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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

“Salvation: What It Is and Why It Is So Important”

TRANSCRIPT

We had better go ahead and make a beginning because we have a good bit of material to try to cover tonight. So let's begin with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the opportunity studying of Thy word and we thank Thee for the great doctrines of holy Scripture. And we pray that as we look into them, throughout our course of studies this fall and winter, that we may come to understand Thee better as we understand the person and work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Enable us, Lord, to approach Thy word, willing to be taught and willing to have the Holy Spirit illuminate our minds and guide us into all truth. Enable us to put aside the things that hinder and prevent his teaching ministry in our lives, specifically our sin and enable us to grow in grace and on the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

We commit each one present to Thee and pray Thy blessing upon them. And as we study, we each be formed by the Spirit into a closer likeness to our Lord who has loved us and has given himself for us. And so at the beginning of our series of studies, we commit ourselves to Thee for Thy blessing upon us.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

[Message] Now, this fall we’re beginning a series of studies which we will continue, the Lord willing, throughout the winter and also the spring in the doctrine of Christology and soteriology. Now, these are, as you might suppose, two of the greatest of the divisions of systematic theology. And I think it is probably insufficient to say that there is hardly anything more important than a correct understanding of Christology and soteriology.

And so we want to approach this series of studies with a proper attitude and ask that as we do and I hope you will pray in your own life, as we do, we be willing to come under the direction of the Spirit’s teaching.

Now, if you have a copy of the series of titles, you will notice that we begin with salvation, what it is and why it is so important, which we want to deal with tonight. We also take up the person of our Lord Jesus Christ for a couple of studies. One of them next Monday night, discuss the perversions of the doctrine of Christ’s person, deal with his offices, then begin to discuss what he has done in his sufferings.

We are also going to spend a great deal of time, you will note, upon the doctrine of election. And I hope to be able to answer some of the problems which you may have in your own mind, with reference to that doctrine. Then we’re going to move on into a discussion of the things that we have as Christians, the blessings that are ours. And you will notice that we not only will deal with that question, but also move onto how we are saved or what are the terms of salvation. And then also can we, once we have been saved, know that we are Christians and can we know that we should belong to the Lord forever. And we shall conclude with a study of glorification. And I hope that throughout this winter and spring that each one of us is going to grow in the knowledge of the teaching of the word of God.

Now I’d like to say just a few words by way of introduction to our subject tonight. Salvation, what it is and why it is so important. And I think as a basis for our study tonight, I want to turn to two passages in the Bible. First of all, one in the Old Testament and one in the New. And the first passage, just one verse, Deuteronomy chapter 6 in verse 23. Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 23. Now riding against the background of the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt, and knowing that that deliverance, which Israel experienced from Egypt was an example of the deliverance that you and I experience from sin, Moses writes in verse 23 in Deuteronomy chapter 6:

“And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers.”

And I want you to notice the two expressions, “he brought us out from thence,” that is from Egypt, “that he might bring us in,” so that the work of the salvation of Israel from the land of Egypt, was a twofold work. It was a deliverance from Egypt. It was also a settling of the children of Israel in the land. So, as Moses puts it, “he brought us out that he might bring us in.” And in the work of salvation, there is this two-fold aspect. We are brought out from the dominion of sin, that we might be brought into Jesus Christ and experience all of the blessings that pertain to our position in him.

Now let’s turn to a passage in the New Testament; the small epistle to Titus, chapter two, and we’re going to begin reading with the eleventh verse. Titus chapter 2, verse 11. And the apostle Paul writes in Titus chapter 2 in verse 11,

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.”

Now, notice that Paul puts this in the past time: “the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” For Paul, the grace that brought salvation was a past event. But then he says, “Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; that salvation has a

present significance. And finally he says in verse 13, “looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our savior Jesus Christ.” And so the apostle lived in the light of a past deliverance, looking for a future deliverance. So we have here three time or three times or three tenses in salvation: past, present and future.

