we want a relationship with the Lord Jesus, and to be saved by His blood. For us the gospel is not merely words on paper; they give us life. The apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15 verses 1 to 2, "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain." Oh we want everyone to be saved; we don't want anyone to believe in vain. So thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Jesus came to earth "to save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1 and verse 21). "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed" (1 Peter 2 and verse 24). Now Jesus is in the saving business, the forgiving business. He takes people where He finds them and He makes them into the kind of people that He wants them to be. He's the friend of sinners! He's like the shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine in the open pasture and searches for the lost sheep until he finds it! He brings it home on his shoulders rejoicing! Oh I tell you, God rejoices over every sinner that repents (Luke 15 verse 7). The Lord is searching for you, if you're a sinner, my friend. He wants to find you. He doesn't want you to be lost!

Perhaps this has made you think and you want to study more about this, well we offer this study free. And in fact we're putting out a little booklet, called "Your Soul" this month. And if you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, then mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials online at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org).

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Romans 5:6 to 10, and we'll explore the salvation of your soul.

Our reading today comes from Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 5, verses 6 to 10. "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man, someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." God's Word tells us about the great demonstration of the love of Jesus. Let's pray together. Father, we're grateful for Your love and we're thankful that Jesus was willing to pay the price. So that even though we were sinners and enemies, we could be saved. And Father now as we thank back of what you've done for us, may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

What does it mean to be lost spiritually? Well we know what it means to lose our keys or our wallet. We know what it means to lose our health, our savings, or our house. We have amber alerts for

a lost child and silver alerts for a lost senior citizen. And when a child is missing or a senior is missing, we'll turn over every rock to find them. Well now all these things are tragic, but they're trivial compared to the loss of our soul. Being lost spiritually means that we're without God and without hope in this world. Being lost spiritually means that we can't enjoy the blessings or the promises of God in this life or in the one to come. Now God doesn't want anyone to be lost. 1 Timothy 2 verses 3 to 4 says, "This is good, and it's pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Now the fact is that many are lost and don't know it. Our nation has become so morally confused and religiously confused, that many have come to believe that everyone is okay with the Lord. The Lord Jesus, however, clearly taught that not everyone is saved. He said in Matthew 7 verses 13 to 14, "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it." Wouldn't it be sad not to be among that few who finds life? Scripture reminds us that there is salvation in no one else, "for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4 and verse 12).

Even many religious people think that they are right with God, but not everyone who is religious is saved. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7 and verse 21, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter." When people fail to follow the will of the Lord, even if they're religious, the Lord will not allow them into heaven. But when people do love the Lord, when they are willing to listen to His words and obey Him, God opens His heart and opens the way for them to enter into Heaven. When you get away from the words of Jesus, you get away from Jesus.

The prodigal son had lived wickedly until he ran out of money. And when he became destitute, he took a long look at his choices and life. The Scriptures say that "he came to his senses." He realized that he needed saving. What about you? Do you need saving? Are you in sin and in need of forgiveness. You see, the prodigal son decided to go home to his father and confess that he had sinned against heaven and in his father's sight. You see, in his mind, he was no longer worthy to be his father's son. Sin makes us small in our own eyes. Sin ruins our lives. Our sins must be atoned for. And Jesus died on the cross to atone for our sins. We must be willing to come to Him for forgiveness.

The prodigal son was afraid of what might happen, and many today have a fear that the Lord or the church won't accept them. But when people come home humbly and penitently, willing to do the will of the Father, God will accept them. When David came to God for forgiveness, he said in Psalm 51 verses 16 and 17, "For You (speaking of God) do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You're not pleased with burnt offering. (No he says) The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." Now just as the prodigal son's father, God will open His arms to us, will run to meet us, will embrace us and kiss us. The Father knew his son had been wicked, but the father still loved him. And God still loves us!

"But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe (not just any robe, but the best robe) and put it on him, put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate" (Luke 15 verses 22 to 24). I tell you, God celebrates when people recognize their sins and come home in repentance. Do you need to come back to God?

God wants to forgive you, to save you from sin, because He loves you. Your salvation is so very important. Preaching the gospel means talking about sin and salvation. And that is what gospel preaching is all about. What happens when you're saved? Well let's see:

First, your salvation means that God has washed you clean from sin. Now sin leaves a stain and it causes us to feel the sting of our guilt. But when we become Christians the stain and the guilt are gone. 1 Corinthians 6 verses 9 to 11 says, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. (And the he looked them in the eye and he said) such were some of you; but you were washed (God cleaned you up), you were sanctified (God made you holy), but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God (God made you innocent, made you innocent)." When we're washed clean, we're also made holy and righteous. God no longer sees what we were but sees what we have become, and what he caused us to become. We're new creatures.