Now, salvation: what it is and why it is so important. At the beginning of this course, I want to impress upon you that I have three aims; first to interest you in the truth as it pertains to soteriology, or the doctrine of salvation; second, to instruct you in that truth; and finally, to inspire you by the truth. And I do not think that it is possible for us to properly teach the bible unless we not only interest and instruct but also inspire. So I hope through our studies that you will be inspired and as you think on the great things that concern our salvation. But when you study soteriology or theology, you must deal with some technical things and so I want to say a few words, first of all, about this term, soteriology.

So if you are taking notes, this is Roman I: the term soteriology. And let’s think first of all about the Old Testament background of this term. Soteriology, let me say, is a word derived from the Greek word, for salvation. Soteriology means really the doctrine of salvation. There is a Greek word which is *soteria*. The Greeks use that word to express salvation. As you can see soteriology is a transliteration of this word, plus the word *logos*, which means “a word” or sometimes “utterance” or sometimes “teaching.” And so this is really the teaching of salvation. Soteriology: the teaching of salvation.

Now, the Hebrew word in the Old Testament translated save, the root from which we get the word salvation from the Old Testament is the word *yasha*, Y-A-S-H-A, *yasha*. That word in the Old Testament means to save. Now this word originally meant to make wide or to make spacious, but it came to mean to cause to be wise or to cause to be spacious. And thus, it came by a process of change to mean to deliver. So the word soteriology or the word save in the Old Testament had the idea of deliverance. That was used in to twofold sense of deliverance, deliverance from physical perils.

For example, if in the Old Testament, Moses describes the children of Israel’s deliverance out of Egypt, he may use the word save. Now he doesn’t mean by that that they were saved spiritually, he means they were saved physically. And so the word can be used in that sense; is used in that sense in the Old Testament.

It is also used in the spiritual sense. That is a salvation from sin. So salvation in the Old Testament was salvation physically, depending on the context, then salvation spiritually, or deliverance from sin. In the New Testament, the word for salvation is the word *sozo*. Now, this is an attempt to try to transliterate the Greek word, this is really more equivalent to our z, because it is zeta. But put this in your note and if you’re around a real good Greek scholar, don’t show him that. I’m doing this for your sake. This is the word. If you want to show him the Greek word, to show off your knowledge of Greek, that’s fine, but it is the word *sozo* in the New Testament. Translate and that word is usually translated saved in the New Testament.

Now this word, too, is a word that not only is used with reference to salvation from sin, but is also used of salvation from physical perils. As a matter of fact, at the time of the apostles and the time of our Lord Jesus, *soteria or soteria*, the word salvation, was a word that was frequently used for bodily health. If I should have met you in the street in the first century, I might have said to you how is your solteria, that is, how is your health. So *soteria* is a word that meant health or salvation.

Now just like the Hebrew word *yasha*, it has several senses. It may be used of deliverance in the physical sense from external evils and troubles. We could say he is saved with reference merely to the physical. The context of the New Testament, of course, will let us know what is in view.

Many years ago when I first began to preach, I used to go out to Eagle Ford and preach in a little schoolhouse out there. It’s still standing, if you are ever on the toll road from Dallas to Ft. Worth and you get out near the Eagle Ford and you look off to the side and you see a little schoolhouse, that schoolhouse is famous, because that’s the first

sermon -- I ever preached, I preached in that school house. And it’s still standing, no doubt, to commemorate that event. [Laughter].

But one night, I was coming home with a friend who went out with me to preach, and we were in our cars and it was during the last stages of the Second World War, (not that long ago) and as we were coming in to the seminary, we stopped over in Oak Cliff and picked up a sailor. There were two of us, only one of him. We both were Christians. We thought “well, here’s a fish. We’ll try to land him. And so we picked him up in the car and we engaged him in conversation and finally one of us turned to him, I forgotten which, and said “Are you saved or have you been saved.” And he said, “oh yes, I’ve been saved several times.” And we knew we really had a fish of course, when he said that. [Laughter]. But he said he went on to say “I’ve been saved several times. I was saved once on the operating table.” And I understood exactly what he meant by that, because when you get off the operating table after a doctor has worked on you and you survive, that is salvation. [Laughter] And so he said he had been saved that way. And then he said “I was also saved during one of the battles out in the Pacific.” And I think he had a third salvation, but I’ve forgotten exactly what that one was. But he of course was using the term salvation in the purely physical sense. He had been saved, yes, several times. And probably now, he’s been saved several more times since then.

Now, the New Testament uses the term in that sense. And if we had time we could turn to some passages. For example, in Acts chapter 27, the apostle uses the term to express deliverance from the storm that arose on the Mediterranean Sea as he and his friends were making their way to Rome. But it is primarily used in the Bible in a spiritual sense. Just as in the Old Testament, it is a word that refers to our salvation spiritually from the dominion of sin. And probably the first use of it in the New Testament is Matthew chapter 1 in verse 21, in which in a sense we have a combination of both the Old Testament words for salvation and the New Testament word for salvation.

Because remember in Matthew chapter 1 in verse 21, the angel said to Joseph “thou shall call his name Jesus,” and Jesus is simply the Greek term for Joshua, which in turn is a word derived from *yasha*, the Hebrew word *yaboshua*, Joshua, which means the Lord is salvation or the Lord is my salvation, or something like that; “Thou shall call his name Joshua (Jehovah salvation) for he shall save *sozo*, the Greek word, “save his people from their sins”. So there is a union of the Hebrew word *yasha* and the Greek word *sozo* in our Lord, whose name is a reflection of the Old Testament word, but whose work is according to the angel, a reflection of his saving work from sin in the New Testament.

Now this saving work that Jesus does for us has three senses. It may be past, present, or future. And remember that we said something about that when we read the Titus passage; past, present, and future. There are three tenses to salvation; past, present and future.

Now I think that Bob Theme calls these phase one, phase two, and phase three of God’s saving work. And I guess that’s all right, providing we understand his terminology, but the past, present, and future salvation. Salvation may be spoken of in the past. It is then salvation usually from the guilt or penalty of sin. For example, Paul says in Ephesians chapter 2 in verse 8, “for by grace have you been saved through faith”, past, “for by grace have you been saved through faith.”

Now that is past salvation. When a man believes in Jesus Christ -- the moment he believes in Jesus Christ, he is delivered from the penalty of sin. Paul says it twice in that one passage in Ephesians 2, “for by grace have you been saved.” He means salvation not from some physical ill. He means salvation from spiritual ills, but he uses the past tense; deliverance from the penalty of sin. The moment a person believes in Jesus Christ he is delivered from the judgment of sin. He will never, as we shall see, come under judgment again, for Jesus Christ has worn that judgment.

But we also may speak of salvation in present time. Now, I think it might do well for us to look at a passage in present time because this is not too familiar to us. Let’s take

2 Corinthians chapter 2 in verse 15, 2 Corinthians chapter 2 in verse 15. Now this passage is capable of two interpretations, but it won’t effect what I’m saying because what I’m saying is taught of the New Testament without question. Verse 15 we read:

“For we are unto God a sweet savor of Jesus Christ, in them that are being saved (literally), and in them that are perishing.”

Or turn back to 1 Corinthians chapter 1 in verse 18. 1 Corinthians 1 in verse 18. And I think this text is really a better one than the other one, and I should have given it to you first to start with. Here the apostle states: 1 Corinthians 1, verse 18:

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness; but unto us which are being saved.”

Again, that word which is translated here “are saved” is in the Greek text a present participle; “are being saved.” It is the power of God. So we can speak of ourselves as having been saved. We can also speak of ourselves as being saved.

Now, what do we mean when we say that we are being saved. How is it possible for us to say “I have been saved” and yet “I am being saved.” Well, only of course, if we are speaking of different types of judgment, for example, or different types of deliverance.