When we're baptized, we're calling out to God for a good conscience (1 Peter 3:21). Ananias told Saul of Tarsus, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (Acts 22 and verse 16). And you see that's how we call upon God for salvation. 1 Peter 3:21 explains, "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." In baptism we're asking God to clean our souls and our consciences, so that we can be right with Him and right with ourselves.

Second, your salvation means that you are forgiven and reconciled to God. Now reconciliation means that I'm in a right relationship with God, God and I are friends again. To be guilty of sin and know you're not forgiven is scary. To think that I will face eternity without God's favor, without His friendship, and having no hope, my friend that's frightening. Hebrews 10 and verse 31 reminds us, that "It's a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." I wouldn't want to face God outside of Christ, lost in sin, never having believed or never having obeyed the gospel. I wouldn't want to face God having forsaken the church. I wouldn't want to face God living in sin and being unwilling to repent.

I'm thankful for the words of 2 Peter 3 and verse 9, that "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." God doesn't want to condemn anybody. He wants people to believe, to love Him, and to change their ways. He wants us to leave our sins and to become obedient. And I'm thankful God is patient with us. I don't want to presume on the grace or the patience of God. I know that I must change my ways if I want to see the grace of God work in my life.

My favorite saying is this: "I'm not all I ought to be; I'm not all I want to be; I'm not all I'm going to be; but thank God by His mercy and grace, I'm not what I used to be." God's grace and forgiveness transforms us. And when we're obedient to the gospel, we become a child of God. We become new people, transformed into a child of God. 2 Corinthians 5:17 to 19 says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us (made friends with us) to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation." Being forgiven means that God no longer holds my sins against me, and that allows me to become friends with God once again.

Third, your salvation means that you are sanctified. What does that mean? It means God makes you holy and regards you as holy. Peter describes obedient Christians in 1 Peter 2 verses 9 to 10, he says "But you are a chosen race, A royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you were once were not a people, but now you're the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

My friend, if God has forgiven you, and cleansed you by the blood of Jesus, and He's made you holy, then you should live that way. God's word says in 2 Timothy 2 verses 19 to 22, "Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.'" Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he'll be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. (And so he says) Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."

Fourth, when the Lord saves you at the time that you're baptized, He adds you to His kingdom, His family, the church! When you're baptized into Christ, you're also baptized into His church. You'll remember Peter said to them, ""Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (that is so that you'll receive forgiveness); and you'll receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.' And with many other words he solemnly testified and he kept on exhorting them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation!' So then, those who had received that word (His word) were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:38 to 41).

These penitent believers were happy to do what God says. They didn't argue with God. They committed themselves, and God recognized that. And so He added them to the other believers, to the church. Acts 2 and verse 47 says, "And the Lord was adding to their number (that is the church) day by day those who were being saved." My friend, to be saved means to be added to their number, and to be a part of the church, the family of God.

Well why does this matter? Well it matters because we're talking about your soul and your future. To be saved means every blessing in Christ is yours. To be lost means you have no relationship with God and no hope. Don't gamble with your soul. Buy the truth and do not sell it. Get right with God, and don't let anything, anything come between you and God ever again. Don't argue with God. Life is too uncertain to put off putting your trust in the Lord and obeying the gospel in repentance and baptism. If the Lord Jesus came in the clouds this day, would you greet Him with love or would you be afraid? Why would you remain afraid? Get right with God. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that we can come to You humbly and penitently, and that You will accept us as we are obedient to Your Word. And Father we pray that are love will grow for you. Father may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen!

How are we saved? Well, God saves us by His grace, it's a gift. God has always wanted to save and redeem us from sin. Ezekiel 18:23 says that the Lord takes "no pleasure in the death of the wicked" but He wants us to "turn from" our sinful ways and live! God is in the saving business. People lose their souls when they rebel against God, or refuse to believe in God, or will not obey God. And God grieves when His people sin. He made and loves you and He doesn't want anybody to be lost.

Some people want the grace of God but have little interest in what He teaches or commands. They want a Savior but not a Lord. However, you can't separate Him from His teaching. Wanting Him means listening to what He has to say. 1 Corinthians 1 and verse 21 says that "God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." God saves through a message. 1 Peter 1:22 to 23 says, "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God." God saves us through the gospel (Romans 1 and verse 16).

And if you believe and are willing to confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, if you're willing to repent of your sins, and if you're willing to be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, you too can be saved and the Lord will add you to His church. Peter told the people to repent and to be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins in Acts 2 and verse 38. Ananias told Saul of Tarsus to rise and be baptized and wash away your sins in Acts 22:16. That's how a person responds to the grace of God. Won't you repent and be baptized today?

My friend, your soul has a destiny. And so we want you to think about what God says. We're offering this little free book, anyone who asks for it. And if you live in the United States, we'd like to offer you a copy of it, called "Your Soul." It's free, and you can have a copy of the book or a CD of this message, just let us know. Write to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, if you get a hold of us, we're not here to get your money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

So we ask that you please get involved with a church. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So, as always, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.