I cannot say I have been saved from the penalty of sin and I am being saved from the penalty of sin. That would be contradictory. The Bible never contradicts itself. Truth does not contradict itself. But I may say “I have been saved from the penalty of sin” and “I am being saved from the power of sin in my daily life.” And that of course is what Paul means. He means, we have been saved from the penalty of sin. We shall never come under judgment for our sin, but, nevertheless, we are not completely delivered from the power of sin.

Wives, look at your husband, who has been saved from the penalty of sin. But has he been saved from the power of sin, completely? No. You probably had some fresh evidence of that today. [Laughter] I assure you that Mary did. So you may well have had the experience of having been saved, but this salvation from the power of sin is something that will continue as long as we are in the flesh, for we still possess the old nature.

Now, what possibly could mean when we say that we shall be saved? Well, again, if we are talking about the same thing, we have hopeless confusion. But if we are talking about something different, then it makes sense. I think we ought to look at a passage, too. Let’s look at Romans chapter 13 in verse 11. Romans chapter 13 in verse 11. Now, here Paul states in verse 11 of Romans chapter 13,

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”

Our salvation is nearer than when we believed. It sounds as if Paul doesn’t really have his salvation yet. And yet he’s the same person who said, “For by grace have ye been saved,” and he’s the one who says that “the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness but unto us which are being saved it is the power of God.” But he also says, “Our salvation is nearer than when we believed,” and of course he could not possibly say that if he meant salvation from the penalty of sin. So he must mean something else and of course, he does, as we know from his other teaching. He has referenced, of course, to salvation from the presence of sin.

When we have been saved, we still have our old natures. And so sin is present in us, even though we are delivered from the penalty of sin. We are progressively being delivered from the power of sin by the work of the Holy Spirit within us, through the word of God. That’s why you’re here tonight.

I hope after our studies, you leave more delivered from the power of sin. But there is a time coming when Jesus Christ shall come and the saints should go up to meet him in the air and all of us who have old natures will have those old natures eradicated, eliminated, destroyed, but not until then. Then we shall be delivered from the presence of sin. So you see it’s possible to speak of salvation in three tenses: past, present, and future.

There is an old anecdote which I always tell my students when I teach them Romans at the seminary. And I usually teach them right at the first part of that book, where Paul states “that the Gospel is the power of God and to salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” It concerns Bishop Westcott, who was an evangelical Anglican bishop in England. And Westcott was a man who was a genuine Christian who loved the Lord and loved the things of the Lord. And one day he was walking on the streets of one of the cities in England and he saw an old-fashioned Salvation Army meeting in which the workers gathered, sang hymns. And then one of them gave a testimony or preached from the word. And at the conclusion of the meeting, having gathered a crowd by the singing and by the preaching, the workers would move out among the audience and seek to make contact to lead some to the Lord. And so a little lassie saw the bishop standing over with his bishop’s attire on and thought, “Ah there’s a good fish for me to land, a bishop.”

And so when the meeting was over she went up to Bishop Westcott and she said “sir” -- now Westcott was one of the greatest of the Greek scholars. She said, “Sir, are you saved?” And he said, “Yyoung lady, what do you mean? Do you mean *esothain*, *sesosmai*, *sosomai*, or *sothesomai*?” And of course she was utterly dumbfounded by what he said. And then he went on with a smile to point out to her that the doctrine of salvation had three tenses. And that if she meant, had he been saved or has he been saved, *esothain* or *sesosmai*, yes, he had been saved from the penalty of sin. If she meant *sosomai*, well, he could not really say that he was completely saved, that process was going on. And if she

meant *sothesomai*, future, well then he was not saved at all yet, because his salvation was still off. It was nearer than when he believed and it was coming, but it was not there yet.

So now to sum up what I’ve been trying to say. The term “soteriology” then refers to deliverance. Basically, it is a deliverance that may be physical or spiritual. But when we talk about the doctrine of salvation theologically, we are primarily talking about the spiritual deliverance, for that is the important thing; spiritual deliverance. And not only is that deliverance a deliverance from something, but it also a deliverance unto something.

So we are taken out of the old life, and we are placed in the new life as Moses said concerning the children of Israel, “God has brought you out, that he might bring you in.” And it isn’t enough, by the way, for us to know that we have been saved from the penalty of sin. He wants us to go on and discover all of the things that we have in Christ; what we have now and what we shall have. And then that salvation has three tenses, that spiritual salvation has three tenses: past, present, and future, one from the penalty of sin, the other two from the power and presence of sin.

Now, Roman 2, the relation of soteriology to systematic theology. And let me just say very simply that what I mean by this heading is soteriology is the natural outcome of the work of Jesus Christ. Now, we have studied last year -- those of you who were here, we have studied bibliology, or the study of the doctrine of the Bible. We said something about its inspiration, remember and the revelation that God has given us. And we said something about illumination; how we understand the Bible through the spirit’s work. We also studied theology proper. We studied the trinity, for example, the decrees of God, the providence of God, and other matters along that line. And then in the spring, we studied angelology and anthropology. We studied the doctrine of Satan, and we studied the doctrine of man. They were related, and we tried to relate them and we showed how Satan was created, how Satan fell, how through Satan, man having been created fell. And we then finished with a history of the activities of Satan, according to the Bible.

Now, the next subject in theology would normally be a discussion of the work of Jesus Christ. And that is Christology, or the doctrine of Christ. And then once having discussed what Christ is and has done, then we should discuss the application of that to those who believe, or soteriology.

So we are going to study Christology and soteriology; the doctrine of Christ, who he is and what he has done and its application to men, which is soteriology. So we are going to study then, the application of the person and work of Christ to those who believe in him.

Now, that is all I want say right there, the relation of soteriology to systematic theology. It is, of course, right at the center of systematic theology, and then I guess, I should say, once having studied this, then we should study the doctrine of the church. And finally we should go on to discuss the doctrine of eschatology, because that is the doctrine of future things. Central to what we have been studying so far is this soteriology.

Now, roman 3, the scope of soteriology, the scope of soteriology. And I just want to say this about it. Soteriology is the application, (I’d like for you to get that word down in your mind and on your paper -- and in your papers and on your mind or in your mind.), it is the application of the work of Christ, the person and the work of Christ to believers. That is its scope. We are dealing with the application of what God has done through Christ to believers.

Now Roman 4, the importance of soteriology. I’ll spend a little more time on this. I would like to suggest to you three reasons why soteriology is important; Christology and soteriology. First of all, it is important in the salvation of souls. From the standpoint of the recipient of the message of salvation, a knowledge of soteriology is the knowledge of salvation. When I know my salvation, I know something about soteriology. If God has a plan for the salvation of men, it is plainly of the greatest importance that men understand it. And the doctrine of salvation is of tremendous significance in the salvation of men. If you turn to the Bible, you will discover that not only are men interested in the doctrine of

salvation, but even the angels are interested in it. Prophets are interested in it. Take your Bibles and turn with me to 1 Peter chapter 1 and let’s read a passage that we read once last year, I think at least once. 1 Peter chapter 1 in verse 10. 1 Peter 1, verse 10. Peter is speaking about the salvation that we have in Christ and he says of which salvation, 1 Peter 1:10,

“Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, (Now you can see the prophets were very much interested in the salvation that God has given us in Jesus Christ.) who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed (that is the prophets,) that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.”

So the prophets and the angels are interested in the salvation that God provides. I think it is of the greatest importance that we understand salvation for it is in a sense, a study of what God has given us when we believe in Christ.

Secondly, it is important in the evangelization of others or sinners, if you like. From the standpoint of the preacher, and every one of us is a preacher, from the standpoint of the preacher of the message of salvation, soteriology is of the greatest significance. It’s linked with the gospel. It is the gospel. And the New Testament, of course as you know, constantly over and over affirms that salvation is by the Gospel or that through the Gospel salvation comes to men. And so that if we are going to bring men to Christ, we must understand soteriology or salvation.

It is tremendously important that we bring the right message to people when we do preach the word. I’m not speaking about a man speaking who stands in the pulpit. It’s obvious he must preach the right message, but it is of the greatest significance that you, as a Christian, offer to others the gospel in its purity; therefore, it is necessary that you understand something about soteriology.

Many evangelists today are giving a message that is not clear when they preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. For example, you will frequently find men faithfully preach the person and work of Jesus Christ and then say, “in order to be saved, what you must do is believe and surrender to Jesus Christ.” Now when you study the New Testament, you will discover that surrender is not the proper term, a response to the gospel. As a matter of fact when you read the New Testament you discover that no one can surrender until he has been saved. If a man could surrender to God, he wouldn’t need salvation. And when Paul uses a term that is synonymous with surrender, he addresses it to Christians. As I said yesterday in preaching, Paul said, “I beseech you” in Romans chapter 12,

“I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God, that you present your body a living sacrifice.”

So the term “surrender” is addressed to Christians not to non-Christians. The New Testament term of salvation, as we shall see, is believe. You may want to explain believe in different ways but be careful that you do not use a term that is contrary to its essence. You might say, and properly, trust, or rely upon or receive, but believe is the term that the New Testament uses far more than any other term. Believe. It does not say believe and surrender. It says believe. Therefore it is of the greatest significance that we understand what salvation really is if we are going to preach our gospel purely. The Bible never says, for example, believe in Jesus Christ and come down front to the altar. A

man does not get saved by coming down to the front to an altar. He is saved when he believes in Jesus Christ.

I remember Dr. Chafer telling us of an experience he had when he was an evangelist. He had been concerned about some of these things, but he had not come to see clearly that the one term for salvation was “believe.” And he said he was in a meeting in which he was preaching the Gospel and during the midst of his message as he was unfolding the person and work of Jesus Christ, a man jumped up in the audience and said “I see it! I see it! I’m saved!” And Dr. Chafer looked at us in the class and said, “You know, I thought that the first thing I should say to that man was, sit down. Sit down, it’s not time. At the end of the meeting, I’ll grind you out when I bring you up front.” And he said that it dawned upon me that the Holy Spirit often speaks to people and brings them to the light of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and it’s absolutely unnecessary to have any kind of altar call in order to be saved. And he learned an important truth of course. And that is what he taught and did teach for a long time afterwards.

You know, I’ve had the same experience. And I remember one woman that I was examining once, prepared her toward joining the church. And I asked her “when were you saved?”

And she said, “Well, do you remember the Bible class that you had in so and so’s home?”

And I said, “Yes.”

“Well, I was there. And do you remember that you said that you were talking about salvation that you could be saved right in your chair in that Bible class, right at that moment?”

And I said, “Well, I don’t remember because I always say that sooner or later in a Bible class.”

And she said, “Well, when you said it, I believed in Jesus Christ, right then. And that’s when I was saved.”

Now, it’s tremendously important that we understand what salvation is and the terms of it if we are going to be effective Christian workers. And thirdly, it’s important in the edification of the saints, soteriology. For you see, soteriology or the doctrine of salvation, covers all the facets of salvation in Christ; all of the riches that we have in him. And so it is necessary that we understand soteriology.

Now, finally, roman 5, the divine motivation in soteriology. And I would like (I only have five minutes), but I would just like to mention very quickly with just a remark or two, several reasons which the Bible gives us for God’s saving work. First of all, to manifest his glory in his love for men. To manifest his glory in his love for men. God not only had as one of his motivations, our salvation, but he also had, as one of his motivations, that he should be glorified in his love for us. Now, I would like for you to put down as a passage; 1 John chapter 4 verses 7 through 14; 1 John 4, 7 through 14, 1 John 4:7-14. And I want you to read that passage, if you will, and study it. And you will discover that one of the reasons that God has given us this great salvation is to manifest his glory in the salvation of men.

Secondly, another motive that God had in providing salvation for men is to bestow upon us eternal life. I think this is probably a lesser motive than to glorify himself, but it is expressed in a passage like John 3:16,

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

In other words, one of the motives of God in saving is the gift of eternal life. Now, this is of course a man motive. The glory of God is the divine motive.

Thirdly, God has saved us that we might do good works. That is expressed as one of his motives. It was expressed in that Titus passage that we read. Remember? Paul said in Titus chapter 2 in verse 14,

“Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

And remember in Ephesians chapter 2 we read,

“For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God not works lest any man should boast. For we are God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”

So our salvation is to the end that we do good works. I used to have a very godly friend who was a judge in Lufkin, Texas. And he went home to be with the Lord about two years ago. But he was a man who had had a rich Christian experience, and he also had some terminology that I always found very interesting. So I would ask him theological questions, and he would give me the answers in his own terminology. And we were talking about the relationship between salvation and good works at one time, and he expressed it this way: “We don’t do good works in order to but on account of,” and that was right. We don’t do good works in order to be saved but on account of having been saved. It was one of the motives that God had in our salvation, that we do good works.

Fourth, God has saved us in order that we might offer spiritual sacrifices unto God. Now, that is expressed for us in 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 5. He states that one of the reasons God has brought us unto himself is that we shall offer up spiritual sacrifices.

Now, those sacrifices are the sacrifices of praise. You know a Christian who never praises God has not fulfilled the purpose of his salvation. One of our sacrifices is our giving. And we have never really fulfilled the end of our salvation until we have given.

And those praise and our money and of course the greatest sacrifice of all is the sacrifice of ourselves, to give ourselves to him for his use.

Fifthly, he has saved us to the end that we might live with him. Now, that is expressed in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 in verse 10. In other words God saves us not just to deliver from hell, not just that we should do good works, not in order that his glory may be seen in our salvation only, but he wants to enjoy our presence. And he wants us to enjoy his throughout all eternity. You know what God is doing in our hearts is just the beginning, just the beginning.

And then sixthly, to the end that we might show forth his excellences. Now, 1 Peter chapter 2 in verse 9. Peter says (I’ll look it up, you needn’t look it up.) 1 Peter 2:9;

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; that ye should shew forth his excellences of the one who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

You know someone has rendered that and I think correctly, advertise. A Christian is to be a walking advertisement of the salvation that has come to him. There ought to be a truth-in-lending law, a truth-in-advertising law by Christians too, you know. We have truth-in-advertising, truth-in-lending, but we don’t have any truth in Christianity. So there are lots of people who could go around and say “I’m a Christian,” but you’d never know it if they hadn’t said it. But nevertheless, one of the purposes is that we should show forth the excellences. Advertise the virtues of our God.

And, finally, we have been saved in order that God may through us show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness to us throughout eternity. That’s expressed in Ephesians chapter 2 in verse 7. And I’m going to close by reading this particular verse saying just saying one word about it. Paul says;

“That he has raised us up together, made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus that -- that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

So we have been saved not only to glorify God now, but that all throughout the ages of eternity the whole of God’s creation may see exhibited in us the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us. You know, I think heaven is going to be one great meeting for a long time until we all get acquainted. And we’re going to hear the testimony of the work of God in the life of every single believer, down through the centuries before the time of Christ and after. Isn’t that going to be interesting? Wouldn’t you like to hear Isaiah get up and give his testimony? I think I could listen to him for thirty minutes or so. [Laughter] And all of eternity is going to be the expression of the glory of God in the revelation of his kindness toward us, not only in the past, but I think all down through the years of time. So God has a tremendous motivation in our salvation. And I am so thankful that I am one of the saved. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. And heaven is going to be great. Let’s bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the saving work of Jesus Christ. And as we study the facets of it this fall and this winter and next spring, help us, O God, to appreciate what it costs me and help us to understand our place within Thy program.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.